

Story #376 (not on tape)

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Location: Ankara was site of collecting  
but informant's family came  
from Tokat region

Date: December

Keloghlan and the Ooh-Genie<sup>1</sup>

*magul' ohyet - shyalat*

<sup>TEK</sup> Once there was and twice there wasn't, when genies played polo in the old Turkish bath, when the camel was a salesman and the flea a barber--well, in those days there was a forgetful bald-headed boy named Keloghlan. This Keloghlan lived with his mother in a cottage at the edge of the village, and since their bread and cheese depended on him, they ate but little.

By luck one day Keloghlan found a five-para piece in the road. On the way home with it, he passed the market, and there he saw a sack of roasted chickpeas. In a moment he had traded the five paras for some chickpeas. Forgetting that he was on his way home, he started walking toward the river, eating chickpeas all the way. But as he leaned over to look at a fish, he dropped the last of his chickpeas into the water. "Ooh, hoo, hoo, I dropped my chickpeas! I dropped my chickpeas!" he howled, scratching his bald head and scratching his bald head.

While Keloghlan was howling, the ooh-genie appeared, with his feet on the ground and his turban almost touching the sky. "Oh, you bald boy! Why are you howling so?"

Keloghlan said, "Oh, sir, I dropped my chickpeas in the water. Now I haven't any more." And he began again to howl and to scratch his bald head

<sup>1</sup>The Ooh-Genie appears when someone says Ooh! as a result of fatigue or exasperation. He is not always the benevolent creature which appears in this tale.

"Stop that howling!" the genie ordered. "Here is a five-para piece. Go and get some more chickpeas for yourself."

And off went Keloghlan, with not so much as a word of thanks, to get himself some more chickpeas. He meant to take them home, but in a little while he was back at the river, with only a handful of chickpeas left. As he bent over to watch a fish, the last of his chickpeas fell into the water.

hoo, hoo, I dropped my chickpeas! I dropped my chickpeas!" he howled, scratching his bald head and scratching his bald head.

There came that great big genie again. "Oh, you bald boy! Why are you howling so?" he asked.

Keloghlan said, "Oh, sir, I dropped my chickpeas into the water. Now I haven't any more." And he began again to howl and to scratch his bald head.

*MDG* *clap* "Stop that noise at once!" the genie demanded. "You should have known better than to drop your chickpeas again. But I have something here that's much better than chickpeas. Take this board home with you. Whenever you put it on the floor and say, 'Spread, my board. Spread!' it will spread itself with all sorts of delicious foods. Eat all you want. When you

finished, say, 'Board, fold yourself,' and the rest of the foods will disappear. You can keep the board, but this you must remember: Part with your head, but not your secret."

Off went Keloghlan, with not so much as a word of thanks, to see what the board could do. "Mother," he called as he entered the cottage, "come and see what I brought home." Putting the board in the middle of the room, he said, "Spread, my board. Spread!" And the words were scarcely spoken when the board became filled with all sorts of delicious foods-- dolmas and böreks and pilav and baklava--and Keloghlan and his mother both ate until they could eat no more. When Keloghlan said, "Board, fold yourself,"

the rest of the food disappeared, and the board folded itself and Keloghlan stood it against the wall.

From that day on, Keloghlan and his mother lived so happily that they could scarcely believe their good fortune. They grew healthy, and even fat, and they became the talk of the village. But Hasan, the greedy fellow next door, wondered long and longer about this change in his neighbors. Meeting Keloghlan one day, he said, "You must have found a bag of gold somewhere. How else could you be eating so well?"

Keloghlan, forgetting at first what the genie had said, answered, "Oh, it's no bag of gold. It's a plain board that I found."

"A plain board? How can a plain board bring you food?" Hasan asked.

Noticing the gleam in his neighbor's eye, Keloghlan said, "Ah, that's my secret." And he would say no more.

But Hasan had heard all he needed to know. The next day when it came time for dinner, he stood quietly outside Keloghlan's cottage where there was a small crack in the wall, and he watched as Keloghlan put the board in the middle of the room. "Spread, my board. Spread!" Keloglan said, and Hasan could scarcely believe his eyes at the feast which appeared on the board. He watched as Keloghlan and his mother ate; he listened carefully as Keloghlan said, "Board, fold yourself."

"I must have that board for myself," Hasan decided. And he looked and looked until he had found a board that looked exactly like the one Keloghlan had. Then one day when Keloghlan and his mother had gone to a wedding feast, he slipped into their house and traded his worthless board for Keloghlan's magic one.

