

Story #374 (Not on tape)

Narrator: Dikmen Gürün

Location: Collected at Istanbul, but narrator had grown up in Iskenderun, Hatay Province

Date: 1963

Keloghlan and Ali Ghengiz¹

Transferrative - shaykh

Text Once there was and twice there wasn't, when I was rocking my father's cradle tungur mungur--well, in those days there was a clever bald-headed boy named Keloghlan. This Keloghlan had nobody in the world except his mother, but the two of them lived comfortably enough in a little cottage. As for their living, Keloghlan earned that by tending sheep for the people in the village.

When Keloghlan had grown to be a handsome young man, he came to his mother one day and said, "Mother, it is time for me to be married."

"Think, my son! How can you provide for a wife when we two can barely be comfortable on what you earn tending the sheep?"

"Never mind, mother. We'll manage," Keloghlan answered. "Now, tell me. Isn't it time for me to be married?"

Keloghlan's mother thought this way and that about the matter. Of course the girl would come to live with them, and she might well be a help around the house. "You may be right, my son. Have you found the one you want to marry?"

"That I have, mother," said Keloghlan. "I want to marry the padishah's daughter. Who else?"

¹Ali Ghengiz was a legendary magician capable of transforming himself into many different shapes. The "Ali Ghengiz Game" is a bout in which two people--one of them quite often said to be Ali Ghengiz himself--one the pursued and one the pursuer, change into forms that will give them "one up" on the opponent. The best known version of this (without the name A.G.) occurs in "Puss and Boots."

"Are you out of your mind?" his mother asked. "Surely you do not suppose the padishah will give you his only daughter! Why, they'd laugh me through the gate if I went to ask for her hand for my Keloghlan."

"Never fear, mother. Somethings can be done as well as others. Am I not strong and handsome? Why shouldn't the padishah be willing to give me his daughter? Tomorrow you will please dress yourself nicely and go to the palace to ask for the princess's hand in marriage."

Will she, nill she, Keloghlan's mother must go to the palace, so right after the second prayer the next day she put on her finest dress and shawl and went to the gate of the palace. By a stroke of fortune, the padishah was in good humor, and so he agreed to see her

"Well, my good woman, what is it that you want?" he asked as she stood trembling before him.

"I -- I --" Keloghlan's mother was suddenly speechless with fright

"Come, come!" the padishah ordered. "What do you want? Tell me quickly."

Keloghlan's mother became even more frightened than before, but she stammered, "My -- my padishah, I have a s -- son and his name is Keloglan. And . . . "

"Well? Well? And what? Tell me quickly!"

"Sir, I'll tell you, but I am sure you will be angry. Please don't be too angry with me. And please don't cut off my head!"

The padishah smiled. "Well, the~~x~~ I'll not be angry with you. Tell me what you want."

"Sir, my son Keloghlan looks after the sheep in our village," she began, "and he buys our bread and cheese with the money he earns. Yesterday he told

me that he wanted to be married, and the bride he wants is your daughter. I said, 'Oh, you are just a shepherd. You can't marry the padishah's daughter.' But he said, 'Why not? I am strong and handsome. Why shouldn't I marry the padishah's daughter?' So, sir, I have come to ask, in the name of the Prophet and by the will of God, for the hand of your daughter."

The padishah laughed. "I'm not angry with you. Your son Keloghlan is bold enough to ask for my daughter's hand; I'll give him my daughter, on one condition: He must learn all the tricks of Ali Ghengis."

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Surprised by the padishah's answer, the woman hurried home to Keloghlan. "The padishah will give you his daughter," she said, "if you are able to learn all the tricks of Ali Ghengis. The sooner you learn the tricks, the sooner you can marry the princess."

"What could be easier?" Keloghlan answered. "We'll go tomorrow to Ali Ghengis"

This Ali Ghengis was a magician famous for the great number of tricks which he knew. And he was willing to teach these tricks to any young man who wished to learn them. For forty days he worked to train a young man. At the end of that time, he asked him if he could now do all the tricks of Ali Ghengis. When he replied "yes," the magician took him to a certain cave and killed him.

