

Story #660 (1961-62 Tape #70)

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The (Guessing Children) Help the (Istanbul) Hoca

Once a long time ago, two men went to (Istanbul) to make (money). They worked hard and saved their earnings. As they were sitting at a (coffeeshop) discussing their coming trip back home, they met a fellow from their (village) whom they had not seen since they left the village. They sat down together and chatted for a while. The two friends mentioned their plans to return to the village for a visit. Their new friend told them it was not safe for to keep their savings themselves because there were notorious (thieves) in the city. He said that there was a certain (hoca) who safeguarded many villagers' money, and that they should go to see him and let him keep their money for them. The two men thanked the third for his advice and set about to find the hoca. They asked many people before locating his house.

They knocked on the door and asked to see the hoca. Meanwhile, while they had been carrying on their conversation at the coffe house, a thief had been (eavesdropping), and had followed them to the hoca's house. They were shown in and presently the hoca came down to see them. When they told him their problem, he assured them he would guard their (savings). They told him they would return for their money in about a week. One of the men's names was Gökçiki the other's was Akçiki. Gökçiki had saved

thirty-nine gold pieces and Akciki had saved forty gold pieces.

They thanked the hoca and left. The hoca taught religious chants -- religious each night at nine, so he too left shortly thereafter. Before he left he told his wife about the two men who had just visited and asked her to give them their money if they should come for it when he was away

A couple of hours after the two peasants' visit, the thief that had followed them to the hoca's house, along with one of his companions, knocked at the door. They asked the hoca's wife to return their money, because an urgent matter had come up and they would be leaving for their village the same evening. The hoca's wife asked them for details, and they said their names were Akciki and Gokciki. They also told her that they had entrusted forty and thirty-nine gold pieces respectively to the hoca. Having been reassured of their identity, the hoca's wife went upstairs, got their money, and handed it over to the thieves. They thanked her and left

In a week the two villagers came to the hoca to get their savings so that they **could** return to their village. The hoca called his wife and asked her to fetch the money. She told him that she had already returned the money, the very night that it had been brought. The hoca said to the men, "Someone has robbed you of your money, but come back in a week and I shall have found the thief and recovered your money for you." He then went to the chanter's school and asked four of his pupils to volunteer in finding the stolen money. Four tall, robust, young men stepped

out and said they could help him.

He asked them to speak out, and the first one said, name of the village is Horazan." The second said, "There is a Turkish bath next to his house." The third one said, "His name is Ramazan." The fourth one said, "His wife's name is Kerziban."¹

The hoca was very pleased with his four pupils and asked them to go and find the thief. The four young men left and went to the village named Horazan. They found the house next to the bath. They asked the people on the street to show them Ramazan's house, and the people did. They went up the steps and knocked on the door. Meanwhile Ramazan had heard that four young men from the chanter's school were looking for his house. He deduced that they had been sent by the hoca. He took the gold pieces, locked them in his chest, and told his wife that if four young men came to the door to enquire about him to say that he had died six months ago.

When the four young men knocked on the door, Ramazan's wife, Kerziban, went to the door. The young men asked her where Ramazan was, and she told them he had died six months ago. The young men looked at each other in puzzlement and disbelief. They decided to recite the saying again. So one of them said, name of the village is Horazan." The second one said, "There is a bath next to the house." The third said, "His name is Ramazan." And the fourth said, "His wife's name is Kerziban. "That's it!" they all said. "Go find Ramazan!"

¹This whole revelation rhymes.

She swore she could not get him because he had gone beyond her reach, but the four young men told her they knew better, and that they would not leave before getting the money from Ramazan. Seeing that the four young men would not be convinced, the wife went into the house and said to her husband, "Unless you were to go seven levels beneath the earth, these four young men would find you. You had better come out and speak with them."

Ramazan came out and asked the four young men, "What do you want with me?"

They ordered him to go and fetch the money, but Ramazan insisted that he did not have the money. Hearing this, the four young men recited the revelation one more time. The first said, "The name of the village is Horazan." The second said, "There is a bath next to the house." The third said, "His name is Ramazan." And the fourth said, "And his wife is called Kerziban." Then together they continued: "Under the staircase is a cellar, and the chest that is there contains the money."

They had told him his name was Ramazan and that his wife's was Kerziban. They knew that the money was hidden in the chest which was in the cellar under the staircase. And then they ordered Ramazan to go fetch the money and be quick about it. Ramazan, having no other choice, went down to the cellar, opened the chest, and got the money out, but he took two gold pieces from each purse and pressed them under his tongue. He then went up and gave the young men the purses. They counted the gold pieces and found there were two missing from each purse. Therefore they repeated the

revelation one more time. "The village is Horazan. There's a bath next to the house. The man's name is Ramazan. His wife is called Kerziban. In the cellar beneath the staircase is the chest with the money. Get the rest out of his mouth!" So they gave Ramazan a sharp slap and knocked the coins out. The four young men took the money and returned to Istanbul, where they delivered the stolen money to the hoca.

When their week was up, the two villagers came to the hoca to get their money. He gave the stolen money back to them. They thanked him for his kindness and left for their village.

When these men had first come to the city they had bought two pistols of the old fashioned kind which worked with black powder. They had stuck these pistols into their belts and to protect themselves even further, they took false names, the one calling himself "Mustafa" and the other "Hasan." The guns were for protection from robbers, which at that time were very common, for money was very scarce.

They started out for their village and decided to sleep under some bushes for the night. During the night "Mustafa" woke up to find three robbers standing tall and strong above him. He sighed and said, "If I could only reach my village safely with my savings, I would get myself a wife and have a big wedding. We would have a son, and I would name him 'Hasan.' Oh! 'Hasan' he cried out. Hearing this, the "Hasan" beside him awoke and shot the thieves. They returned to their village with their savings.