The next morning at breakfast time Keloghlan put the board in the middle of the floor and said, "Spread, my board. Spread!" But the board didn't spread. Keloghlan repeated, "Spread, my board. Spread!" And nothing happened. "Spread, my board. Spread!" Keloghlan shouted, but the board lay just like any ordinary board on the floor. Then Keloghlan knew that his own board had been stolen. What would he and his mother do for food?

Keloghlan thought for a while. Then he slipped into his worn shoes and walked to the river. "Ooh, hoo, hoo!" he howled. "Someone has stolen my board. Now how can I live?" And all the while he howled, he scratched his bald head and scratched his bald head.

Suddenly the great big ooh-genie came again, with his feet on the ground and his turban almost in the sky. "Stop that howling, bald boy!" he ordered. "Of course someone stole your board. And why wouldn't it be stolen as soon as you told someone about it? Didn't I tell you to part with your head but not your secret?"

"Oh, sir, I forgot," said Keloghlan. "But, ooh, hoo, hoo, my board is gone. And how shall I live?" he howled, scratching and scratching his bald head.

"Stop that howling!" the genie commanded. "You were fool enough to lose your board. But I have something better than a board. Here is a donkey. When you say, 'Give gold, my donkey. Give gold!' it will spit gold pieces. When you have enough gold, say, 'Stop, my donkey. Stop! You can keep the donkey, but remember: Part with your head but not your secret."

Off went Keloghlan, with not so much as a word of thanks, to see what the donkey could do. He led the donkey into their small stable. Then he called, "Mother, come and see what I brought home." As soon as she had

Id. defunctis  
 donkey  
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come into the stable, Keloghlan closed the door. Then he said, "Give gold my donkey. Give gold!" To their delight, the donkey spat out one gold piece after another, until Keloghlan and his mother could scarcely stuff the coins into the old grain sack at the back of the stable. "Stop, my donkey. Stop!" Keloghlan said, and the donkey stopped spitting gold and began to eat the straw in the stall.

Now that Keloghlan and his mother had enough gold to make them rich, they decided to live as wealthy, important people. They had a big house built, and they covered the floors with rugs and carpets. Instead of their old straw mats, they had fine, soft beds. They dressed themselves in elegantly embroidered clothing. And they killed lambs and gave them to the poor. They became known for their fine living and their generous ways.

Meanwhile, Hasan saw this change that had come about in his neighbors and he wondered long and longer about it. "How can this be?" he asked himself. "I stole their board, and now they have even better fortune than before. I must find out about this." And one Friday he stopped to chat with Keloghlan after the service at the mosque. "Allah has been good to you, neighbor. How else can one account for such good fortune?"

Forgetting for a moment what the genie had said, Keloghlan laughed. "Well, it might be Allah. But then, again, it might be a donkey!"

"A donkey!" exclaimed Hasan. "How could a donkey make such a change in your life?"

Keloghlan, remembering what had happened to his board, scratched his bald head. "A donkey? Did I say a donkey? The donkey is myself, neighbor. And now, goodnight." He walked home, and carefully covered the window

of the stable so that no one could see his donkey.

But Hasan was determined to find the answer to this puzzle. He went 'round and 'round Keloghlan's house, and 'round and 'round the stable, finally he found a hole to peep through. Yes, there was a donkey inside--a very ordinary-looking donkey--eating the straw in the stall. Still, the neighbor wasn't satisfied. He watched day after day until he saw both Keloghlan and his mother go into the stable and close the door. Then he hurried over and peeped through the hole in the stable wall. He listened as Keloghlan said, "Give gold, my donkey. Give gold!" And he watched in amazement as the donkey spat out gold piece after gold piece, in a great shining heap on the floor. Trembling with eagerness, he watched and listened until he heard Keloghlan say, "Stop, my donkey. Stop!" The donkey stopped spitting gold pieces and went back to eating the straw in the stall. As soon as Keloghlan began to stuff the gold pieces into the old grain at the back of the stable, Hasan hurried back to his house. Somehow he must manage to get that donkey for himself. But how?

Hasan looked and looked until he had found a donkey exactly like Keloghlan's. Then one day, while Keloghlan and his mother had gone to attend a funeral, he hurried to the stable with his new donkey and exchanged it for Keloghlan's donkey. Quickly he led Keloghlan's donkey to the stable back of his own house and put him into a large stall. "Give gold, my donkey. Give gold!" he commanded. And the donkey spat gold pieces until even Hasan was satisfied. "Stop, my donkey. Stop!" he said, and while the donkey ate straw, Hasan counted the coins over and over again.

