

#18 #18 #18
Keloğlan and the Giant in the Orchard

There was once a Keloğlan who had four older brothers. They lived happily until one day a giant started coming to their orchard and eating all the fruit from their trees, one tree at a time. Each of his elder brothers took a turn waiting in the orchard to try to kill the giant, but each of these elder brothers fell asleep during his watch, and so the giant went on eating their food. And so finally it was the turn of Keloğlan to watch and wait for the giant.

Keloğlan kept awake while he waited for the giant, and when he came to steal fruit, Keloğlan shot at him with his bow, wounding the giant in the heel. The giant ran away, but Keloğlan was able to track him by the bloody trail that he left. Keloğlan tracked him to his lair, which was a deep well, and then followed the giant down into the well, where he finally cornered him and killed him.

While they were fighting, Keloğlan noticed several large storks flying around over the mouth of the well, and these birds were so large that they sometimes closed off the sunlight from the well. After the giant was killed, Keloğlan discovered a beautiful girl there on a ledge where the giant had kept her imprisoned. He released the girl and then tried to find a way to return to the surface of the earth again. It was easy enough to slide down into the well, but it was another matter to climb out, for the sides of the well were steep. Just then one of the big storks looked down from the mouth of the well. "What is it that you wish, you Keloğlan?" it shouted down.

"I want to take this girl and myself to the surface of the earth again," said Keloğlan.

brothers -- older
-- four

four

[weapon] wound -- in heel

tail -- of giant

so large that
black wings

beautiful -- imprisoned by giant

imprisoned

Hero -- Same as above Underworld -- re

"I shall carry both of you up," said the stork. "You will have to provide me with 40 kilos of meat and 40 skins of water. When I say 'Gak!' you will give me water. When I say 'Gook!' you will give me meat."

And the bird then came down to the bottom of the well.

Keloglan agreed to this and took meat and water from the giant's lair and together with the girl climbed on the bird's back. The huge bird then started flapping its wings and carrying the two up toward the earth. Keloglan kept giving it water on the way when it cried "Gak!" and meat when it cried "Gook!" After a long flight upward, they were nearing the mouth of the well when the meat supply was exhausted. The bird did not know this, and when it said "Gook!" Keloglan cut a piece of meat from the calf of his leg and gave it to the bird. The stork did not

bird --
fear meat
to it at
in flesh --
does not

swallow this meat, for it knew from the taste that it was human flesh; it just kept the meat under its tongue.

Hero -- feeds
flesh from his calf
to giant bird
carrying him to on
from underworld

When they reached the top, they climbed off the bird, and Keloglan and his girl started walking away, but Keloglan was limping. The bird noticed this, and taking out the piece of meat that it had kept under its tongue, it stuck it back on Keloglan's calf, and immediately Keloglan's leg was completely healed.

Flash cut by
hero from own calf
-- to feed giant bird
carrying him from
underworld -- miracle

Their trip out of the well had taken a long while, and again it took them a long while to walk from there to Keloglan's home. When Keloglan arrived at his home with the girl, his brothers did not recognize him, and he had to explain to them that he was Keloglan, their youngest brother. After that, Keloglan and his girl friend were married, and they lived in happiness all their lives.

rejoined to calf
by bird

NOTE: Interesting discrepancy that does not bother the folk: The bird can talk well enough to bargain with Keloglan, but when it wants meat and water, it can say only "Gook!" and "Gak!" sounds which are thought to be those made by ducks, geese, and other domesticated fowls. In one variant, the sounds were "Lik!" and "Loop!"

NOTE: The ability to detect human flesh by its taste recurs in Turkish folk tales; see, for example, Story #1, "The Guessing Children."