

Story 2089 (1967 Tapes 8, 9, and 10)

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67

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### The Story of Eşref Bey<sup>2</sup>

Hey, ağas<sup>3</sup>! This is the third day of Ramazan<sup>4</sup>, and today I will begin to narrate a new story. In the early days of history, Shah Abbas lived in the city of Isfahan<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Aşık is a term used for singing poets, the minstrels or bards of medieval time and of Turkey today. The word is also used for a person who is in love with somebody.

<sup>2</sup> In Republican Turkey there are no beys. The term refers to a Turkish aristocrat of Ottoman, Seljuk, and pre-Seljuk times, and goes back to the 8th or 9th century, and perhaps earlier. The bey was a landed nobleman, sometimes wealthy and often politically powerful. In the 10th century Book of Dede Korkut he was a tribal chief or one of his close associates. The Turkish bey was roughly equivalent to a British lord or baron.

<sup>3</sup> An ağa is a rural landowner, sometimes wealthy, often powerful. The word does not indicate an official title but describes an economic status. They are often the principal employers of farm workers, and they are often viewed by their employees as harsh, driving, and abusive. The term ağa is also used in a complimentary way, as an honorific, for a distinguished or just older person than the one using the term. Thus an older brother is called ağa bey by his younger siblings. Ağa bey may be used as a deferential term to one older or more prestigious than the speaker. A taxi driver may refer to his passenger as ağa bey; a salesman speaking to a male customer may call him ağa bey.

<sup>4</sup> Ramazan (in English, Ramadan) is a month during which faithful Moslems fast. Between sunrise and sunset nothing--not even a drop of water--passes their lips. They do, however, break the fast after sunset and eat plentifully during the night. Stores are not open at night, so most families stock supplies ahead.

<sup>5</sup> A city in Iran at the present time. The name of the city is also spelled Esfahan.

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Nazım Khan lived in the city of Kandahar<sup>6</sup>. Zuhai Khan lived in the city of Shiraz<sup>7</sup>. As is the case in contemporary ruling systems, in the old times every khan had viziers or advisors to counsel him.

Let me begin my story with information about the city of Kandahar. In the area surrounding Kandahar there was a bandit leader named Deli<sup>8</sup> Murat. Another bandit leader named Hebib Bey lived in the area surrounding the city of Ardabil<sup>9</sup>. Deli Murat and Hebib Bey could not get along, and very often fought each other. Each outlaw leader had about two hundred and fifty horsemen under his command. The rivalry between the two had cost them the loss of a number of men.

Eventually they discussed the matter between the two groups, and the leaders decided to become blood brothers and thus quit fighting against each other; the two became the leaders of five hundred horsemen. They were not ordinary bandits; they were robbing or demanding money from the merchants who were overcharging all the peasants, cheating in their businesses. Deli Murat and Hebib Bey were getting money or goods from the deceitful merchants and then distributing that money among the poor and among peasants. As a result of their deeds, they became very famous near and far.

Shah Abbas tried many times to capture them, but his attempts all failed. Since he was not able to capture the outlaws in his country, Shah Abbas decided to announce a general amnesty for all the bandits and outlaws. Everybody heard about the announcement of an amnesty.

One day, while Deli Murat, Hebib Bey, and all of their men were sitting together, they began talking about the amnesty announced by the shah. Among the outlaws there was a man named Zincir Kılıç. He was Deli Murat's uncle. Zincir Kılıç was the oldest

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<sup>6</sup> A city in Afghanistan at the present time, now usually spelled Kandahar.

<sup>7</sup> A city in Iran; the Turkish spelling is Siraz.

<sup>8</sup> The word deli as an adjective is equivalent to the English word crazy. It is often used as a nickname for epic heroes to indicate their daring, fearless, and reckless deeds.

<sup>9</sup> A city in Iran; the Turkish spelling is Erdebil.



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and most experienced man of all. While they were sitting and talking, Zincir Kılıç said, "My friends, I am going to propose something. If you would like to listen to me, I would like to tell it."

They said, "Tell it, Uncle. Have we ever ignored your suggestions and advice?"

Having made all the men ready to listen to him, Zincir Kılıç asked Deli Murat, "How old are you?"

Murat replied, "I am forty years old."

Zincir Kılıç asked Hebib Bey, "What about you, Hebib Bey?"

"I also am forty years old," replied Hebib Bey.

Zincir Kılıç said, "Is it not true that a man is supposed to begin establishing a house and taking care of a family at that house in his early adult years? Is it not also true that establishment of a family for a man in his later years is very difficult? Am I not right?"

They replied, "Yes, uncle. You are right, and your words are all true."

Having been approved, Zincir Kılıç continued, "My sons! I am a sixty-year-old man. What can I achieve after this age? If I were in danger and tried to escape or save myself from it, I might not be able to do it. I might not be able to save myself from threats at this age. Look at me, and see your futures. You will be like me in the future. Now you both are the leaders and commanders of five hundred strong horsemen, but one day they will all be aged, as well. What are they going to do in the future? Nothing. I have heard that Shah Abbas has announced amnesty for all the outlaws. If you accept my opinion, I think we should take advantage of this amnesty, and you should allow your men to become lawful subjects of the state and settle down wherever they want. You should give some money to each of your men and let them go where they wish to go. They should return to their cities, towns, or villages, and start a new life with their families or establish their own families. They should work in accordance with the law, make money lawfully, and eat their lawfully earned food<sup>10</sup>."

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<sup>10</sup> The narrator uses here helal, which is a Moslem concept opposed to another Moslem concept, haram. That which is helal is that which is permissible according to canonical law. That which is haram is forbidden. There is no obligation or restriction or penalty for doing or taking whatever is helal, but there will be a penalty on Judgment Day for doing or taking what is forbidden. To accept something from a donor is helal; to take it or steal it is haram. To do anything morally or religiously improper is haram.

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Deli Murat and Hebib Bey favored the idea presented by Zincir Kılıç, and they both said, "Yes, of course, you are right. We will follow your advice and ask our men to take advantage of this amnesty. We will also give some money to each man."

Deli Murat and Hebib Bey called their men, told the plan they had decided on, and then they gave some money to each man and let their men return to their places. Hebib Bey himself returned to his home city, Ardabil. Deli Murat and Zincir Kılıç went to the city of Kandahar, where they surrendered themselves to Nazım Khan. So, they all became lawful people of the state, and they were all forgiven by the state for all of their misdemeanors.

Shortly after their resettling in the city of Kandahar, Deli Murat convinced his uncle to get married, and upon finding a suitable bride Zincir Kılıç married a girl. Finally he reached his desire. On the other hand, Deli Murat was still a single man.

Time passed, and Deli Murat's uncle became a father; his wife gave birth to twins. Both of the babies were girls. They named one of the twins Mahi and the other Mine.

One day, Deli Murat and his uncle Zincir Kılıç were walking on the street in the marketplace of the city. At this time, in a royal carriage, Nazım Khan's female family members were returning from the public bath. The group was escorted by the soldiers of Nazım Khan, and the soldiers were making way for the group through the marketplace. The soldiers were not allowing anybody to walk up and down or to cross from one side to the other side of the street. Without realizing what was going on, Deli Murat and his uncle walked down the middle of the street. When the group approached Deli Murat and his uncle, one of the soldiers shouted, "Hey, you! This is not a mountainous place or wilderness where you can walk freely. This is a city with orders and is ruled by law. You must obey the law and the people who enforce the law. Now, you must stay off the street as does everyone else."

Deli Murat replied, "Why must I stay away from the street?"

The soldier said, "Why should you not? Do you not see the royal carriage taking the wife and the female family members of Nazım Khan, the ruler of our city, passing

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Dying or endangered people often declare helal anything they have given to or done for another person, so that No. 2 will not go to Judgment indebted to another (which is haram unless declared helal by the benefactor).

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through the street? While they are passing through the streets of the city, you must stay away."

This explanation made Deli Murat very upset and angry with the soldiers and the khan. There was a bakery on the side where Deli Murat was standing. In front of the store there was a pile of wood to be burnt. Suddenly Deli Murat picked up a piece of wood, and then ran over to the soldiers. He attacked the soldiers, who were not expecting such action from him. Shortly he beat all the escorting soldiers. Then he let the horse-drawn carriage continue on its way. While the royal carriage was passing by, Deli Murat stood there and gazed at all the women. While gazing, he saw a beauty among the women. She was a very charming and beautiful woman. May her house be demolished, my friends! She was either a houri or a fairy, a remedy for any kind of illness. She was very tall. She had curly hair over her forehead; her eyes were as big as coffee cups; her doubled chin was five hand spans wide. She had a whiteness better than white, and a redness better than red. Her degree of redness was equal to one thousand red colors. If someone had tried to flick her face with his fingers, her face could have shivered for forty days like the essence of honey<sup>11</sup>. If you had seen her, you would have chosen to die for her. Upon seeing such a beauty, Deli Murat became confused, and he could not move from the place where he was standing; he could not know what to do. When the whole group had passed, he turned to Zincir Kılıç and said, "Uncle!"

"What is it, my son?" asked Zincir Kılıç.

"Uncle, listen to me. I will tell you something."

"What do you want to say, my son?"

"Uncle, I will write a letter, and you will deliver it to Nazım Khan's court. When you give the letter, you must wait at the court. When Nazım Khan asks you about what you want, by God's will, you must ask his daughter's hand in marriage for me. You must

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<sup>11</sup> The beauty of a girl is described thus in medieval and classical Turkish literature, especially in classical poetry. These descriptions have also passed into the oral tradition, and with minor changes asiks are still using them. The beauty, of course, as described here does not mean much in translation, but when the internal rhyming and rhythm are considered, it makes memorable sense in Turkish.

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also tell him that I am leaving it up to him whether to give his daughter's hand in marriage to me or not. Whatever response you get from him, you must inform me about it."

Zincir Kılıç said, "My son, you were an outlaw until recently, and he is a khan. How do you expect him to give his daughter's hand in marriage to you? Have you lost your mind?"

Deli Murat insisted, "My uncle, by God's permission, I will have her. Your duty is to go to Nazım Khan's court and deliver my message."

Following a brief discussion between the two, Zincir Kılıç agreed to take a letter from Deli Murat and deliver it to the palace. Deli Murat wrote a letter and gave it to Zincir Kılıç, who took it unwillingly. Actually Zincir Kılıç did not want to deliver it, but because of his fear of Deli Murat, who might have hit him very hard and killed him there, he took the letter and then went to the palace.

Zincir Kılıç paid his respect to Nazım Khan. He paid his respect at every step seven times, and then waited to be allowed to talk or to be asked about the reason for his visit. Finally, Nazım Khan held his head upward and said, "Aleykümselam<sup>12</sup>, Uncle Zincir Kılıç! What brings you here? Do you have anything to tell me or to ask for something? Are you out of money, or do you need something else?" Zincir Kılıç did not say anything, but he took the letter from his pocket and handed it to Nazım Khan. Nazım Khan read the letter and began thinking. After thinking for awhile, he said, "Why do you not sit in the kitchen for awhile where the coffee is being prepared? I will call you later."

When Zincir Kılıç went out, Nazım Khan revealed the contents of the letter to his viziers: Deli Murat was asking his daughter's hand in marriage. Nazım Khan asked for the viziers' opinions and advice on this matter. There was a very smart, deceptive, and

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<sup>12</sup> Selamünaleyküm/Aleykümselam--traditional exchange of greetings between Moslems not well acquainted with each other. It means roughly May peace be unto you/ And may peace be unto you too. If Selamünaleyküm is not responded to, the speaker should be wary of the one so addressed.

Note that in this text the first person does not say anything. In some cases it may be so. Without getting a greeting from the first speaker, the second may greet him by saying Aleykümselam.

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trouble-solving vizier among the advisors. He said, " My khan, we should ask for three days to answer him. Within the three days we may find a solution for this problem." Agreeing with this idea, they called Zincir Kılıç inside and told him that the response would be given three days later. Zincir Kılıç left the palace and told Deli Murat about the response he was given.

While Nazım Khan and his viziers were discussing this matter and trying to find a solution for this problem, Nazım Khan received a letter from the shah informing him about the sudden death of Nazım Khan's representative at the shah's court and asking that he send a new representative. Having this news and a demand from Shah Abbas, Nazım Khan and his viziers began to discuss the new problem. Each vizier proposed a person to be appointed as the new representative for the city of Kandahar and for Nazım Khan. In the heat of the discussion, the smart vizier arose up and said, "Listen to me, my khan and my vizier friends! We have a bigger problem here. We have to solve the more important problem first and then deal with the new one. We can search for a man to be appointed as the new representative of our city when we solve our bigger problem."

The viziers asked, "What can be more important and bigger than choosing a man who will represent our city and our khan at the shah's court?"

The clever vizier got angry at them and said, "You are water-buffalo heads. Do you not remember the promise we made to the man who came here to ask for Nazım Khan's daughter's hand in marriage? First, we have to provide an answer to him. Think about what kind of a solution you have for this particularly important matter."

They asked, "Have you something in mind?"

The clever vizier replied, "Yes, indeed, I have something in mind. We should write a letter to the shah and inform him about Deli Murat and ask the shah to execute him. Then we should send Deli Murat with a letter to the shah, who knows about him and will take care of him. When we solve this problem, then we can choose a man to become our representative at the shah's court." They all approved of this idea. Immediately a letter was written informing the shah about a former outlaw Deli Murat and asking that when he comes there he be executed. The letter was signed, sealed, and sent with a special messenger of Nazım Khan. Let him deliver the letter.

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Meanwhile, three days passed. Deli Murat went to his uncle's house and said, "Uncle, do not wait. Go. Go as fast as you can and bring me an answer. This is the time."

Zincir Kılıç got ready and went to Nazım Khan's court, where the viziers received him very warmly and said, "O, our uncle! Is that you?"

Zincir Kılıç replied, "Yes, it is I."

The clever vizier said, "All right. Now you should go to our son-in-law and tell him to come here."

Zincir Kılıç said, "All right." He returned to his house, where Deli Murat had been waiting impatiently, and said to him, "Come closer to me, my son."

Deli Murat asked, "What happened?"

"My son, there is news, but it is very strange. They said, 'Tell our son-in-law to come here.' I do not know what it means. I feel some kind of uncertainty about these words."

"Well, you may be right. Let us go and see."

Having decided on going to the palace together, they got ready and then went to the palace. While entering the court, Deli Murat paid his respects at every one of the seven steps, and at the eighth step he kissed the vizier's caftan and hand, and then stood silently to be talked to.

The vizier said, "Aleykümselam! Aleykümselam, our son-in-law! Let us talk. First, I must say this: if your wish is an order of God, what can we say against it? You have sent a letter to us, and asked for Nazım Khan's daughter İnci Hanım's<sup>13</sup> hand in marriage. Is that right?"

Deli Murat replied, "Yes, it is true."

The vizier said, "My son, you are a former outlaw, and she is a daughter of a khan. We have read and discussed your letter and your demand, and we have made this decision . . ."

Deli Murat interrupted the vizier and asked, "What is it?"

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<sup>13</sup> Hanım is a term of respect for females. It is equivalent to the English term lady.

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The vizier continued, "The council's decision is this: our city representative at the shah's court died a few days ago.

My friends, this representative's post was the equivalent of that of a parliamentarian or a senator of our days.

We have decided to send you as the new representative for our city and our khan at the shah's court. You will serve at the shah's court for a year, and when you complete one year at the shah's court, you will return. Upon your return from the shah's court, we will prepare a wedding ceremony, and we will marry İnci Hanım to you. That is how you can reach your desire."

Deli Murat said, "All right. I accept your condition, but I also have one condition: if you prepare an agreement letter about your promises, I will be glad to perform your conditions."

The vizier thought a little bit about it, and then decided to prepare an agreement letter. He took a pen and a piece of paper and wrote the letter. Then he took it to Nazım Khan to sign and seal. He said, "You know that he will be executed as soon as he arrives. It is up to you whether to give him this letter or not. In my opinion, he is going to be killed very soon, and therefore I see no problem in giving him such a letter." Nazım Khan agreed with the vizier, and signed and sealed the letter. The vizier gave the letter to Deli Murat.

Deli Murat and his uncle left the palace, and Deli Murat prepared himself for a journey to the city of Isfahan. Having got ready, Deli Murat kissed his uncle's hand, bade farewell to his friends, and then rode toward the city of Shah Abbas.

Hey, my God! Take your creatures.

He passed through the riverbeds like a flood.

He passed over the hills like wind,

He went on his way like Hamzai the wrestler.

He rode while Hasan was at home;

Hüseyin was at his village.

He rode when the rivers were rising up.

He rode when the mud in the field was knee deep.

He rode leaving a cloud of dust behind,

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And he passed many places in such circumstances<sup>14</sup>.

Deli Murat was still riding. Let him go on his way.

About what should I inform you, my ağas? Have you not thought about the letter sent with a special messenger to the shah? What had happened to that letter? The messenger delivered the letter to the shah.

As I mentioned earlier in my story, Deli Murat had a blood brother, Hebib Bey. Let me tell you more about him. After being forgiven by the shah, Hebib Bey went to the city of Ardabil, where he was selected as the representative for his city at the shah's court. Since Hebib Bey was a very clever and experienced man, soon he was recognized by the shah. Shah Abbas appointed him as his best clerk in the court, and Hebib Bey became responsible for all letters sent to the shah. He was the one who opened and read all the letters first, and then gave them to the shah and let the shah's council know about them.

One day, while Hebib Bey was at the shah's court, Nazım Khan's letter was delivered with some other letters. During the meeting, Hebib Bey was first reading each letter and then showing the letters to the shah one by one. When he considered it necessary, he was also telling the contents of the letter to the viziers and the representatives at the court. Eventually, he began reading the letter of Nazım Khan, which made him greatly excited. Although he did not want to show the letter to the shah, the shah noticed his excitement and asked, "Hebib Bey! Why have you become so excited? What is that letter about? Is that an important letter?" Hebib Bey could not hide the letter, and handed it to the shah. The shah read the letter, which made him very angry, and then he ordered, "Prepare an execution place at an intersection of two main roads." While the shah's order was being performed, Shah Abbas said to Hebib Bey, "Hebib Bey, inform me when that man arrives here. We must execute him as soon as he comes here. I was informed that Deli Murat was the leader of all the outlaws." Hebib Bey just listened; he could not say anything about the situation.

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<sup>14</sup> The lines here are not sung to a saz or to a special tune, but they are in Turkish rhyme and they are told like the lines in a tongue twister (tekerleme).



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Meanwhile, Deli Murat was approaching the city of Isfahan. The city had seven gates which connected Isfahan to the rest of the country. Hebib Bey decided to see his friend before he appeared at the shah's court. He put two men at each gate, and told the men that he was going to pay each of them a gold coin for each hour of their work. He explained what they had to do at the gates: "My sons, you are going to look for a man named Deli Murat who is coming from Kandahar. He dresses like this and that. He is coming as the new representative for Kandahar. His physical appearance is like this and that. When you meet him, you must tell him that your ağa has sent his greetings to him, and he would like to invite you to his home for the night to have a cup of coffee, and he wants to talk with you. If he asks about your ağa, you must not tell him my name. Instead of giving my name, you just tell him that you are paid only for finding him and relating my message to him, and you are not allowed to say anything more. You must tell him that your duty is to perform the orders given by your ağa." Having finished his orders, Hebib Bey set the men at the gates, and returned to his own place.

The next day, while Hebib Bey's paid men were waiting at the gates and searching for Deli Murat, late in the evening and mounted on his good breed of Arabian steed, Deli Murat arrived at one of the gates of the city. While he was passing through the gate, two men approached him and asked, "Hey, ağa! Would you stop for a moment?"

Deli Murat pulled his horse's reins, and said, "What is it, my sons? Do you have a question to ask me?"

"Yes, our ağa. We would like to ask you a few questions."

"What are your questions? Ask them."

"What is your name?"

"Murat."

"It is Deli Murat, is it not?"

"Yes, it is Deli Murat."

"Are you the new representative for the city of Kandahar?"

"Yes, I am."

"You are the man we have been looking for. Our ağa has sent his greetings to you, and he would like to have you as his guest at his home for a cup of coffee."

"Who is your ağa, my sons?"

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"We swear to God, we do not know his name."

"What do you mean you do not know his name?"

"Well, he did not tell us his name. He told us only this much. We have only this much information and the orders from him. We are mere messengers to inform you about his message."

"Let it be so, my sons. Let us go, then."

As was said in a proverb, "Go with your heart to the place where you are invited, and try not to be seen at a place where you are not wanted."

Deli Murat repeated, "All right, my sons. Let us go to your agā's place."

The men led Deli Murat to Hebib Bey's house. When they arrived at Hebib Bey's house, Hebib Bey's servants rushed out and took Deli Murat's horse to the stable and then led Deli Murat to Hebib Bey's court. Deli Murat was eagerly waiting to meet his host, and when he saw his blood brother, Hebib Bey, he became excited and rushed to hug him. They hugged each other, and then sat together and began asking questions about each other. Hebib Bey, of course, did not want to talk about the letter immediately, but as their conversation touched on different subjects he looked for an opportunity to tell his blood brother about the reason for inviting Deli Murat to his house in such a hurry. He wanted to tell it without hurting Deli Murat's feelings, but he could not tell it to him that night.

The next morning, while Hebib Bey was getting ready to go to the shah's court, Deli Murat, too, began preparing himself to go with him to the palace. He had no idea what was going on behind the walls. He had no fear of anything, as was indicated by his nickname, Deli (Crazy). Although he was a fearless, brave man, he was short in intelligence. He was not as clever as Hebib Bey. While they were getting ready, Hebib Bey said, "My brother, I have the highest-ranked position at the shah's court. There are three levels of ranking at the court. The representatives ranked as the second and third group have actually never performed at the court. Most of them have not even seen the shah. I have such a very special position at the court that I sit at the right side of the shah. I will seek an opportunity to tell the shah about you and your qualifications, and I will try to preserve the position at the shah's left side for you. Now, since you have come from a very distant place, you must be tired. I suggest that you go to a public bath

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today and take a good bath and get a good rest today. God willing, we can go to the shah's court tomorrow where I shall introduce you to the shah, the viziers, and the representatives there, and before tomorrow I may also get one of the highest-ranked places for you."

Deli Murat was usually not an easy man to accept the advice of others, but this time, for some reason, he accepted Hebib Bey's suggestion. He said, "All right. I will do what you said."

Hebib Bey went out and walked through the center of the city. While walking toward the palace, he noticed many peasants who were walking up and down on the streets. Even though he tried to gather some information about the reason for having an unusual number of peasants in the city, he failed to find out. As he approached the palace, he saw more and more peasants waiting in front of the palace garden. Once again, Hebib Bey asked a few men about the crowd, but he was not provided a good explanation. When he walked into the shah's court, he saw that the shah had crossed his arms on his breast, his head bowed to one side, thinking like an old wolf.

Hebib Bey said, "Selamünaleyküm, my shah!" But the shah did not reply to his greeting, as if he were not there. Shah Abbas seemed to be lost in deep thought, and he also had a few teardrops on his face. Upon finding the shah in such a condition, Hebib Bey felt saddened, and he could not wait any more to be greeted by the shah. Instead of waiting to be noticed by the shah, he went near him and asked, "My shah, what is wrong? Why are you in such a condition?"

The shah replied, "Hey, my son, Hebib! Do not ask."

"What is it, my shah?"

"Well, I do not know why I have been given such trouble by those outlaws. Although I declared a general amnesty for them, it looks as if it did not work with some of them. It did not end my subjects' problems with them."

"What has happened, my shah?"

"Do you know the outlaw leader named Abdürrezak, who has five hundred horsemen under his command in the Arak<sup>15</sup> land of my country?"

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<sup>15</sup> Arak is a city in the western part of Iran. It is located in the southwest of Tehran.

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"Yes, I do know him. What has he done?"

"He has done worse and worse. What else could be worse than his deeds? He and his men have plundered about fifteen villages. Did you not see the peasants crying outside? I do not know how to handle this problem. I must either die or finish this problem."

Hebib Bey said, "My shah, do not worry. Do not worry so much about it. God is great. God may provide us a way solve this problem."

The shah said, "How could I not be worried, my son? I see no solution to this problem."

