

Story 1157 (1977 Tapes 31,32) Narrator: Aydın Arslan, 35

Location: Sosgert village
kaza of Çıldır,
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Tale taped by Ahmet Ali Arslan

Crazy Ahmet and Transformation

Childless
At one time there was a padişah who had no children. day while he was in the rose garden, he turned round and round and round, and as he turned, he thought, "My Allah, give me a child. I should be pleased even if it should be a good-for-nothing.

Isb.
At that very moment a dervish appeared. Taking an ^{*magic apple*} apple from his pocket, he gave it to the padişah and said, "Here. Take this apple! Eat half of it yourself and give the other half to your wife. Do not give the child a name. I shall return at the appropriate time and name it."

"Father dervish, father dervish!" called the padişah, the dervish had disappeared. Taking the apple into the palace, the padişah said to his wife, "I have just met a dervish who handed me this apple and told me to eat half of it and have my woman eat the other half." Each of them then ate half of that apple

After nine months and nine days the padişah's wife gave birth to a child. It was a boy. The padişah sent criers all

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about the city to announce the birth of their son. Although the dervish had warned the padişah not to name the child, everyone began thinking of likely names

The people who came to congratulate the padişah gathered at the palace to select a name. "Let's name him Ahmet," some said. "Let's name him Mehmet," others said. And then other names were suggested: Mohammed, Ali, Yeli.

In the midst of all this discussion, the dervish father arrived and asked, "Am I late?"

"No," said the padişah.

"Then let his name be Ahmet," said the dervish.

"Father dervish, wait!" called the padişah, but the dervish had again disappeared. And so the boy's name became Ahmet.

Time passed, and the boy grew. He became one, two, five years old. He became very destructive, and he left nothing in the palace unbroken--even his father's throne. More time passed, and he was fifteen years old. He went out into the rose garden and pulled a tree out of the ground by its roots. He carved this tree into a staff for himself. Taking this staff in his hand, he walked into the market district of the city, where he did a great amount of damage. He went into this shop and smashed it up; he went into that shop and did the same. He broke down the doors; he knocked down the

naming child

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chimneys. "We can't say anything to him, for he is the padişah's son." They decided, however, to see the padişah about this

They went to the palace and pleaded with the padişah in this way. "Our padişah, may you remain in good health! We hold in highest veneration both you and your throne. We venerate your son, too, but please tell him not to destroy our shops and frighten away our customers."

After he had heard their complaint, the padişah said, "You may depart now. I shall speak to him about this."

In the evening Crazy Ahmet returned to the palace with his stick in his hand. He asked, "Father, shall I go outside and break things up?"

"Sit down," said his father. You are giving much trouble to my people. Don't leave the palace grounds. Here we have a fine style of life; we have this throne; we have this dynasty. Why do you go out and cause trouble to the poor people, endangering their lives and damaging their property?"

"With my stick in my hand, I am not afraid of anything," said the boy, and he struck a powerful blow against his father's table

As this was happening, the padişah thought to himself, "I asked Allah for trouble, and he gave me trouble. We didn't

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ask for a clever son. Let him be crazy, and we shall put up with the trouble.

At this point the dervish who had provided the apple and named the boy appeared. He asked, "What is the situation now?" When the padişah explained the problem, the dervish said, "Move him out into the rose garden and build a house for him there. Assign some old woman to take food to him there."

"All right," said the padişah. Then to Crazy Ahmet he said, "My son, I am giving the rose garden to you, and I am having a house built there for you. Go there and hunt. Hunt a certain bird there. Bring it back, and we shall cook it and eat it.

The boy agreed to this and began to live in the rose garden. Each day the old woman took his food to him. After she had deposited the food on the table, she would clean the house and then return to the palace. One day when Ahmet returned to the house, he found his food half eaten. "It must have been that old woman who ate that food," he thought. "I'll break her back with my stick!" The next day when the old woman arrived, he said, "Look here! I'm going to break your back with this stick. Why did you eat my food? Don't they give you any food in the palace?"

"Ahmet, I'll be your dog if I ate a bite of your food!"

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she swore.

"All right, then. I'll forgive you this time. You may go."

When she left the rose garden, the old woman went to the palace and told the padişah what had happened. "Ahmet grabbed me and was ready to kill me. I got away. Someone is eating the food that I take to Ahmet."

