

Story #53 (Tape 52)
1961-1962

Narrator:

Location:

Date: Ap

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How Koroğlu Became an Outl

Koroğlu's father was groom in the household of Bolu Bey. One day some wealthy boys came to Bolu with thousands of fine horses, and Bolu Bey asked them to give him one. The visiting boys told Bolu Bey's groom to come and select from their pack whatever horse he wished and then take it to his master. The groom went and selected a horse that looked very weak and poor. He mounted this horse, took it to Bolu Bey, and showed it to him.

Bolu Bey was furious. "Is that the best horse you could choose out of all those thousands of horses?" he demanded. He was so angry that he had his servants poke out the eyes of the groom with a hot rod. Then he was put on the poor horse and headed for his home.

When Koroğlu's father reached home, he said to his son, "Build four walls here." After Koroğlu had built the four walls, his father said, "Now cover these four walls with a roof so that not even a single ray of sunshine can penetrate it."

The horse was put in this stable -- dark and there it was groomed for six months. After that time had passed, Koroğlu's father ordered that a field be plowed twelve times and watered after each plowing. After this was done, he ordered Koroğlu to mount the horse and ride through the plowed field. When Koroğlu had done this and returned, his father felt the horse's hoofs with his hands, but he was not satisfied with what he felt there.

hoof -- of horse

*horse -- ability of -- to penetrate mud with hooves
and reach dry ground -- tested*

"There must be a leak in some corner of the stable," he said to Koroğlu. "This horse must be kept in complete darkness in the stable for another six months." Koroğlu found the place in the roof where a small amount of light leaked in and fixed it. Then he cared for the horse for another six months.*

At the end of that time, his father ordered that the field be again plowed and watered twelve times. Koroğlu then mounted the horse and rode around the field several times, jumped over a high wall, and returned to his father, who again felt the horse's hoof with his hands. time he was satisfied, for he found some dry earth on the hoofs and knew that the horse had been able to reach down through the mud to the firm earth.

"As long as you have this horse," he told Koroğlu, "nobody can defeat you. Now I want you to go and take my revenge against Bolu Bey."

After this, as you know, Koroğlu had a long series of adventures. He went to Bolu Bey's home and waited to get a chance to kill him. Bolu Bey saw him from a high window, and asked who he was. He told Bolu Bey's servants that he was a groom for Koroğlu. But Bolu Bey noticed that the horse he was riding was so violent that no one else could get near it; and he noticed it pawing up earth with its feet. He suspected that this was Koroğlu himself, about whom he had often heard, and he ordered his men, "Catch him!" But Koroğlu got back on his horse and galloped from there as fast as the wind.

As you know, he had forty men in the hills with him. That is what I have heard, anyway. One of them was Ayvaz whom he had stolen from his father's butcher shop in Uskudar.¹

* In some versions the light penetrates the barn when K., overcome by curiosity, peeks at the horse on the 39th day.

¹ A city on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, better known to Western readers (thanks to Florence Nightingale, perhaps) as Scutari.

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One day Koroğlu went on a journey to the Caucasus Mountains to a place called Dagistan. There he saw a girl taking water from a fountain in a pitcher. He took a ring from his finger and threw it into her pitcher, and then he followed the girl to her home. Both of the parents of the girl were deaf, but Koroğlu shouted to them, "By the will of God and the permission of the Prophet, I want to marry your daughter."² *(Mohammed)* marriage agreement -- formulaic request.

The father of the girl said, "Could I possibly give my daughter to a braver man than this?" and he consented to their marriage.

Koroğlu stayed that one night with his wife and then in the morning departed, leaving with her a shield, a club, and a sword. In the stable of his father-in-law there was a fine mare, and Koroğlu mated this mare and his famous horse. He said to his wife before leaving, "When my son is eight years old, mount him on the colt that will be born to the mare. Give him the shield, the club, and the sword, and let him go. Farewell!" *weapons -- sword, club, shield -- left with mother of her by father -- on day of conception -- to be given to her -- when he*

Eight months later, the mare bore a male colt, and nine months and ten days after Koroğlu left, his wife bore a son. When the child grew old enough to talk, he began to ask questions about his father: "Who is my father? Where is my father? When is my father going to return?"

When he was eight years old, they saddled his horse and placed him in the saddle, giving him the shield, the club, and the sword of Koroğlu.

He started riding in the direction of Camlibel.

When a young man in Turkey is interested in marrying a girl, he has a matchmaker visit her parents in his behalf; usually it is one or both of his own parents, if they are alive; or, if the girl is above his station in any way, he may have a more prominent person act in their place. The matchmaker, called in Turkish dünür, opens the interview with the girl's parents by saying, "By the will of God and the permission of the Prophet, I have come to ask for the hand of your daughter for X."

Hasan of Dagistan -- and his horse -- conceived on same day -- when father ^(Koroğlu) and his stallion visit + mother and her mare, respectively -- pp. 62, 71

Have -- and his horse -- conceived on same day

Conception -- of her and his horse on same day

Quest -- by son -- to find father

Sen -- on quest -- to find father

Story #53

At Çamlıbel--that is near Bolu, you know--Köroğlu and his followers had a beautiful mansion with a tower on one end. One day Köroğlu and Ayvaz were watching from this tower when Köroğlu said, "A prey is approaching us." They came down from the tower and looked at the approaching horseman, and Köroğlu was interested to see that he was riding a horse -- bay colored bay horse, like his own. When the stranger was close enough, they exchanged greetings in song. I don't remember all of the verses now,³ but Ayvaz announced himself this way: "I am called Ayvaz, the strongest of men among all Turkish tribes."⁴

Köroğlu's son answered, "Greetings to you, Ayvaz. I am called Hasan of Dağıstan, the fastest of horsemen."

Ayvaz and Hasan were about to start fighting when Köroğlu sprang between them and separated the^m, for he had recognized that the boy was his own son.

³The version of the legend that the narrator knew was apparently a cante fable, as, in fact, most versions were originally or became later. Folk poets in Turkey delight in creating librettos for the many episodes in the Köroğlu legend. A whole study could be made of these librettos.

⁴In Turkish tales of the heroic ages, warriors introduced themselves with a good bit of bragging and chest thumping, just as they did, according to literature, in many other cultures.