Hebib Bey said, "You sit and wait here, my shah. I first will find a place for those peasants to stay temporarily. I will also feed them. Then we can discuss how to handle this problem." Having got permission from the shah, Hebib Bey went out and placed all of the peasants at the caravansaries and inns in the city, and then he provided enough food to feed them. He spent the rest of his day taking care of the homeless and hungry flock of peasants.

In the evening, Hebib Bey returned to his house very tired and thinking about the problems he had. He knew that the shah hated the outlaws who upset the stability of the country. The shah was very angry with the outlaws, and when someone mentioned or talked about an outlaw, Shah Abbas became very much upset. Because of that, Hebib Bey could not tell the shah anything about Deli Murat. This situation was so disturbing that since the letter delivered about Deli Murat he had been thinking of some way to keep his blood brother alive. When he returned to his home in the evening, his mind was busy with those problems.

Shortly after that, Deli Murat came in and began talking about his first day in the city of Shah Abbas. Since Hebib Bey had been struggling with the thoughts in his mind, he seemed not to hear what Deli Murat was saying. Having noticed Hebib Bey's ignoring him, Deli Murat became furious. With an angry face he suddenly stood up and told the servants to bring his belongings and to prepare his horse to leave. Then he turned to Hebib Bey and said, "I am leaving. Good-bye."

Astonished by Deli Murat's sudden act, Hebib Bey asked, "Why are you going?"

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Deli Murat said, "What do you mean, 'why'? I have been your guest here for only one day, and you have become so very concerned with my existence here that you have been in deep thought all the time. What makes you so worried? Have you become the most important man in this country that you have so completely ignored me? Why did you not respond to my words while I was talking to you?"

Hebib Bey said, "I do not know what I am doing. I am very sorry if I have hurt your feelings, and I did not mean to ignore you."

Deli Murat said, "Did you not ignore me?"

Hebib Bey said, "I am very sorry. Please sit down and let us talk. Instead of leaving my house, why do you not ask me what I have been so much concerned about?"

Deli Murat calmed down, and asked, "What has happened? What are you concerned with, my brother? Are you the one who is responsible for everything that takes place in this country?"

Hebib Bey replied, "It is not like what you think."

"What is it, then?"

"First, you sit down, and then I will explain."

"All right. Here I sit. Tell me now."

"Do you remember the outlaw Abdürrezak in the Arak land?"

"Yes."

"You do remember him."

"I, of course, remember him. Whenever we needed some extra money or goods, we were threatening him, and getting from him each time one hundred gold coins as a tribute."

"Yes, that is he."

"So, what is the matter with him?"

"The matter is this: he and his men have attacked and plundered several villages in the last few days. All the peasants living in those villages lost almost everything and rushed to the shah's palace demanding better protection and return of their goods. When I went to the shah's court today, the shah was very sad and angry about the situation. As the shah's best advisor, I have been thinking about this problem; I have been seeking a solution to it."

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Deli Murat said, "Is that what you have been concerned with? That is very easy to solve. What we need to do is to mount our horses, go to Abdürrezak's place, capture him, and bring him here either alive or dead. Then it is up to you or the shah either to behead him or to hang him. Once he is eliminated, the peasants can feel safe, and they can freely return to their villages. I know he is an infidel. Outlaws like us took advantage of the amnesty and thus have become lawful people, but he has not surrendered himself, and he has continued his sinful deeds. Why should he be given freedom of exercising his banditry? He must be captured."

Hebib Bey asked, "Are you serious about capturing him?"

Deli Murat replied, "Yes, I am. We should lose no time. Let us go now."

Hebib Bey agreed on going immediately after Abdürrezak. They prepared themselves, mounted their good steeds, and then they set off. The two rode all night until dawn. When they reached the Arak land of the shah's country, they saw a line of men and animals. As they approached the people, they recognized them as Abdürrezak's men returning from a village they had just plundered; the animals were the stolen livestock of the villagers. Hebib Bey and Deli Murat rode closer and closer and saw a place where a few tents had been set up. They recognized those tents as the tents of Abdürrezak and his men.

While they were approaching the tents, Abdürrezak was walking around the tents and talking to his men. Suddenly he noticed two horsemen approaching. He stood and tried to recognize the horsemen; he finally recognized them. As soon as he had recognized Deli Murat and Hebib Bey, he began screaming and shouting, "Eyvah, eyvah<sup>16</sup>, my friends! God save me!"

His men asked, "What has happened?"

Abdürrezak said, "Do you not know what we have done? Do you not see the men approaching here? Do you know who they are?"

A few of his men said, "It does not matter whoever they might be."

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<sup>16</sup> Eyvah is an indication of grief and sorrow.

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Abdürrezak shouted at those men, "You may think it does not matter, but when they come here we will see what matters to you. They are not the kind of men you know; they are not easy folk. They are Deli Murat and Hebib Bey. They must have been sent by Shah Abbas. I have heard that they surrendered themselves and were forgiven by the shah, and they have been working for the shah."

Abdürrezak's words made his men fearful of Deli Murat and Hebib Bey, and thus they asked, "So, what are we going to do?"

Abdürrezak said, "I do not know, my friends. I do not know. You may just pray to God, and you may ask one another to forgive all the rights you might have."

The men said, "Let us wait and see."

Meanwhile, Deli Murat and Hebib Bey reached Abdürrezak's tent. They saw Abdürrezak and his men cowering in fear. Deli Murat and Hebib Bey held their swords up and said, "Abdürrezak, surrender yourself!"

Abdürrezak said, "I am surrendering myself, my friends. Do not harm me. It is up to you whether to kill, or forgive, or take me to the shah's court."

Deli Murat and Hebib Bey ordered him, "Get up and gather all of your men. Tell them that they must return all the goods, animals, and other things they have taken from the villagers. They must place every single item exactly where they found it. When they are done with returning all the plundered items, then they must surrender themselves to law enforcement in their towns and thus become lawful people of the country. Tell them that if they do not perform our orders, we will kill them all wherever they might be." Abdürrezak told his men what he had been ordered to do.

Taking Abdürrezak with them, Deli Murat and Hebib Bey returned to Isfahan. After having their horses taken to the stable, and putting Abdürrezak in a room, they went to Hebib Bey's room at the palace.

Hebib Bey said, "My brother, I am going to tell you something. Listen to me carefully."

Deli Murat impatiently said, "Do not wait. Tell it. I am listening."

"Well, do not become crazy now. This is not the right time and place to act crazy. Be patient and listen to me."

"All right, all right. I am listening."

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"Now, I will go to the shah's court, and you will wait in front of the door with Abdürrezak. When I say 'Bring Abdürrezak!', by holding your head upward and showing your usual brave manner and at the same time showing all possible respect to the shah, you will enter the court with Abdürrezak. When the shah asks you what you wish, you must ask that your life be spared."

Deli Murat was confused and asked, "Why must I say that? My life is not in danger."

Hebib Bey said, "You cannot understand it. You do not know what has been taking place at the palace. You just follow my advice. You just say what I teach you, and save yourself."

Deli Murat was astonished and asked, "What am I, a dead man?"

Hebib Bey said, "Do not say anything against my words, and do not ask any more questions. Just do what I said."

Deli Murat, of course, could not understand his real danger, and therefore he became very upset. He was angry at his blood brother, who was not giving him a reasonable explanation. His anger could have caused him to become crazy and kill his blood brother right there. He wanted to have more information, and asked again, "Why are you talking like this? I am alive, and my life is not in danger. I really want to know what makes you talk like that. But even though you do not provide any more information to me, it is all right with me; I will follow your instructions."

Hebib Bey went to the shah's court. For two days the shah had been trying to find a solution for the problem of the outlaw Abdürrezak. Meanwhile he had not seen Hebib Bey at his court. Upon having Hebib Bey appear suddenly at his court, the shah said, "Hey, you betrayer. I thought that you had betrayed me, and escaped from my palace. Are you a betrayer?"

Hebib Bey said, "Why should I be, my shah? What has happened?"

Shah Abbas said, "Do not act as if you do not know what has happened. What will happen to those peasants, who are all afraid of the outlaws? They do not want to return to their villages as long as those bandits are out there. How can we handle this problem with those outlaws?"



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Hebib Bey teased the shah, "What outlaws, my shah? Who are they, my shah? You are the shah just order, and he will be in your court."

The shah, "Who will be here?"

Hebib Bey said, "Abdürrezak will be here, my shah."

The shah laughed, despite his anger. "Are you dreaming, or what? Come over here and sit down."

Hebib Bey said, "My shah, I am not dreaming. You are the shah, and I swear to God, when you order, he will be here. Just give your order."

The shah said, "How will he be here? Let us suppose that I gave such an order. Who will bring him, and how will he be brought here? Does he have wings to fly through the window, or will he come through the chimney? How will he come in?"

Hebib Bey said, "My shah, you just give your order. When you order, he must be here."

The shah finally agreed to give an order. "All right. Let Abdürrezak come in."

With the shah's permission, Hebib Bey shouted, "Hey, bring Abdürrezak in! Bring the outlaw in!"

With Deli Murat as his guardian, Abdürrezak appeared at the court. Like Caliph Ali's sword<sup>17</sup>, Deli Murat was holding his double pointed sword in his hand. Keeping his eyes on Abdürrezak and his head held upward, Deli Murat walked in. When Shah Abbas saw them, he did not know what to say. He just turned to Hebib Bey and stared at him as if he were asking for some kind of an explanation. Since Hebib Bey did not give him a clue about what was going on, the shah asked, "Hebib Bey, is this a dream, or what? What is going on here?"

Hebib Bey said, "My shah, this is what you must expect from your loyal warriors. This man had come here, and upon seeing the crying peasants and being informed that Abdürrezak had plundered their villages, instead of visiting you, he decided to go after Abdürrezak. He defeated his band and captured him. He made Abdürrezak's men return all the goods they had stolen from the peasants. While coming back to your court, he decided to bring Abdürrezak to your judgment. This is a good thing, is it not? As stated

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<sup>17</sup> Caliph Ali had a double-pointed sword called Zülfikar.

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in a proverb, 'The one who is available out there may not be available at a bey's court.' My shah, this man has done it all for your honor."

The shah turned to Deli Murat and asked, "Tell me your wish, which will be granted."

Deli Murat said, "I wish only your good health<sup>18</sup>; my shah."

The shah said, "My good health is for me, and you cannot benefit from it. You must tell your wish, and I will grant it."

Deli Murat said, "Hebib Bey may explain it better than I can."

The shah asked Hebib Bey, "What does he mean, Hebib Bey? How do you know about his wish? Is there something behind all this that I must know?"

Hebib Bey said, "Yes, my shah. Yes, there is something you must know. If you ask me about his wish, I would tell you to spare his life. It should be his wish to be forgiven from the death penalty order you had given about him."

The shah asked, "What order?"

Hebib Bey explained, "My shah, this is the man about whom you had received a letter from Kandahar. He is Deli Murat, who had come here, and upon seeing the peasants situation he had gone after Abdürrezak. He had captured him and tied him up, and then he brought him here to your court. Now, you must make a decision about Deli Murat as to whether to forgive him or to have him killed."

The shah said, "Would it be just to kill such a man?"

Hebib Bey said, "It is not my duty to decide, my shah. It is you who can order him to be killed or can spare his life."

Meanwhile, Deli Murat was listening to the conversation between the shah and Hebib Bey, and upon hearing his life's being bargained, he became confused, and asked, "My shah, would you tell me what that letter and death penalty order is about? I came here to represent my khan and the city of Kandahar."

The shah said, "All right, my son. This is the letter." While saying those words, the shah gave the letter to Deli Murat.

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<sup>18</sup> For courtesy, when a person is asked about his/her wish at a ruler's court, the answer for the first time is always the same that is to wish good health for the ruler.

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Following his reading of the letter, Deli Murat said, "All right. But here is another letter given to me. This letter was written by the grand vizier of Kandahar and it was signed by Nazım Khan as well." Deli Murat handed his letter to the shah. Shah Abbas read the letter, and understood the deceit of the grand vizier of Nazım Khan.

Having solved the puzzle, the shah wrote this message on the back of the letter Deli Murat brought: On this date Murat Bey is acknowledged as the representative for the city of Kandahar at my court. When he completes his service at my court, you must perform the promises you had made as clearly indicated and signed in this letter by you. You must marry İnci Hanım to Murat Bey as promised. If you do not keep your promises, and try to act against the agreement between you and Murat Bey, and if you act against my orders as indicated on the back of your letter, I will come there and destroy your palace in the city of Kandahar." Shah Abbas signed and sealed the letter. Then the letter was sent to Nazım Khan with a special messenger for Shah Abbas.

Following taking care of the letter, the shah said to Deli Murat, "My son, I accept you as the new representative for Kandahar. Hebib Bey has been sitting at my right, and from now on you will be seated at my left." With this appointment Deli Murat and Hebib Bey were satisfied, and so was the shah, whose ruling of his country was becoming very easy with the advice of Hebib Bey and Deli Murat.

About what should I inform you now? I think we have reached the most complicated part of our story, my dear friends.

Shah Abbas had a sister named Shah-i Duhter. She had never been married. She was going to succeed Shah Abbas. She was called Shah-i Duhter since she was going to be the next ruler of their country. She and Hebib Bey had a secret affair. Shah Abbas, Hebib Bey, and Deli Murat spending their time together at the palace. The three men were together at the shah's court most of the time.

One day, while they were together at the court, Deli Murat remembered his beloved, and thought to himself, "My God, before I die, will I ever have a tryst with my beloved?" While he was thinking about his beloved, Shah Abbas noticed that Deli Murat had gone into deep thought. The shah said to Hebib Bey, "Hebib Bey! Murat Bey seems to be worried about something. Would you tell me what makes him so worried?"

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Hebib Bey said, "My shah, how would anyone know what makes him worried? He goes into deep thought from time to time. That is why he is called crazy Murat."

Then Hebib Bey turned to Deli Murat and asked, "Hey, my crazy brother! What have you been thinking about?"

Deli Murat said, "If my shah allows me, I would like express my worries by my saz and song. You know I play the saz from time to time."

The shah said, "All right, you have my permission to play your saz and sing. Just tell your problem whatever way you like."

Deli Murat did not have a saz with him at the shah's court; therefore, he held his sword as if he had a saz and began singing. Let us hear what he sang. Let us hear to what Shah Abbas and Hebib Bey listened. May my ağas not worry about anything. May God not let the good people need the bad people. Take it, my decorated saz, and play and tell us what you are thinking:

Amaan, amaan<sup>19</sup>!

I do not have a messenger to be sent to my beloved;

I should ask about the situation of my beloved.

My beloved has combed her hair and put it to one side;

I am afraid her hair will hurt my beloved.

He sang once more. The shah and Hebib Bey were listening:

[Tape 8, side A ends here and the story of Eşref Bey continues on tape 8, side B.]

[It should be noted, however, that for some reason some episodes of the story are missing. The missing part includes Deli Murat's return to the city of Kandahar, his marriage to Nazım Khan's daughter, and his becoming the khan of Kandahar. The story continues with the adventures of Deli Murat's son, Eşref Bey. Eşref Bey finished his education and he is just becoming an adult.

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<sup>19</sup> Amaan is an expression of despair.

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The second part of the story continues from where we are informed about the falling in love of Eşref Bey, the son of Deli Murat, who became the ruler of Kandahar. Eşref Bey had a dream in which he had fallen in love with a beauty. While he was unconscious, lying in his bed, his teacher and his father went to his bed and tried to wake him up by playing the saz and singing. The narration continues from there.]

Hoca<sup>20</sup> Abdullah fixed his saz and went to Eşref's bed. While Eşref Bey was lying unconscious in his bed, Hoca Abdullah began playing his saz and singing. Let us hear what he sang. He used to play the saz and sing very well, but for some reason he had not played for a long time. Murat Khan was playing and singing, as well. First, it was Abdullah Hoca's turn to play and sing. The tune he played is called Mereke Divani<sup>21</sup>:

Amaan, amaan!

When a brave man has fallen in love, he becomes acquainted with the world.  
One who has not fallen in love is a beggar, even though that person is a shah.  
If a man does not listen to the saz and song, he becomes short of knowledge.  
If repentance is acceptable for a wrongdoing, it should not be a sin.

When Abdullah Hoca had finished his first stanza, Murat Khan asked, "What does it mean that a sin is not a sin if repentance is acceptable for it? Would you explain it?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "I took Eşref to the school, where I could not play my saz because Eşref might get interested in playing the saz instead of studying his other courses. Since I have become his teacher, I promised myself not to play the saz anymore. I, however, have to break my promise and play the saz because Eşref is sick and lying down unconscious; the only thing that will wake him up is the sound of the

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<sup>20</sup> A hoca is the preacher and religious leader of a community. In pre-Republican times he was also a teacher, for then education was the responsibility of the clergy. Since the Kemalist Reforms of the 1920's, "church" and state have been separated, and teachers are now required to have secular rather than religious training.

<sup>21</sup> This tune has sixteen-syllable-long lines. The musical aspect of this tune is also different from the other aşık singing style.

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saz. My breaking a promise should not be a sin in this case. May God forgive me for breaking my promise because of Eşref. I would not play the saz if it were not for the sake of Eşref."

Murat Khan said, "All right, Abdullah Hoca. You explained very well, but your explanation has nothing to do with Eşref's problem. Now, give the saz to me; let me play and sing, and you listen to what I sing. You listen and learn how I explain Eşref's problem in my song. In my opinion you could not understand his problem, but I will teach you what that is."

Let us listen to what Murat Khan sang:

Amaan, amaan!

When a brave man has fallen in love, he becomes one who talks a lot.  
Though he drinks the passion of love, his future becomes a troubled one.  
Every day heaven mixes the good and bad together.  
When he wakes up in the morning he finds himself one who is crying.  
Every day heaven mixes the good and bad together.  
When he wakes up in the morning he finds himself one who is crying.

Abdullah Hoca said, "Murat Khan, I know what you are talking about, but his problems are not what you think. Now it is my turn. You listen to what I sing."

Let us hear what Abdullah Hoca sang:

Amaan, amaan!

Let him rule the world for a day the way he likes.  
He should drink wine and sing with the voice of Davud<sup>22</sup>.  
Fate occurs even though you hide yourself behind fences.  
People cannot help people; may your helper be God.  
Fate occurs even though you hide yourself behind fences.

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<sup>22</sup> Davud (the biblical David) was a kingly prophet. Besides many other aspects of his deeds, he was well known for his voice, for his singing and playing.

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People cannot help people; may your helper be God.

Murat Khan said, " My hoca, give that saz to me. You do not know anything about my son's problem. Maybe you know what his problem is, but you have been pretending as if you do not know. For me, he will suffer. Now give the saz to me, and let me sing."

Murat Khan sang:

Amaan, amaan!

Do not think falling in love is easy; it burns a soul and body more than fire.

Nobody can bear it, because it makes you burn day and night.

It runs in the twelve rivers of the body, and it is as hot as forty-eight degrees.

When you feel, it destroys the three hundred and sixty-six walls in your body<sup>23</sup>.

It runs in the twelve rivers of the body, and it is as hot as forty-eight degrees.

When you feel, it destroys the three hundred and sixty-six walls in your body.

Abdullah Hoca said, "No, no, Murat Khan. You did not explain his problem at all. Let me explain it."

Let us hear how Abdullah Hoca tried to explain Eşref's problem:

Amaan, amaan!

Sometimes I go to the medrese<sup>24</sup> where I study for God.

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<sup>23</sup> The lines that mention "twelve rivers" and "three hundred and sixty-six walls" of the body are based completely upon the folk tradition in Turkey, according to which the human body has twelve main blood vessels and three hundred and sixty-six main cells. The lines above are referring to those twelve blood vessels and three hundred and sixty-six cells.

<sup>24</sup> Medrese was the general name of the theological schools where the Ottoman elites were educated. With the series of reformations in Republican Turkey, medreses were closed, and a western-oriented educational system was established.

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Sometimes I drink and eat, which satisfies my fleshly needs.  
 My soul cries from time to time in order to enter paradise.  
 Our forefather is the prophet Adam, and my name is Abdullah.  
 My soul cries from time to time in order to enter paradise.  
 Our forefather is the prophet Adam, and my name is Abdullah.

Murat Khan said, "Abdullah Hoca, you should listen carefully to my last stanza.  
 Listen to what I will say in my last words."

Let us hear what he said in his last stanza:

Amaan, amaan!

My Eşref has got a problem, but he cannot find a solution to it;  
 He cannot escape from the pain caused by love.  
 He goes into the sea of love, and sails with a boat of grief.  
 Although my name is Murat<sup>25</sup>, I cannot help him to reach his desire.  
 He goes into the sea of love, and sails with a boat of grief.  
 Although my name is Murat, I cannot help him to reach his desire.

When their exchange of song was over, Eşref Bey woke up and saw his teacher and his father playing the saz and singing around his bed. Hearing them playing the saz, Eşref said, "My teacher, my father!"

They replied, "What is it, our son?"

Eşref Bey said, "Please keep the saz tuned, and do not change it, and give it to me. Let me play and sing, and you listen to my song."

They said, "Our son, you do not know how to play the saz and sing a song."

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<sup>25</sup> Murat means desire, wish, goal, or aim.



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Eşref Bey replied, "That is what you think. My pir<sup>26</sup> has taught me the best way of playing the saz and singing a song. You could not even guess how much I know about playing the saz and singing a song."

Abdullah Hoca argued, "I cannot give it to you, my son. I cannot do it."

Eşref Bey asked, "Why, my hoca?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "I cannot give it to you because I am afraid that you will not tell the truth in your song."

Eşref Bey asked, "What do you mean, my hoca? Why should I not tell the truth?"

Abdullah Hoca replied, "My son, if you promise to tell us truly what you saw in your dream, I will give the saz to you. Otherwise, even if you kill me, I cannot give it to you."

Eşref Bey said, "Look at me, my hoca! I will sing it to you the way I learned it from my pir. I will not sing more or less. If I sing it more or less, it should be unlawful. I will sing what I have learned. This is my scale, there is the saz, and here comes my song. Let me sing, and you listen. If I sing anything untrue, you may take the saz away from my hands, and you may even beat me. Is that all right with you?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "All right, my son. But remember, you will sing to us about what you saw in your dream."

Eşref Bey said, "All right, my hoca."

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<sup>26</sup> Pir is the term indicating the founder of a sect. In the Sufi system he is the murşid, the "spiritual director." He claims to be in the direct line of the interpreters of the esoteric teaching of the Prophet and hence holds his authority to guide the aspirant (murid) on the path. But he must himself be worthy of imitation. "He should have a perfect knowledge, both theoretical and practical, of the three stages of the mystical life and be free of fleshly attributes." When a pir has proved--either by his own direct knowledge or by the spiritual power (vilayat) inherent in him--the fitness of a murid to associate with other Sufis, he lays his hand on the aspirant's head and invests him with the hırka. The murid need not necessarily receive his investiture from that pir who gave him instruction, who is called the pir-i suhbat. For further reading see R. A. Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism (Cambridge, 1921) and J. P. Brown, The Darwishes (Oxford, 1927).

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Let us hear what Eşref Bey sang. The tune Eşref Bey sang is called "The Tune of Beys"<sup>27</sup>. This tune has never been sung in any other story. Let us hear the song:

While the cup was filled with love and my eyelids were closed,  
 My beloved, my beloved, my beloved, I am burnt.  
 I woke up, and began crying, and suffering at night.  
 I was burning, and the cup was filled with passion of love.  
 My beloved, my beloved, my beloved, I am burnt.  
 My pir offered a cup of liquid, and I drank it at night.

Abdullah Hoca said, "You are singing great, my son. But tell us who gave the cup and how. Tell us more about those. I would like to learn more about the people in your dream."

Eşref Bey continued playing his saz and singing. His soul was burning like hell, as if his soul had caught fire from the fire of Süleyman<sup>28</sup>. The heat caused by the love he felt was burning his soul and his body. Within such a condition, Eşref sang the second stanza. Let us hear what he sang:

I saw my beloved, and we sat down knee by knee.  
 My beloved, my beloved, my beloved, I am burnt.  
 While sitting there I combed her hair with a golden comb.  
 I saw my beloved in my dream that night.  
 Hear what my Zöhre had done to me that night.  
 I saw my beloved in my dream that night.