In the meantime, Ahmet himself had begun to think about the loss of his food. The next day he placed his food out in the open and hid himself. Soon something came from the sky and landed in front of the fireplace. It was a rose duck, which took off its feathers and turned into a girl as beautiful as the fourteenth of the moon.¹ She swept the house, ate half of Ahmet's food, put her feathers back on, and left. "What is the meaning of this?" Ahmet wondered. He did not eat any of the food that was left.

By then it was time for the old woman to come again with , 23 4

¹ Throughout the Moslem Middle East the moon is greatly admired as a symbol of beauty. Both oral and written literature testify to this repeatedly. To compare any woman's beauty to that of the moon is to flatter the female. Although governments may use the Western Gregorian calendar, the Islamic community uses the older lunar calendar. On that lunar calendar the moon is full at the middle of the month, on the 14th and 15th days, and it is then that it is considered to be at its most beautiful phase. Traditionally Moslem men have admired plump women more than slender women, and so there is a parallel between woman at their most beautiful and the moon at its most beautiful. The simile used by the narrator here is common in Turkish lore.

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Transformation
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food. She brought food every morning, noon, and evening.

"Why didn't you go hunting? Why haven't you eaten your food?" she asked.

"I simply didn't go hunting. I feel somewhat ill today I am not at all hungry."

The old woman left the food there and went away

The next day Ahmet again hid behind the door. After a while the same creature flew down. She took off her feathers set them aside, and began to eat some of the food. She then swept the floor and cleaned the house again. As she was just beginning to put on her feathers to leave, Ahmet called, "Stop! Wait!" and he began to chase her. He chased her here and there. When she entered a cave, he pursued her there, too, and finally caught her. Taking her into his house and locking the door, he said, "Tell me whether you are a human being or a creature of another world."²

*Formulaic
expression*

"Ahmet, now that a human hand has touched mine, I can tell you that I am the daughter of the Padişah of Fairies. But at the same time I must tell you never to burn my feathers, for if you do, I shall no longer be yours. If you do not burn my feathers, I shall be your wife forever

² The formulaic expression used here is "Inmisin cinmisin.

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"I shall not burn your feathers. Why should I want to burn your feathers?"

They began talking and becoming better acquainted with each other. Soon there was a knock on the door. "Who is it?" Ahmet called.

"It is I. I have brought your food," the old woman said

"Come in, my old woman," said Ahmet

"Wait," said the girl, "and let me put on my feathers so that she will not know that I am a girl, the daughter of the Padişah of Fairies." After she had put on her feathers, Ahmet placed a collar around her neck and tied her to the leg of table

When the old woman entered the house, she asked, "What is that?"

"I caught it," said Ahmet. "It was this that had been eating my food

"Well, throw it away Why would anyone bother to keep

"No, I won't throw it away. Let me tell you something else. Go back to the palace and tell my father that I am going to be married. Tell him to make preparations for wedding ceremonies and a feast. Tell him that I shall marry a believer."³

³ There has been no indication that the fairy girl has accepted Islam.

Wally
collected
25-46

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"How can that be?" the old woman asked

"Never mind that! Just do as I have told you to do, or I shall take my stick and break your back!"

The old woman became very frightened at hearing that, and she fled the house so quickly that she left one of her shoes at the beginning of the path to the palace and the other one halfway along it. When she reached the palace she exclaimed excitedly, "Health to my padişah!"

"Calm down! What has happened?" the palace people said to her.

"Health to my padişah! Ahmet is to be married to a believer. He has asked that his father make preparations for a wedding ceremony and for a feast. Otherwise he will pull down the city on his father's head!"

"Allah, O Allah!" said the padişah. "Tell him it is all right." He then went to his wife and told her the news

"Our son will do what he says he will do," she said. "If he says he will marry a believer, then he will do just that. Start preparations for the wedding.

The old woman left the palace and ran to Ahmet's house "Your father is going to make preparations for the wedding," she said.

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When the old woman had left, the houri⁴ removed feathers and returned to her human form again. "Ahmet let us invite everyone in the city to this garden for the wedding. Can your father afford to prepare a feast that will not only feed such a crowd but will also allow them all to take some food home with them?"

"No, he cannot," said Ahmet. "He will be able to invite only the viziers and the ministers of government to attend the ceremony."

