

Story 1501 1973 Tape 11

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Location: Kargıcak village,
Silifke kaza,
İçel Province

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Musical Communication

There was once a young man who worked as a shepherd on a large farm. The girl to whom he was engaged also worked for the same farmer. She worked in the dairy and made the butter

One day while the shepherd was tending his flock, some bandits came along. After shooting the shepherd's speckled sheepdog, they overpowered the shepherd and captured him. They intended to kill the shepherd, and they were talking among themselves about how they would do that.

Understanding what they were going to do, the shepherd said to them, "You are going to kill me, I know. Before you do that, however, give me my saz¹ and let me have the pleasure of singing a song." The bandits saw no harm in his doing that, for he was tied securely, and so they handed him his saz. He then sang,

¹A saz is a three-stringed instrument used by Turkish folk singers. The word saz does not appear in the text but was added by the editor. The narrator said that he informed his fiancée of his difficulty by playing a tune upon his pipe (kaval). Although tunes may suggest the lyrics of given songs, the message here could not be part of any previously known song, for it applies only to this specific situation. The idea of singing messages is very common in Turkish folklore, but one cannot sing while playing a pipe. The pipe is, however, the favorite instrument of shepherds, and they do communicate orders to their flocks by pipe tunes, just as a bugler gives messages to troops. The narrator apparently referred unthinkingly to the pipe here.

Story 1501

shot my faithful speckled dog;

have me bound with juniper.

Their men are lying on the grass.

Come quickly now and rescue me.

The shepherd's fiancée was churning butter when she heard this message. She quickly gathered some of the other farm workers, who rushed to the pasture and saved the shepherd's life.