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<sup>27</sup> The narrator provides the name of the tune he uses for this particular song, but it is not known whether this tune is particular to this song or not. For more information on the tunes used by Turkish minstrels see Yıldıray Erdener, The Song Contests of Turkish Minstrels: Improvised Poetry Sung to Traditional Music (Garland, 1995).

<sup>28</sup> The narrator makes an attribution to the prophet Suleiman, who is known for a number of prophecies.

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Hear what my Zöhre had done to me that night.

Abdullah Hoca asked, "What do you mean by the word 'Zöhre,' my son? Tell us more about it. Think carefully before you sing. I knew you would not tell us everything very clearly, and that is why I did not want to give the saz to you."

Upon the request of Abdullah Hoca, Eşref Bey sang again:

When I woke up from the dream, I was crying at night.  
 My beloved, my beloved, my beloved, I am burnt.  
 Nobody has issued an amnesty verdict for me yet.  
 My God, provide a solution to Eşref's problem.  
 The weight of grief has loaded me; that is my profit.  
 My God, provide a solution to Eşref's problem.  
 The weight of grief has loaded me; that is my profit.

Abdullah Hoca said, "My son, Eşref! I must tell you that I did not understand anything from your song. You did not tell us what you saw, whom you met, and what you went through in your dream. You must tell about those, and make it clear."

Eşref Bey said, "Is that so, my Hoca? I think you perfectly understood what I said, but it seems you did not. If you want me to sing more, I will do it. I will tell you once again."

Eşref Bey sang again:

The pirs visited me while I was sleeping.  
 The Threes came and greeted me.  
 They offered three cups filled from the lake of power.  
 They taught me all the languages and the words.  
 They offered three cups filled from the lake of power.  
 They taught me all the languages and the words.

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Abdullah Hoca said, "Look at Murat Khan! As I told you, he has fallen in love with Mahi and Mine. His mind has stuck with Mahi and Mine. He has fallen in love with his uncle's daughters. Have I not told you?"

My friends, Abdullah Hoca was deliberately trying to twist Eşref Bey's words. He, indeed, understood that Eşref Bey had fallen in love with a girl named Zöhre. Abdullah Hoca wanted to know where Zöhre lived, and then he wanted to protect Eşref Bey from having a dangerous journey in search of his beloved. In order to achieve that, Abdullah Hoca tried to engage Eşref Bey to one of his uncle's daughters and forget about Zöhre, the girl with whom Eşref Bey had fallen in love in a dream. The love, however, was inspired in him by God, and it was impossible to make Eşref Bey forget about the girl whom he had met in his dream.

Upon hearing Abdullah Hoca's words, Eşref Bey said, "No, no, my Hoca. What you said is not true. Let me sing more, and you will know it."

Eşref Bey sang:

My words are not lies; they are all true.  
 I am not suffering because of Mine.  
 My beloved one's name is not Mahi.  
 My Fate was written in this way.  
 My beloved one's name is not Mahi.  
 My Fate was written in this way.

Abdullah Hoca said, "My son, you are not telling what I asked for. You should tell us what you saw. You said Zöhre and something else that I did not understand. I know that there is a star named Zöhre<sup>29</sup> in the sky, and I do not know anything else about Zöhre. Tell us more about it."

Eşref Bey said, "My hoca, it seems to me that you do not want to understand what I mean."

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<sup>29</sup> Zöhre or Zühre is the Turkish name for Venus.

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Let us hear what Eşref Bey sang as an answer to his hoca:

I saw the city of Shiraz in my dream.  
 Shiraz was sweeter than the taste of sugar.  
 The beauties of Shiraz were better than all others;  
 They guided me, and showed to me all the world.  
 The beauties of Shiraz were better than all others;  
 They guided me, and showed to me all the world.

When Eşref Bey's song was over, Abdullah Hoca called Murat Khan away, and said, "Come with me, Murat Khan. Your son has fallen in love with a girl named Zöhre in Shiraz."

Murat Khan said, "So, what should we do?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "You wait here, and see how I will fix this problem." Then, Abdullah Hoca turned to Eşref Bey, and said, "My son, Eşref!"

Eşref Bey said, "Yes, my hoca!"

Abdullah Hoca said, "My son, listen to me. You mentioned the name of a girl, Zöhre, and the name of a city, Shiraz. I, however, must tell you that there is no city in this world named Shiraz. For Zöhre, it is the name of a star in the sky. What I mean is that you have fallen in love with a star. You must forget about falling in love with such a thing. I must also tell you that your uncle has two beautiful girls. Whichever of those two girls you may choose, we can engage to you." Eşref Bey did not comment on Abdullah Hoca's explanations and the offer he had made, but it was obvious from his face that he did not like the idea.

With the advice of Abdullah Hoca, Murat Khan furnished a separate house for Eşref Bey where he also invited Eşref Bey's friends to stay with him. Abdullah Hoca also advised Murat Khan to assign a few guards to watch Eşref Bey, who might go in search of his beloved. When the guards were ready to serve, Abdullah Hoca said, "You must carefully follow what he is doing. I am sure that he will try to go in search of his beloved."

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Upon the strong warning of Abdullah Hoca, Murat Khan asked, "How can we prevent his going to find his beloved? Is there a way to make him forget about her?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "You must forbid the use of the names Zöhre and Shiraz in your city. From now on, nobody should name her baby Zöhre, and the women who have already given the name Zöhre must change it for something else. You know that the words Shiraz and kiraz<sup>30</sup> are rhyming, and the word kiraz always reminds people of the city of Shiraz. Therefore you must order cut down all the kiraz trees in the city. In this way, nothing will remind him of his beloved, and we may make Eşref Bey forget about Zöhre and Shiraz."

Murat Khan thought that the idea presented by Abdullah Hoca was reasonable, and thus ordered everything suggested by him. Abdullah Hoca and Murat Khan wanted to do everything which could make Eşref Bey forget about his dream, his beloved Zöhre, and the city of Shiraz. Soon, all the women who had the name Zöhre in Kandahar changed their names for some other names, and no one in the city used the name Zöhre anymore. In addition to that, all the sweet cherry trees were cut down, and using the name Shiraz was also banned.

Hey, my friends! Let them ban the names, and let Eşref Bey stay with his friends at his newly furnished house. About what should I inform you now? I would like to tell you about two merchants who had just arrived in Kandahar.

In order to do some trading, two merchants arrived in Kandahar with their goods. After spending a few hours in the marketplace of Kandahar, and being disappointed in the trade they had expected, the merchants sat in front of a coffeehouse and began talking about their business. A few tables away from them a keloğlan<sup>31</sup> was sitting, and

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<sup>30</sup> Kiraz is sweet cherry.

<sup>31</sup> Kel or keloğlan means bald boy. The loss of hair referred to comes not from aging but from ringworm infestation of the scalp. Ringworm is encouraged by uncleanliness, and it is more common in remote rural areas where bathing facilities are minimal. In a large family the younger children, often unattended, are prey to this disease. In folktales the keloğlan is a sympathetic figure: intelligent, courageous, and often lucky; thus, despite his handicap, he is usually successful. By selective extension, the word often has an altered connotation. Keloğlan may simply refer to the youngest child in the family, all the way from the royal household down to that of the most lowly



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trying to overhear what the merchants were talking about. My ağas, you know that those keloğlans were very tricky. Let us see what this keloğlan will do.

Having no idea and information about the events that had taken place in Murat Khan's palace, and his banning the usage of certain words in Kandahar, the merchants were talking to each other.

One of them said to the other, "My friend, we could not sell our goods here, in Kandahar, but I have heard that the goods we have might be sold for a very high price in the city of Shiraz. We should go to Shiraz."

The second merchant replied, "I think you are right, my friend. We have to go to Shiraz as soon as we can."

While they were talking, Keloğlan overheard what they had just said, and upon hearing the merchants saying a forbidden word, Keloğlan said, "Did you say Shiraz?"

The merchants replied, "Yes, we said Shiraz. So, what?"

Keloğlan said, "You will see what. Now, I am going to inform them about you."

The merchants could not understand why Keloğlan threatened them, and thus they asked the coffeehouse keeper, "Do you know why that keloğlan threatened us?"

The coffeehouse keeper asked, "Did you say something to him?"

The merchants answered, "We did not say anything to him, but we were talking to each other about going to Shiraz, where we can sell our goods. What is wrong with this?"

The coffeehouse keeper said, "No, no, my friends! Do not ever say that word here in my coffeehouse. My friends, our khan's son has fallen in love with a girl in Shiraz, but the khan did not want his son to get into trouble going in search of her, and therefore he has been trying to do everything possible to make his son forget about her and the city of Shiraz. He has made many women change their names from Zöhre to some other names, and he has also made everybody cut down all the sweet cherry trees because the word kiraz rhymes with the word Shiraz."

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child in the family, all the way from the royal household down to that of the most lowly peasant. As such, he retains all the qualities of the bald boy except his baldness. Like everyone else, the keloğlan must have a name, but we almost never learn what it is. The word keloğlan is simply capitalized and serves as his name: Keloğlan.

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The merchants asked, "What should we do? That keloğlan went to inform the khan about us."

The coffeehouse keeper answered, "You must catch and stop Keloğlan before he reaches the palace. If he informs the khan about you, you may consider yourselves dead."

Astonished with the information, fearful of being executed, the merchants rushed to catch Keloğlan. Running for a few minutes as fast as they could, the merchants saw Keloğlan walking fast toward the palace.

The merchants shouted, "Hey, Keloğlan! Keloğlan! Keloğlan! Wait a minute. Wait for us. Tell us where you are going."

Keloğlan said, "Where am I going? I, of course, am going to the palace, where I can inform our khan about you who disobeyed his orders. I am sure that he will execute you."

The merchants asked, "Suppose we were executed by the khan. Would you tell us what kind of a benefit you may get out of it?"

Keloğlan replied, "I am sure our khan will reward me generously. I was told that Murat Khan promised that whoever informs him about someone who used the forbidden words in his city will be rewarded. So, I think I will make my fortune today."

The merchants asked, "How much money do you think he may give you?"

Keloğlan said, "I assume he will give me a thousand gold coins."

The merchants said, "Let us give that much money, but you must promise us not to go to the palace and inform the khan about us. What do you say, Keloğlan?"

Keloğlan said, "I have no job, and suppose I took the money you offered, and I spent it in a few years. I would again have no money and no job. What am I going to do then?"

The merchants asked, "So, what do you want from us, son?"

With a tricky smile on his face, Keloğlan said, "The thing I want from you is this: You are merchants, and have so much money. I, on the other hand, am a penniless and jobless man. I want to be your partner. Whatever you own, you must share with me; I must be the third owner of everything you own. You must give me a written statement



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about our partnership, and you may call yourselves working partners, and I am the sleeping partner."

The merchants asked, "What do you mean by 'sleeping partner'?"

Keloğlan explained, "You must take me wherever you go, and while you are doing all the trading, buying and selling of the goods we own, I will be responsible just for our animals; I will take care of them and myself. That is the only thing I know how to do. You must write in your statement that you will provide me whatever I want. It will go in this way until I die, or you die. If you die before me, I will own everything we share, or if I die first, you will continue to own everything you have. In short, I want to become your partner, and it must be stated in a written document."

The merchants thought a few minutes, stared at one another's face, and then said, "All right, Keloğlan. We accept all the conditions you set for us."

Upon reaching an agreement, the three men went to a public notary of the time, and the merchants there declared Keloğlan as their partner.

My dear audience, they became partners. Keloğlan owned some wealth without sweating. Look at this tricky Keloğlan. Look at him very carefully, my friends.

Keloğlan and the merchants returned to the place where the merchants had left their goods and animals. On that day, they could not talk about where to go. Keloğlan was eager to talk about going to Shiraz, but since it was forbidden to say the name of that city, he could not, though he was thinking of a way to say it. Finally Keloğlan could not keep himself silent anymore and said, "My friends!"

The merchants said, "What is it, Keloğlan?"

Keloğlan said, "My friends, since we cannot sell our goods in Kandahar, we must go. We must go to the city you were talking about. Let us load our goods, go to the city you mentioned earlier, and sell our goods there. We must earn some money."

The merchants said, "All right. Let us load everything and go."

Shortly, the three partners loaded their goods on the animals they had, and left the city of Kandahar. When they could not see anything of Kandahar, and when Keloğlan was sure that it was safe to say anything he wanted, he said, "My friends, now we are outside the city of Kandahar, and we are free to say anything we want; we can say both Shiraz and kiraz."

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Since they still had some fear and doubts, the merchants said, "Is that right?"

Keloğlan said, "Yes, yes, my friends. We have our freedom to talk about anything." Keloğlan convinced the merchants that they were safe to discuss all kinds of business by using any words they wanted. Thus, they began discussing how to handle their goods in Shiraz. Meanwhile, they were halfway between Kandahar and Shiraz.

My friends, I would like to remind you about the outlaw Abdürrezak and his men. Following the capture of Abdürrezak, most of his men returned to their towns and villages, but after a few years some of them formed a new gang, and they began robbing the merchants and travelers on the way between Kandahar and Shiraz. While Keloğlan and his two merchant friends were riding toward Shiraz from Kandahar, those outlaws hid along the road. The outlaws stopped Keloğlan and the merchants, and they took away all the goods and the animals.

Having nothing left, one of the merchants said, "We have nothing to sell, and so it is meaningless for us to go to Shiraz. I think we should go back to Kandahar and make a complaint to the khan about those robbers."

Keloğlan thought to himself, "I had, indeed, nothing day before yesterday, and I have basically nothing today. I do not care what they do. As stated in a proverb, 'One who has neither loan nor debts does not worry about the world,' or as stated in another proverb, 'One who has no nail in his horseshoe does not care about the world.' They have a right to cry and go back to Kandahar and complain about their loss, but I, on the other hand, lost nothing, and thus have nothing to cry for. I have come all the way here, and I am not going back to Kandahar. I would let them go wherever they want to, but I must reach my destination, Shiraz." Having made up his mind, Keloğlan turned to the merchants and said, "May it be well with you, my friends. Good-bye!"

The merchants asked, "Where are you going, Keloğlan? Are we not partners?"

Keloğlan replied, "What do you mean by 'partners'? What do we have to make us partners? I think our partnership is over. You may cry or go back to complain about your loss of the goods you had, but I have not lost anything. I obviously did not own a needle. I will not go back and make a complaint to the khan of Kandahar. Instead, I will seek my fortune in Shiraz. Good-bye, my friends."

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Astonished with the words of Keloğlan, the merchants understood that they had no way of stopping Keloğlan, who was determined, so the merchants said, "God damn you, Keloğlan! Go wherever you want, and never come close to us again."

Keloğlan and the merchants parted there, and Keloğlan began walking alone toward Shiraz. He walked for awhile, and at some point on the road, he encountered a dervish who had a string of prayer beads in his hand, like the one I have in my hand<sup>32</sup>, and had been chanting the names of God. When Keloğlan and the dervish were very close to each other, the dervish greeted Keloğlan, "Selamünaleyküm, young man!"

Keloğlan replied, "Aleykümselam, my dervish father! Where are you coming from?"

The dervish answered, "I am coming from Shiraz, my son."

Keloğlan said, "Very well, my dervish father. I have a few questions for you."

The dervish said, "Ask whatever you have in your mind."

Keloğlan asked, "My dervish father, would you tell me how much a worker makes in Shiraz?"

The dervish replied, "How would I know? What kind of a question is this?"

With a teasing voice Keloğlan said, "You are right, my dervish father. How can you possibly know, since you are not a working man? I think I made a mistake by asking such a stupid question of you. But would you tell me how much an okka<sup>33</sup> of bread costs in Shiraz?"

The dervish became upset with the question and replied with anger, "How would I know that, my son?" Then the dervish thought to himself, "Look at him. He stopped me here and is asking nonsense questions of me<sup>34</sup>."

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<sup>32</sup> At this point of his performance, the narrator was showing his audience the prayer beads in his hand. This is one of the most frequent aspects of oral performances of tales that has been recorded by scholars in various traditions.

<sup>33</sup> Okka was a weight measurement used by the Ottomans. An okka is equivalent to 1282 grams, which is roughly three pounds.

<sup>34</sup> The questions of Keloğlan here regarded as nonsense by the dervish seem not easy to understand by a non-Turkish reader, but if we know that the dervishes were provided free food by community members wherever they lived, and therefore the dervishes were a kind of people who were spending their time only praying and who were living without working at all, then it makes sense why the dervish answered

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The dervish's turning down every question he asked angered Keloğlan as well. With an angry voice Keloğlan shouted, "What did you eat in Shiraz? Did you eat ice or snow, or was it dirt? How did you survive? What did you eat instead of bread? Did you drink only water, and not eat at all? If my questions about what you ate in Shiraz are nonsense to you, what should I then ask you? Tell me. How did you spend your time in Shiraz?"

The dervish feared the anger of Keloğlan, and realized that Keloğlan did not know how the dervishes were living. He said, "Do not be angry with me, my son. I was singing gazels<sup>35</sup> in front of the houses, especially the houses located in rich neighborhoods, and they were providing me food and drink, as well as some money. I was walking in the streets of Shiraz singing gazels from morning to evening, and making enough to live on."

Keloğlan asked, "Can a person make enough by singing?"

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Keloğlan's questions in such a way. It should also be noted that the narrator at this point was enjoying himself by somewhat criticizing the attitude of the dervish.

<sup>35</sup> Gazel is a short poem of more than four but fewer than fifteen lines. The first two lines have the same rhyme, which is repeated at the end of the fourth, sixth, additional alternate lines; the poet usually mentions his own name in the last line. The subject matter of this type of poem is usually beauty, wine, spring, and so on. The form should be as perfect as possible, especially from the point of view of language; vulgar words are to be most rigidly avoided. The gazel is a kind of poem most favored in Persian, and Indian and Turkish were classical literature, influenced by it. Almost all of the Ottoman classical or what is called divan poets wrote at least a few gazels which were included in their divans.

It should also be noted that the competition between classical poets and asiks, the singing poets and narrators of the romances, in the Ottoman era was obvious. Especially those asiks who did not write their poems, but rather sang them to the saz they played, claimed that they were much better than the divan poets, who never played a musical instrument in order to perform their poems. The competition between the two types of poets led the asiks to overlook the poems created by the divan poets, while the divan poets also criticized the asiks as being illiterate singers.

That the narrator here makes the dervish a kind of gazel singer might be one of the results of the competition explained above that as an asik the narrator of our story was exhibiting a kind of attitude toward a form or a type of the divan poetry by putting the gazel in the mouth of a dervish who might also be considered a kind of beggar. The clever insult of the asik to divan poets and their poetry becomes obvious when one pays enough attention to poetry chanted or sung without a musical instrument by the dervish.

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The dervish replied, "Yes, of course."

Keloğlan asked, "You must have some gazels with you. Do you?"

The dervish answered, "Yes, I do have some."

Keloğlan said, "I have an idea. Let us exchange our clothes."

Surprised by this idea, the dervish asked, "Why?"

Keloğlan explained, "Look at me, my dervish father. My clothes are newer and more valuable than yours. What else might a dervish like you need? Take my clothes to a tailor who can buy them and also fix you some cheap clothes like yours. But I do not have time to go to a tailor to get a dervish costume. That is why I need your clothes. Now give your clothes to me and take my clothes. You must also give me your hat, which will cover my bald head."

The dervish still could not understand Keloğlan's intention and asked, "What are you going to do?"

Keloğlan answered, "Well, when you give me your clothes, your hat, and a few gazels, I will become a dervish like you are, and then I will sing those gazels in Shiraz, where I am going to seek my fortune."

Upon the explanation it became clear to the dervish, who also understood that he had no strength to stop Keloğlan, and he said, "All right, all right. Here are my clothes; take them."

Dressed in the dervish costume, Keloğlan bade farewell to the dervish, and continued on his way to Shiraz. In a few days Keloğlan arrived in Shiraz. He rested for awhile, and then began walking on the streets of Shiraz by singing the gazels he was given by the dervish. Apparently Keloğlan had a very nice and high volume voice. As he sang on the streets and in front of some rich houses, he was given some free food as well as some money as a tip for his singing. Keloğlan liked the thing he was doing, and so he decided to visit one neighborhood a day and sing in front of every fancy house in that neighborhood. In this way Keloğlan passed forty days in Shiraz.

One early morning Keloğlan walked to a neighborhood where he saw a very large and rich-looking house. With an expectation of delicious food and a really good tip from the owner of the house, Keloğlan first thought to himself, "As stated in a proverb, 'The big fish lives in the ocean, and the rich man lives in a large house.' God willing, I



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might get a very large tip from the owner of this house." Having made up his mind, he began singing in front of the house.

My ağas, you are not asking me about the people who lived in that house. That house belonged to Zöhre Hanım, with whom Eşref Bey had fallen in love. By the time Keloğlan reached the front of her house, Zöhre Hanım had just got up and begun drinking her morning coffee while her forty maids were around her and trying to comfort her. She was addicted to coffee, and drank coffee as soon as she got up in the morning.

While drinking her first cup of coffee, Zöhre Hanım heard Keloğlan's voice and said to her maids, "Girls, girls! I am very excited today. My feelings are mixed this morning. On the one hand, I am feeling joyous; on the other hand, I have some kind of fear. Let us call that dervish singing outside, and listen to him over here. He will sing for us some nice gazels, and we shall give him some food and a tip. Those dervishes travel from one place to another, and they gather information from the places they visit. The singing dervish outside may know something about my Eşref Bey. Let us invite the dervish inside and ask."

Upon Zöhre Hanım's request, a few maids rushed outside and soon returned with Keloğlan, the dervish, to Zöhre Hanım's court, where Keloğlan saw Zöhre Hanım, who had no match for her beauty in this world. May her house be demolished, my audience! Keloğlan, of course, became very excited and surprised upon seeing such a beauty.

Zöhre Hanım greeted the dervish and said, "Welcome, my dervish father! Have a seat, please." When the dervish sat down on a bench, she asked, "My dervish father, would you sing for us a gazel?"

Keloğlan was, of course, more than willing to perform not one, but all the gazels he knew. So Keloğlan sang a gazel. Having listened to the gazel sung by the dervish, Zöhre Hanım was satisfied, and she said, "May God bless you, my dervish father. You sang it very well. If you do not mind, I have some questions for you."

Keloğlan said, "Yes, my lady! Go ahead, and ask anything you wonder about."

Zöhre Hanım asked, "My dervish father, would you tell me the names of the cities you have visited, and those you have heard about?"

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Keloğlan began telling the names of the cities he knew; he first told a few city names in Russia, and then some other city names in Europe. Following that, Keloğlan told the names of all the cities in Iran.

When he had finished telling the names of the cities except one in Iran, Zöhre Hanım said, "There is one more, my dervish father."

The dervish named them again, and Zöhre Hanım said, "My dervish father, there is one more."

The dervish named the cities and said, "My daughter, that is all I know, but I did not tell the name of one city, Kandahar."

Excited even by the name of the city, Zöhre Hanım asked, "Have you been in Kandahar?"

Keloğlan replied, "Yes, of course. I have been there. I actually am from Kandahar."

Zöhre Hanım said, "May I be sacrificed for you, my dervish father. I have a very important question for you."

Keloğlan said, "Please, my lady, ask me anything you want. Do not hesitate or wait; just ask."

Zöhre Hanım asked, "My dervish father, would you tell me who the ruler of Kandahar is? Is he a shah or a bey?"

Keloğlan replied, "Kandahar is ruled by Murat Khan."

Zöhre Hanım said, "You are right, my dervish father. Kandahar is ruled by Murat Khan. Would you tell me whether Murat Khan has a child, a daughter or a son, or both, or whether he has none?"

Keloğlan said, "Aaah, aaah<sup>36</sup>! My daughter, do not ask about that." My friends, Keloğlan understood that she was the girl with whom Eşref Bey had fallen in love. My friends, he was Keloğlan, seeking an opportunity to make some money all the time. He was Keloğlan, who had tried to trick everybody in this world. So, with a sparkling look in his eyes Keloğlan answered, "My daughter, Murat Khan has a son who is very handsome."