After a while, Keloghlan had used all the gold in his grain sack, and he went one morning to the donkey. "Give gold, my donkey. Give gold!

he said. But the donkey just looked at him and went on eating straw.

"Give gold, my donkey. Give gold!" Keloghlan repeated, more loudly. But the donkey just flicked one ear and went on eating. "Give gold, my donkey. Give gold!" Keloghlan shouted, but the donkey stood there, stubborn as any donkey, and not a single gold piece did he spit. So Keloghlan knew that his own donkey had been stolen. "Now what am I to do?" he said. "How shall we eat? How shall we live?"

Keloghlan thought and thought. Then he walked in his fine new shoes to the river. "Ooh, hoo, hoo!" he howled. "Someone has stolen my donkey. Now how can I live?" And all the while he howled, he scratched his bald head and scratched his bald head

Suddenly that great big ooh-genie came again, with his feet on the ground and his turban almost in the sky. "Stop that howling, bald boy!" he ordered. "Of course someone stole your donkey. And why wouldn't it be stolen as soon as you told someone about it? Didn't I tell you to part with your head but not your secret?"

"Oh, sir, I forgot," said Keloghlan. "But, ooh, hoo, hoo, my donkey is gone. Now how can I live?" And all the while he howled, he scratched his bald head and scratched his bald head

"Stop that howling!" the genie commanded. "You've been fool enough to lose your board and your donkey. How do I know that you have learned your lesson?"

"Oh, sir, I have, I have!" Keloghlan cried. "Truly I'll remember this time!"

"Perhaps this stick of wisdom will help you to remember," said the genie. "I'll give you the stick of wisdom. This is how it works. 'Beat,

my stick. Beat!" As soon as the genie had said this, the stick began to beat Keloghlan on his bald head, <sup>Om</sup> putt-ta-kit-ta, putt-ta-kit-ta. When Keloghlan had had enough, the genie said, "Stop, my stick. Stop!" and the stick stopped beating. "Her<sup>y</sup> boy, is the stick. Now, look at me. Don't you ever come back here crying and whining again or I'll finish you! Take your stick to the one you suspect of stealing your board and your donkey. Set the stick to beating him, and let him be beaten until he has learned to leave your things alone. He'll give you back your board and your donkey. Take good care of them! Now, be off about your business."

With not so much as a word of thanks, Keloghlan went home. "Well, mother, I have a magic something else. Now we'll see what can be done with it to mend our fortunes," said Keloghlan.

He took his mother with him and went directly to Hasan. "Look, neighbor, he began. "You stole the board that gave me my food. You stole the donkey that gave me my gold. Will you return them to me as any honest person should?"

Hasan laughed scornfully. "What board? What donkey? I haven't taken anything of yours."

"Oh, you haven't? We'll just see!" said Keloghlan. "Look. Over there against the wall is a board. Put it down in the middle of the room, and we'll see whether it is mine or not."

Much against his will, Hasan put the board on the floor. "Spread, my board. Spread!" ordered Keloghlan, and immediately the board was spread with all kinds of delicious foods. Keloghlan and his mother sat down and ate and ate, until they could eat no more. "Well," said Keloghlan, "the board is mine. Now, let's go out to your stable."

"My stable!" exclaimed Hasan. But he went with Keloghlan and his mother to the donkey's stall. "Give gold, my donkey. Give gold!" ordered Keloghlan, and the donkey began to spit gold until there was scarcely room for it in the stall.

"Now, neighbor," said Keloghlan. "Will you or will you not return these things to me?"

"Indeed, I will not," answered Hasan angrily. "Why should I? They belong to me."

At that, Keloghlan took the stick from under his jacket. "Beat, stick. Beat!" he commanded, and the stick began to beat Hasan on the head, putt-ta-kit-ta, putt-ta-kit-ta, until Hasan had danced himself out of the stable and into the house.

"I'll give you back your things!" he shouted. "But stop that stick!"

"Will you ever take anything of mine again?" asked Keloghlan, as the stick continued to play its tune on Hasan's head.

"Never, never!" exclaimed Hasan. "As Allah is my witness, I'll never touch a thing of yours again."

"Stop, my stick. Stop!" Keloghlan ordered. Keloghlan loaded the gold on his donkey's back. Then he took his board and his donkey and his stick, and he and his mother returned home. From that day on, they lived in peace and contentment. And may we all have a share of their luck!