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The Stubborn Keloğlan

Once upon a time there was a keloğlan who lived with his grandmother. Because they were very poor, Keloğlan used to go about barefooted. One day when he was walking around the village barefooted, a thorn stuck into the of his foot. He came limping home and asked his grandmother to remove the thorn. The old lady took a needle, removed the thorn from Keloğlan's and then she put the thorn on the corner of the stove.

One day when she was sweeping the house, she knocked the thorn into the stove and it burned. A few days later, when some winds were blowing in his head,¹ Keloğlan remembered the thorn that had been taken from his foot. He running home and he asked his grandmother for the thorn. She told him it had fallen into the stove and been burned. Now it happened that that day was one on which Keloğlan felt obstinate. He had his baldness about him.² So he continued to request the thorn from his grandmother. He said, "You will either give me the thorn or I shall take the stove, tingir, tingir, tis!"³ This teasing went on for days, Keloğlan always saying, "Tingir, tingir, tis!" Finally his grandmother's head was swollen.⁴ She had no more patience, and so she said, "Well, then, take the stove and get out of here!"

¹To have some winds blowing through one's head is to be in a capricious mood. To have poplar winds blowing through one's head is taken to mean that one is interested in a member of the opposite sex.

²Bald people are sometimes thought to be very stubborn. This is the meaning suggested here when Keloğlan is said to have his baldness about him.

³This is a rattling noise, a rhythmic sound often used in nonsense jingles (tekerlemeler) that begin folktales. It is roughly equivalent to such expressions as clippity-clippity-clop, or bumpity-bump.

⁴To have one's head swollen is to be at the breaking point. A slangy equivalent in English might be ready to blow up.

Keloğlan took the stove from the house and went with it into the street. Then he began to wonder what he would do with such a large thing. He went to the home of a neighbor and asked, "May I leave my stove for a while in your house?"

"Very well," said the neighbor, "put it over there in the corner where it will not be in the way."

But the stove did get in the way, and when Keloğlan did not return for it, after many days, the neighbor moved it to the cow shed. One day an ox kicked the stove and broke it to pieces. Keloğlan finally returned for the stove, and it happened that he came on one of his stubborn days. When he heard what had happened to his stove, he said to the neighbor, "You will either give me back my stove in perfect condition or you will give me your ox, tıngır, tıngır tıs." His baldness was upon him again, and he repeated this threat day after day after day until finally the neighbor shouted, "Curses be upon you! Take the ox and get out of here!"

Keloğlan took the ox and went his way. Along the road he noticed a wedding going on at a large house. He tied his ox in a corner of the courtyard of that house and went inside to join the wedding party. It was a long wedding celebration that lasted many days, and a great amount of food was eaten by the guests. Seeing the ox tied in the courtyard for several days, the owner of the house thought that it must be a wedding gift. So he killed the ox and used the meat to make a large meal for all his guests

When Keloğlan was ready to leave the wedding, he looked for his ox but couldn't find it where he had left it. He asked the owner of the house if he had seen the ox. "Yes, we saw an ox tied in the corner of the courtyard," said the owner, "but we thought that it was a wedding gift, and so we

slaughtered it and fed its meat to the guests." I shall give you another ox in its place."

But Kelođlan replied, "I do not want any other ox. I want my own ox. You will either give me my own ox or you will give me the sister of the bride, t'ng'r, t'ng'r, t's." He continued saying this day after day after day as his stubbornness continued. Finally the father of the bride realized that there was no escaping Kelođlan.

"Take my younger daughter and go!" he said. The girl was as beautiful as the fourteenth day of the moon,⁵ and Kelođlan was very happy to leave with her.

⁵As noted in earlier tales, the moon is considered a most lovely object, and to indicate the beauty of anything or anyone, one compares it with the moon. The moon is thought to be most beautiful just before it becomes full, so the fourteenth-day moon is the acme of beauty.