<sup>36</sup> Aaah, aaah! is an expression indicating sorrow and grief.

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Upon finding out that the dervish was from Kandahar, and assuming that he knew so much about Eşref Bey, the excitement of Zöhre Hanım was increased, and she said, "Let me be sacrificed for Eşref Bey's name." While saying that, she lost consciousness, and fell down. Keloğlan and the maids rushed to help her. The maids brought some rosewater and put some rosewater on her face, and rubbed her arms to make her regain consciousness. When Zöhre Hanım had regained consciousness, she asked, "My dervish father, is his name Eşref?"

Keloğlan replied, "Yes, my daughter. His name is Eşref."

Zöhre Hanım said, "My dervish father, if you love God who created you, and me, and everything else in the universe, you have got to help me. If you help me, you will be blessed."

Keloğlan asked, "How can a poor dervish help a rich beauty like you, my daughter?"

Zöhre Hanım said, "How was Eşref's situation in Kandahar?"

Keloğlan said, "Do not ask about his situation, my daughter. Do not ever ask about it. It is terrible. Ever since he has fallen in love, he has been burning like the fire of Suleiman. I have heard that his parents had told him he should not suffer for nothing; what he had fallen in love with was Zöhre, which was a star in the sky, so there was no reason for him to suffer. They had told him that when it was night he might open one of the windows in his room and look at the sky to see Zöhre, the star. They had told him that he might get his satisfaction with his beloved by looking at that star. They had also told him that there was no city in the world named Shiraz."

Zöhre Hanım asked, "What are you talking about, my dervish father?"

Keloğlan said, "I am telling you what Eşref Bey's parents had told him about you, my daughter. I assume that your parents have also told you similar things about Eşref Bey. Am I right, my daughter? Tell me what they have told you."

Zöhre Hanım said, "Aaah, aaah! My dervish father, my parents have told me that there is no city named Kandahar, and no ruler named Murat Khan who has a son named Eşref. They have told me that Eşref means light, in Arabic, and so I should light a candle and watch the light of a candle as long as I want. They have told me that I had fallen in love with light."



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Keloğlan said, "My daughter, if your situation is like that, and Eşref's situation is not better than yours, then I can only say may God unite you. I cannot tell you or do for you more than that."

Zöhre Hanım said, "My dervish father, would you do me a favor?"

Keloğlan said, "If it is something I can do, I should like to do it. I would like to do not only one, but as many as I can do for you, my daughter."

Zöhre Hanım said, "Would you deliver a letter from me to Eşref?"

Keloğlan thought to himself that it was the opportunity he had sought for a long time to get some money. He said, "My daughter, I, of course, of course, shall deliver your letter. I consider delivering your letter as a duty, but there is something . . ."

Zöhre Hanım interrupted him and asked, "What is it, my dervish father?"

Keloğlan said, "It is not easy for me to deliver a letter, my daughter. I cannot tell you the reason for that."

Zöhre Hanım said, "Do not hesitate, my dervish father. You may tell me whatever you need or want."

Keloğlan said, "I swear to God that I was a rich merchant; in the Arak land my partners and I were robbed by outlaws."

My friends, he is not lying here. I should remind you that Keloğlan became a partner of the merchants, and thus he was a rich merchant.

Zöhre Hanım said, "So, my dervish father?"

Keloğlan said, "What I mean is this, my daughter: Before I had left my home city, I borrowed some money from rich people in Kandahar. Since I was robbed and lost everything, including the money I had borrowed, I cannot return to Kandahar. If I go there without having enough money to pay my debts, those people will hold my neck and my arms, and they may kill me. That is why it is not easy for me to deliver your letter to Eşref. Had I not owed so much money to rich people in Kandahar, I would have taken your letter to Eşref."

Zöhre Hanım said, "Wait a minute, my dervish father."

Keloğlan asked, "What happened? Have you got my money from those robbers?"

Zöhre Hanım said, "Well, yes. I have your money. It is not the money you lost, but I might replace the money you owed. Tell me how much you owed."

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Keloğlan thought to himself for awhile, "What should I say to her? If I tell her so much, she may not give me any money at all, and if I say very little, then it does not help me at all." Following a brief discussion in his mind, Keloğlan said, "My lady, I owed one thousand gold coins."

Zöhre Hanım smiled and said, "That is not much. I think we can handle it, but tell me whether or not you will deliver the letter with the money."

Keloğlan reluctantly said, "Well, my lady. I would deliver it, but I do not know if I could."

Zöhre Hanım asked, "What is it that you do not know, my dervish father?"

Keloğlan said, "Suppose I take your letter, and I am on my way to Kandahar, but what am I going to spend for food and for other expenses I might have? You have promised to give me one thousand gold coins, which will repay my debts, but how can I survive without any money for my own expenses? I also need a horse to deliver your letter very quickly, but it also requires some more money."

Zöhre Hanım said, "I think you have explained this very well to me, my dervish father. How much more do you think you may need? Let me give one thousand gold coins for a horse you may buy and for your expenses which you may have during your journey. Is that enough?"

Keloğlan was a greedy man, and he was thinking to get more money from her. He said, "Well, my daughter, two thousand gold coins would be enough to pay my debts and my other expenses on my journey back to Kandahar, but it would be much better if I had some more money to restart my business."

Zöhre Hanım asked, "My dervish father, what would you say if I give you three thousand gold coins? Is it enough?"

Keloğlan reluctantly said, "It may be enough. I do not know."

Zöhre Hanım understood that Keloğlan still wanted to have more money, so she said, "My dervish father, I will give you five thousand gold coins. Does that satisfy all of your financial needs?"

Keloğlan said, "My daughter, that is plenty. Please write your letter very quickly, and let me deliver it."

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Zöhre Hanım wrote this: "My soul, my dear Eşref, the dervish told me that he knew you, and he also informed me about your situation. He was a merchant, but he was robbed and lost everything he owned. Consequently, he became a poor man, and a dervish. He was singing some gazels in front of my house, and I invited him in to my court to listen to him, and to ask some questions about you. That is how I met him. Luckily, he knew you, and upon my request he agreed to deliver this letter to you. When you receive this letter, you must send me a reply as soon as possible. If I do not receive a letter from you, or if you do not present yourself here, I will die. You must come here. If you do not come to see me, I will poison myself. I have been burning with your love. My dear, my soul, my two eyes, my Eşref." When the letter was finished she signed it, "I am the grieving Zöhre, the daughter of Zuhâl Khan in Shiraz. I am Zöhre, with whom you have fallen in love in your dream."

While Zöhre Hanım was handing the letter to Keloğlan, he said, "My daughter, you have forgotten to write down something, have you not?"

Surprised by Keloğlan's statement, Zöhre Hanım asked, "What do you mean, my dervish father? What did I forget?"

Keloğlan said, "What did you write?"

Zöhre Hanım said, "I wrote about my love, my request for a reply letter, and my demand to see Eşref in person here. That is all that I wrote to him."

Keloğlan said, "Is that all? Have you written anything else?"

Zöhre Hanım said, "No, I have not written anything more."

Keloğlan explained, "My daughter, you both are descendants of khan families. You gave some money that I needed. Since he is a son of a khan, he must match the amount you provided to me. That is what you have forgotten to indicate in your letter. You should have written in a corner of the letter that you have given some money to the poor dervish who is going to deliver your letter, and so when he receives the letter he should also provide a tip."

Zöhre Hanım said, "You are right, my dervish father. I, of course, should have written that. If you allow me, I will write it just at a corner of my letter as you suggested." Zöhre Hanım put the letter down and wrote this: "I have given some money to the dervish who promised to deliver this letter to you. When you receive the letter

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you should also give him some money." She closed the letter, and said, "Here it is, my dervish father."

Keloğlan took the letter and got up to leave, but Zöhre Hanım stopped him. "Wait, my dervish father. Where are you going?"

Keloğlan said, "My daughter, you gave enough money for my debts and for my own expenses. You hosted me wonderfully at your house. Now, it is my turn to perform your request of delivering your letter. I will lose no time here or there; I will ride day and night, and I will find Eşref as soon as I can."

Zöhre Hanım asked, "What will you tell Eşref about me?"

Keloğlan replied, "I have this letter. Have you not written everything to be told to him?"

Zöhre Hanım said, "Well, I have written everything I wanted to tell him, but what will you tell him?"

Keloğlan replied, "I shall tell him this: 'My son, you should neither wait here, nor listen to your parents. What you must do is to go to Zöhre as quickly as you can. You are a son of a khan, so you must put your armor on, fill your saddlebag with gold coins, mount your horse, and ride toward Shiraz.' You must also say this: 'I shall either find my beloved one, or I shall die.' You must ride day and night. You must keep this in mind: 'Even if I cannot find her, I will die in search of her or on the way to finding her.' "

[Tape 8, side A ends here, but the story of Eşref Bey continues on tape 9, side A.]

Zöhre Hanım said, "My dervish father, before you leave, I would like to sing a few stanzas. Listen to my song carefully, and when you see Eşref, sing my song to him. Is it all right with you?"

Keloğlan said, "All right, my daughter. Sing it."

Zöhre Hanım repeated, "Are you going to sing my song to Eşref, my dervish father?"

Keloğlan answered, "Yes, of course, I will sing it to him, my daughter."

My dear audience! There is something that bothers me a lot about this song. Some people who had listened to this song when I sang it in different places and in different

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times had memorized it, and then they changed some words in some of the lines, and provided it to Turkish National Radio Station. The tune is the same, but some of the words in their version are different. I have been singing this song almost every year during the nights in the month of Ramazan in Kars, Erzurum and Sivas. Some people who listened to my song could not perfectly understand the tune, and then they provided it to the archive of Turkish National Radio Station. They made some changes in my song. What they had done is very wrong. I said they could not understand the tune very well because they did not know the name of the tune to which this song is sung. The name of this song's tune is "The Tune of Eşref."

Now, let us listen to how Zöhre Hanım sang it:

If you love God, my dervish father;  
 If you love God, my dervish father;  
 Take my letter and give it to Eşref.  
 I cry day and night, and weep so much.  
 Deliver quickly my letter to Eşref.

O my soul! O my soul! O my soul!  
 I should wear only black.  
 They should cover my body  
 With the handkerchief of my beloved.  
 Neither you should forget about me,  
 Nor I should forget about you.<sup>37</sup>

Her sorrow did not diminish, and she sang again:

My dervish father, hear again the old saying:

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<sup>37</sup> This stanza is not considered a main stanza in the Turkish folk poetry and folk song tradition. These kind of stanzas are repeated after every main stanza, and they might be called an attachment stanzas.

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As the cold hits leaves when the autumn comes,  
The fire has been burning my heart.  
Deliver quickly my letter to Eşref.

O my soul! O my soul! O my soul!  
I should wear only black.  
They should cover my body  
With the handkerchief of my beloved.  
Neither you should forget about me,  
Nor I should forget about you.

Zöhre Hanım sang one more. She sang the best one this time:

Listen to my words, my dervish father;  
Listen to my words, my dervish father.  
Let me put my face on your feet.  
Do not make Zöhre's eyes wet.  
Deliver quickly my letter to Eşref.  
O my soul! O my soul! O my soul!

I should wear only black.  
They should cover my body  
With the handkerchief of my beloved.  
Neither you should forget about me,  
Nor I should forget about you.

Keloğlan listened to Zöhre Hanım's song very carefully, and then he bade farewell to her. He went to the marketplace of Shiraz, where he bought a good Arabian steed. When he mounted the horse he said this:

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"Hey, Allah! Take your crazy man;  
Keep him in place if you can."

Hey, my beys! Keloğlan rode toward Kandahar.

If you ask about time, it flies on the wind.  
If you ask about our story, it is carried in words.  
The language of the aşık is very rich.  
His words unite everything in a short time.  
The aşiks make a year pass with a word<sup>38</sup>.

So, about what should I inform you now? I will tell you what took place next. Having some rest and some ride every day, eventually Keloğlan arrived in Kandahar. There, first he took his horse to the stable of a caravansarai, and then he walked up and down on the streets. The walk he was taking had a reason. While walking on the streets of Kandahar, Keloğlan was seeking a way to deliver Zöhre Hanım's letter to Eşref Bey. Meanwhile, Eşref Bey had been spending his time with his friends at the house furnished for him.

On that day Eşref Bey had just got up and had been drinking his morning coffee with his friends. It seemed for Eşref Bey that he was going to have one of those usual days. He used to talk to his friends while he was drinking his morning coffee. While Eşref Bey was drinking his coffee and talking to his friends, still dressed in the dervish costume Keloğlan began singing a gazel in front of Eşref Bey's house. Upon hearing the dervish song, Eşref Bey said, "Aaah, aaah! My friends, while I am sorrowful, that dervish is singing outside. He has a very nice voice. Let us invite him here, and make him sing for us. I am filled with love for Zöhre. That dervish may sing some songs about love."

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<sup>38</sup> These two lines are employed by the aşık here to express the transition of time and events in the story. These kinds of expressions are commonly used by the aşık in the storytelling tradition in Turkey.

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Hey, my ağas! Feeling love inside must be the feelings of Eşref Bey. Do you not agree with me? In these days the youths are talking about their falling in love with some girls, and when they are asked how they have fallen in love, and how it feels when you are in love with someone, they say they just stared at each other. My friends, that is not falling in love. The real love is the one Eşref Bey experienced. I hope you are getting your lessons from his experience, and also from the words of the aşık who is telling you this story.

So a few friends of Eşref Bey went out and invited Keloğlan to Eşref Bey's court. While they were walking into the house, Keloğlan took the letter from his pocket and then placed it in a fold of his coat. When they reached Eşref Bey's court, Keloğlan first greeted everybody, and shook the fold deliberately. Finally, the letter dropped on the ground, but Keloğlan pretended he did not realize it.

Upon seeing that a letter had dropped from the dervish's coat, Eşref Bey said, "What is it, my dervish father? I think you dropped a letter."

Keloğlan said, "Yes, my son. It is a letter which I found somewhere on the street, but since I am a very old man with very poor vision, I could not read it. Would you take a look at it, my son? If you read it, we would know to whom that letter is addressed, and then either you or I would try to find that person to deliver it."

Eşref Bey said, "All right, let me take a look at it." Then he took the letter and read it. While reading the letter he became pale. The letter astonished him. The letter, of course, was addressed to him, and it was sent by Zöhre in Shiraz.

After reading the letter, Eşref Bey screamed, "My dervish father, this letter was written by Zöhre, and she sent it to me."

Keloğlan interrupted him and said, "Be quiet, my son! Be quiet! Why are you screaming?"

Eşref Bey said, "Why should I not?"

Keloğlan said, "Do you not know your father's orders? If he hears about this, he will kill me. Do you not remember his order to cut down all of the sweet cherry trees in Kandahar because those trees were reminders of the name of Shiraz? Therefore you should scream neither the name of Zöhre nor of Shiraz."

Eşref Bey said, "You are right, my dervish father."



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Keloğlan said, "Well, my son, you should not let anyone know about this. At least while I am here, do not reveal the contents of the letter. Is it all right with you?"

Eşref Bey said, "Do not worry, my dervish father."

Keloğlan said, "Well, that is good. I think I have finished my job here, and I should go now."

Eşref Bey said, "All right, my dervish father. If you wish, you may go."

Keloğlan thought to himself, "Look at him! It seems he did not understand what I meant." Then he said, "My son, is there not something written at a corner of the letter? Did you read it? If you did not read it, would you take a look at it again?"

Eşref Bey opened the letter and read the writing at a corner of it. It said that Zöhre gave some money to the dervish who agreed to deliver it, and also told Eşref to give some more. Upon reading it, Eşref Bey said, "I am very sorry, my dervish father. Because of the joy I felt with this letter, I could not see what was written at that corner of this letter." Then he called some of his friends and said, "My friends, please go to my room and open the top shelf of the closet, where you will find a saddlebag filled with gold coins, and bring it here." His friends went his room and returned with the bag filled with gold coins.

Eşref Bey said to one of his friends, "My friend, please put the bag on your shoulder, and carry it wherever my dervish father wants you to take it. From now on, this bag is his."

Keloğlan said, "May I be sacrificed for you, my son. Please do not tell anyone about the letter and me. Especially do not tell your father that the letter was delivered to you by me. If he finds out that I delivered a letter from Zöhre to you, I am sure that he would kill me. He would not be satisfied with sentencing me for seven years in prison. He would definitely kill me. He would make my children orphans and my wife a widow."

My friends, Keloğlan was, of course, not married, and he had no child, but because of fear he talked to Eşref Bey like that. He was very happy to have a bag filled with gold coins, but he also did not want to lose his life. Taking the bag, Keloğlan walked out.

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When Keloğlan left, Eşref Bey read the letter once more, which made him think to himself, "My hoca has lied to me. He told me that there is no city named Shiraz, and he also told me that Zöhre is one of the stars in the sky. Let me take this letter to him, and teach him about Zöhre and Shiraz. I must throw this letter at his face." Having made up his mind, Eşref Bey got ready and went to the school where his hoca was.

Having Eşref Bey appear unexpectedly at school, Abdullah Hoca was surprised, and said, "Look who is here! May I be sacrificed for you, my child. My dear son, Eşref, is here to see me. My Eşref has not forgotten about me and has come to see me. Welcome, my son! Come, come here and have a seat, my son."

Eşref Bey said, "Wait right there, my hoca!"

Abdullah Hoca asked, "What has happened to you, my child?"

With an angry voice Eşref Bey shouted, "Take a look at this. I think you and my father want to set up a tent over the earth. Would it be possible? You must learn that you cannot cover up or hide everything from me. Look at this letter."

Abdullah Hoca said, "Calm down, my son! Would you come over here and sit down?"

Eşref Bey refused. "No! No, my hoca! I will not sit down. You sit down and read the letter over there. I will stand right in front of this door, and I will prove to you whether I have fallen in love with Zöhre the real person in Shiraz or Zöhre the star in the sky."

Abdullah Hoca asked, "What do you mean, my son?"

Eşref Bey said, "Take this letter and read it."

Abdullah Hoca took the letter and read it. There was so much in the letter: greetings, love, and so on. Everything was written down. What Abdullah Hoca had long feared finally had come true. When he had finished reading the letter, Eşref Bey asked, "Have you done reading?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "Yes, my son. I have read it all."

Eşref Bey said, "There must be a poem written in it. Do you see it?"

Abdullah Hoca answered, "Yes, I see it, my child."

Eşref Bey said, "Well, then. Now I am going to prove to you whether my love is real or not. I will sing that poem to you, and you will listen. I will sing exactly what is

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written there. If I make any mistake, or change even a single letter of that poem, you may say my love is not a true one and my song is a made up song. But if I sing everything very well, you must allow me to go in search of my beloved and meet my desire."

Abdullah Hoca understood how determined Eşref Bey was, and that there was no way of keeping him in Kandahar anymore, and then he said, "All right, my son. Sing it. You have filled me with sorrow and grief. Just sing it."

The poem was written by Zöhre Hanım and sung by Eşref Bey, my dear audience. Eşref Bey was standing up in front of the main door of Abdullah Hoca's room, and Abdullah Hoca was sitting at his corner.

Eşref Bey said, "Are you ready to listen to me very carefully, my hoca?"

Abdullah Hoca replied, "I am ready to follow every word of yours, my son."

Let us hear what Eşref Bey sang. He took his saz and sang the best one. My friends, the tune of this song is called "The Tune of Garip." It was inherited by both Aşık Garip<sup>39</sup> and Eşref Bey. Let us hear what Zöhre wrote in her letter, and how Eşref Bey sang it:

Take this letter and say my greetings to my beloved.

He should read it and learn about my sorrow.

Since I have fallen in love with him,

Armaan, armaan, armaan!

This love is becoming heavier than my soul.

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<sup>39</sup> Aşık Garip is one of the most well-known minstrel stories of the Turkish minstrel tradition. The main antagonist of the story of Aşık Garip is believed to have lived. According to the scholars, the story which talks about his great love was created after him in the 16th century. The story of Aşık Garip consists of a certain number of well-known poems or songs. Those poems are memorized and sung by contemporary Turkish minstrels. Contemporary Turkish minstrels believe that the songs in the story of Aşık Garip were actually composed and sung by Aşık Garip. They also believe that the songs and tunes of Aşık Garip have been preserved by former masters passing to their pupils the Turkish minstrel tradition without any change.

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When his first stanza was over, Eşref Bey asked, "How is it, my hoca? Is there any change?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "Perfect, my son! There is no change or any mistake so far. You sang it as if it were written by you."

My friends, God is the greatest and the most powerful. When we need His help, God helps us. That is how Eşref Bey succeeded in singing the poem of Zöhre Hanım without making any mistake. Let us hear more: ||

Take this letter to the land where my beloved is.  
He should wear the costume of sorrow.  
I hope you should not come through the land of Arak.  
I am afraid that you may lose your life there.  
I hope you should not come through the land of Arak.  
I am afraid that you may lose your life there.

My friends, do you know why she was warning Eşref Bey against going through Arak land? She was warning him because Keloğlan had told her that they were robbed in the land of the Araks.

Upon finishing his second stanza, Eşref Bey asked again, "What do you think, my hoca?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "Great, my child! Do not ask me how you did it. There is no doubt that you will sing the rest very well. Indeed, you are a 'Hakk aşığı'<sup>40</sup>, my son. Thus you will be able to sing exactly what is written in this letter."

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<sup>40</sup> Hakk aşığı means One who is in love with God. According to the Turkish minstrel tradition, minstrels are classified in accordance with their knowledge, experiences, skills, and so forth. One of those classified groups claims that the love, and hence the minstrelsy, was inspired in their hearts by God in a dream they might have had. Experiencing a dream about their beloved one, and drinking the potion of love which was offered by a holy figure in the dream, eventually causes or provides the ability of composing songs and singing songs and playing a musical instrument, usually a saz, to the person who experienced the dream. Those singing poets who are also the tellers of the romances, either their own or related to some other minstrels, call themselves "Hakk aşığı."

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Eşref Bey sang once more, and he sang the best one again:

Take this letter as a gift to my beloved.  
 My poor soul has been suffering from his absence.  
 I am Zöhre, who has been expecting Eşref Bey.  
 Will our tryst be facilitated by God?  
 I am Zöhre, who has been expecting Eşref Bey.  
 Will our tryst be facilitated by God?

When he had finished singing all the stanzas of the poem written by Zöhre, he said to Abdullah Hoca, "My hoca, I cannot stay in this city anymore. You must allow me to go in search of my beloved. I shall either find my beloved and meet her, or I shall die on the way to finding her. For God's sake, let me go, my hoca. "

Abdullah Hoca realized that it was useless to say anything against Eşref Bey's words, and it was too late to try to stop him. He said, "My son, listen to me carefully. If you want to go, you must do what I will tell you."

Eşref Bey said, "All right, my hoca. I am listening, and I will do what you say. But tell me very quickly."

Abdullah Hoca said, "My son, you should go from here to your father's stable and prepare a horse for your journey. You should also put all your armor on. Get a saddlebag and fill it with gold coins which will help you when you are in trouble. Money solves so many problems in this world. You should prepare yourself for a very difficult journey. Meanwhile, I will go to your father's court; I will talk to him and bring him to your place. You and I will convince him to give permission for you to leave Kandahar. Now, go ahead; get ready, my son."

Eşref Bey quickly left Abdullah Hoca's room and went to the stable to get a horse. While he was busy preparing himself, Abdullah Hoca walked to Murat Khan's court in the palace. Murat Khan was performing his daily duties.

Abdullah Hoca greeted the khan, "Selamünaleyküm, Murat Khan!"

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Murat Khan replied with a smile, "Aleykümselam! Aleykümselam, my son's best teacher! Welcome, Abdullah Hoca!"

Abdullah Hoca said, "Well, my khan, all my efforts have failed. Forget them all."

Murat Khan wondered, "Why? What has happened?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "It is proven that a crazy man's son eventually becomes crazy. Have you seen a smart child of a crazy man?"

Murat Khan was surprised. "What are you talking about, my hoca? What is wrong now?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "What else could have happened? The worst thing has taken place. Look at this letter and see what is wrong."

Murat Khan asked, "What kind of letter is this?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "I do not know what kind of letter it is, but I am sure you will find out when you read it."