No young man had ever been able to learn all the tricks of Ali Ghengis and still come back alive to his village. But Keloghlan was determined to marry the padishah's daughter, so the very next morning he and his mother set off to find Ali Ghengis. They went a little; they went far. They

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traveled over hills and through valleys, picking hyacinths all the way. And at last they met a man.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"We are looking for Ali Ghengis," Keloghlan said, "because I want to learn the tricks of Ali Ghengis."

"I am Ali Ghengis," the man answered. "You, old woman, leave your son with me for forty days. On the forty-first day come again to get him."

Keloghlan's mother returned to her village, and Ali Ghengis took Keloghlan to his home. After he had shown Keloghlan the room where he was to sleep, the magician went out again. Now, the magician's wife and daughter had seen Keloghlan, and they decided to help him. As soon as Ali Ghengis had left, his daughter came to Keloghlan. "You must know," she said, "that at the end of the fortieth day my father will ask you whether you have learned his tricks. If you say 'yes,' he will take you to a cave not far from here and kill you. If you say 'no,' he will decide that you are stupid and will let you go home. If you value your life, you must say 'no.'"

"All right," said Keloghlan. "I thank you for your help." And he put the words of the magician's daughter in his pocket.

When Ali Ghengis returned, he began at once to teach Keloghlan his tricks. Day after day they worked, and Keloghlan said nothing, but he noticed much. Of course, he learned the tricks. But at the end of the fortieth day, when Ali Ghengis said, "Well, my son, have you learned all my tricks?" Keloghlan blinked and said, "Sir?"

"Have you learned all my tricks?" Ali Ghengis repeated.

Keloghlan scratched his bald head. "Sir, sometimes I think I have, and sometimes I think I haven't. Perhaps if we worked for another forty

days --

"Stupid boy!" shouted Ali Ghengis. "Forty days I have worked with you, and still you have not learned the tricks of Ali Ghengis. You belong at home with your mother in the village. You have wasted my time."

And the next morning, when Keloghlan's mother came for her son, the magician said in disgust, "Here, take this stupid son of yours. In forty days he has not learned a single one of my tricks. See if you can at least get your bread and cheese from his labors!"

Keloghlan's mother was disappointed, but she said nothing, and the started back to their village. While they were passing through a forest, they met a group of hunters running after a rabbit.

"Stay here, mother," Keloghlan said suddenly. "I'm going to become a ^{ghost} ^{by the} ^{way} ^{of} ^{the} ^{huntsman} ^{and} ^{through} ^{out} dog and follow that rabbit. When I bring him down, the men will want to buy me from you. All right, you will sell me for five pieces of gold.

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must you must not sell me with the collar around my neck. If you sell me with my collar, I shall have to remain a dog. Now, remember what I say!"

In an instant he had become a dog, and off he went after the rabbit, and caught him.

"Oh, my good woman, is this dog yours?" asked the head of the hunters.

"Yes. Why do you ask?" she replied.

"We'd like to buy him," the hunter answered.

"He's been with me for years," the woman said. "I need him to guard my cottage."

"Just any dog will do for guarding a cottage," the huntsman insisted

"Come, we will pay you five gold pieces for him."

"Well," said the woman, 'you may have him for five pieces of gold. But I must have his collar. I will need it for my new watchdog."

The huntsman removed the collar and counted the five gold pieces into the hand of Keloghlan's mother. Away went the dog after another rabbit, with the hunters hurrying as fast as they could to keep him in sight.

Dodging here and there, Keloghlan came to an open place in the forest, ^{ran}and suddenly he turned into an old man with an axe in his hand. Chunk, chunk, he chopped away at a tree. As he stopped to rest for a minute, there came the chief huntsman, hoo-hooing and hallooing for his dog.

"Old man," he asked, "did you see a dog pass this way?"

The old man scratched his head. "Well, sir, I heard a dog, over there," he said, pointing to the thickest part of the forest. "But he didn't come into the clearing." The old man returned to his chopping, while the head huntsman and his fellows plunged deep into the forest after their dog.

Meanwhile, Keloghlan's mother had just stopped to take a drink of water from a spring when she heard a sound, and there stood Keloghlan beside her. "Come, mother," he said, and they started walking toward their own village. As they approached the village, Keloghlan suddenly smiled. "Mother, I am going to become a cow, and you must sell me at the market in our town. Tie a rope around my neck and lead me there. Sell me for ten gold pieces. But there is one thing you must remember. Be sure to take the rope from my neck ^{from} before you give me to my new owner. If you do not, I shall have to remain a cow."

