

Story #491

Narrator: Rıza Göçün, 43, son of Mehmet Göçün, one of Eberhard's informants in 1951

Location: Gebeli village, kaza of Osmaniye, Province of Adana

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*Canto fable*

Ilbeylioghlu<sup>1</sup> and Alıkadioghlu

Ilbeylioghlu was one of two cousins. One was called Ilbeylioghlu, and the other, Alıkadioghlu. They were beys in Marash [Province], living at Ilbeyli village during the days of swordsmanship. They lived there; that is to say, they were the beys there at that time. Alıkadioghlu and Ilbeylioghlu were cousins. There was the kind of song about Ilbeylioghlu that I am now going to sing for you.

[At this point, peasants among the audience asked him to tell the story before he sang it, and the narrator agreed to do this.]

Alıkadioghlu and Ilbeylioghlu once carried out a robbery together. They robbed a rich merchant who passed along their way and took money from him.<sup>2</sup> Alıkadioghlu knew that there was also

<sup>1</sup>This name is also spelled (as in Eberhard's study) Elbeylioghlu.

<sup>2</sup>Preying upon the caravans of merchants--the word used here is bezirgan--seems to have been considered acceptable not only for outlaws like Köroghlu but also for otherwise respectable members of the establishment, here lords (beys).

some money in a bundle. Ilbeylioghlu was a man of clean heart. He said to his cousin, "Your share of the money is less than mine. Why do you not take more?"

"No, no, it is enough for me." But in fact, Alıkadioghlu had found the money in the pack. Saying, "This is enough for me," Alıkadioghlu went to Marash and had a beautiful kiosk built over the Aynalı Göl [Mirror Lake].

At that time there was a pasha at Marash known as KÖr Pasha [Blind Pasha]. He stayed at his kiosk as his guest. Ilbeylioghlu had a friend named Muhuioghlu. One day this Muhuioghlu had Ilbeylioghlu called and said, "My pasha, let us place a sword around the waist of Ilbeylioghlu." Ilbeylioghlu came, but Alıkadioghlu grew jealous of him when he sat next to the pasha. He therefore took Ilbeylioghlu's horse and falcon, left the pasha's presence, and went to his own home.

Ilbeylioghlu waited [in ambush] for Alıkadioghlu for a week, saying, "I shall not leave this place before taking off his head." He waited a whole week at a bridge for him. When Alıkadioghlu came along with his forty horsemen, he said to him, "Alıkadioghlu, prepare for your end. Why did you humiliate me in the presence of the pasha and then leave? We are cousins, but now get ready, for I shall take off your head." Ilbeylioghlu then cut off the head of his uncle's son, along with the heads of his forty companions. Alıkadioghlu's head he had sent to the presence of the pasha.

*see my*

Ilbeylioghlu had a horseman by the name of Sefil Süleyman [Süleyman the Miserable]. Sefil Süleyman took the head and brought it before the pasha.

The Blind Pasha of Marash looked<sup>3</sup> at him and asked, "What is your name?"

"My name is Sefil Süleyman."

"Whoever cut off this head did a good job of it, but I wonder that he dared have it brought to my presence."

"As long as my bey promises to give me his concubine Karakırnak<sup>4</sup> I would bring to your presence not only one head but also a thousand more for you, O pasha."

The pasha had no response to these words, but after writing many letters to the sultan, he arranged to have Ilbeylioghlu sent to Istanbul as a criminal to the presence of the sultan. He was sent there under guard. Ilbeylioghlu reached Istanbul and spent fourteen years there in prison<sup>5</sup>

When he first arrived there, the padishah said, "Take him to the executioners." But when the guards who had brought him to

<sup>3</sup>It is apparent that Blind Pasha is only a name, that the man whom it adorns is not actually blind.

<sup>4</sup>The name may mean "Dark Coquette." Kırılmak means to behave in a coquettish manner, and kara means black.

<sup>5</sup>Fourteen years of imprisonment is common in folktales. That is the length of the captivity of Bamsi Beyrek with the Gray Horse in The Book of Dede Korkut.

Istanbul testified that Ilbeylioghlu was really a very honest and respectable man, the padishah did not have him killed but had him thrown into jail instead where he spent fourteen years. During this time the guards took care of him and fed him.

One day Sefil Süleyman was singing a song in the jail. The padishah happened to be passing by with his vezir on the way to the Friday service<sup>6</sup> and he wondered where the song was coming from. In those days there were phaeton <sup>cazca</sup>carriages.<sup>7</sup> The padishah

might hear the song. The sultan said to his vezir, "Whoever

Friday service."

"Very well, my padishah," the vezir said.

The padishah's men went to the prison and said, "O friends!

minute."

After a signal from his bey, Sefil Süleyman raised his hand, saying, "I am he."

the song that follows.

<sup>6</sup>The Friday noon service was once the religious high point of the Moslem week in Turkey, Friday then being the sabbath day. Among the Atatürk reforms was the moving of the sabbath to Sunday.

<sup>7</sup>The narrator speaks as if phaetons were a thing of the past in Turkey. In such provincial capitals as Adana and Konya phaetons and other horse-drawn carriages are still used as taxis. This is also true in oceanside resorts such as Erdek, though in such places they are retained more as colorful attractions for the tourist trade.