Murat Khan took the letter and read it in a moment, and then he said, "My hoca, I hope you have not shown it to Eşref. Have you?"

Abdullah Hoca took a deep breath and said, "Aaah, aaah! It was given to me by Eşref."

Murat Khan asked, "How did Eşref get it?"

Abdullah Hoca replied, "How would I know, my khan?"

Murat Khan said, "Have you not questioned him about how and where he got it?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "Do not be so naive, my khan. Do you think Eşref would have told me who delivered it, how and where he got it? Does it matter how he got it anymore? As stated in a proverb, 'A nobleman may not have what others have in their possession.' [i.e. 'A rich man does not have everything.'] Whatever we have done to protect him did not work at all. Someone, sometime, must have delivered it. How can we know who he was and how he had delivered it? I do not think it matters anymore for us to know who did it. I also believe that Eşref would not tell us how he received it."

Having no idea what to do and where to go, Murat Khan asked, "What should we do now?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "It is too late to try to stop him, but you should not wait here."

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Murat Khan asked, "Where should I go? What should I do?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "It seems you have not realized how serious this is. I am telling you he is going."

Murat Khan asked, "Who is going and where?"

Abdullah Hoca said, "He might have gone. I swear to God he is going."

Murat Khan got up from his seat, but he could not find enough strength to pull himself together to wear his shoes. He was confused and wanted to see his son before he had gone. Therefore he walked to Eşref Bey's place in his slippers. Abdullah Hoca followed him. By the time they arrived at Eşref Bey's place, Eşref Bey had already prepared himself for the journey he had on his mind. He had put his armor on, and hung a saz on the saddlebow of the horse. With the halter of the horse in his hand he was circling in his courtyard, and chanting this: "My Zöhre! My Zöhre! My Zöhre!"

Upon seeing Eşref Bey in such a condition, Murat Khan wept and he rushed to his son, crying "My son! My only child! My only baby!"

Eşref Bey replied, "My soul father! Let me be sacrificed for your voice. What do you say about my going?"

Murat Khan asked, "My son, are you disobeying me?"

Eşref Bey said, "My dear father, how would I disobey you? But you must understand that I am in a terrible situation."

Murat Khan said, "What makes you think that your situation is terrible, my son? Whatever I have will be yours. You will inherit all the wealth and power I now have. You will be the next ruler of this city. All the beauties in this city will be yours. I do not understand why you are still in sorrow and grief. Whatever girl you want to marry in this city I will get for you, Son."

Eşref Bey said, "My problem is not what you think, Father."

Murat Khan asked, "Then what is it, my son?"

Eşref Bey said, "I do not want anything you have offered me, Father. What I want is your permission. I am only asking your permission. That is all that I want."

Murat Khan asked, "For what, my son? What kind of permission do you need?"

Eşref Bey said, "I shall either find my beloved one, or I shall die. Even if I cannot find her, I will die on the way to finding her."

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Murat Khan realized that his son was determined, and that there was no way of keeping him. With tears in his eyes, Murat Khan said, "My son, Eşref! I realize that you are determined to go in search of your beloved, but again I will ask you not to leave me alone in my old age. Stay with me, Son. How will you leave while all the people in this city have their eyes on us? I have countless enemies, my son. If they hear you are going to set out to seek your beloved one, they might follow you and try to harm you; they might try to kill you. What would I do if something bad should happen to you, my son? Please do not go."

Upon hearing his father's worries, Eşref Bey could not say anything more. Instead of telling his ideas in prose, Eşref Bey took his saz and began singing. Let us hear what he sang. Eşref Bey sang the best one:

My reckless heart intends to go to a foreign land.  
It wants to be in the country where my beloved is.  
My father begs me not to go on such a journey,  
He sets forward so many reasons to keep me here.

His sorrow did not diminish, and he sang again:

I have forgiven all the rights I might have on the people here.  
I cannot feel happiness here because my heart is in sorrow.  
One day heaven will take all the tools it has;  
It will destroy all the things I have gathered.

Eşref Bey sang again:

Hey, Eşref! There is a river which carries love.  
One day it sends you to a foreign land with tears.  
One day heaven blows the sail of sorrow;  
It will destroy the four walls of your life.



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Once again, Murat Khan understood that Eşref Bey had made up his mind and that there was no way of stopping him. He said, "My son, I am convinced that you will go. However, you must listen to my advice before you leave. As stated in a saying, 'Nobody can enter paradise without proof'; you must keep my advice in your mind, and take the letters I will write to my friends as proof that you are my son. Those will help you when you are in trouble." Then Murat Khan wrote a letter, and said, "Take this letter, my son. If you ever go to Isfahan, give this letter to Shah Abbas." He wrote another letter and said, "If you cannot reach Shah Abbas' court, then you should try to see his sister, Shah-i Duhter. Take this letter, and when you meet Shah-i Duhter give this letter to her." Murat Khan wrote one more letter and said, "If you go to Ardabil, you have an uncle, Hebib Bey, there. He is the khan of Ardabil. Give this letter to him. My son, we have only three true friends in this world. You should not seek any other true friends for our family. I have done many good things and many bad things in my life. The help given and the good things you may have done are quickly forgotten, but the bad things are always kept in the minds of people. What I mean is that I have many enemies who have been watching us and looking for an opportunity to harm our family. You must be very careful, and keep my advice in your mind."

Murat Khan gave all three letters to Eşref Bey, and then he filled a saddlebag with gold coins; he loaded the bag on Eşref Bey's horse, and said, "Take this money, Son. While you are in foreign lands, you will need it. Money can solve some of the problems you may encounter." As saying good-bye to his son, finally Murat Khan kissed Eşref Bey's eyelids and hugged him. Also, Eşref Bey kissed the hands of his father and his teacher. Then he asked to be forgiven for the rights of the people who gathered to say good-bye to him. He bade farewell to the people in Kandahar and said:

"Hey, Allah!

Either take your creature to your court,

Or keep this crazy man in one place if you can.

I shall either find my beloved one,

Or I shall die on the way to finding her."

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Let him ride toward the city of his beloved. Let him go on his way. Eşref Bey rode for a few days. God knows how far he had gone. The tongues of aşiks move rapidly, and they make lovers meet very quickly.

One day Eşref Bey arrived in the city of Ardabil. At the outskirts of the city he encountered an old man whom he asked, "Hey, father! Are you from this city? Do you know the name of this city?"

The old man answered, "My son, this city is called Ardabil."

Eşref Bey asked, "Well, father! Would you tell me where I can spend a night as a guest? I am a stranger here, and I do not know any place."

The man answered, "My son, the best coffeehouse and a guest house attached to it is called Hasan Ağa's coffeehouse in this city. You can spend a night there. They say that it is well furnished, and rich people like you usually stay there."

Eşref Bey said, "All right, my father. Would you take this money and show me the coffeehouse you just told me about?"

The old man led Eşref Bey to Hasan Ağa's coffeehouse. When they arrived there, Eşref Bey thanked the old man, and then dismounted from his horse. Upon seeing a new customer, the workers of the coffeehouse rushed out, and while some of them were taking Eşref Bey's horse to the stable, some others carried his bags and led him into the coffeehouse. Eşref Bey was given a room, but he decided to stay in the coffeehouse for awhile.

My ağas, let him sit and get some rest in the coffeehouse. About what should I inform you now? I would like to tell you about Hasan Ağa and his partner Deli Behram. Hasan Ağa was the man who was staying in the coffeehouse and taking care of the requests of the customers. Do you want to know who Deli Behram was? He was Eşref Bey's uncle Hebib Bey's brother. But he was not exactly a brother of Hebib Bey; he was his stepbrother. They were born of the same mother, but their fathers were different.

Deli Behram was not a good man. Therefore, Hebib Bey did not like him. Deli Behram and Hasan Ağa were good partners in robbing their customers. They were robbing the rich customers of their coffeehouse and customers of the guest house. Whenever they had a rich merchant or a rich prince who stayed in their guest house,

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they were breaking into that customer's room at night, taking the man to the basement of the guest house, slaughtering him there, and keeping all his money and other belongings.

While Eşref Bey was sitting at a table in the coffeehouse, Deli Behram came in, and asked Hasan Ağa, "Is there any rich customer today?"

Hasan Ağa pointed at Eşref Bey and said, "Do you see that young man?"

Deli Behram looked toward the direction Hasan Ağa pointed at, and said, "Yes, I see him."

Hasan Ağa said, "He must be the son of a very rich man. He came in with very heavy bags which must be filled with gold. He is our prey tonight. He is a well-fed duck, and if we are able take his feathers off we will have much money which is enough for not only two of us, but it will be enough for all of our relatives."

Deli Behram said, "That is very good. Then we have business to take care of with him."

Having decided to rob Eşref Bey at night, Deli Behram went out to find two executioners. He had two strong murderers who had worked for him in his dirty businesses. They were killing people for Deli Behram. Shortly, Deli Behram was able to find them, and he told them that they had business at night. When it was very late at night, three of them walked to Hasan Ağa's coffeehouse.

By the time Deli Behram returned to the coffeehouse with his men, Eşref Bey had gone to his room to sleep. They all waited until the last customer in the coffeehouse had left, and then all together walked up to Eşref Bey's room. One of the men knocked on Eşref Bey's door, and the murderers took their place at each side of the door. Eşref had just fallen asleep, and upon hearing the knocking on his door, he got up and opened the door. Holding their swords up, the two murderers immediately took their place at each side of Eşref Bey. Upon seeing the men who had held their swords up to kill him, Eşref Bey asked, "What is this?"

Deli Behram replied, "Do not talk or ask anything. Your time is over. Just walk with us."

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Deli Behram and one of his men tied Eşref Bey's hands at his back, and then they took him to the basement of the building. A few minutes later, Hasan Ağa joined them there. Deli Behram said to Eşref Bey, "We will cut your head off, my friend."

Still in shock and confusion, Eşref Bey asked, "Why? What have I done to you?"

Deli Behram said, "You have done nothing to us, but you have got much money. If we take your money and let you go, you can make a complaint about us. But if we cut your head off, the head without a body cannot talk. If no one learns that we have got your money, we can spend it without facing any problem. That is why we have to kill you."

Eşref Bey said, "If you believe in and love God, Who created you and me, release my hands for a few minutes. I would like to sing a couple of stanzas before you kill me. When I finish with my song, you may either kill me or free me."

They did not refuse Eşref Bey's request and released his hands. Eşref Bey began singing. Let us hear what he sang and how he begged them:

If you love God, Who created all of us,  
For God's sake, please do not kill me.  
Forgive me for the sake of the earth and sky;  
For heaven's sake, please do not kill me.

Among the four men, Hasan Ağa was the softhearted one who thought to himself, "What would happen if someone asks about this young man?" Deli Behram, on the other hand, showed no sign of mercy on Eşref. Eşref Bey sang again:

My destiny must be written as black by the Creator.  
Do not add more fire into my already burning heart.  
My mother and father are hoping to see me.  
If you love God, please do not kill me.

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Eşref Bey sang again:

Do not put poison in Eşref's food.  
 Why do you need to kill me, heartless executioners?  
 You came to my room holding your swords;  
 For God's sake, please do not kill me.

Upon listening to Eşref Bey's song, Hasan Ağa said, "My friends, let us not kill this boy here. Killing him here is going to create a big problem for me, because everybody in the coffeehouse has seen him. Tomorrow some people may ask about him. In addition, it seems to me that he is not an ordinary man. Behram, you have a brother who is the ruler of this city. When you are in trouble he would save you. I, on the other hand, do not have someone like your brother who would save me."

Deli Behram asked, "What do you suggest?"

Hasan Ağa said, "Let us handle this situation in some other way."

Deli Behram asked, "Do we have any other choice?"

Hasan Ağa said, "Yes, we do. We could take him in front of your brother's palace."

Deli Behram interrupted, "So?"

Hasan Ağa continued "When we reach there, we would call Hebib Bey to take a look at an outlaw who has come to Ardabil from the land of Arak to spy on Hebib Bey, and while he was spying we have captured him and taken him there. I am sure that Hebib Bey would tell us to kill him there. When we have Hebib Bey's order, we would kill him there. Thus, if someone questions us about the boy tomorrow, we would defend ourselves by blaming Hebib Bey. We would say that we performed Hebib Bey's order. If we can achieve this, nothing would happen to either one of us, and thus we could keep this boy's money and other belongings without facing any problem. Otherwise, we have to answer the questions that might be asked by the people who have seen him, and we could not keep his money."

Deli Behram said, "Hasan Ağa, you are right. However, you do not know much about the character of my brother, who helps the poor and orphans. I am afraid that he would not let us kill this boy."

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Hasan Ağa insisted, "You do not have to worry about it, Behram. When you call your brother up and tell him what a bad outlaw we have captured, he would definitely let us kill this boy there. You can convince Hebib Bey very easily."

Still reluctant to follow Hasan Ağa's idea, Deli Behram said, "All right. Let us go, then."

Upon reaching an agreement, they took Eşref Bey from the basement, and then they all walked together to Hebib Bey's palace. In the middle of the night they shouted in Hebib Bey's window, "Hebib Bey! Hebib Bey!"

Hebib Bey woke up, opened a window, and said, "Who is it?"

Deli Behram said, "It is I, Behram, your brother."

Hebib Bey asked, "What do you want? Why are you bothering me in the middle of the night? What kind of business do you have at this time, you crazy one?"

Deli Behram said, "Why are you mad at me, my brother?"

Hebib Bey said, "Everybody knows that you are not a clean man. You are not a good man, you crazy fellow. That is why I am upset with you."

Hasan Ağa quietly said to Behram, "Go ahead, Behram! Tell him what I told you. While he is angry and half sleepy, he would tell us to kill this boy. Just tell him what I told you."

Deli Behram said to Hebib Bey, "Listen to me, Brother!"

Hebib Bey asked, "What is it, you crazy one?"

Deli Behram said, "An outlaw from the land of the Araks came to Hasan Ağa's coffeehouse. We have captured him while he was gathering some information about you and Ardabil. We have brought him here, and we have decided to kill him. What do you say?"

Hebib Bey shouted, "Wait! Wait! Do not touch him. Bring him quickly to my court. Let me question him first. He might provide me with some information about his friends. We captured their leader a long time ago, and told the rest of them to return to their towns or villages. It seems since then they have formed a new gang. Let me question him about their new gang and their new leader. I would like to learn how many of those former outlaws have become members of this new gang. When I get

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enough information about their group, I will seek a solution to destroy the new gang. Before I question that man you have captured, you must not harm him."

Deli Behram turned to Hasan Ağa and said, "May your house be demolished! May your chimney fall down and may smoke never go out of it! Have I not told you that my brother would not let us kill him? Did you hear what he said? What will we do now?"

Hasan Ağa said, "Do not worry. Eventually Hebib Bey will let us kill him. We will get his permission and his order at his court."

Deli Behram shook his head and said, "I do not think he will ever let us kill this boy. We will not be able to have this boy's money at all."

With this argument as to whether or not they would get Hebib Bey's order to kill Eşref Bey, they took Eşref Bey to Hebib Bey's court. Hebib Bey looked at Eşref Bey's physical appearance and this was what he saw: Eşref Bey appeared to be a handsome, brave youth. He appeared to be born as one in one thousand. Then Hebib Bey thought to himself, "Would it be possible for such a youth to become an outlaw? Would it be fair to kill him? Does he have the appearance of an outlaw?" With those thoughts, Hebib Bey asked, "What is your name, my son? What were you doing in the land of the Araks, and why did you come to Ardabil? How many people are there in your gang?"

Because of the shock and fear of the death he had faced in the basement of the coffeehouse, Eşref Bey had grown pale, and therefore he could not supply an answer to any of those questions.

Having no reply from the boy, Hebib Bey asked again, "My son, I am talking to you. Who are you, and what are you doing in Ardabil? Do you have any friend in Ardabil?"

Eşref Bey was still in a state of shock. He was not able to pull himself up. He did not have enough strength to reply to Hebib Bey. Upon noticing that the boy feared Deli Behram, Hasan Ağa, and their men, Hebib Bey said to them, "You go back to the coffeehouse and wait for me there. It seems to me this boy fears you, and while you are here, he cannot even talk. When the boy calms down a little I will question him again."

Although they did not want to leave Hebib Bey's court, they had no other choice, nor could they have said anything against Hebib Bey's orders. Reluctantly the four men left Hebib Bey's court. Hasan Ağa and Deli Behram sent the two murderers to Hasan

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Ağa's coffeehouse. Behram and Hasan Ağa waited outside and tried to overhear the conversation between Hebib Bey and Eşref Bey.

When they had left, Hebib Bey asked Eşref Bey, "My child, I have asked you some questions, but you have not answered any of them. Tell me who has sent you? What are you doing in Ardabil? Where are you from, and what is your name?"

Eşref Bey looked around and upon seeing nobody holding a sword over his head, he calmed down a little. He took a deep breath and tried to gather some strength in his body to talk to the man who had asked him a number of questions. He said, "My master, if I try to answer your questions in plain words, I may make a mistake; my tongue might twist my words. However, if you have some knowledge about poetry, playing the saz, and singing, I would like to reply to your questions by my saz and by my song."

Hebib Bey asked, "Do you mean you have a saz, my son?"

Eşref Bey said, "Yes, I do. But my saz is in my room at the guest house."

Hebib Bey called one of his servants and ordered, "Go quickly, and bring this boy's saz from Hasan Ağa's guest house!" The servant rushed to Hasan Ağa's guest house; he shortly returned with the saz, and handed it to Eşref Bey. Let us hear what Eşref Bey sang at Hebib Bey's court. He sang this song at his uncle's court. Although Eşref Bey had heard the name Hebib Bey when Deli Behram had called him, until he gazed on the walls of the room while tuning his saz and saw the name "Hebib Bey the ruler of Ardabil" on a frame he was not sure whether the man who was questioning him was his uncle or he was another Hebib Bey. When Eşref Bey had convinced himself about the identity of the man, he began playing and singing. Let him sing, and let us hear what he sang:

I have come to your court with my hands tied up.

My bey, I do not have anybody except you.

I have thought that you are my only hope;

My uncle, I do not have anybody except you.



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Upon hearing Eşref Bey's first stanza and his calling him "uncle," Hebib Bey said, "Shut your mouth! How dare you to call me 'uncle'? Would it be possible for me to become an uncle for an outlaw? Tell me who you are, and where you are from. Tell me what your name is."

Eşref Bey sang again:

The executioners stood at my left and right;  
My destiny was written as black by God.  
I had begged a bey, but he turned me down.  
My bey, I do not have anybody except you.  
I had begged a bey, but he turned me down.  
My uncle, I do not have anybody except you.

[Tape 9, side A ends here, but the story of Eşref Bey continues on side B]

When Eşref Bey's second stanza was over, Hebib Bey said, "My son, I have asked you about your identity, about your friends, and about the city where you are from. Instead of answering my questions, you have kept calling me 'uncle.' Your song stirs my emotions, but I do not understand why you have not supplied answers to my questions."

Eşref Bey sang again. Let us hear what he sang:

I was brought to your court with my hands tied up;  
I was hurt by those ropes, and my heart was broken.  
I am Eşref Bey, the only son of Murat Khan.  
My uncle, I have nobody except you.  
I am the son of Murat Khan of Kandahar.  
My uncle, I have nobody except you.

Upon hearing Eşref Bey's last stanza, Hebib Bey took up his sword, and then he rushed to Hasan Ağa's coffeehouse to kill Hasan Ağa and Deli Behram. Since Deli Behram and Hasan Ağa had listened to Eşref Bey's song and knew that Hebib Bey

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would come over to kill them, before Hebib Bey had arrived at the coffeehouse, they hid somewhere in the guest house. Hebib Bey searched for them for awhile, but he could not find any of them. Having found none of them, but being sure that they were hiding somewhere there, Hebib Bey shouted, "Hey, you! Behram, Hasan Ağa! Bring all the belongings of the boy to my court. Now, I am going back to my palace, but if you do not bring all of his belongings before dawn, I will get you all and hang you in the city square in the morning."

Hasan Ağa and Deli Behram heard Hebib Bey's shout. Deli Behram said to Hasan Ağa, "May your house be destroyed! May your door be shut and never opened again! May you burn and your ashes be blown into the sky! You did not let us kill that boy down there and have his money. Have I not told you that my brother is a protector of the poor and orphans, and that he would not let us kill the boy?"

Hasan Ağa said, "How would I know, my friend? What can we do against our fate if it was not our fortune to have that boy's money? I am sure that your brother would have hanged me and he would have orphaned my children and widowed my wife if I had killed the boy. He would have destroyed my family. However, you would have saved your life, because he is your brother. Tell me, Behram! Tell me how I would have saved my head and my family from the severe punishment of your brother. I think I have done the right thing by taking the boy to Hebib Bey's court. Have you not heard the boy's song? He said that he is the son of Murat Khan, the ruler of Kandahar. That boy is the son of Hebib Bey's blood brother. Do you know Murat Khan?"

Deli Behram said, "Yes, I know who Murat Khan is."

Hasan Ağa said, "That boy is his son. Wake up, Behram. What would have happened to us if we had killed the boy? It is good that we did not kill him."

Meanwhile, Hebib Bey returned to his palace. He hugged Eşref Bey and asked, "Thank God! My son, God has helped you to meet me. Tell me about your father, Son. How is he? Has he sent anything to me, a letter, greetings, or something like that?"

Eşref Bey said, "Yes, of course. He gave me a letter addressed to you, Uncle. Here it is." Eşref Bey handed the letter to Hebib Bey.

Hebib Bey opened it and read these words: "My soul, my dear brother, Hebib Bey. My son, Eşref Bey, has fallen in love with Zöhre, the daughter of Zuhul Khan, the ruler

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of Shiraz. I was not able to keep Eşref in Kandahar. I could not prevent him from going in search of his beloved. If he comes to Ardabil while going to Shiraz, I hope you will help him."

When Hebib Bey finished reading the letter, he hugged Eşref Bey once more and said, " Have a seat, my son. God is great. If one door is closed, God opens another one. God may provide us a solution to solve your problem. We will find out how to handle your problem. For some reason I may go with you to Shiraz. Let us wait and see what comes upon us."

My dear ağas, let them stay in Ardabil. About what should I inform you now? Whatever was written in our fate takes place. Fate cannot be changed. I believe in God and Fate. Let me tell you a little bit about Shah Abbas.

Once every year or two, Shah Abbas had used to visit and inspect his khans who were ruling the cities and the surrounding areas. As was his custom, one day Shah Abbas had gone to visit Zuhai Khan, the ruler of Shiraz. On the last day of the shah's inspection, Zuhai Khan offered a big feast. While the shah, Zuhai Khan, the viziers of both, and the other people gathered and were having their dinner, Zuhai Khan's son came to the dining room. The boy was about three or four years old. Upon seeing him Shah Abbas asked, " Whose son is this boy?"

Zuhai Khan replied, "He is my son, my shah."

Shah Abbas asked, "Has he been circumcised<sup>41</sup>?"

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<sup>41</sup> The Turkish word for circumcision used here is sünnet. Sünnet olmak is to be circumcised. The word sünnet is an Arabic loan word in Turkish. Sünnet, or Sunnah in Arabic, is the body of the words and the deeds of Prophet Mohammed. There is punishment if a Muslim does not perform the sünnet, but those who follow the sunnah will be rewarded. Circumcision of Muslim males is considered one of the deeds of Mohammed, and that is why it is called in Turkish sünnet. A Muslim man can be circumcised until he reaches the age of puberty. In contemporary Turkey, however, most families prefer their sons to be circumcised before their sons begin elementary school.

Circumcision in the Turkish tradition is not only a basic surgery. A ceremony is attached to it. This ceremony consists of a feast to which all the relatives, neighbors, and friends are invited. This kind of festivity is not much different from the festivity that takes place during a wedding ceremony.

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Zuhal Khan answered, "No, he has not been yet, my shah."

Shah Abbas asked again, "Has anyone asked you to become his kirve<sup>42</sup>?"

Zuhal Khan replied, "No, nobody has ever asked me if he could become my son's kirve, my shah."

