

Story 2194 (1966 Tape 5)

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50s, housewife

Location: Kaza town of Taş-  
köprü, Kastamonu  
Province

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The Heavy-Headed Keloğlan<sup>1</sup>

There was once a keloğlan who was part of a large and comfortable household. On one occasion his parents to him, "Keloğlan, we shall have guests today. While are here, be serious and do not chatter so much in your light-headed way. Perhaps you should just stay away the guests while they are here."

Keloğlan was somewhat confused by these instructions. He thought, "Since they do not want me to be light-headed, I should instead be heavy-headed." He selected several weighty objects to balance on his head. It took him some time to do this.

<sup>1</sup>The word keloğlan means bald boy. The loss of hair referred to is not of the variety brought about by age. It is instead the result of ringworm infestation of the scalp. This condition is encouraged by uncleanliness. Until recently few rural Turks had modern bathing facilities, and in large families the children might not be bathed as often as required for good health. The very small children, still unable to fend for themselves, were seemingly the most vulnerable to this physical condition. The keloğlan is--perhaps out of compassion--a sympathetic and lucky figure in Turkish folktales. Whatever a bald child's given name may be, we seldom hear it because he is usually called by the quasiname Keloğlan.

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In fact it took him so long to do so that both his family and the guests wondered what had become of him. They called out, "Keloğlan, where are you?" When they received no answer, they began to search for him. They found him lying on the floor in his room, where he had fallen under the unsupportable weight piled upon his head. "What is the matter, Keloğlan? What happened?"

"When you told me to be serious and not light-headed, I placed objects upon my skull to make myself heavy-headed."