"That will not be enough. Listen now, and I shall tell you what to do. Remember the cave in which you caught me? Well, go there and call, 'Mother-in-law, Mother-in-law, Mother-in-law, I have come!' My sisters will then come to the threshold of the cave and say, 'O welcome, Brother-in-law! Come in and take a seat.' Then you will say to them, 'Your sister said that you are to give me the old tent.' They will then answer, 'Yes, we shall do that, but, Ahmet, you have not drunk any water or tea or coffee or milk, and you haven't eaten anything yet.' You will then say, 'Well, I am in a hurry. I must go.' They will then give you the tent. It may look quite shabby to you, but don't throw it away on the

⁴ The narrator is speaking figuratively here. She is not literally a houri. Houris are the angelic female attendants who comfort and serve those good people who reach Heaven.

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their human shape. If those two layers were to be removed, I should not have been able to see them. With my staff I killed the men sent to beat them, and later I killed many of the soldiers of the Padişah of Fairies. When I agreed to

killing his soldiers, the padişah swore upon the seal of Süleyman that he would forgive me. He never touched me, and he permitted^{me}/to take my family and leave."

"My son, whether all of this is true or false, tell me one thing truthfully: Did you bring back the children?"

"Yes, I did," Ahmet replied.

"Have my litter brought at once!" ordered the padişah. Climbing into his litter, he said to his bearers, "Go very quickly to the rose garden, or I may die of anxiety!" The carriers ran with him to the rose garden

The padişah was delighted to see his grandsons, and he determined not to take any chance of losing them again. He said to Ahmet, "My son, whether you are still crazy or not, I am going to take these partly grown boys to the palace and look after them there. Otherwise, if you should ever again burn your wife's feathers or break her heart in some other way, these boys might be lost again--and you would probably be unable to find them either on earth or in the sky a second time."

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this tent, anyway?"

"If you want to know, go into the house, and I shall call you out in a few minutes."

While Ahmet was in the house, the girl set up the tent. As soon as it was raised, its poles, its tables, its spoons, its forks, its knives--all became gold, silver, and bejeweled. She then called to Ahmet, "Come outside and see what this old tent is good for!"

When Ahmet came out and saw the tent, he was amazed. It was so large that it could easily hold the populations of three cities the size of his father's. He opened the tent flap and saw that inside it was an imitation of paradise.

The girl then said, "Go and first invite your father mother, and all your other relatives. Then go and invite every resident of the city between the ages of seven and seventy, healthy or crippled. Everyone is to come here to eat, and when they leave they are to take with them not only some food but also their plates and knives and forks and spoons."⁵

⁵ The practice of giving gifts to departing dinner guests is an old custom in Turkish culture. In the 10th-century Turkish epic The Book of Dede Korkut Kazan, Bey of Beys, has an annual "Plunder Feast." After the meal he removes his family to safety and then invites the beys (lords) to plunder his home, taking whatever they want of his personal belongings. In later times lesser and specific gifts were given to the depart-

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"Very well," said Ahmet, and he departed to carry out these instructions. Going first to his father, he said, "You and all the family are to be my guests in the rose garden

"All right," his family all said.

"You had better be there, for if you are not, I shall tear down the entire city part by part."

the wedding feast and that when each left he should take along with him not only a supply of food but also the plate, knife, fork, and spoon which he had used

Talking together among themselves, the people said, "We had better go, or he might tear the city down in his rage!" Thus, out of fear, they all attended the wedding feast, but they enjoyed themselves there, eating and drinking.

When it became apparent that people were wondering who it was that Ahmet was to take as his wife, the girl said to Ahmet, "Ahmet, do not be offended at this, but I want to be presented first in my rose-duck form. Don't interfere with this. Just do as I say."

ing guests. The meal plus the gift place a double indebtedness upon the guest, and so to assuage the guest's pride, the host sometimes says of the gift, "This is for the rental of your teeth"--as if the host were indebted to the guest for eating his food! "Tooth rental" is still referred to in Turkey. ATON 65 and 1157 offer excellent examples of gift-giving to departing guests.

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"All right," said Ahmet

A few minutes later the padişah said, "Where is our bride? Bring out the bride that we may all see her."

Ahmet then went apart and tied a rope around the neck of the rose duck and led her forth. She went immediately to Ahmet's father and mother and kissed their hands.