Shah Abbas said, "Well, then, your son has a kirve. I am willing to serve as his kirve. When you have made a decision to have your son circumcised, you must inform me. I would like to come here and perform my duty as his kirve, or I may send a dependable person to represent me."

Zuhal Khan said, "Thank you, my shah."

Shah Abbas gave a very valuable gift to the boy. When the shah finished his inspection, he returned to Isfahan and forgot about it.

Time passed, and the boy reached an age to become a student, and therefore it became necessary for him to be circumcised. Having decided to send his son to a school, Zuhal Khan also decided that his son would be circumcised before he attended his classes.

Having made up his mind, he immediately wrote a letter to Shah Abbas to inform the shah about his decision. He wrote this: "May all the honors be yours, my shah! As

<sup>42</sup> Kirve or kivre is the title of the man who helps the boy who is to be circumcised. The kirve and related practices became a tradition in Turkish society following the Turkish people's conversion to Islam. According to the Turkish kirve tradition, when a relative or a friend is asked to be a kirve to a boy, it is usually accepted. In order to become a kirve, it is not necessary to be asked; a relative or a friend may tell his wish to become a kirve to a boy. When a man is elected as a kirve, he and the boy's father call each other kirve. Also the boy calls the man his kirve.

According to the kirve tradition, the person who is called kirve buys a new sünnet costume for the boy prior to the boy's circumcision ceremony. The kirve is also responsible for all expenses made before and during the circumcision ceremony and the circumcision festivity. The kirve is the one who also helps the boy while the circumcision surgery is taking place. In some places in Turkey, while the kirve is helping during the circumcision surgery and if a drop of blood falls on the kirve's dress, then a special relation begins between the kirve's and the boy's families. The members of the two families consider each other as brothers and sisters.

A gift, equivalent to the kirve's spending, is given to the kirve by the boy's family. The boy visits his kirve on every holiday, and he is always helped by his kirve. The kirve tradition is still alive especially in the eastern provinces of Turkey.

The kirve tradition might be evaluated as the equivalent of the godfather tradition.

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you wished to become my son's kirve, and as you gave him your valuable gift as a sign of your will, and told me to inform you when he will be circumcised, I consider it as my duty to inform you that I have decided to have my son circumcised. The ceremony will take place as soon as you arrive. I am informing you and expecting you and your orders. As stated in a proverb, 'Do not make a promise even if you are killed, and do not break your promise even if you must die.' Please come and perform your duty, my shah."

When Shah Abbas received the letter he thought to himself, "I am very busy, and I have much work to do, but I promised Zuhail Khan to be his son's kirve. What should I do now? If I go to Shiraz for the circumcision ceremony, I must postpone all of the work related to the whole country. If I do not go, Zuhail Khan will become angry with me. I do not have anybody to sit on my throne, and I do not have anybody to take care of my work."

My dear audience, at that time wedding or circumcision ceremonies were lasting forty days. The wedding festivities and celebrations of the shahs and khans were lasting forty days and nights. That is why Shah Abbas was very much concerned, and he was thinking, "How could I leave my throne to someone else for forty days?" Finally his thoughts brought a solution to his problem. He thought this: "Yes, of course, I have a solution! I just remembered!" Then he called his sister to his court.

Shah-i Duhter walked to the shah's court and said, "Yes, my brother, Shah Abbas? What is your order?"

Shah Abbas let her sit and then he said, "Shah-i Duhter, this is what I would like to talk to you about: When I went to Shiraz to inspect Zuhail Khan, I made a promise to be his son's kirve. I also gave a gift to the boy as a sign of my promise. I received a letter from Zuhail Khan today in which he informs me about his decision to have his son circumcised, and is asking me to perform my duty as his son's kirve. You know that I cannot leave Isfahan for that long. What shall I do now?"

Shah-i Duhter said, "I have no idea, Brother. Also, I do not understand why you are asking my advice on this issue. It is not something I can fulfill for you."

Shah Abbas said, "I thought that you would be the only one who could carry out this task for me, Sister."

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Shah-i Duhter asked, "How can I do it?"

Shah Abbas explained, "You will act on behalf of me. I am going to ask one of my khans to help you there."

Shah-i Duhter asked, "So?"

Shah Abbas continued, "So, you will order whatever is needed for the public, and he will perform it."

Shah-i Duhter asked, "Suppose I accept your idea. Who can be my helper in carrying out such a task?"

Shah Abbas said, "Among my khans, I trust only two people: Murat Khan, the ruler of Kandahar, and Hebib Bey, the khan of Ardabil. You can choose either one of them, and I will send a letter to the one with whom you may want to go to Shiraz."

Upon hearing the shah's offer, the three hundred blood vessels of Shah-i Duhter began boiling. Why, my dear audience? Because both Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter were still single. Neither one of them had been married, and they had feelings toward each other.

Shah-i Duhter said, "Well, then, it is all right with me, Brother. I would like to take Deli Murat the khan of Kandahar with me . . ."

My dear friends, look at her, and see how she is acting like those politicians. Do you understand her real intentions? You will see now.

Shah-i Duhter continued, "I would like to have Murat Khan, but you know that he is a little crazy. He cannot handle a hard situation in a smooth way, and I am afraid that he may get angry with something there, and everything might be turned upside down. He may ruin all the happiness."

Shah Abbas agreed, "Yes, he may do something unexpected."

Shah-i Duhter said, "I think Hebib Bey is more suitable for this journey and the task. He is smart, gentle, and calmed down. He can handle everything very well."

Shah Abbas said, "Well, I am leaving it up to you, Sister. As I said, you can take either one of them with you."

Shah-i Duhter said, "All right, Brother. I will take care of it."

She returned to her room and began writing a letter to Hebib Bey: "My soul, my dear Hebib. My two eyes, Hebib. I was told by my brother, Shah Abbas, that he has

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promised to be kirve to Zuhul Khan's son. Shah Abbas was informed by a letter sent by Zuhul Khan that his son's circumcision ceremony will be held as soon as the shah is there. Shah Abbas, however, has much work to do here in Isfahan. Therefore, he appointed me to perform his duties in behalf of him in Shiraz. He has also appointed you as my guide. Please be prepared for a journey to Shiraz. I will be in Ardabil within three days with two hundred and fifty horsemen. You should also prepare another two hundred and fifty horsemen. We must go there with such a crowd to honor Zuhul Khan on behalf of Shah Abbas. We need a great number of men because Shiraz is a famous place. May you stay in good health and be informed."

Shah-i Duhter immediately sent the letter to Hebib Bey. By the time the letter was delivered, Hebib Bey and Eşref Bey had been talking; Eşref Bey had been playing his saz, and singing.

Hebib Bey opened and read the letter very quickly. When he finished reading it, he stared and laughed at Eşref Bey. These unusual actions of his uncle made Eşref Bey curious about the contents of the letter. He asked "Why did you laugh at me, Uncle? What is written in that letter?"

Hebib Bey replied with a smile, "Do not ask about it, my child. I am very happy for you. I am filled with happiness and joyous feelings caused by this letter. Those feelings were almost causing me to swallow my own tongue."

Eşref Bey asked, "Why? What does it say?"

Hebib Bey replied, "What else could it have said, my son? Now, you are looking at me exactly the way your father used to. He could not even know how to wash his hands and his face, but his good luck was always with him. You have been acting like your father. Like your father's luck, my son, your wish has also come true."

Eşref Bey became very anxious about the contents of the letter and asked again, "What do you mean, Uncle? Would you tell me what it says?"

Hebib Bey said, "You do not ask me, but I will tell you. Shah Abbas' sister, Shah-i Duhter, is going to be here within three days with two hundred and fifty horsemen. Meanwhile, I will prepare another group of two hundred and fifty horsemen. When all of us are ready, we will go to Shiraz. I, of course, will take you with me. You will see

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both Shiraz and Zöhre. You will see the world you have wondered about. What else have you wished, my son?"

Upon hearing the news, Eşref Bey, too, became very happy, and for him those three days became an everlasting three days. He waited very eagerly for Shah-i Duhter's arrival. While waiting for them to come, he was thinking to himself, "My God, let them come very quickly, and let us ride to Shiraz."

Finally, Shah-i Duhter and her companion horsemen arrived in Ardabil on the evening of the third day. Hebib Bey had already prepared all the necessary things for his special guest and her two hundred and fifty horsemen. He received Shah-i Duhter warmly. The two of them walked to Hebib Bey's court and began chatting about various matters. While they were talking to each other, Eşref Bey was serving them food, coffee and so on. During their conversation, Shah-i Duhter noticed Eşref Bey, and after examining carefully his physical appearance her anxiety about this handsome youth increased very much. She had also noticed a saz hanging on a wall of the room. She could not draw a relationship between the saz and Hebib Bey. She stared at the saz, and then at Hebib Bey, and finally at Eşref Bey. Upon noticing her curious gazing, Hebib Bey said, "My lady, why have you looked at the saz, at me, and then at the boy?"

Shah-i Duhter replied, "I have looked at the saz and you because I was wondering whether you are the one who is playing that saz, or not? But my second thought reminded me that you had no skill at playing a saz. I had never seen you playing a saz. Therefore, I looked at the boy, but he does not look like an asik. Would you tell me who plays it, and who this boy is?"

Hebib Bey answered, "Shah-i Duhter, it is very complicated."

Shah-i Duhter asked, "What do you mean, Hebib Bey?"

Hebib Bey said, "The saz and the boy."

Shah-i Duhter asked, "What is wrong with them?"

Hebib Bey said, "Before I tell you about them, you should carefully examine the boy's appearance, and then you should tell me if you can recognize him. He is the son of a man whom you know very well. He looks very much like his father. Take a good look at him."



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Shah-i Duhter called Eşref Bey near her, and then she asked him to turn around, to walk back and forth. Meanwhile, she examined Eşref Bey's appearance very carefully. Finally, she said, "Hebib Bey, since you have made me nervous about his identity, I can make a mistake in my guess, though I can think of only one person whom this boy looks like."

Hebib Bey asked, "Tell me whom you have thought of."

Shah-i Duhter said, "It is Deli Murat. This boy looks like Murat Khan, the ruler of Kandahar."

Hebib Bey said, "Perfect! You are absolutely right."

Shah-i Duhter said, "Am I really?"

Hebib Bey said, "I swear to God, you are right. His name is Eşref. He is Murat Khan's only son."

Upon finding out about Eşref Bey, Shah-i Duhter called Eşref. "Come here, my son!"

When Eşref Bey walked near her, Shah-i Duhter got up and hugged him. Then she said, "Thank God! God has made it possible for me to see Murat Khan's son, who is very handsome. It has become a wonderful time for me, Hebib Bey." Then she asked Eşref Bey, "My son, has your father sent a letter or something like that for me?"

Eşref Bey replied, "Yes, I have a letter for you." Then Eşref Bey took out the letter addressed to Shah-i Duhter, and gave it to her.

Shah-i Duhter read these words: "Hey, my two eyes, my sister, Shah-i Duhter! The person who brings this letter to you is my son, Eşref. I ask for your help if he comes to your court. He has fallen in love with the daughter of Zuhul Khan in Shiraz. My son has drunk the passion of love which was offered him by a pir, and he was also taken to the girl's place by Hızır<sup>43</sup>. If he ever comes to you, please help him. I first trust him to

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<sup>43</sup> Hızır: once a water deity and fertility god--and still both those figures to most farmers in southern Turkey--Hızır is more widely known now as a granter of wishes, a last-minute rescuer from disaster, and a special messenger and agent of God. In these latter three functions he appears fairly frequently in Turkish folktales. Not mentioned by name in the Koran, a chapter of that work was later named after him. He is assumed to be the person instructing Moses in Chapter XVIII of the Koran, where he is referred to by God simply as "our servant."

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God, and then to you." When she finished reading, she kissed the letter and put it on her forehead and then placed it in her bag. Then she said to Eşref Bey, "My son, I promise you to get that girl's hand on the first day we spend in Shiraz. I will get that girl, whose name is Zöhre or something else, for you. From now on, I consider this issue as a duty on my neck. Now, you just be happy, my child."

Upon hearing these words, Eşref Bey could not sleep all night. Until dawn, he walked up and down, back and forth in his room. In the morning, first they checked whether everything needed was ready or not. Hebib Bey had already prepared two hundred and fifty horsemen. They also prepared a carriage for Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter. Hebib Bey prepared gifts which were going to be carried by the maids. Before they left Ardabil, Hebib Bey had offered a feast. During the feast, all the poor were dressed and the hungry people were fed. Everybody was well satisfied. When the feast was over, they all took their places in a line and began riding toward Shiraz.

On the way to Shiraz, Shah-i Duhter frequently examined the horsemen in the line, and the surrounding area. My dear beys, there were five hundred strong horsemen in the line. The view they created was just magnificent. Can you imagine such a crowd of horsemen riding along? When she had looked at them, she saw nothing but Eşref Bey. He seemed very brave, handsome, and strong. His horse, his costume, and his armor were all a perfect match. Having seen Eşref Bey appear in such a stature, she turned to Hebib Bey and said, "Would you take a look at our horsemen, Hebib Bey?" Hebib Bey looked at the view. While he was looking at the crowd of horsemen, she asked, "Would you tell me what takes your attention at first among those horsemen? There is something which strikes a person as soon as one looks at this crowd."

Hebib Bey answered, "The only person who gets my attention is Eşref Bey. It seems to me that anyone can easily single him out among those men."

Shah-i Duhter asked, "How do you single him out?"

Hebib Bey said, "Shah-i Duhter, you might have seen a rosebud which has just blossomed among other wild flowers. He appears to be just like that rosebud."

Shah-i Duhter said, "You have wonderfully described him and his appearance, Hebib Bey. May God bless Murat Khan's loved one!"

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In this way they rode for a few days, and they finally reached the outskirts of Shiraz. By the time they were there, it was almost evening. Upon noticing it had become very late, Hebib Bey said, "My shah, it has become very late. If we enter Shiraz at this time with this many people, we may bother many people over there."

Shah-i Duhter asked, "What do you suggest?"

Hebib Bey replied, "I suggest that we should camp and spend a night here. We can set up our tents and kitchens, and cook and eat here. We have brought enough food with us. We should also send a messenger to Zuhul Khan to inform him that we will be in the city tomorrow morning. God willing, we can enter the city tomorrow morning."

Shah-i Duhter thought a while and then said, "All right, Hebib Bey. That is a very good idea." Then she ordered the horsemen to dismount and set up their tents there.

When Eşref heard the order, he came to Hebib Bey and asked, "What has happened, Uncle? Are we not going to Shiraz?"

Hebib Bey answered, "My son, we will spend the night here. God willing, by tomorrow morning we will be in the city."

When Eşref Bey found out that they were not going to be in Shiraz that night, he felt destroyed. Spending a night away from his beloved seemed to him longer than a year. Therefore, he asked again, "Why is it necessary for us to spend a night here? I do not understand the meaning of it, my uncle. I would like to meet my Zöhre quickly."

Hebib Bey said, "My son, I understand your excitement, but you must be patient. I know you are in love with her; you want to be with her, and your feelings are making you impatient, but you must learn to be patient. Being impatient is not good. No hurry, my son."

Although Eşref Bey did not like the idea, he had no power of changing Hebib Bey's decision. Soon the tents were set up, the horses let grazing, and everybody went to sleep in the tents. They had grown very tired, and with the exception of the guards and Eşref Bey, everybody fell asleep. Since he was filled with excitement, Eşref Bey could not sleep at all. In the middle of the night, he mounted his horse and rode it around the tents.

My ağas, about what should I inform you now? We have reached the most interesting point of our story. I would like to tell you about Zöhre Hanım in Shiraz.

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While Eşref was riding around the tents, she was sleeping in her room in the palace. She had two maids who used to sleep in the same room with her. One of her maids was called Tuygun Kız, and the other one was called Seyrek Basan. Seyrek Basan had this name because her steps were very long. She was very tall, like a pine tree.

While Zöhre Hanım and her maids were sleeping, Hızır came into the room and said to Zöhre Hanım, "Wake up, my daughter. There is good news for you."

She woke up, and Hızır put a mirror in front of her and said, "Look at the mirror very carefully, and then tell me what you see, my daughter."

Zöhre Hanım looked at the mirror, and then she said, "I see tents."

Hızır asked, "What else do you see?"

Zöhre Hanım answered, "A horseman, mounted on an Arabian steed, and riding around the tents."

Hızır asked again, "Who is the rider? Look at him very carefully, my daughter."

Zöhre Hanım replied, "Yes, I have recognized him. He is Eşref, whom I met in my dream."

Hızır said, "That is right, my child. Tomorrow morning a crowd of horsemen will pass in front of your room, and while they are passing you should look out of your window. You will see your Eşref in person. You will meet tomorrow. Your tryst will take place tomorrow evening. You will reach your destiny tomorrow night." Having said those words, Hızır took the mirror away and then he disappeared.

Zöhre Hanım suddenly awakened, and she could not decide whether it was a dream or real. She threw the quilt over her body. She threw the quilt so very fast that the quilt touched the ceiling of the room. She was very excited and did not know what to do.

She called her maids, "Girls! Girls! Girls! Wake up!"

The maids awakened, but they were still feeling sleepy, and they asked, "What has happened, our lady? Let us sleep a little more."

Zöhre Hanım shouted, "May your house be demolished! Get up! It is my time."

The maids asked, "What do you mean, Lady Zöhre? What has happened?"

Zöhre Hanım said, "What else could have happened? Tomorrow morning my Eşref Bey is coming. He will be among the horsemen. They will pass in front of my room, and I will see him in person."

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The maids asked, "Who are those horsemen?"

Zöhre Hanım replied, "Do you not know that there is a circumcision ceremony of my brother? The horsemen are coming from Isfahan, the city of Shah Abbas. They are going to attend the ceremony here. Eşref Bey will be among them. The pir who had offered the passion of love told me tonight. Eşref Bey will be here tomorrow morning, and I will see him. Can you believe it?" Then Zöhre Hanım opened a window in her room and began searching eastward to see the sunrise. She watched the sky as if someone were watching for the Pleiadas.

My ağas, shortly the first sunlight appeared in the east, and it became morning. All the horsemen got up; everybody packed his belongings and loaded them on the horses. Hebib Bey ordered them to form a line by groups. Each group had ten horsemen. When everybody was ready, Hebib Bey ordered them to march in line to Shiraz. Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter seated themselves in the carriage again, and the carriage was at the end of the line.

By the time the first group reached the city, Eşref Bey became very excited, and he could not control himself anymore. He cut a branch of a willow tree, and he made a cirit<sup>44</sup> stick out of that tree branch. Filled with happiness and joyous feelings, Eşref Bey threw the stick at a horseman. The stick hit the man very fast, which caused the man to fall from his horse. The man thought to himself, "He must either be crazy or have lost his mind." Then he turned to Eşref Bey and asked, "Why did you hit me with that stick?"

Meanwhile, Hebib Bey had been watching them, and before Eşref Bey had answered the man, he called Eşref Bey, and said, "My son, I cannot allow you to act like that."

Eşref Bey asked, "What do you want me to do?"

Hebib Bey said, "Come here and dismount from your horse."

Eşref Bey asked, "Why, Uncle?"

Hebib Bey shouted, "Get down! Get down quickly!"

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<sup>44</sup> Cirit is an ancient Turkish game similar to European joust at tournaments. The difference, however, is this: Tournaments feature contests between two participants; cirit is a "battle royal," a free-for-all struggle in which each participant fights against all other participants. Once a deadly game, cirit in modern times is played not with javelins but with blunted sticks.

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Eşref Bey could not resist, and obeyed his uncle's order. While he was dismounting from his horse, Hebib Bey called a beggar near him and said, "I need your outfit, my son. I will give you enough money to buy a new costume and some food for yourself. What do you think?" Instead of replying to Hebib Bey, the beggar immediately took off his outfit and gave it to Hebib Bey, and in return he got enough money.

Hebib Bey handed the beggar's outfit to Eşref Bey and said, "You must exchange your costume with these." Eşref Bey reluctantly took off his fine costume and wore the beggar's dirty and torn outfit. Hebib Bey put Eşref Bey's costume in a bag and gave it to Shah-i Duhter to keep.

As they rode a little farther, Hebib Bey saw a water seller who had a very weak horse. Hebib Bey said to the man, "My son, I would like to buy your horse. Would you tell me how much you would ask for it?" But before waiting for him to reply to his question, Hebib Bey gave him a handful of gold coins which was more than the value of the horse. The water seller accepted the deal. He handed over the halter of his horse and went away. Hebib Bey said to Eşref Bey, "Tie your horse's halter to my carriage, and mount this horse." When Eşref Bey had mounted the weak horse of the water seller, Hebib Bey said, "It is just perfect, now. An aşık is supposed to be like this. When you were in your fancy costume and mounted on the best Arabian steed, you did not appear to be an aşık. Why were you very excited, and why did you hit that horseman with the stick? Now you would not dare to act as you did before."

My friends, Hebib Bey was doing these things deliberately. He had his own reasons for making Eşref change his clothes and mount that weak horse. He did not want him to be noticed. Hebib Bey did not want to reveal Eşref Bey's intentions. Wearing a beggar's costume and mounted on a weak horse made Eşref Bey lose his confidence and reduce his excitement. He began feeling like a broken-winged bird. He asked Hebib Bey, "Is this how you want me to appear in public, my uncle?"

Hebib Bey replied, "You look wonderful, my son. Now you look like a real aşık. An aşık must appear like this."

Meanwhile, the first group of horsemen was passing in front of Zöhre Hanım's room, and Zöhre Hanım and her maids were watching them. They were eagerly waiting to see Eşref Bey. Shortly, the group which included Eşref Bey approached and passed.

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Zöhre Hanım and the maids saw Eşref Bey dressed like a beggar and mounted on a weak horse.

Upon seeing him in such poor condition, the maids teased Zöhre Hanım. "Hey, look at Zöhre Hanım's lover! Is he not great?" Then the maids turned to Zöhre Hanım and said, "Is he the one you have waited for all this long time? Are you out of your mind? You deserve someone much better. Can you not find a better man? Is he the one with whom you have fallen in love?"

Zöhre Hanım was shocked by the appearance of Eşref Bey, and she felt more hurt by the teasing questions of her slave maids. She felt that it was the end of the world. She felt like it was the judgment day. She did not answer the maids' questions, but she just felt sick. She screamed in tears, "Eyvah! Eyvah! Girls, take me to my bed. I am feeling like a dying person." All her dreams were destroyed. She felt pain in every cell of her body, and thought to herself, "Last night Hızır showed me my Eşref in a magnificent costume and on a wonderful horse. Today, I saw him in a completely different appearance. How could it be?" Shocked and confused, Zöhre Hanım became sick and lay down in her bed.

Hey, my dear audience! Finally, the five hundred horsemen reached the courtyard of Zuhul Khan's palace. Except for Eşref Bey, every one of them was invited by a palace member or a rich man of Shiraz. Since Eşref Bey looked like a beggar, none of the rich people invited him. He was left alone there. May the cradle of poverty be broken! My dear beys, Eşref Bey had no place to go in Shiraz.

While he was looking around, a poor old man approached. The old man noticed Eşref Bey's saz, and he thought that this youth was a poor aşık. The old man said, "Those rich people do not know what is good and what is bad. They do not have real taste. They do not know how to enjoy, to be entertained, to be happy. Come with me, son. Follow me and be my guest." Eşref Bey did not refuse the old man and followed him. While they were going to the old man's house, the old man greeted a woman and a girl who looked like his relatives. The old man's house was really far from the palace. When they arrived at the old man's house, the old man tied Eşref Bey's horse to a tree in front of his house, and then he invited Eşref Bey into his little one-room house.

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The old man showed Eşref Bey a place to sit. Eşref Bey sat down and looked around. The room was very dirty. It was covered with spiderwebs, and many spiders were running up and down in the room. There was a small fireplace where tezek<sup>45</sup> was burning to heat the room. Eşref Bey examined the room for awhile, and then he thought to himself, "This is just perfect. We all match and fit this room. This is just wonderful."

Hebib Bey, on the other hand, had a gathering at Zuhul Khan's palace with the khans of other cities. Shah-i Duhter, too, had her own group in another palace room. She was being entertained by all the single girls of Shiraz but Zöhre Hanım. In Hebib Bey's room there were forty khans who had been invited to the circumcision ceremony.

