

Story #74 (Tape #23, 1961-1962)

Narrator:

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The Keloğlan and the Bezirgan's Wife

There was once a hoca who had a son. One day when there was no wheat left in the hoca's house, the hoca said to his son, "Go and find us some wheat somewhere."

The boy took their forty goats up to the mountain. There he killed one goat a day, ate its meat, and then oiled his body with the fat. This continued for forty days, until the entire flock of goats had been eaten. At the end of that time, he returned to his father and told him that he had traded the forty goats for forty mule loads of wheat and that he must have forty mules with which to haul home the wheat. The hoca had only two mules of his own, but he went from house to house in his village borrowing mules from his neighbors, and at last he had the forty mules for his son.

The keloğlan¹ took the forty mules and went to a nearby town. He went to an inn, sat down in a chair near the stove, and told the inn keeper to put his mules in a stable. As the inn keeper was trying to get the mules into the stable, one of them was balky and would not move. When he told Keloğlan of this, Keloğlan swore loudly at

¹The boy was not referred to first as a keloğlan. Here, as often in Turkish folktales, however, a smart boy, whether bald or not, takes the name Keloğlan.

the mule and said, "Get into that stable or I'll pick you up and toss you up into the air again!" The mule for some reason then actually go into the stable.

door to the inn was the home of a bezirgan² [traveling peddler]. The bezirgan was away, but his wife was at home, and she overheard what Kelođlan said to the mule. She sent a boy to the inn with a message for Kelođlan to come and visit her. After he came to her house, they ate and they drank together, and then the woman asked Kelođlan, "What are you doing in this town?"

"I have come to buy some wheat," he said.

The woman said to him, "If you can copulate with me forty times, I shall give you forty bags of wheat. If you fail to do this, then I shall take your forty mules."

Kelođlan agreed to this bargain, and then they got busy. After copulating with the woman thirty-nine times, Kelođlan started to bleed, and the woman thereupon claimed that the terms of the bargain had not been fulfilled by Kelođlan. They argued about this, and finally Kelođlan said, "Let us go to a judge and present our cases." The woman finally agreed to this.

Kelođlan explained the problem to the judge in this way: "Efendi, this woman and I had a bet. I said that I could knock down forty walnuts with one stone. This woman said that I could not. I bet forty mules that I could do this, and she bet forty bags of wheat that

² There are many stories about bezirgans in Turkish folklore. They are sometimes similar to the traveling salesman stories in the U.S. Inasmuch as business was once not the concern of Turks--it was left to the lower class minority groups--salesmen were often the butt of ethnic jokes.

I could not. I threw a stone and knocked down forty walnuts, but as we were shelling them, we found that one of the nuts was rotten. Do I get her forty bags of wheat, or does she get my forty mules?"

The kadi [judge] thought about this for a while, and then he ruled that Kelođlan had won. "It was not your fault that one of the nuts was rotten," he said.

They returned and went to the barn of the bezirgan where started to load the mules with wheat. By the time they had the mules loaded, it was evening, and so Kelođlan decided to spend another night in the woman's home and start back early the next morning.

When it was time to go to bed, the woman set another proposition for Kelođlan. "Do you see this ^{golden rooster} golden cock? If you can sleep tonight between me and my daughter without touching either of us, you can have this cock. If you do touch either of us, however, then I shall take both the forty mules and the forty bags of wheat that you won from me today."

Kelođlan agreed to this bargain. He went to the town square and bought some twine with which he tied his penis to his leg so that it would not get away from him. The woman perfumed both herself and her beautiful daughter, and the two of them lay in the bed, one on either side of Kelođlan. Kelođlan pretended for a long while that he was asleep, and he pretended that he was snoring, "Vu! VU! VU!" [onomatopoeia for snoring]. But, in fact, he was wide awake. The woman kept

looking at Keloğlan, and she realized that he would not be attracted to them unless she did something. She reached over to Keloğlan's leg and discovered that he had tied fast his penis. With a pair of scissors she cut the string that held it fast. Then Keloğlan immediately copulated with the woman and then with her daughter, and then with the woman again. Dead tired after such a night, Keloğlan finally welcomed the arrival of the morning.

When the woman claimed the mules and the wheat, Keloğlan refused to give them to her. "I was cheated last night," he said. Unable to settle their dispute between themselves, they again went to the judge.

Keloğlan explained their present problem to the judge in this

"Efendi, this woman owns a field of barley and a field of wheat. I tied my donkey to a stake on a grass strip between these two fields. The donkey ate the grass but none of her wheat and none of her barley. But during the night, when I was asleep, she untied my donkey and it ate from both the fields of grain. Must I pay her for what it ate?"

The judge said to the woman, "Did it all happen in this way?"

"Yes," said the woman.

"Well," said the judge, "the owner of the donkey is not to be blamed. The one who released it is at fault. Of course the donkey would eat from both fields if it were let loose."

Thus Keloğlan slept with the bezirgan's wife and his daughter also won forty bags of wheat and a golden cock. The same day he returned with these to his father's house