Everyone laughed, and the people said to each other, "This boy is crazy! That is the reason he is so perverse and obstinate." But they all feared Ahmet, and they were now worried about whether or not to take their plates and dinnerware with them when they left. They feared that if they really did take these things, Ahmet might kill them. On the other hand, if they did not take them, then Ahmet might be offended and kill them anyway. As a result, those who had finished eating hid these things partially under their arms and left quickly.

Soon everyone had left except Ahmet's mother and father and their servants. Because his mother was a padişah's wife, she had forty female slaves attending her.

The padişah said, "My son, it seems that you are planning to marry a rose

"Wait, Father," said Ahmet. The girl then removed her feathers and became again a girl as beautiful as the fourteenth day of the moon. She again went and kissed the hands of

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Ahmet's father and mother, but both of them fainted at the sight of her great beauty. So the girl kissed their hands anyway and stepped back. The slaves laughed at this.

There was a pool there in which there were various kinds of fish. The slaves covered their faces when they looked into the pool at these fish. The fairy girl asked them, "Why do you cover your faces when you look at these fish?"

"Because some of the fish in the pool are male," the slaves responded. "Why was it that you disguised yourself in feathers when you first kissed the hands of your father-in-law and mother-in-law?"

"I am the daughter of the Padişah of Fairies, and that is why I kissed their hands when I was disguised. But why did you cover your faces to look at male fishes when you yourselves are men?"

"These slaves are not men but women," said the padişah.

"Health to my Padişah, who is also my elder, and now my father! Give an order for these slaves to go into another room and there be undressed by a woman. If all forty of them are not men, I shall burn my feathers with my own hands!"

When the padişah ordered the slaves undressed, all forty of them turned out to be men. The padişah immediately ordered the executioners to behead all of the slaves.

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The padişah was pleased with the marriage that Ahmet had made. One day soon after this, the padişah said to him, "My son, you have come to your senses. Now that you are married the doors of my palace are open to you."

Ahmet now began to become more reasonable in his behavior. He now went to the market section of the city without his staff. This was partly because his wife had warned him about it. "The day you take that stick in your hand, I shall take my feathers and leave. And if you should decide to burn my feathers, you will never see me again." Ahmet now seemed less crazy than he had once been.

Time passed, and after a while the wife of Ahmet bore him two sons. Ahmet went to his father to tell him the good news. "Give me my present,"⁶ I now have two sons!"

The padişah was delighted by this good news. His heart pounded, and his spirit drifted. He sent criers to all parts of the city to announce that there would be a feast to last for forty days and forty nights, and that all were invited. Everyone came and enjoyed himself eating and drinking, and each guest upon departure was given a gift made of gold, silver,

⁶ When messengers brought good news, the recipient of the news often gave the bearer a gift. Sometimes the bearer became so confident that he had a reward coming that he would ask how much he was going to receive even before he revealed the good news. Occasionally, as here, the messenger will even demand his reward ahead.

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or copper.

One day when the padişah went to see his two grandchildren he was so pleased with them that he said to his son, "Ahmet, couldn't you arrange to have them stay with me? I may well die one of these days before long. Do not let my request go unfulfilled."

"All right, Father," said Ahmet. They then began to take the children to the palace every morning and bring them back home every evening.

Now Ahmet began to work. He said to his father, "I do not want anything from your treasury. I shall work and earn my bread."

"Very well," said the padişah.

Ahmet used to bring two apples every day for his sons. But one day there was something bothering him, and he forgot the apples. He went back to the market, however, bought two apples, and took them to his children and fondled them.

The next day he was still bothered by something. To himself he said, "Change my wife." To his wife he said, "I am very bored."

"Why?" she asked.

"Today I am not going to work." His purpose was to burn his wife's feathers. He thought, "When I burn her feathers,

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can I do to prevent her from taking the children with when she leaves?" But he was unable to burn the feathers, despite all of the different ways in which he tried to do so.

His wife took the two boys and stood with them on the threshold. She said, "Ahmet, nothing can be used to burn my feathers except the leaves of red roses. But remember that if you burn my feathers, I shall go."

Feeling completely crazy again now, Ahmet asked, "Where could you go with two children?" Filling the fireplace with the leaves of red roses, he lighted them and placed the feathers on top of the pile.