Before the dinner, one of the khans said to his friends, "My friends, please listen to me carefully! He is Hebib Bey, who is here on behalf of Shah Abbas. He is representing the shah. If you do not know him well, I shall let you know. He is a very intelligent and experienced man. While you are in his court, I suggest that you not talk too much. Do not talk all together and loudly. While he is talking, listen to him, and try not to bother him with meaningless questions."

Some of the khans asked, "Can each of us talk to him?"

The khan said, "I think we should choose a representative who could carry on a conversation with Hebib Bey so we can have a very nice discussion."

The other khans asked, "Who is going to represent us?"

The khan said, "I think Ragib Khan can handle it. He is also an experienced man."

They all agreed on Ragib Khan, and asked him, "Ragib Khan, you are a very smart and experienced man. Would you sit near Hebib Bey and carry on a conversation with Hebib Bey?"

Ragib Khan said, "If you think I am the one who can handle it, then I will do it."

Soon very delicious food was served to satisfy the hunger of the khans. The coffee cups appeared on the fine trays. While they were drinking their coffee, Ragib Khan said, "Hey, kirve! May God make this ceremony the best one!"

Hebib Bey replied, "Welcome! Welcome, my friends!"

Ragib Khan said, "Hey, my bey and my khans! What are we here for?"

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<sup>45</sup> Tezek is dried cow dung.



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The khans replied, "May God accept it! We are here for the circumcision ceremony of Zuhul Khan's son."

Ragib Khan said, "You are right, my khans. We are here for the ceremony and the festivity. What does a festivity require? Do you not think that we need an entertainer, a singer, a musician?"

Hebib Bey said, "Yes, you are right, Ragib Khan."

Ragib Khan continued, "In short, this place needs an asik. It is a custom of this city. Is it not, my friends?"

The khans replied, "Yes, it is a tradition of Shiraz."

Ragib Khan asked, "Well, then, may I ask you, Hebib Bey, where your asik is? As far as I know, Kandahar is famous for its asiks, and Isfahan has more asiks than Kandahar. When it comes to Ardabil, do not even bother asking about the asiks of Ardabil; they are simply the best. Hebib Bey, you are the ruler of the city where the best asiks have been dwelling, but you do not have any of them with you. Would you tell us where your asiks are? Have you or have you not brought an asik with you? You are here to represent Shah Abbas as the kirve, and also you are coming from a city where the best asiks are found. You, however, do not have an asik to entertain us here. Do you not know the tradition?"

Hebib Bey, of course, knew the tradition, and he was expecting such a demand from him. It appeared that everything was going on as he had planned. He said, "I am sorry, my friends, but all the asiks of Ardabil had gone somewhere else before I received the letter from the shah to represent him here. Otherwise, I, of course, would have come with a number of asiks of Ardabil to entertain you. You, however, do not worry, my friends. Even if I do not have an asik from Ardabil, I might have someone else to play a saz and sing songs for you. I have met an asik on my way to Shiraz."

Ragib Khan asked, "So, where is he?"

Hebib Bey continued, "He was very poor, and dressed up in a dirty outfit. Therefore, I could not bring him here. I had thought to myself that he would not fit the court of khans. Also, I asked my horsemen about the skill of that asik, and I was told

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that during his eşref time<sup>46</sup>, he had fallen in love with the star of Zöhre within the zodiac of Zuhâl. I was told that this aşık has been struggling with that star in the sky."

Hey, my ağas! Do you understand what Hebib Bey had tried to do? Zuhâl is the name of Zöhre's father, and Zöhre is the name of the girl with whom Eşref Bey had fallen in love. Eşref time is representing our hero, Eşref Bey. So, I think you have got it now, my ağas.

Hebib Bey continued, "I was told that while he was in his eşref time, the aşık whom I met on my way was touched by the star of Zöhre within the zodiac of Zuhâl. I actually do not have much knowledge about aşıks' singing and playing. What I am telling you here is what I have heard about this poor aşık."

Ragib Khan said, "It is not our problem whether he has been struggling with a star or with all the stars in the sky. As long as he has the skill of entertaining, playing a saz, and singing songs, we would not care about his own problems."

Hebib Bey said, "Well, if you think that it is all right with you in what condition that aşık comes here, what he sings, then I should send someone to call him. I am, however, reminding you that he might come here with his dirty and inappropriate outfit, and he might sing songs about his own problems. If you do not mind about those, I am sending someone to call him here."

Remember, my friends, Hebib Bey had made Eşref Bey exchange his fine costume with the beggar's dirty outfit. Hebib Bey did not get any response either from Ragib Khan or from any other khan. So Hebib Bey thought that all the khans accepted in what condition the aşık comes and what he says.

Hebib Bey wrote a note to Shah-i Duhter: "Dear Shah-i Duhter, the khans here in my court are asking for an aşık. Please find Eşref Bey, dress him in his own costume, tell him to take his saz, and advise him how to act in the court of khans. He should not say anything about Shiraz. He should not reveal his real name in his songs, and finally he should not talk about his love for Zöhre. In short, he should not create a crazy situation. Other than those, he can sing and say anything he wants."

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<sup>46</sup> According to Turkish tradition everybody has a good-tempered time and a bad-tempered time. The good-tempered time is called eşref saati.

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When Shah-i Duhter received Hebib Bey's note, she immediately sent someone out to find Eşref Bey. They looked for Eşref Bey in many the places, in the coffeehouses, on the streets, but he was nowhere. So the servants returned to Shah-i Duhter's court with empty hands.

My friends, the poor old man had a daughter whom Eşref Bey saw on the way to the old man's house. She was there at the palace, in Shah-i Duhter's court. When she noticed Shah-i Duhter was looking for someone she asked, "Whom are you looking for?"

Shah-i Duhter replied, "I am looking for an aşık who came to the city with us."

The girl said, "The aşık you are looking for is with my father at our house."

Shah-i Duhter asked, "Where is your house located?"

The girl said, "It is really far from here. It is located in a poor neighborhood almost at the outskirts of the city, down to the hills of Black Mountain."

Shah-i Duhter said, "May your house be demolished, aşık! Why did you go that far?"

My friends, what could Eşref Bey have done? Since nobody invited him but the poor old man, he went to his house.

Shah-i Duhter sent someone to the old man's house. Shortly, Eşref Bey appeared at the threshold of Shah-i Duhter's court.

Shah-i Duhter first dressed Eşref Bey up in his own costume, and also put some accessories on his costume. Then she said, "My son, Eşref! Now, you will go to Hebib Bey's court where all the khans have gathered. The khans asked for an aşık from Hebib Bey. Hebib Bey will present you as an aşık whom he had met on his way to Shiraz. You must not say crazy things there. You must not talk about your love. You must not reveal your name or your beloved."

Eşref Bey said, "Shah-i Duhter, I accept all of those restrictions, but sometimes I forget about the place and time, and I feel that I am in a state of love. In such a time I lose my conscious attention on something, and thus I just begin saying whatever is in my mind. What if something like that happens, and I use those words in my songs? When my feelings grow very high, I do not know if I can keep myself from talking about my beloved."

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Shah-i Duhter said, "Do not worry, my son. When you are about to use those words, or talk about your love, your uncle is going to provide you a sign."

Eşref Bey asked, "What kind of a sign?"

Shah-i Duhter explained, "He will tell you this: 'My son, you have broken a string of your saz.' When he provides you the sign, you must understand that you have already used one of or all of those words, or you are about to use them, and talk about your love."

Eşref Bey asked, "Would he ever remind me among the khans?"

Shah-i Duhter said, "Yes, he would remind you."

Eşref Bey said, "If he reminds me, and if I do not lose my conscious attention, I will not say those words."

Following all the instructions and advice given to Eşref Bey, he was led by a servant to the room where all the khans had gathered. When the khans saw Eşref Bey in the court, their eyes were dazzled, and they thought to themselves, "Is this the aşık Hebib Bey was talking about? Can it be he? He does not look like a poor aşık." Remember, my friends, Hebib Bey had told them that the aşık whom he had met on his way to Shiraz had no appropriate outfit, and therefore he had not invited the aşık to the khans' court. Now, I am going to tell you more about the incidents that took place at the court.

Hebib Bey noticed the confusion of the khans and said, "May God grant Zuhul Khan a very long life! He dressed up very well the aşık whom I had brought to Shiraz. Thank you, Zuhul Khan! It is your generosity, but this is much more than I expected. Nobody could have dressed up an aşık as richly as this."

Zuhul Khan thought that his servants had dressed up the aşık in such a nice-looking costume. He puffed himself up like a turkey, and he did not hesitate in taking the honor of providing such a valuable costume.

My dear friends! Zuhul Khan actually did not have much intelligence. He could not even think of such a thing, but he was very pleased with Hebib Bey's complimentary words about him.

Eşref Bey was shown a place to sit down. When he sat down at the court, Zuhul Khan ordered his servants, "Give a cup of sherbet to the aşık!"

## Story 2089

My friends, aşiks drink sherbet in the wedding ceremonies. While they are telling a story, it had been a custom to offer several cups of sherbet to the aşiks. So they offered a cup of sherbet to Eşref Bey.

When Eşref Bey had finished his cup of sherbet, Zuhul Khan said to Hebib Bey, "Kirve, would you give your permission to the aşık to begin playing and singing?"

Hebib Bey said, "I have already told you that I do not have much knowledge about the aşık tradition, aşiks' singing and playing. I used to listen to them when I was a bandit walking over the mountains. I think I have performed my responsibility for providing an aşık to this court. Now it is your duty to make him play, sing, and entertain the people here. Although I do not know much about the aşiks, I must remind you that this aşık has some problems with the star of Zöhre within the zodiac of Zuhul. In his eşref time he was touched by that star. So you must be careful about his songs. That is all that I was told and what I know about this aşık."

Some of the khans said, "It is not important for us what kinds of problems he has. It does not matter as long as he plays his saz and performs some songs. We do not understand why you have kept reminding us about his problems. He is an aşık, and we would like to listen to his songs."

Zuhul Khan turned to Eşref Bey and said, "Let us begin, my son. Play your saz and sing a good song for us. It is your turn now."

Instead of replying to Zuhul Khan, Eşref Bey took his saz from its case. The case was velvet, and the saz was masterfully ornamented. It was inlaid with nacles, and it had golden strings. Eşref Bey's saz was like my saz, my friends, but his saz was a beautifully decorated golden-stringed saz.

First Eşref Bey tuned his saz for a few minutes, and then he began playing and singing. Let us hear what he sang. What should we sing here, and what should our ağas hear? Let him sing the best one:

I have abandoned my country, my land.

I have decided to come to this court.

I have suffered for a long time.

I have come here like a butterfly turning around a candle light.

## Story 2089

While Eşref Bey was singing, Shah-i Duhter dressed two of her maids up in male costumes, and then she told them, "Take a piece of paper and a pen, and go to a window of Hebib Bey's court, and listen to them. Whatever they say and sing, write it down. You must not miss a word, especially about the shah, whether the words were said in favor of the shah or against the shah."

The girls got a piece of paper and a pen, and then they went out. Disguised as men, the maids sat behind a window of the khans' court and began listening to the conversation which took place inside the room. When they saw Eşref Bey, before he had sung his first stanza, both of them had almost lost consciousness. They had spontaneously fallen in love with him. Then they heard him singing these lines:

I have abandoned my country, my land.  
 I have decided to come to this court.  
 I have suffered for a long time.  
 I have come here like a butterfly turning around a candle light.

The words of Eşref Bey, of course, needed a reply. Ragib Khan immediately understood it and said, "Great, my son! You are very welcome here! As long as you have this skill and voice, there will always be the best place reserved for you in such courts. We very much enjoy your style of playing and singing. Thanks to our kirve, Hebib Bey, who has taken you with him. May God bless you, aşık! You are a real aşık. Go ahead, my son!"

Eşref Bey sang again:



Ever since I have drunk the passion of love,  
 I have not passed a day without sorrow and grief.  
 I am afraid that I will not have a tryst with my beloved.  
 I have come for a beauty in your land.  
 Ever since I have drunk the passion of love,  
 I have not passed a day without sorrow and grief.

## Story 2089

I am afraid that I will not have a tryst with my beloved.  
I have come for a beauty in your land.

Upon hearing the second stanza, Ragib Khan said, "I have already told you welcome, my son." Then he turned to the khans and said, "My friends, this aşık has come here for a girl." Then he turned to Eşref Bey and said, "Yes, of course, my son. Let all the girls in Shiraz be sacrificed for you. We are ready to give to you the hand of any girl whom you want in Shiraz."

Hebib Bey was carefully listening to the conversation between Ragib Khan and Eşref Bey. He felt that he must intervene, and he said, "Hey, you, aşık!"

Eşref Bey said, "Yes, my khan!"

Hebib Bey said, "Have you not noticed that you have broken a string?"

Eşref Bey checked his saz, and then said, "No, I have not broken any strings of my saz. They are all fine. Even if one of them gets broken, I have more strings in my bag to replace the broken one."

Thinking that Eşref Bey understood the signal, Hebib Bey did not say anything more, and let Eşref Bey continue singing. My friends, I think he will break a string this time. Let us hear what he said in his last stanza:

I have seen the city of Shiraz in my dream.  
The taste of Shiraz is sweeter than sugar.  
The beauties of Shiraz are very valuable.  
I am Eşref Bey, and I have come for Zöhre Hanım.

Upon hearing Eşref Bey's last stanza Ragib Khan jumped up and said, "Hey, my khans! Hey, my friends! Hey, my beys and my ağas! Did you hear what he just said? Hebib Bey brought this aşık with him because the aşık has fallen in love with Zuhul Khan's daughter. He has come here for Zöhre Hanım. He said that he is Eşref Bey, and he has come here for Zöhre Hanım. Hey, aşık! Do you know what you are talking about? Shut your mouth, and do not play your saz anymore." With those words Ragib Khan interrupted Eşref Bey, and he did not allow him to sing.



Story 2089

One of the khans asked, "Will you not let him sing more?"

Ragib Khan said, "No, I will not."

Hebib Bey knew that sooner or later something like this would occur. In order to break the icy silence in the room, he said, "Hey, my friend, Ragib Khan! You are right not to allow him to sing anymore, but I have already told you about it. I have told you that he has been struggling with the star of Zöhre within the zodiac of Zuhel in the sky. I have told you that during his eşref time he was touched by Zöhre the star. Were you not listening while I was telling you about him?"

Some of the khans agreed with Hebib Bey and they said, "Yes, Hebib Bey is right. He has told us about him, and we all accepted his personal problems." Then some of them turned to Ragib Khan and said, "Hey, Ragib Khan! You are always acting like this. You are adding cold water to the food which has already been cooked. You are turning an antidote into poison. The aşık said the words exactly as Hebib Bey has told us. In his eşref time, he was touched by the star of Zöhre within the zodiac of Zuhel. Have those words not been told us by our kirve, Hebib Bey?" Then those khans turned to Eşref Bey and said, "Hey, aşık! Continue to sing and play." Then they warned Ragib Khan, "Ragib Khan, you keep quiet and do not interrupt the aşık again!" They not only warned Ragib Khan, but they also chose a new representative among them to sit and talk to Hebib Bey.

When the discussion was over and everybody had calmed down, Hebib Bey said, "Hey, aşık! Fix your saz very well and tune it again. If you make a mistake or break a string, I will not be responsible for it."

Eşref Bey said, "Do not worry! I have more strings in my bag. If one of them gets broken, I will replace it with a new one."

Eşref Bey sang again. Let us hear what said in his song:

How can I overcome my burning soul?

Whoever sees me thinks that I am a noble man.

I have been in love for a long time.

Before I feel happiness, sorrow covers me.



Story 2089

While Eşref Bey was singing, Ragib Khan followed him word by word. He thought to himself, "If he talks about his feelings toward Zuhul Khan's daughter, God knows that either I will kill him, or they will kill me."

Eşref Bey sang his second stanza:

My tongue is twisting; I do not know my state.  
Even if I were killed, I would not stay away,  
I have not been pitied by the heavens.  
They say there is nothing to be worried about.

Eşref Bey sang his last stanza:

I cannot compete with Ragib Khan.  
I can only tell my love to a person who keeps it secret.  
Eşref says, "Since I have fallen into this fire,  
My eyes cry, and bloody tears fall down."

Upon listening to Eşref Bey's songs the khans in the court divided into two groups; some of them supported Ragib Khan against the asik and Hebib Bey, and some others took their place on Hebib Bey's side. As they discussed the matter, the tension increased between the two groups. A fight was about to break out. Everybody held his sword and prepared to attack a man in the other group. Hebib Bey got up, took Eşref Bey away from the middle of the room, and kept him under one of his arms. Then he shouted, "I swear by all the names of God that I will slaughter all of you if you make a move against anybody."

Hey, my friends! He was great Hebib Bey of the mountains once. When he shouted, everybody listened to him. Nobody could have stopped him when he was angry.

Meanwhile, the disguised maids behind the window said to each other, "Let us go! Soon they are going to fight and kill everybody. While they are fighting, we might also be killed. Let us run for our lives."

Story 2089

They hurried to Shah-i Duhter's court. Upon seeing the maids rushing and in fear, Shah-i Duhter asked, "What has happened, girls?"

The maids answered, "What else could have happened? The aşık had sung a song of a few stanzas, and said something . . ."

Shah-i Duhter interrupted, "So?"

The maids continued, "Suddenly all of them stood up, held their swords, and prepared for a fight. Before they began fighting, we escaped from there to save our lives."

Shah-i Duhter thought to herself, "Eyvah! Eyvah! I think Eşref had used those words, and he had created a bad situation there." Then she immediately went out and summoned the five hundred horsemen. The horsemen shortly arrived there. She ordered them to surround the palace. The horsemen surrounded the palace and began awaiting her orders.

Meanwhile, some old khans tried to make peace between the two groups of khans. They asked each group to calm down. When all of them had sat down again, one of the old khans said, "Hey, aşık! Play and sing something cheerful. Let us cheer up, my khans!"

My dear audience, Eşref Bey could not control his tongue. He created a very difficult situation over there. May his tongue be poisoned! He used all the forbidden and poisonous words. He broke all the strings of the saz. Upon the old khan's order, he began playing again. I hope he sings a cheerful song this time. May his chimney fall apart! He made the world turn upside down. Let us hear what he sang:

[Tape 9, side B ends here, but the story of Eşref Bey continues on tape 10, side B.]

[Eşref Bey's song and some of the following events unfortunately were not recorded or for some other reason those parts were lost. Therefore it became necessary to provide some information about those incidents.

Following Eşref Bey's song, some of the khans returned to Isfahan to complain about Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter to the shah. Meanwhile, Eşref Bey and Zöhre Hanım met for the first time. At night, some of the khans came together and sought a way to overcome Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter.

## Story 2089

On the other hand, Deli Behram, who had gone to Shiraz among the five hundred horsemen of Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter, was assigned to serve coffee to Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter. Hebib Bey was sharing his room with Eşref Bey and Shah-i Duhter with Zöhre Hanım, for they were going to depart to Isfahan on the next day.

Treacherous Deli Behram, however, had put a kind of drug into the coffees he served to Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter. As a result of the drug's effect, both Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter could not keep themselves awake. While they were unconscious, two executioners had sent by the shah came to Shiraz to take Eşref Bey. While the executioners were taking Eşref Bey, Zöhre Hanım heard noises and went out, where she talked to Eşref Bey.

The dialog between the two is in the form of poetry or song. The remaining parts of the story begins with the last stanzas of Eşref Bey and Zöhre Hanım.]

Eşref Bey sang:

I have been trying to reach you.  
My mind never goes away from your portrayal.  
I am Eşref Bey, and I have spent my youth,  
But I cannot do anything against Fate.

Zöhre Hanım replied:

Zöhre's black fate never becomes white.  
Her luck is never with her, and it never changes.  
I have been sacrificed by my Fate.  
God might not write Eşref in my destiny.

The soldiers of Shah Abbas tied Eşref Bey's hands up and helped him to mount a horse, and they left the city of Shiraz very quickly. They were riding very fast toward Isfahan, the city of Shah Abbas. However, when they reached a crossroads, Eşref Bey saw a merchant who was mounted on a horse, with all of his goods loaded on his mules following his horse. In order to talk to the merchant Eşref Bey slowed down there.

## Story 2089

The executioners asked, "What are you waiting for, our son?"

Eşref Bey replied, "For God's sake, can we wait a little here? Merchants travel everywhere. This merchant may be going to my father's city. I would like to send a letter to my father if this merchant will go to Kandahar. He may deliver my letter. I would like to let my father know about my situation and my whereabouts, so that he can at least come and visit my grave."

The executioners said, "All right; let us wait for a few minutes."

They waited, and shortly the merchant reached the point where Eşref Bey and the executioners had waited for him. The merchant pulled the bridle of his horse and stopped, and then he gazed at them, especially at Eşref, for awhile. What he observed was a young man with a saz on his shoulder, his hands tied at his back, mounted on a horse which was standing between the horses of the two executioners. Eşref Bey was looking at his face as if he were asking for help like a wounded deer.

Having observed the situation, the merchant asked, "Hey, executioners! Who is this boy, and where are you taking him?"

The executioners replied, "We are the executioners of Shah Abbas. Shah Abbas summoned this boy to question him about a matter. We are taking him to the shah's court. When the shah finishes questioning him, we will execute the boy there."

The merchant thought to himself, "Eyvah! Eyvah! May God have mercy on this boy! Would it be fair to kill such a young man? He looks very handsome and well mannered."

Eşref Bey asked, "Excuse me, sir! Would you tell me to what direction you are going? What is your destination?"

The merchant replied, "My son, my first destination is Kandahar. God willing, I will be there soon. I am going to Kandahar."

Upon finding out that the merchant was going to his city, Eşref Bey begged, "For the love of God, His prophet, and your family, would you take a letter and deliver it to my father? My name is Eşref, and I am the son of Murat Khan, the ruler of Kandahar. I have been trapped, and now I am being taken to the shah's court, where they will kill me. If you deliver my letter to my father, he can at least know the place of my grave, and visit it. For God's sake, would you take my letter?"



Story 2089

The merchant said, "Go ahead, my son! Write your letter quickly; write down whatever you would like to write."

The executioners intervened, "Hey, boy! Hurry up! We cannot wait here all day."

The merchant did not let them talk anymore. He took some money from his bag, and while handing the money to the executioners he said, "My sons, take this, and let the boy write a letter to his father about his situation."

One of the executioners took the money and said to the other one, "Let us wait for awhile. Let him write his letter. Why are you in such a hurry? We can wait and get some rest." Then he turned to Eşref and said, "Write your letter, aşık! Write it, aşık; write it!"

Eşref Bey wrote a letter to his father explaining his situation. The letter was addressed to both Murat Khan and Abdullah Hoca. At the bottom of the letter, Eşref Bey added a song of three stanzas. Then he put the letter into an envelope and handed it to the merchant, saying, "Here is my letter, my merchant father. If you love your God Who created you and me and everything else in the universe, deliver it as quickly as you can."

Hey, my dear audience! Let the merchant continue his way to Kandahar. Let him deliver Eşref Bey's letter. The executioners, on the other hand, with Eşref Bey continued their way to Isfahan. In a few days they reached Isfahan, where they immediately took Eşref Bey to the shah's court. The shah and the khans who had felt offended by Eşref Bey's songs and his demand to have a tryst with Zöhre Hanım in Shiraz had been eagerly waiting for Eşref Bey to be brought to the shah's court and executed there. Zöhre Hanım's father, Zuhul Khan, and Ragib Khan were there, as well.

When Eşref Bey appeared at the shah's court with the executioners, all of the khans stood up and held their swords like a butcher who is ready to kill an animal. Shah Abbas, however, very quietly waited, and when Eşref Bey walked into the middle of the court, the shah turned to the khans and said, "Hey, my khans! What are you doing? What are you trying to do? What is wrong with you?"

The khans replied, "Our shah, he is our enemy. Allow us to kill him in a moment. Let us cut him into pieces."