Ah, efendim, oh, efendim,

My illustrious bey, my illustrious bey,

I have come to you believing you to be a deputy of the

Prophet.<sup>8</sup>

M6

Either cut my throat or let me go,

Either cut my throat or let me go.

I have come to say that your chains about my neck are

too tight

Either cut my throat or let me go,

Either cut my throat or let me go.

I have come to say that your chains about my neck are

too tight.

<sup>8</sup>Peygamber is the word used in standard Turkish to refer to the Prophet. The narrator here says Pengamber.

Efendim and efendim,

Please let my be your slave, let me be your slave;

Let me not see again the dark days that I have seen.

I am a building stone.

Let me not remain on the ground,

Let me not remain on the ground

I ask that you use me, O bey, in your building.

I am a building stone.

Let me not remain on the ground,

Let me not remain on the ground.

I ask that you use me, O bey, in your building.

This is the message of Ilbeylioghlu.

The words are mine,

The words are mine.

My heart is burning, efendim, and I have no substance left.

The Gündeshli<sup>9</sup> girl whose eyes I love,

The Gündeshli girl I love--

I have come to ask that you give me my fiefdom back.

The Gündeshli girl whose eyes I love,

The Gündeshli girl I love.

I have come to ask that you give me my fiefdom back.

After listening to this song, the padishah asked, "Are you Ilbeylioghlu?"

"Yes, I am."<sup>10</sup>

"Call the guards," said the padishah. They called the two guards whom they were going to execute [because they had brought him there alive?].<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>We cannot identify the girl from Gündesh, nor, for that matter, the place called Gündesh. It is not a kaza of Turkey now.

<sup>10</sup>The narrator indicated clearly that it was Sefil Süleyman who raised his hand to indicate that he had been the singer in the jail overheard by the sultan. It is obvious here, however, that it was Ilbeylioghlu who claimed to be the singer so that he might have an audience with the sultan in order to plead his case.

<sup>11</sup>Frequently in folktales executioners take pity upon those condemned to die and only pretend that they have killed them. This would have been no surprise in such a tale as this one. The narrator seems to have forgotten that it was the sultan himself who took pity on Ilbeylioghlu, commuting his death sentence to imprisonment.

"Here are our necks, and there is your sword, my padishah," they said. "This man called Ilbeylioghlu is a very fine man, one who is clean hearted. His wedding with the Gündeshli girl had been going on for a week. We happened to be there, and we watched his wedding for three days. He made us his guests, fed us with his own hands. When we discovered that he was a bey worthy of respect, we did not execute him. Here are our necks and there is your sword. Do as you wish with us. We have manipulated many people in our lives. In fact, we sold the horses and equipment of the forty companions of this man, and with the money we have fed them until now. This is how it all happened. Here are our necks, and there is your sword. If you wish, cut them; if you do not, then do not cut them."

After the guards had spoken to the padishah in this way, he said to them, "Sons, here is the key to my treasury. Because you did not kill this man, you may load [your horses] with as much gold as you can to take back with you." The padishah had been moved by their account. He then said to Ilbeylioghlu, "You will wear the same kind of garments you wore before, ride upon the same horse you formerly rode, and parade before the palace."

Ilbeylioghlu mounted his horse, and at the head of his [companions], he passed before the palace while the people applauded. When the padishah had learned that he was a very clean man, he was very pleased. He had thought that he had had him executed,



and now when he discovered that he had not, he was very happy about it. He sent Ilbeylioghlu back to Ilbeyli village in Marash in a way befitting a bey. He returned to his village where his wife had been ruling as a bey in his absence. Ilbeylioghlu returned and joined his tribe<sup>12</sup> again.

He had spent seventeen<sup>13</sup> years in jail. While there, he had been poor and hungry. Also, in those days there were many lice which used to eat human beings. As our times are scientific, none are left now, no lice left at all. The children of this age do not even know what they are, but the people of an older time knew what they were. Men once suffered much from them. One day in jail Ilbeylioghlu had taken his shirt off and was breaking his lice on his thumbnail. When Sefil Süleyman saw him doing this, he could not help singing a song. Now let us hear what he sang to Ilbeylioghlu.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup>The narrator says he returned to his cabinet or office, the Turkish word kabine having both those meanings.

<sup>13</sup>The narrator said twice earlier that his imprisonment lasted for fourteen years.

<sup>14</sup>Although this is the way in which sung portions of a tale are usually introduced, the narrator here does not sing the stanzas that follow but simply recites them.

Why are you so gloomy, O sons of beys?

Do you say that the gloom will not leave your head?

My God, who let Joseph out of the well,

The brave man bares his back,

And we are dying of starvation.

Sirkıntıoghlu is considered your nephew.

Will not help come to you from him?

I have thrown away my bow and arrows, and I have given

up such beauty [beautiful or attractive thoughts].

İlbeylioghlu, have we no friends left at all?

Have our friends all abandoned us here?

Now Sefî Süleyman throws his arrows into the air.

Do not be sad, my agha, for this will come to an end.

As long as we survive, all this will pass away.

Will you tell water not to run where it is running?

No, water will take its own course.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>It seems odd that the narrator would revert to this prison scene after he has had Ilbeylioghlu freed from jail and returned to his own people. Apparently he had forgotten to include it at the appropriate place in the tale.