As the feathers began to burn, he heard a voice coming from the chimney. It said, "Ahmet, put iron shoes upon your feet and take an iron walking stick in your hand.⁷ Then wander the earth in search of me."

"Go wherever you wish! You won't be able to go very far, anyway."

After he had burned the feathers, causing the woman to take the children and leave, Ahmet sat in the house for quite

' Iron shoes and an iron stick are narrative conventions. They symbolize lengthy and arduous travel which is to end only when the iron shoes are worn out. Almost always the journey is made to recover a wife or husband from a supernatural world into which he/she has been projected.

Iron shoes
+ walking stick

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a while. Time passed, but his wife and children did not return. He went outside and searched the rose garden, calling them, but they were not there. He then called the servants, but they too had gone. After that he took his staff in his hand and went to the palace, where he asked his father, "Is my wife here?"

"No, Son, she is not. Why?" the padişah responded.

"Father, they have gone."

"Why did they go, Son?"

"Because I burned her feathers. After I had done that, she said, 'Put iron shoes on your feet and an iron stick in hand. Then go and search for me.' Father, get me a pair of iron shoes and an iron walking stick, for I intend to go and look for her." The padişah agreed to do this and he ordered his blacksmith to make these iron objects.

Wearing the iron shoes and carrying the iron stick, Ahmet went to his house. He loaded a sheep with food and started traveling. He traveled up and down mountains, across rivers, and over rocks for days, months, years. One day he heard a frighteningly loud voice coming from a mountain ahead of him. The voice was so very loud that when it sounded, earth and sky mixed into each other. Going closer, Ahmet saw three giants, Sky, Earth, and Hunter. They were brothers, and they

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were fighting among themselves. They fought so furiously that when one was struck by a blow, he was driven seven levels below the surface of the earth, and when another was struck, he was brought to earth from the seventh level of the They would fight, grow tired, take a rest, and then fight again. During their fighting, one of them saw Ahmet and called, "Hey there, human being Don't try to hide behind that rock! Come and help us!"

"How are they able to see me?" Ahmet thought

"Come on!" they shouted. "Don't hide behind that rock!" One of the giants drew in a very deep breath, and the suction of the air drew Ahmet toward them and left him beneath a nearby tree.

"What is your problem?" Ahmet asked them.

"Look here!" said one of the giants. "Here is a carpet; here is a stick; here is a conical hat; and here is some black paste. What is the purpose of these things? For what are they used?"⁸

maybe to
help in
 Ahmet explained their uses to the giants. "You lay the carpet down and sit on it. The black paste is kohl, and you use it to darken your eyelids. The hat is something that you wear on your head. If you strike the carpet with this stick

⁸ In folktales giants are traditionally slow-witted, sometimes downright stupid.

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and say, 'For the love of Allah who created both of us, take me to such-and-such a place,' it will take you anywhere you want to go. If you put the hat on your head, you will not be seen by anyone even if you are in the midst of an array. If you rub the kohl on your eyelids you will have special sight."

"What could be simpler than that?" the giants asked. "But how can we agree on how these things should be divided?"

"I'll show you," said Ahmet. Taking his bow and arrows, he shot one arrow toward the east, one toward the west, and one toward the north. Then he said, "All right! The one who brings back one of these arrows first will receive the carpet and stick. The one who comes back second with an arrow will receive the hat. And the last to return will receive the kohl."

The giants agreed to this arrangement and rushed away to retrieve the arrows. As soon as they had gone, Ahmet sat upon the carpet, taking with him the stick, the hat, and the kohl. Then striking the carpet with the stick, he said, "For the love of Allah, who created both of us, take me to the place where my two sons are now." The carpet rose at once, and when the giants returned with the arrows, they could find no trace of Ahmet, the carpet, the stick, the hat or the kohl.

The carpet landed on the roof of a house on a mountaintop

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Ahmet climbed down from the roof, folded up the carpet, and placed it behind a rock. He then put the magic hat upon his head and took in his hand the stick which he had had previously.

Now let us see what the daughter of the Padişah of Fairies and her two children are doing. Because the children came into being from a human father, the Padişah of Fairies had ordered them to be taken to a mountaintop and there beaten until seven layers of their skin had been removed. "Take off all their layers of skin so that they will be acceptable in the fairy world," he had said. Every day ten fairy men had come and beaten both the padişah's daughter and her two sons until ten batches of sticks had been broken.

