

Story 2099 (1988 Tape 16)

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Location: Aydın, capital of
Aydın Province

Date: January 21, 1988

Every Action Has Its Price

Once the Ottoman army defeated in war a hostile country. But the military action did not cease after victory. Ottoman troops continued to invade the conquered country in order to gain complete control of it, and the sultan had no intention of withdrawing the Ottoman forces until a peace treaty had been signed. But maintaining an army in a foreign land was an expensive operation. The longer it remained abroad, the more difficult it was to purchase ammunition and food supplies. The depletion of the imperial treasury became a matter of grave concern to the sultan.

One night the sultan and his grand vizier discussed at great length this financial crisis. What could they do to resolve this problem? When the sultan suggested that they might borrow money from a wealthy neighboring country, the grand vizier felt that this was not an advisable tactic. When the grand vizier suggested that could raise the necessary money by imposing new taxes,

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the ruler balked at that proposal. Hours passed as they pondered this subject.

At that time there was still no electricity in Istanbul, and as a result, the streets of the city were poorly lighted at night. Even where oil lamps were used and where outdoor fireplaces were lighted, there was very low visibility. About 3 o'clock in the morning there was a barking of dogs and the muffled sound of a few men walking along the street. Looking out one of the palace windows, the sultan could see nothing. He then asked the grand vizier, "Do you have any idea why dogs might be barking and men passing by at this time of the night? Why should anyone be going anywhere at such a cold and dark time?"

"My sultan, this is the hour when enthusiastic hunters often start out in quest of game."

"Why would anyone leave a warm bed on such a cold and dark night for something as unimportant as hunting?"

"My sultan, hunting is an exciting undertaking for some men. Otherwise they would not willingly pay the price it imposes. To engage in their favorite sport, hunters will sacrifice part of their sleep, walk several kilometers in the wilderness, be torn by thorns, and

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scraped by low branches of trees. They endure all this just to have an opportunity to shoot at a wild animal, even though they may later return home with empty hands and an empty soul. To acquire what they want, both nations and individuals must pay the required price."