

3. Mehmed Sinap

Fall was over. The forest was completely bare when word of his son's birth arrived. He was more than happy. Fog protected him, whereas summer was more dangerous. Sometimes summer meant surprises and vulnerability and the first blizzards closed roads, building an impenetrable wall between him and his foes. Sinap used to stand on the upper veranda, looking towards the bright horizon of Chech.

In the middle of the winter, everything was covered in snow. In the nighttime, the wind was whooshing through gorges and valleys, in the dark, dank places echoed the howls of the wolves. It was easier to swim across the sea than it was to wander without roads and paths through the unknown kingdom of Sinap.

That is why he was humbly staying in his trap, swaying his son's swing.

"Gyula!" he was saying to his wife in a rebellious pride. "Our son will be adaredevil, eh?"

Then added, "A daredevil you will be, son, viziers and bashaws will tremble before you."

It was in Sinap's nature to be merry and talkative, that is why when no one was around he used to speak to his son, even more when he grew up. He sang songs and played the quills for him.

He was a master- got used to the thought as if something ordinary. At his police station he had military sentries, trusted people, who he fed and who were something like spies for him, in other words- personal retinue. Gyula, his wife, had a whole wing at the police station with countless maids and although she was young, she was able to get used to the work and manage the house like a real housewife. Sinap was pleased with her so he often joked, "Gyula, you are a warlord and the way you manage the house, a cannon can't demolish it."

"Hoy. Mehmed, don't laugh at me," she shied, "I'm still young..."

"No one's laughing, woman, I'm just telling you. Nobody can go near Sinap's police station, it'll stand longer than the king's fortress."

When he said that, Sinap, had many secrets in his mind. In the summer he went again with his people and saw that royal force had doubled. And, really, the mutiny had spread farther, it had reached Strandja Mountain, the Balkan Mountains, even down to the sea. At places in the Ottoman kingdom armed, hungry and nude crowds, whole human herds, and stormed wherever they wished. He could meet Eminzhika, Kara Feiziya and he had heard about the wonders of Inzhe. Dertli Mehmed was his right hand so was Topal Salih, but he was constantly noted from Isaoglu and Adzhi aga... and those messages read that the Ottoman army was attacking and slaughtering without mercy, with horsemen and cannons.