Ahmet stood by the doorway of the house wearing the magic hat on his head and the kohl on his eyelids, and so he could see well but could not be seen by others. His sons sensed that he was there. The slightly taller boy said, "Mother, my father has come."

"How do you know that, Son?" his mother asked.

I can smell his scent, Mother."

Then the slightly smaller boy said, "Mother, my father has come

"Son, what makes you think that? Your father is a very

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great distance away from here. He would not be able to come here if he traveled for the rest of his life."

I smell his scent."

"Allah is great, and perhaps through Him your father will be able to come here some day."

Ahmet heard a noise and saw approaching ten big, strong men, each carrying ten bundles of sticks. They beat his wife and sons with these sticks, and they did not stop until all of the sticks were broken. By then, the victims had lost another layer of their skin. After the men had gone, the mother said to her sons, "Oh, if Ahmet, your father, were here, they wouldn't be able to beat us this way."

"My wife! My sons!" exclaimed Ahmet, taking off his hat.

"Yes, Father!" shouted the boys. "Mother, didn't we tell you that our father had come?"

"Ahmet," said his wife, "this has happened before, but it should not happen again. They have beaten off so much skin that we have only two layers left. If they take off those last two layers, we shall no longer look like human beings, but we'll all look like something else. Five layers of skin have been removed now, and if two more are removed, we shall be completely under the yoke of my father. Therefore, you had better return the same way you came here."

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"I may die, but I shall not go back. What would happen to these children if you should die? No, I shall not go back," said Ahmet.

"Take a look at the men who come here and see how big and strong they are. They could kill you."

When the time approached for the return of the ten men, Ahmet hid behind the door. He put the hat on his head and the kohl on his eyelids. In his hand he had the staff he had carved from a tree in the rose garden of his father's palace. As the first man entered the door, Ahmet clubbed him on the head and knocked him to the floor.

"What happened to you?" asked the second man in line. "What was it that knocked you down as soon as you crossed the threshold?"

"There is something here that hit me!"

"Allah, O Allah, what is it?" asked the second man as he entered. Ahmet struck him on the head and knocked him down too.

The third man looked in and asked the second, "Didn't you get enough sleep? Are you exhausted from beating people? What are you doing on the floor?"

"Something hit both me and the man ahead of me on our heads."

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you seeing things? Who could have hit you? There is no one here." But as soon as he had said that, the third man was struck on the head.

In this way Ahmet knocked down nine men. The tenth one thought to himself, "All of the nine men ahead of me have been struck on the head. Why should I also be hit?" This tenth man turned and ran to the Padişah of Fairies

"Good health to you, my Padişah!" he said. "When we went to your daughter's house to beat her and her sons, the first nine were struck on the head as they crossed the threshold. I ran away to avoid being struck."

"Who struck them?"

"We could not see who did it," said the tenth man.

this must be the work of our son-in-law," the padişah said.

Meanwhile, Ahmet took off his hat and went inside to his wife. "Did you see what happened?"

"Yes, Ahmet, and now I believe that you can save us. My father will soon be here, and he will promise you all sorts of things if you will only step outside the door. Don't go near him until he swears to you upon the seal of Sultan

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Süleyman⁹ that he will forgive you. Otherwise, he will kill you."

Soon the Padişah of Fairies arrived and stood outside the door. He said, "Son-in-law Ahmet, come out and I shall give you so many soldiers, so much money, so much property." But Ahmet did not go out. The padişah then ordered his men to wreck the building. Wearing his hat and swinging his great staff, Ahmet whirled about among the soldiers, striking everyone within reach. Each one who was hit fell dead to the ground

When the padişah saw what was happening to his troops, he called out, "Enough, Ahmet!" and he promised him many other things. Still, Ahmet refused to go out to him. In the the Padişah of Fairies said, "Ahmet, I swear to you upon the seal of Sultan Süleyman that I forgive you. Come out! Don't kill any more of my soldiers."

Ahmet wiped the kohl from his eyes, took off his hat, and walked out to meet the Padişah of Fairies. He said, "I have made a mistake. I burned my wife's feathers. Forgive me."

"Ahmet, do you know the great distance you have traveled to come here?"

