

Story 1189 (1990 Tape 6)

Narrator: Fevziye Abla¹

Location: Kilis, kaza town in
Gaziantep Province

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Taped for ATON by Dr. Mehmet Yalvaç
How ^{all} Keloğlan² Got a ^{1st} Bride for a Chickpea

Once there was and twice there wasn't, in that old time when the sieve was in the straw,³ there was a keloğlan. This

¹Abla means older sister. It sometimes refers literally to an older sister, but just as often it is used as a term of respect for any woman older than the speaker. Thus, we do not know the narrator's surname.

²The word keloğlan means bald boy, but the baldness is not that caused by aging. It is caused by ringworm infestation of the scalp. This disease often strikes the younger and perhaps improperly tended younger children of large peasant families. It is encouraged by uncleanliness. In folktales the keloğlan is a definite personality type, a winner, and a sympathetic figure. In tales the keloğlan image is often used as a disguise. Disguisers conceal their hair by covering it either with a sheepskin turned inside out or with the cleaned lining of a sheep's stomach.

³This is part of a tekerleme, a nonsense jingle filled with paradoxes, which precedes many a Turkish folktale. It is an attention getter and a sign that a folktale is about to begin. The full tekerleme of which this is part is about ten times the length of the opening sentence here. The sieve is never in the straw. While threshing grain, workers pass the detached grain and finely ground straw through a large-mesh sieve. Longer pieces of straw which may still have grains attached to them do not pass through and will need further threshing. So, the straw is in the sieve, not the sieve in the straw.

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EX *day, rapitob*
 poor boy was walking along the street one day when he found a chickpea. Picking up the chickpea, Keloğlan went to the nearest house and knocked on the door. When a woman opened the door, he said to her, "Mother, will you keep this chickpea for me until I can return for it?" When the woman agreed to do this, Keloğlan handed her the chickpea and left.

That evening Keloğlan returned to the same house and again knocked on the door. When the woman opened it, he said, "Mother, I have come for my chickpea. Give it to me."

"Oh-h-h! A chicken ate your chickpea while you were gone."

"Well, if you cannot give me back my chickpea, you must give me the chicken that ate it. I shall not leave this door until you do!" shouted Keloğlan.

"All right Take this chicken and go away!"

Keloğlan took the chicken and went to a nearby house, where he knocked on the door. "Who is it?" a woman called from inside.

is I, Keloğlan. Mother, will you keep this chicken for a while for me? I shall return for it later

Opening the door, the woman said, "Very well, my son. Give it to me." Taking the chicken from him, she put it in her stable. Now, it happened that there was a type of oven called a tandır.⁴ The chicken fell into the tandır and eventually

⁴A regular oven (fırın) is usually built into a fireplace. A tandır type of oven may be a clay-lined pit or (as here) a large earthenware jar buried in the ground.

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became kebab,⁵ which the people of that household ate.

When Kelođlan returned, he asked, "Mother, where is my chicken?"

"My son, your chicken fell into a tandır and became kebab. It was then eaten by the children."

"Well, if you cannot give me back my chicken, then you must give me the tandır. Until you do so, I shall not leave this door," said Kelođlan. He stood before the door, making the sound "Dombudu, lak, lak, lak. Dombudu, lak, lak, lak."⁶

The woman said, "Let us give him the tandır in order to make him leave." Pulling the oven out of the ground, she handed it to Kelođlan

Without saying another word, the boy took the tandır and left. He went to another house and knocked on the door.

"Who is it?" called a woman from inside

"It is Kelođlan. Mother, will you keep this tandır here for me until I return for it?"

Taking the tandır, the woman put it in their stable. In that part of the stable there was a cow, and as the cow was walking about, it kicked the tandır. The earthenware tandır was in this way broken into several pieces

⁵Grilled meat

⁶The sound of Kelođlan's fists pounding on the door.

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After a while Keloğlan returned and knocked on the door "Who is it?" called the woman.

"Where is my tandır? I have come for it."

"Oh, my son, the cow kicked it and broke

"Don't tell me that! Give me either my tandır or the cow which broke it. Until you do so, I shall never leave your door." Then he began to drum upon the door, "Dombudu, lak, lak, lak. Dombudu, lak, lak, lak."

When the people of that house could not stand any longer the noise he was making, they gave Keloğlan the cow. Leading the cow a short distance away, he knocked on still another door.

"Who is it?" a woman inside asked.

"It is Keloğlan. Mother, please keep my cow for a while. I shall come back later for it."

"All right, son. You may leave it here," said the woman. She took the animal to her stable and tied it there. That woman had a son who was being married that day, and many people had been invited to the wedding feast. In order to have enough food to feed all of the guests, they slaughtered Keloğlan's cow and cooked the meat

That evening while the feast was going on, Keloğlan returned. "Where is my cow?" he asked.

The woman said, "My son, we had such a large crowd of people to celebrate the wedding of my son and his bride that we had to kill your cow in order to feed everybody."

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"Well, then, if you cannot give me back my cow, you must give me the bride. Otherwise I shall never leave your door." As before, he began beating upon the door, "Dombudu, lak, lak, lak. Dombudu, lak, lak, lak

"Aman! Aman!"⁷ said the people of that house. "We cannot stand that noise! We don't really need this bride!" And so they gave the bride to Keloğlan.

"I got a bride for a chickpea!" said Keloğlan. "Let us now arrange a wedding celebration!"

Drums were beaten and zurnas⁸ were played. Then Keloğlan was married to the bride he had gained for a chickpea. We ate and drank with the rest of the guests, and it was a very nice wedding.

*Needs
celebrate*

*Instrument
drum*

⁷Aman is a common exclamation in Turkish. It may (negatively) mean alas or oh, dear! More positively, it may suggest, oh, my goodness or the equivalent of wow! or golly!

⁸Double-reed folk instrument which is a sine qua non for festivities and celebrations of all kinds.