

Story 1819 1970 Tape 16) Narrator: Ayfer Uysal, child

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Karacabey kaza,
Bursa Province

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Fairies in Mills and Public Baths¹

For a very long time it has been the practice of fairies to enter mills and baths at night. In the past most people were afraid to go near such places at night. My father--may Allah have mercy on him!--was always a very brave person, and once when he was still quite young, he decided to spend a night in a mill.

He regretted this decision afterwards. It was not because he was afraid of the fairies he saw there but because they prevented him from getting any rest. The fairies carried on all sorts of very noisy activities throughout the entire night. Some were beating large drums and others were beating upon small drums.² Some of the fairies were dancing. All of this activity was part of a wedding celebration which ended with a feast. Because of

¹Deserted mills are especially attractive as meeting places for jinns, fairies, demons, and supernaturally endowed animals. People who happen upon their meetings may, if discreet, learn valuable information about how to find buried treasure or achieve unusual feats.

²This small drum is called dümbelek.

Story 1819

that continuous noise, my father did not get a single moment of sleep that night.

In the morning my father spoke to the mill owner. He said, "There was very loud noise all night long in your mill. What was going on here?"

The mill owner answered, "Well, everyone knows that a great many fairies come here. They dance and sing and hold weddings here. However, if you had started praying, they would have fled at once."³

"That may be so," said my father, "but I shall not try to sleep in a mill again!"

³In the Western world fairies are sometimes thought to be part of Satan's "Kingdom of Evil." See, for example, the traditional British ballad "Tam Lin." The statement here that praying can disperse fairy groups suggests a similar association of fairies and evil.