⁹ Peasant narrators frequently confuse the Biblical Solomon with the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent of the early 16th century. The legendary sacred seal belonged to the Biblical Solomon. It is the subject of a couple of tales within ATON.

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"What difference does the distance make? I came and I came and I came until I got here. I climbed and climbed and climbed until I almost reached the sky up here."

"By what means did you get up here?"

"Good health to my padişah! I shall tell you. My name is Crazy Ahmet. My mother brought me into this world as a crazy man. Somewhere along the way on my trip here I encountered three giants who were fighting. I took from those giants a magic carpet, a pot of kohl, this hat, and a stick. Then I flew up here."

"Ahmet, all of those objects--the carpet, the kohl, the hat, and the stick--were mine, but those giants came and took them from me. I gladly give them to you. Now you may take your family and go."

As they said farewell, Ahmet and his sons on the one side and the padişah on the other forgave each other for all that had happened between them. When the carpet had been laid on the ground and all of his family had climbed upon it, Ahmet ordered it to take them to the rose garden. In the blink of an eye they found themselves in the rose garden

Ahmet said to his family, "You stay here now while I go to see my parents. Much time has elapsed since they saw me off on my long journey." He then headed for the palace with

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his staff in his hand. When the guards saw him approaching, they opened the gates, beat upon drums to announce the arrival, and gave the news to his father

The padişah could not believe this. He said, "No, Ahmet to the kind of place from which he will never return." The padişah had cried so much over the loss of his two grandsons that his vision had become blurred. His wife had suffered the same eye difficulty.

Ahmet then burst into the room saying, "Father, I have come!"

"Oh, my crazy son!" exclaimed the padişah, and the two embraced. The padişah then said, "Son, there must be some secret behind the fact that you have survived and returned."

"Father, after I had been traveling for a long, long while, I came across three giants who were fighting among themselves. I took from them a magic carpet, some magic kohl which gave me keen vision, and a magic hat which made invisible anyone who wore it. With that magic carpet I flew to where my family was on a mountaintop in a land close to the

It was the land ruled by the Padişah of Fairies. There I found my wife and sons were being beaten daily to remove their seven layers of skin. Five layers had already been removed, and if the last two were removed, they would lose

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their human shape. If those two layers were to be removed, I should not have been able to see them. With my staff I killed the men sent to beat them, and later I killed many of the soldiers of the Padişah of Fairies. When I agreed to

killing his soldiers, the padişah swore upon the seal of Süleyman that he would forgive me. He never touched me, and he permitted^{me}/to take my family and leave."

"My son, whether all of this is true or false, tell me one thing truthfully: Did you bring back the children?"

"Yes, I did," Ahmet replied.

"Have my litter brought at once!" ordered the padişah. Climbing into his litter, he said to his bearers, "Go very quickly to the rose garden, or I may die of anxiety!" The carriers ran with him to the rose garden

The padişah was delighted to see his grandsons, and he determined not to take any chance of losing them again. He said to Ahmet, "My son, whether you are still crazy or not, I am going to take these partly grown boys to the palace and look after them there. Otherwise, if you should ever again burn your wife's feathers or break her heart in some other way, these boys might be lost again--and you would probably be unable to find them either on earth or in the sky a second time."

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"Father, whatever you do I shall respect from now on. Here are my staff and my magic hat. Take them. After this I shall be under your guidance. I shall serve the people of the city and do whatever they want me to do. I shall not harm either my people or my parents."

The padişah took his grandsons with him. Some time later he made one of them his vizier and the other one of his ministers

And Ahmet became a street sweeper and a porter, serving the people in every way that he could. At an earlier time the people had feared him greatly, and when they saw him coming, they would either lock their doors or run away from him. Now it was different. He swept the streets, he carried water, he delivered bundles, and no one feared him any longer.

So they ate and drank

And passed in time into the earth

We who have traveled far with a crazy man--

We too in time shall pass into the earth.

Five or six people have been listening;

Five or six apples fell into our village--

One for each listener, a half apple for me!¹⁰

¹⁰ This closing passage is rimed in Turkish. It includes one of the traditional formulae for Turkish folktales--but

with a slightly different twist. The traditional ending is often

Three apples fell from heaven:
One for the listener,
One for /the name of the narrator/
And one for me /the narrator again!/
/

The last line may be

And one for the teller of this tale.