

Story 2118 (Miscellaneous
Tape 17, Item 1--1971)

Narrator: Baki Gönül, 57

Location: Hınıs, kaza town
of Erzurum Prov-
ince

Date: September 10, 1971

Handsome Dough Boy Abducted--A Fragment

There was once a padishah who had just one child a daughter. As the daughter was growing up, she was disturbed that she was an only child. She wished and wished that she had a brother or sister. When she saw all of the other children holding hands on their way to school, she became upset that she was always alone. It made her sad.

One day the girl went to the padishah and said to him, "My dear father, I am going to make a boy doll out of dough. You must have among your advisers a reliable hoca¹ who can help me to give life to that doll. If I pray and the hoca prays, perhaps Allah will turn that dough doll into a real boy. Then I shall have a brother."

"Very well," answered the padishah. "I shall call my hoca and order him to help you."

¹A hoca is the preacher and religious leader of a Muslim community. In pre-Republican times a hoca was also a teacher, for then education was the responsibility of the clergy. Teachers must now have secular rather than religious training, but occasionally a teacher or professor may, for purely sentimental reasons, be addressed as "hoca."

Story 2118

The girl shaped some dough into a doll. She then took a gold coin and carved from it golden eyelashes for that doll. While she and the hoca were both praying, the dough image slowly changed into a living child. Running to the padishah with the baby boy, the girl said, "My father, may I have permission to name this child?"

"Of course you may. Give him whatever name you wish."²

As the boy began to grow up, he was admired by all of the people in that area. They were fascinated by his unusual beauty. As he grew a little older, his handsomeness and golden eyelashes were discussed by people throughout the entire land. When a witch in a remote part of the country heard about this stunningly attractive child, decided to abduct him. For this purpose she constructed a magic boat which could travel through the air, on the land, and in the water. This boat was so amazing that everyone who heard about it wished to see it. The witch charged one lira for a person to examine the boat.

When the padishah's daughter learned about this magic boat, she went to her father and said, "Please,

²The naming of a child often involves a special ceremony. Even though the girl has permission to name the dough boy, she neglects doing so. This is, of course, a lapse in the narrative skill of Baki Gönül.

Story 2118

Father, take me and my brother to see that wonderful boat." The padishah did take his two children to visit that boat. When the witch saw the dough boy, she became even more determined to capture him, but she was unable to do so in the presence of the padishah.

A week later the boy wanted to see that magic boat again. He said to his sister, "I am very interested in the magic boat. Will you please take me to see it again?"

The girl answered, "Oh, my handsome brother with golden eyelashes, I love you very much. Of course I shall take you to see that boat again.

When the witch saw the two approaching, she said to herself, "Now is the time for me to steal that beautiful boy." When the girl and her brother stepped into the magic boat, the witch threw out the padishah's daughter and fled with his handsome son.

Running back to the palace, the girl cried, "Father, Father, help me! The witch who owns the magic boat has kidnapped my little brother." She then packed a bag, took some food, and set out in pursuit of the magic boat in order to rescue her brother

The padishah's daughter walked and walked in search

Story 2118

of her lost brother, but when she looked back, she discovered that she had gone no farther than the length of a kernel of wheat. After awhile she saw a shepherd boy tending a flock of sheep. She said to him, "Shepherd, I shall give you a gold coin for the stomach of one of your sheep." Surprised at the high price she offered, he slaughtered a sheep and sold her its stomach. After cleaning that part of the animal, she removed the lining of the stomach and wore it as a hat. This concealed her long hair and made her look like a boy, a keloğlan.³

In this disguise she continued walking in search of her brother. After walking for several more days, she crossed the border between her own country and a neighboring land. She soon learned that the padishah of that adjacent land had a daughter who was totally mad. The ruler had sent couriers to all parts of the world to find doctors who might cure the girl, but none of those

³Keloğlan means bald boy, but such a person's loss of hair is not the result of aging. It is caused by ringworm infestation of the scalp. Ringworm is often a concomitant of uncleanness. Peasant families often have very limited bathing facilities, and if the family is large, the younger children are sometimes neglected, regardless of whatever facilities may exist. In folktales the keloğlan is often a sympathetic type. By dint of hard work, shrewdness, and occasionally the help of others, he often attains worldly success despite his illness. When the first letter of

Story 2118

doctors had been able to improve her condition even in the slightest degree. When the sister of the kidnapped boy met one of that padishah's couriers, she to him, "Take me to the padishah's palace, for I can heal his mad daughter."

The courier asked, "How could a keloğlan like you cure that girl when all of the doctors have failed to do so? How could you make such a claim? Do you realize that the padishah's daughter is mad?" When Keloğlan insisted however, the courier led him to the palace. By then it was evening, and darkness was approaching. The padishah had grown increasingly desperate to find a cure for mad daughter, and so he gave permission even to this identified keloğlan to examine the princess. When Keloğlan entered the room of the princess, he [she] found the girl chained to the wall. As he [she] was trying to talk with the mad patient, his [her] torch went out. Looking through the window, Keloğlan saw a fire burning brightly in the darkness. A large caldron of water was hanging on metal bars above this flame. Keloğlan went outside to relight keloğlan is capitalized, the word serves as a proper name. We very rarely learn the real name of Keloğlan. There are many keloğlan folktales in Turkey, and there are numerous examples in the Archive of Turkish Oral Narrative.

Story 2118

his [her] torch from the blaze.

As Keloğlan reached that fire, he [she] discovered that a giantess was sitting beside it. The giantess had her breasts slung over her shoulders. Keloğlan sneaked up behind her and sucked once from each of her breasts, saying, "I was lost, but now I have found you, Mother."

"I was not your mother before, but now that you have sucked my breasts, I am your milk mother."⁴

"Mother, why do you have this fire here?"

"I have seven sons, and now you have several brothers. One of those brothers wanted to marry the princess of land, but her padishah father refused to permit him to do so. We built this magic fire as a means of punishing the local people. We punished the padishah by putting a spell of madness upon his daughter."

When Keloğlan heard this, he [she] said, "My mother, why don't you rest for awhile? While you are doing so, I

⁴There is a widespread belief in Turkey that if a person nurses from the breast of a woman other than his mother, there immediately becomes a bond of quasikinship between the two families. Sometimes women nurse each other's children briefly in order to form such an alliance. Both families are thereby strengthened.

Story 2118

shall continue to stoke the fire."

"All right. I shall take a nap, but when your brothers return, be sure to awaken me at once."

As you probably know, when giants fall asleep, they usually sleep very soundly. While the giantess napped, Keloğlan tipped over the caldron of water and extinguished the magic fire. He [she] then took a piece of the burning wood into the palace through the chimney. When the princess smelled the smoke from that burning wood, she was at once disenchanted and made sane again