Before Keloghlan's mother had had time to blink once, there stood a cow before her, with a rope on the ground nearby. She tied the rope carefully around the cow's neck and began to lead it along the path to town.

Before long, they had arrived at the small marketplace, and she stood with the other peasants waiting to sell fruits and vegetables and animals.

Now, Ali Ghengis had been thinking about Keloghlan all this time.

"Perhaps Keloghlan has deceived me," he said to himself. "I must find out where he is and what he is doing." In the flicker of an eyelid, Ali Ghengis appeared in the marketplace of Keloghlan's town, where he saw Keloghlan's mother with a cow. The magician recognized the woman, but how could she know that the bearded cowherd who came to buy her cow was the magician?

"Good woman," Ali Ghengis began, "that is a fine cow. How much are you asking for her?"

"I want ten pieces of gold," replied the woman.

"Suppose I give you twenty pieces of gold? That would be more than fair," Ali Ghengis offered. "But I must have the rope with the cow, since I will need to lead her home."

When Keloghlan's mother heard "twenty pieces of gold," her son's warning about the rope flew clean out of her head. "Of course," she said, she held the end of the rope out toward Ali Ghengis.

Keloghlan, realizing that things were not going at all as he had planned, suddenly turned himself into a small bird and began to fly here and there,

then out of the marketplace. No sooner had he taken wing than Ali Ghengis became a hawk, and started in pursuit of him. Keloghlan had just reached the padishah's palace when he saw the hawk above him, ready to pounce. Changing suddenly into a red rose, Keloghlan fell through the princess's window

"Oh!" cried the princess. "What a beautiful rose!" and she breathed its fragrance with delight. "Look, father," she said, holding the rose out

the window to show it to the padishah, who was walking in the garden. "A bird must have brought me this flower. It's different from all the roses in your garden."

Suddenly there came a knock at the garden gate, and when a servant opened it, there stood a beggar. "Oh, sir," he said, addressing the padishah. "As you can see, I am very poor. Just a few moments ago, I traded my last loaf of bread for a red rose, thinking that if I must die of hunger, I might well die with beauty in my hand. Suddenly a bird swooped down and took my rose, and carried it to your palace, dropping it through a window. Have you seen it?"

The padishah thought for a minute. Of course, that must be the rose his daughter had shown him. "Daughter," he called. "Come to the garden."

Down came the princess, as beautiful as the fourteenth day of the moon, with the rose laid softly at her cheek.

"That's it!" the beggar exclaimed. "That's my rose! May I have it?"

"Oh, no," the princess said. "This is my rose," And she breathed deeply of the glowing flower.

"My daughter," the padishah said firmly, "the rose belongs to this man. You must give it to him."

At last the girl held the rose toward the beggar, who was reaching eagerly for it when all at once it fell to the ground as gleaming grains of wheat. ^{In a flash, the beggar became a chicken, and started to peck at the wheat} Here and there he hurried on little, mincing feet, eating the grains which had been scattered across the grass.

Just as he was reaching for the last grain, it turned into a fox and gobbled him up. And that was the last of Ali Ghengis.

we dreaming?" asked the padishah. "What is all this?"

and his daughter stood puzzling over this strange turn of affairs, the fox became a handsome young man. "My padishah," he said, "my name is Keloghlan. When my mother came to ask for your daughter's hand in marriage, you said that first I must learn all the tricks of Ali Ghengis. I learned them well, for the chicken you just saw eaten by the fox was Ali Ghengis himself. Now I am the only one who knows all the tricks of Ali Ghengis, and I have come for your daughter."

Never had the padishah thought so quickly. If he did not keep the promise he had made, he decided, Keloghlan might well play an Ali Ghengis trick on him. Besides, the fellow was strong and handsome, and the princess would have good reason to be pleased with him.

"My daughter is yours," he said. "Let the wedding ceremonies begin at once. The wedding was a fine one, lasting forty days and forty nights. They went to live in the palace, of course. And Keloghlan and the princess lived in peace and contentment all their days

Wedding
ceremony