

Story #242 (Tape #7, Summer 1970)

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The Two Mad Mehmet's and the Treaty with Germany

There was once a young man by the name of Mehmet the Mad in Istanbul. There was another Mehmet the Mad in Ankara. The mad Mehmet of Ankara ate and drank the money of that city [i.e., he consumed the wealth] and then disappeared and went to Istanbul and joined the Mad Mehmet of that city. He asked the Mad Mehmet of Istanbul, "What is the wealthiest place here?"

Mad Mehmet of Istanbul replied, "There is nothing wealthier here than the palace of the padişah. He has his treasury there and no money anywhere else but in his treasury, but it is under the protection of the padişah. Could we ever get anything out of it?"

"We can," said Mad Mehmet of Ankara

They got #20 nails [20 cm. nails] and driving them into the walls of the treasury, they climbed to the top of the treasury [i.e., made steps] and lowered themselves into the building through a skylight on top [Hacı interrupts and explains this on tape]. They robbed the padişah's treasury a little that day. The next day they returned and got a little more. Then it was discovered, and double the number of guards were placed there. But they still managed to get in. Then a ditch was dug around the treasury and filled with tar.

Mad Mehmet of Ankara said, "Now, show your skill and enter the treasury if you can."

When he was trying to cross the ditch, Mad Mehmet of Istanbul's foot slipped and he fell into the ditch of tar [and died there]. Mad Mehmet of

Ankara broke the head off the neck of the Istanbul Mad Mehmet, entered the treasury, stole more gold, and came out. He took the head of Mad Mehmet of Istanbul and the gold to the house of Mad Mehmet of Istanbul and said to his wife, "Madam, your husband died, and you are left to me."

The padişah had assembled his viziers, asking them who might have robbed his treasury. A wise man at the meeting said, "Your majesty, we can discover who it was, but to do so we must lead a camel through the streets of the town. Announce that it is for sale, and whoever can afford to buy it will be accused of robbing the treasury."

They had a camel decorated with the most expensive jewelry in the world walk through the streets of the city. A vizier or a servant of the palace led the camel by hand. Mad Mehmet of Ankara saw that a camel was being led through the streets and wondered how he could steal this camel. He got a sack of hazel nuts and came carrying this sack on his shoulder to the place where the camel driver stood. There he just poured the nuts on the street, and the people ran to pick the nuts from the ground. The camel driver let the camel go in order to pick up some, too. In the meantime, Mad Mehmet took the camel and walked away with it and brought it home. The poor camel driver returned and said, "It was stolen from me."

They again assembled all the viziers and wise men to examine the case. How did this happen? The padişah said, "I think I have discovered it. No one but he could have stolen this camel." He announced that he needed camel meat for his pregnant wife and called forty witches [pregnant women must have what they crave or the child will be affected] and asked them to discover where the camel was so they could raid the place

Mad Mehmet was sitting in a coffee house when the witches came out, each carrying a box of paint in her hand. They came to Mad Mehmet's house asking

for camel meat for the padişah's wife, but Mad Mehmet had buried the camel in a well. His wife knew nothing of it. When the witches came to ask for meat, they saw that Mad Mehmet's wife had just cut off meat from a camel and was climbing with it out of the well. When they saw this, they marked Mad Mehmet's door with paint

Mad Mehmet got home then and asked the witch, "Sister, what are you doing here?"

"We are looking for camel's flesh. That is why we stopped here, and your wife gave us some, God bless her

"Come back, and I shall give you some more," he said. He then caught the witch, killed her, and threw her into the well. Taking the paint box from the witch, he then marked all the doors in the neighborhood with it.

In the evening, thirty-nine witches returned, but one was missing. The viziers and wise men were assembled, where it was concluded that the same man who had robbed the treasury and stolen the camel had also killed the witch

They advised the padişah, "Your majesty, you announce that if one man committed all these, you would give him your daughter."

Mad Mehmet of Ankara was sitting at a coffee house when town criers made the announcement. Mad Mehmet thought a little and considered whether he should reveal himself or not. He went to the town crier.

"Town crier, I am he who committed all three crimes. Great men like our padişah ought to keep their word, and I am the one who did all these things. Go and tell the palace people

He was arrested and taken to the padişah. The padişah said, "Tell me, my son, what you did."

"I am the one who robbed the treasury, I am the one who stole the camel, I am the one who killed the woman, and I know that padişahs will never go back

on their word."

The padişah said, "All right. Make the wedding arrangements." And the padişah's daughter and Mad Mehmet were married.

One day a note was received by the padişah from Germany in which the padişah of that country was declaring war on him. War was then declared on him, and he did not know what to do.

Mad Mehmet said, "I shall see to it. Bring me a black goat skin and a felt cap and a chest." He knew a trick which he would apply. He traveled to Germany and went to the palace of the German padişah wearing his felt cap. (Mad Mehmet knew a means of making smoke with the chest, and this made the chest go, and this is the way he traveled to Germany.) He lay in the chest and wore the felt cap and traveled to the palace of the padişah of Germany. He extinguished the smoke when he reached the palace. *Magic object*

["What sort of smoke?" Ahmet Uysal asked

"A magic smoke, to make the chest go," the narrator said.]

They had just ended a meeting there at which they had threatened to destroy the Ottoman State, eliminate it completely and saw it apart [the narrator is a carpenter]. Declaring this, they had adjourned.

During the night he let loose the black goat skin with some snorting. "I am Azrail [said the goat skin], come to take your life," he said to the padişah of Germany

The padişah said to Azrail, "Azhail, give me six months and let me finish my war with the Ottoman State. Then take me after that."

"It is very easy to take your life," said Azrail [the black goat skin] Let me see if death becomes you or not. Just lie in that chest." He had him lie in the chest, covered the lid, and carried him to a ship and took him back to the palace of the Ottoman State. There he asked, "Shall I take your life?"

"No. Do not. Give me six months, so that I can fight with the Ottoman State."

At that moment, Mad Mehmet opened the lid and said, "Open your eyes

When that padişah opened his eyes and looked about, he saw he was in the presence of the padişah of the Ottoman State. At that moment the padişah of Germany said, "From now on, let a war between Germany and the Ottoman State be haram!" And from that day on, Germany never waged a war on Turkey

["Explain the last part," said Ahmet Uysal.

"This is magical. This magic skin—each hair produces a certain kind of music and attacks the foreign padişah. The skin says, 'I am Azrail and I shall take your life.'—'All right. I shall not take your life, but get into the chest. Let us see if death is becoming to you.'"]