

Story 1112 (1966 Tape 5) Narrator: Nebiye Birkan, 50ish

Location: Taşköprü, a kaza town in  
Kastamonu Province  
Taped in Ankara

Date: Summer 1966

Keloğlan<sup>all</sup> and the Mirror<sup>all</sup>

One day the ağa<sup>all</sup> called for a glass of water, and Keloğlan went to get it for him. In the ağa's room there was a large mirror, something which Keloğlan had never seen before coming to work there. He noticed that there was another boy in the mirror who jumped to obey the ağa's command, and that other boy seemed to be moving faster than he was. Looking into the mirror, Keloğlan shouted, "You are trying to please the ağa so that he will like you better than he does me!"

<sup>1</sup> The 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 uncleanness. 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.

<sup>2</sup> An ağa (English, agha) is a rural landowner, sometimes wealthy, often powerful. The word does not indicate an official title but describes an economic status. They are often the principal employers of farm workers, and they are often viewed as harsh, driving, and abusive. The term ağa is also used in a complimentary way, as an honorific, for a distinguished or just older person than the one using the term. Thus an older brother is called ağa bey by his younger siblings. Ağa bey may be used as a deferential term to one older or more prestigious than the speaker. A taxi driver may refer to his passenger as ağa bey; a salesman speaking to a customer may call him ağa bey.

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Two days later when the ağa was not in his room, Keloğlan went there and stood before the mirror. The other boy was there again in the mirror. Keloğlan became so annoyed that the other boy mimicked everything that he did that he smashed the mirror into many small pieces. Seeing himself in one of the smaller pieces, Keloğlan grew furious. "Are you still alive?!" he shouted