## Story 2089

The shah said, "Stop! Stop talking like that and sit down where you are. You cannot act like this in my court. I cannot even let you touch the boy. Who am I here? I am Shah Abbas. Where do I sit? I sit on the throne of justice. If I allow you to kill this boy, it would be an unjust act of me. How would I let you kill a man in my court without questioning him and investigating the quarrel properly? Would it be possible in my court to kill a man without a trial? You must sit down and wait until I finish questioning him. I, of course, will not let him go free. He will eventually be executed, but before a trial I cannot let you kill him. I have to question him first."

They began discussing how to question Eşref Bey and what to do next. The khans insisted on having him executed immediately, but the shah refused their demand. While they were discussing these matters, Hebib Bey was still in the city of Shiraz. When he woke up late in the morning, he had a headache and felt tired. Hebib Bey looked around to see if Eşref Bey had woken up, but to his surprise Eşref Bey was not there. He searched for him in the room, but there was no Eşref Bey there. Not able to find Eşref Bey there, Hebib Bey called his stepbrother, Deli Behram, who was in charge of guarding the room, "Hey, Behram! Behram! Deli Behram!"

Behram opened the door slightly and said, "Yes, my ağa!"

Hebib Bey asked, "Where is Eşref?"

Behram replied, "My brother, two executioners came in the night; they had an order from the shah to take Eşref to the shah's court; they tied Eşref's hands and took him with them."

Hebib Bey rose up in anger and said, "You, Crazy Behram! You will never change, will you? You have played the same role again. You trapped me, and gave Eşref to those executioners. Is that not right? You added darüşber<sup>47</sup> powder to my coffee, and when I fell asleep, you let them take Eşref. You are a traitor, Behram. I, however, will not let it go. You will not be able to practice any more of these treacherous acts of yours. You will be punished. You have done many wrong things, but I will not let your

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<sup>47</sup> Darüşber is a sleeping potion.

Story 2089

offspring do similar things, Behram. If I do not find Eşref alive, I swear to God that I will soak you in gasoline<sup>48</sup>, and then I will set you on fire. I will burn you alive."

Having said this, Hebib Bey went out of his room and walked down to the meeting hall of the palace. Meanwhile, Zöhre Hanım had been crying in Shah-i Duhter's room. Upon hearing Zöhre Hanım's cries, Shah-i Duhter woke up and asked, "Why are you crying, my daughter?"

Zöhre Hanım said, "Do not ask me about it, Shah-i Duhter."

Shah-i Duhter asked, "Why not, my daughter? What has happened?"

Zöhre Hanım replied, "Two executioners came at night and took Eşref with them. They said that they had an order from the shah; they tied Eşref's hands at his back and took him away."

Shah-i Duhter screamed in anger, "Eyvah! Eyvah! You are a long-haired, short-minded girl! Why did you not wake me up? If I do not find Eşref alive, I will not let you stay alive, my daughter. You must keep this in your mind." Then she dressed very quickly and walked down. At the meeting hall of the palace, she saw Hebib Bey and asked, "Hebib Bey, what have you done to Eşref?"

Hebib Bey replied, "Do not ask me about him, Shah-i Duhter. Deli Behram trapped me. He must have added dartışber powder to my coffee so that I fell into a very deep sleep, and I do not remember what happened after that. When I woke up this morning, I could not see Eşref in my room, and asked Behram about him. He told me that Eşref was taken by two executioners to the shah's court at night."

Shah-i Duhter said, "Eyvah! Eyvah! I also fell asleep like you. He must have put the same thing in my coffee, as well. Let us get ready and go to Isfahan."

Hebib Bey said, "Listen to me, Shah-i Duhter! If they have harmed or killed Eşref, I do not care about whether he is the shah or your brother or they are your relatives or your friends. I am going to kill them all. I swear to God, I will slaughter them all. This is the decision I have made. I will begin killing them from the right and finish with the one on the left. May God not put me in a dishonored position before them!"

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<sup>48</sup> This is clearly an anachronism.



## Story 2089

Shah-i Duhter said, "I assure you that I am certainly on your side, Hebib Bey. While you are killing them, I will be guarding the door, and if any one of them tries to escape, I will kill that person."

They walked out to prepare their horses. Let them get ready. Let us hear what had happened at the shah's court. Finally the shah made his khans calm down, and then he began questioning Eşref Bey. My dear ağas, while Hebib Bey, Shah-i Duhter, Zöhre Hanım, and Deli Behram, whose hands were tied up, were riding toward Isfahan, Shah Abbas was questioning Eşref Bey.

Shah Abbas asked, "My son, who helped you there? Who showed you the girl? Have you met her before?"

Eşref Bey said, "My shah, may all the honors be yours! If you allow me for a few minutes, I will answer your questions in a song. I would like to sing a song where you will find answers for all of your questions."

The shah said, "All right, my son. You may sing."

Wounded in his heart, the poor child took his saz and began tuning it. Upon finishing tuning the saz, he began singing. Let us hear what Eşref sang at the court of Shah Abbas. What should I sing? To what should our beys listen? May you stay in good health! May you never be in grief and sorrow, my dear audience! God willing, you will stay in good health and wealth. May God never put a good person into a position where he asks help from a bad one! My dear ağas, the tune of this song is "Civan Öldüren"<sup>49</sup>."

Let us hear the song:

I have come to your court with my hands tied.  
This court is to be the court of justice for me.  
My shah, I have considered you as my relative.  
My shah, this court is to be the court of justice for me.

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<sup>49</sup> Civan Öldüren is a very sad tune of minstrel tradition, one that creates sad emotions and sorrow in young people.



## Story 2089

Upon listening to the first stanza of Eşref Bey's song Shah Abbas thought to himself, "What he said is right." Then he turned to the khans and said, "Hey, khans! He might have done wrong things, I will find out about it. I, however, agree with him that this court must be the court of justice. Have you not also come to my court to seek justice?"

The khans replied, "Yes, we would like to see how justice is delivered at our shah's court."

While they were talking, Eşref Bey looked outside through the window, and he saw Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter coming into the court with their swords in their hands. Eşref Bey thought to himself, "Thank God! As long as my uncle, Hebib Bey, is here, nobody can kill me." Then he continued to sing. Let us hear what he said in the second stanza:

People who have offended each other make peace on holidays.  
My sorrowful heart has been torn in pieces with my cries.  
When Shah-i Duhter comes to my aid,  
My shah, this court should witness a fight and blood.

Upon hearing the second stanza the khans said, " Did you hear what he just said, our shah? He said that if Shah-i Duhter comes here, she will kill all of us. He said that this court will have a fight and blood."

The shah said, "Calm down and be quiet! There is something behind all of this that I do not know, but I will soon find it out."

When the shah made the khans calm down, Shah-i Duhter and Hebib Bey entered the court with their swords in their hands. Upon seeing them with their swords, the shah said, "Hey, Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter!"

They replied, "Yes, our shah!"

The shah asked, "For what did I send you to Shiraz?"

They replied, "You sent us for a circumcision ceremony, celebrations, and festivities of Zuhul Khan's son."

Story 2089

The shah asked, "Is this the way you celebrate and have festivities?"

Hebib Bey replied, "Yes, it is the way we do it. We celebrated Zuhul Khan's son, and also added another festivity. We decided on a double festivity, one for circumcision and the second for a wedding."

The shah asked, "What do you mean? How could you dare to give the hand of the daughter of my dear Zuhul Khan in marriage to a man who is either coming from a mountain or has fallen from the sky?"

Hebib Bey replied, "My shah, you do not know exactly what is behind this. You do not know whose son the boy is. Would you ask him who his father is? Since he is here, just ask him."

The shah said, "Who is your father, my son?"

The khans intervened, "Our shah, do not believe him. Do not believe Hebib Bey; he is making it up."

While Hebib Bey, Shah-i Duhter, Shah Abbas, and the khans were discussing and were getting ready to fight, Eşref Bey continued to sing:

Nobody has ever listened and understood my words.

Nobody has ever cried for my problems.

None of those khans is telling the truth.

My shah, this court is to be the court of justice for me.

When Eşref Bey finished his last stanza, Shah Abbas noticed that Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter became emotional and began crying. The shah thought to himself, "God knows, but there is something going wrong here." Then he asked Eşref Bey, "My son, who is your father? Whose son are you? I have asked about your father, but you have not answer my question."

Eşref Bey said, "Wait, my shah, wait! Do not hurt my broken heart. I have been hurt very deeply, and I have been in grief and sorrow for a long time. I have been wounded many times. Soon you will understand why my heart is broken. You will find out who my father is, and who I am."

Eşref Bey sang his last stanza:

## Story 2089

I am in your court with my hands tied.  
 My wrists have been hurt and my heart filled with sorrow.  
 I am the son of Murat Khan of Kandahar.  
 My shah, this court is to be the court of justice for me.

Upon finding out about Eşref Bey's identity, Shah Abbas turned to the khans and said, "This boy is not a child of an ordinary man, but he is the son of a khan. You should give up your claims on him. A girl is for a boy, and a boy is for a girl. In addition, they both have drunk the passion of love. This boy is a Lover of God."

Ragib Khan stood up and said, "My shah, how could we know that he is Murat Khan's son? How can you prove it?"

Upon hearing Ragib Khan's refusal of Eşref Bey's revealed identity, Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter took out the letters written to them by Murat Khan, and then they gave the letters to the shah. At the same time Eşref Bey remembered the third letter of his father, and he took the letter out of his packet and handed it to the shah. Shah Abbas read the letter written to him: "My shah, may all the honors be yours! The person who brings this letter is my son, your subject, Eşref. He has fallen in love with Zuhul Khan's daughter, Zöhre, in Shiraz. I beg for your help if he ever comes to your court."

The khans again refused to accept it. "These are all a big lie of Hebib Bey. We do not believe what is written in those letters."

The shah asked, "Would you give up your claims on him if it is proven that he is Murat Khan's son?"

Some of the khans accepted the shah's idea, and some others, especially the group led by Ragib Khan, refused. However, the majority of them supported the shah's idea. The shah said, "I will write a letter to Murat Khan about this matter. I do not know what kind of a response we will get, but until we receive any news from Murat Khan, Hebib Bey will be responsible for the boy, and the girl will be taken care of by Shah-i Duhter."

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Ragib Khan and a few others still insisted on executing Eşref Bey. "We should not wait. We must execute him now."

The shah said, "I will not allow you to do it. What if the boy is Murat Khan's son? What if Murat Khan, the khan of Kandahar, comes here and finds out that his son was executed by us? If something like that takes place here, he would not hesitate to slaughter all of us here. Do you not know Deli Murat?"

Ragib Khan and his fellow khans replied, "Yes, we do know him. But . . ."

The shah did not let them talk anymore and said, "If you know him, why have you kept demanding to execute the boy? As I said, a girl is for a boy, and a boy is for a girl. Why are you still feeling offended and insulted?"

Shah-i Duhter walked a few steps forward and said, "My shah, I have tried to marry one of my servants' daughter to one my servants' son. Is there any candidate for Zuhal Khan's daughter better than Murat Khan's son? They cannot find a man like Murat Khan and his son. What else could one have wished for his daughter? He is not a son of an ordinary family."

Some of the most experienced and respected khans intervened in the argument. With their support the shah's idea was finally accepted by all the khans, including Ragib Khan. May God never let us lack good people! So they gave Eşref Bey to Hebib Bey and Zöhre Hanım to Shah-i Duhter. Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter guaranteed to bring them to the shah's court whenever they were summoned by the shah.

Hey, my ağas! About what shall I inform you now? Do you remember where we have left the merchant who was going to deliver Eşref Bey's letter? I would like to inform you about him.

Passing a distance between the two resting places in a day, finally the merchant reached Kandahar. First he unloaded his animals and placed his horse and his mules in the stable of a caravansaray. Then he went to Murat Khan's palace. By the time the merchant came into his court, Murat Khan was discussing a matter with Abdullah Hoca. They had also talked about Eşref Bey and his adventures.

The merchant greeted them, "Selamünaleyküm!"

They both replied, "Aleykümselam!"



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Murat Khan and Abdullah Hoca examined the appearance of the stranger for awhile. The merchant appeared to be an experienced and truthful man. Murat Khan said, "Welcome! Welcome! Have a seat."

The merchant walked a few steps forward, and sat down. Murat Khan asked, "What is your name?"

The merchant replied, "My name is Mehmet."

Murat Khan said, "Very nice! What brings you here, Merchant Mehmet? Do you have a request?"

The merchant replied, "I wish your good health, my khan. I have no request from you, but I have a letter for you. Here it is."

As soon as Murat Khan took the letter he noticed that it was coming from Eşref. Having a letter from his only child made Murat Khan very happy; a big smile spread on his face. He looked like someone who had been given all the treasures in the world. He hugged the merchant and kissed his eyelids. Then he asked, "Merchant Mehmet, how was Eşref?"

The merchant answered, "Do not ask about him. Please, open the letter and read it. You will find out about his situation when you read it."

Murat Khan's happiness turned to anxiety. He anxiously opened the letter and read it very quickly. Eşref Bey had written his greetings and narrated his adventures briefly which were followed by the information about his latest situation. At the bottom of the letter there was a song of three stanzas addressed to Abdullah Hoca. Murat Khan handed the letter to Abdullah Hoca to read the song. Let us hear what Eşref Bey had said in his song, and how Abdullah Hoca read it:

Read my letter, my rosy-faced Hoca!

They are taking me to the shah to have my blood.

This might be my last journey; I might not return.

Zuhal Khan wants my life at the shah's court.

This might be my last journey; I might not return.

Zuhal Khan wants my life at the shah's court.

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Abdullah Hoca read the second stanza. Let us hear what the poor child had written:

I am alone here without my relatives.  
 They want only my life for their anger.  
 I am Eşref, who is filled with sorrow.  
 Zöhre made my cries reach heaven.  
 I am Eşref, who is filled with sorrow.  
 Zöhre made my cries reach heaven.

Abdullah Hoca read the last stanza in tears. Let us hear what Eşref Bey had said in his last stanza:

Eşref's Fate was written as black.  
 His life will be taken by the executioners lined up.  
 Hebib Bey cannot come to my aid.  
 The khans want my life at the shah's court.  
 Hebib Bey cannot come to my aid.  
 Father, come quickly; do not wait.

Upon reading the letter and hearing the song, Murat Khan said, "Eşref has fallen into a trap because he could not get aid from Hebib Bey. Eyvah! Eyvah! I should not have given him permission to go on such a journey."

In order to get rid of his sorrow he sang this song:

I am filled with sorrow and grief;  
 It burns my heart and my soul.  
 I bowed my head in front of his highness;  
 He made me the standard-bearer of life.

Murat Khan sang again:

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Neither the shah nor the khans know;  
 My intentions are known only by God.  
 Everybody thinks that I am very happy.  
 The heavens have destroyed my happy world.  
 Everybody thinks that I am very happy.  
 The heavens have destroyed my happy world.

Murat Khan sang one more time. Let us hear what he said in his last stanza:

I am Murat Khan. My eyes cry.  
 My soul cries for our separation.  
 Eşref has written his sorrow in his letter.  
 Nobody knows if he is dead or alive.  
 Eşref has written his sorrow in his letter.  
 Nobody knows if he is dead or alive.

Following his song, Murat Khan called his commanders for a meeting. He briefly explained Eşref Bey's situation, and then he told them his intention to go to Isfahan and destroy it. Murat Khan and Abdullah Hoca gathered one thousand strong soldiers, and when everybody was ready to depart, they rode to Isfahan. When Murat Khan and his soldiers reached the outskirts of Isfahan in a few days, Murat Khan ordered his soldiers to stop there and surround the city.

Upon noticing that many soldiers had surrounded the city, the shah's guards informed Shah Abbas about it. Having heard the news, the khans also gathered at the shah's court and asked, "Who can dare to surround the city of the shah?"

The shah replied, "He cannot be anybody else except our crazy Murat Khan. Who else could have dared to surround Isfahan, the city of the shah? I think he came here as soon as he received my letter."

Then the shah ordered his servants to call Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter. "Go quickly, and call Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter to my court."

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When Shah-i Duhter and Hebib Bey came into the court, Shah Abbas said, "This army is Murat Khan's army. You should go to him and invite him to my court. He should come to my court and talk to me."

Hebib Bey said, "How can I go to him? What should I tell him? I cannot go to him without his son."

The shah said, "I think you are right to take the boy and the girl with you. If he sees his son and his daughter-in-law, his anger will go away, and he will calm down. Then you can bring him to my court."

Hebib Bey agreed with the shah. He called Eşref Bey and said, "Eşref, my son, your father has arrived."

Eşref Bey asked, "Where is he?"

Hebib Bey said, "Well, he has not come into the city; instead of coming to the shah's court he has surrounded the city. We have been informed that he has decided to take vengeance for you from the shah and the khans. His soldiers have begun destroying the houses outside the fortress of the city. Do you have any idea how we can stop him?"

Eşref Bey said, "If you let me go to him with Zöhre, I can tell him to stop harming innocent people. When he sees me and Zöhre, I think he will forget about his anger and stop harming the people."

Upon hearing Eşref Bey's opinion and his willingness to talk to his father, Hebib Bey did not say anything, but he waited for the shah to comment on it. The shah thought to himself whether he should allow Eşref Bey and Zöhre Hanım to go to Murat Khan. Then he decided to summon Zöhre Hanım to his court. Shortly Zöhre Hanım appeared before the shah, and the shah let them go to Murat Khan.

Meanwhile, Murat Khan was not waiting. Let us see what he was doing. By the time Eşref Bey and Zöhre Hanım were about to leave the shah's court, Murat Khan had ordered his soldiers to break the door of one of the main gates of the city. When they broke the door, Murat Khan rode his horse into the city toward the palace. He was riding an Arabian steed, and he was holding his sword up. He was also screaming, "Aaah, my child! Aaah, my Eşref! Where are you?" When he appeared in front of the palace, Hebib Bey saw him shedding tears and bursting with anger. Hebib Bey thought to himself, "At this point Deli Murat does not care even about the shah. Including



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myself, nobody can stop him but his son." Then Hebib Bey turned to Eşref and said, "Hurry up, my son! Take Zöhre with you and meet your father."

Eşref Bey and Zöhre Hanım rushed outside to stop Murat Khan. There Eşref Bey screamed, "Father! Father! Father! I am Eşref! I am alive, Father!"

Upon hearing Eşref Bey's voice screaming "Father!" Murat Khan pulled his horse's bridle and stopped there. When he saw his son alive, he could not keep himself on the horse anymore. Because of the happy and joyous feelings he had, he let himself fall down from the horse. Eşref Bey rushed to Murat Khan and hugged him and kissed his hands. Murat Khan immediately got up, kissed his son's eyelids, and hugged him in tears. Upon noticing Zöhre near Eşref Bey he asked, "My son, Eşref, who is this?"

Eşref Bey replied with a smile, "She is your daughter-in-law, Father."

Murat Khan turned to Zöhre Hanım and said, "Hey, my daughter!" Then he kissed her eyelids, as well.

Meanwhile, Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter came there. Murat Khan turned to Hebib Bey and said, "Hey, my brother, Hebib Bey! What has happened to you? Why were you not able to save Eşref? How did you let them take Eşref to execute him?"

Hebib Bey said, "Do not ask me about it. Somehow they managed to deceive me."

Shah-i Duhter came to Hebib Bey's help and said, "Murat Khan, if we had not helped Eşref, they could have killed him in Shiraz."

Hebib Bey said, "Although I could not save Eşref there, I have saved him here. I also promise you to punish the man who deceived me. You will see how I punish him now."

Hebib Bey ordered a few soldiers, "Go quickly and bring Behram here!"

The soldiers went and shortly returned with Behram. Hebib Bey said, "Behram, you know that I have sworn to God. Now I must perform it." Then he poured some gasoline from the head to his toes and set him on fire. Shortly Deli Behram was caught by the fire, and his body began to be consumed by huge flames. He was circling to save himself, but it was too late for him. Within the flames the infidel Behram began running. Hebib Bey ordered a few soldiers to follow him and to make sure that his body became a handful of ashes. Hebib Bey thought that he should not let his ashes be

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mixed with the earth, for if remnants of his sinful body had got mixed with soil and a plant had grown there, and if someone could have eaten that plant, that person could have been poisoned. Therefore he ordered his soldiers to gather the ashes of Behram's body and blew them into the wind. So, my dear ağas, traitor Behram's soul was sent to hell, and his life was left for you.

Following the punishment Behram received, Murat Khan asked Eşref, "My son, tell me who were those khans who wanted to kill you?"

Eşref Bey said, "I will show you, Father. Just follow me."

Eşref Bey led his father to the shah's court. On their way to the shah's court, Zöhre Hanım said, "Eşref, you should not let your father kill my father."

Eşref Bey turned to Murat Khan and said, "Father, there is only one man who certainly wanted me to be killed. He never believed my words and he never respected my love. I will show you who that man is. I must also tell you that my father-in-law, Zuhal Khan, is not guilty of anything. He is an innocent man among the khans." Shortly, they reached the shah's court, where all the khans had been waiting in fear. There Murat Khan asked Eşref, "Eşref, would you show me the man who wanted you to be killed?"

Eşref Bey pointed at Ragib Khan and said, "He is right there, Ragib Khan."

Murat Khan called Ragib Khan and said, "Is that you, Ragib? Are you the one who wanted to have my son's life taken away? Come down here!"

Ragib Khan, however, was astonished upon seeing the anger of Murat Khan, and he was not able to move even one step. Murat Khan ordered his soldiers to tie Ragib Khan's hands and take him away from his sight. While his soldiers were taking Ragib Khan away, Murat Khan pulled his sword up and walked forward as if he were going to slaughter all the khans in the court. Upon seeing Murat Khan approaching them with his sword, the khans screamed, "For God's sake, spare our lives, Murat Khan! We have not done anything wrong. It was Ragib Khan who made us stand against your son, and we did not know he was your son."

Murat Khan asked, "Is it true?"

The khans said, "We swear to God, it is true."

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Upon hearing the khans blaming Ragib Khan for all the bad incidents Eşref Bey had experienced in Shiraz and in Isfahan, Murat Khan first cut off one of Ragib Khan's ears, and then he cut off his other ear, and then he cut off his nose. Shortly, Murat Khan sent Ragib Khan's soul to hell, and his life was left for you, my dear audience.

Following the well-deserved punishment of the traitors, Murat Khan, Shah Abbas, Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter had a meeting. There Murat Khan said, "My shah, there remains one more thing to be finished."

Shah Abbas asked, "What is it, Murat Khan? I can do everything for you. I will not refuse your request."

Murat Khan said, "We have united two loving children. May God never separate anybody from his beloved one. Now I am going to ask for you something for which you will forgive me if I am wrong. What I would like to ask for you is to marry Hebib Bey to Shah-i Duhter . . ."

The shah interrupted, "What?"

Murat Khan continued, "My shah, I am suggesting that we should have a long-awaited wedding ceremony, wedding ceremony for Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter."

The shah did not respond for awhile and thought to himself, and then he said, "Well, I approve it. Let it be so."

Shortly the news about the marriages and wedding ceremonies of Eşref Bey and Zöhre Hanım and Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter spread in the country. Murat Khan sent some of his best soldiers to bring his wife to participate in their son's wedding ceremony. Shortly she arrived. Meanwhile, all the necessary preparations for the two wedding ceremonies were completed.

The celebrations and festivities lasted forty days. At the end of the fortieth day, on the evening of a Friday, Eşref Bey and Zöhre Hanım were put in a bridal chamber where they reached their desires. On the next Friday, Hebib Bey and Shah-i Duhter reached their desires. All of them reached their desires. May God help us to reach our desires!

Forgive me, my friends! How many people are there here? I guess there are about one hundred people who have listened to this story. So one hundred apples have fallen

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from the sky. Those are the apples of heaven . One of them is mine, and the rest are yours. Each of you should have one apple. Good-bye, my dear ağas, good-bye!

The name of our master is Hıdır<sup>50</sup>.

This is the best I can do.

May all be very sweet that you eat;

May it be fur that you wear;

May God grant long life for each of us.

May God make your day a fruitful one!

God willing, you will have very nice days!

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<sup>50</sup> This word might be “Hızır” or “Hıdır.” The minstrels and other narrators in Turkey mention the name of this holy person in different parts of a story. At the end of each story, the name Hızır/Hıdır is mentioned as a rhyming word, as well.