Story #377 (No longer on tape)  

Narrator: Suzan Koraltürk  
Location: Collected at Ankara, but narrator was from Trabzon  
Date: April 1962  

Once there was and twice there wasn't, in the old days, when the camel was town crier and I was rocking my father's cradle turgul mungur—well, in those days there was a bald boy named Keloghlan.

This Keloghlan had two older brothers whose chief delight was to see their youngest brother run about on errands. "Keloghlan, sweep out the stable," the first would order. And, "Carry some water, you lazy thing," the second would roar. "Now curry the horses," the first would demand, before Keloghlan had even caught his breath from bringing the water. Despite the abuse from his brothers, the boy remained good-natured, fetching and carrying as fast as his legs could trot.

One day as Keloghlan was hurrying back from the village fountain, he heard the town crier making a most interesting announcement. "Hear ye all the word of the padishah! The padishah's lovely daughter has promised to marry the horseman skillful enough to perform a certain task. Come, ye, all who would try for the hand and heart of the princess! On Monday next, come ye all to the padishah's palace for the contest. Hear ye! Hear ye!"

"Did you hear the town crier?" Keloghlan asked his brothers as he set down the water jars.

"Of course, stupid boy," one answered. "Who could miss the news? I suppose you think you are the horseman skillful enough to win the princess?" And the brothers shook with laughter at the very idea.
"I'd never win the princess, but I'd like to see the contest," Keloghlan admitted. "If you're going to watch the horsemen, could I go along with you?"

"Ha! What would you do there? Every skill could be gained by watching, every dog would become a butcher!" And the older brothers sent him off to prepare their clothes for the event.

But on Monday, after Keloghlan had saddled his brothers' horses and seen them off for the padishah's palace, he decided to go himself. Reaching into the pocket of his shabby trousers, he pulled out three hairs, a white one, a brown one, and a black one.

"The old man who gave me these hairs said that if I rubbed the white hair, a white horse would appear, and with the white horse a white suit and a turban for me to wear," murmured Keloghlan. "Well, there's nothing to be lost by trying!" and he rubbed the white hair between his thumb and forefinger. Phut! There stood a beautiful white horse, and with it a handsome white suit and a turban.

clouds as he rode to the padishah's palace, arriving there before his brothers.

The padishah's daughter, lovely as the fourteenth day of the moon, set the task. "The horseman who will win my hand must leap the ravine behind my father's palace," she announced. "How easy!" whispered one. "How fair!" answered another. And the handsomest, bravest young men of the kingdom vied for the chance to be first. But, alas, the ravine was wider than they had judged, and one after another they met defeat. Suddenly Keloghlan rode up to the starting place, pressed his horse forward with great, bounding leaps, and cleared the ravine with a handsome margin to spare.

"The young man on the white horse has won the hand of the princess!" In
ringing tones, the padishah's own crier made the announcement. But where was the victor? Here and there and everywhere a search was made for the winner, but he had disappeared completely—both he and his horse had simply vanished. At last a new announcement was made: "Tomorrow there will be a second contest for the hand of the padishah's daughter. Hear ye! Hear ye!" and the crowd dispersed, marveling at this unusual turn of events.

Meanwhile, Keloghlan had returned home, dismissing the white horse and the white suit and the turban, and he cheerfully unsaddled his brothers' horses when they arrived. "How was the contest?" he asked as he rubbed the steaming horses.

"Oh, even you would have enjoyed it," his older brother said. "Think of it—A fine gentleman on a white horse almost flew across the ravine."

"Then he won the hand of the princess?"

"Oh, no, for he completely disappeared as soon as the contest was finished," answered the other. "Since he did not come to claim the prize there is to be another contest tomorrow for the hand of the padishah's daughter."

"How I wish I could see it!" Keloghlan sighed.

"Well, next time we'll take you, if you'll promise not to make fools of us all," the brothers agreed.

And on Tuesday, after Keloghlan had saddled his brother's horses, he was allowed to saddle one for himself, a wretched beast that could barely put one hoof before the other. In no time at all, the two older brothers had ridden far ahead of Keloghlan, laughing all the while between themselves at that foolish fellow on his sorry steed. As soon as his brothers were out of sight, Keloghlan slipped off his horse's back and tied him securely to an olive
brown one, he rubbed it between his thumb and forefinger. Phut!

here stood a beautiful brown horse, and with it a handsome brown suit and a urban for him to wear. Slipping the hairs back into his pocket, Keloghlan onned the brown suit and the turban, mounted the brown horse, and was off in great cloud of dust for the padishah's palace, arriving there before his rothers.

This time the padishah's daughter ordered that the contestants leap an ven wider part of the ravine. Again, after the other horsemen had tried and ailed, Keloghlan came riding up on his brown horse, took a flying start, and eaped the ravine with an even wider margin to spare.

"The young man on the brown horse has won the hand of the princess!" In inging tones, the padishah's own crier made the announcement. But again the victor had disappeared, and again the hand of the princess went unclamed.

After a hasty conference of the padishah with his visiers, another announcement was made: "Tomorrow there will be a third contest for the hand of the padishah's daughter. Hear ye! Hear ye!" and the crowd went its way, with much talk about the remarkable horseman.

In the meantime, Keloghlan had returned to the olive tree where he had left the old horse. Dismissing the brown horse and the brown suit and the turban, Keloghlan mounted the horse his brothers had chosen for him, and rode slowly toward the padishah's palace. Before long, he met his brothers, returning in a white heat down the road.

"Turn around! There's no need to go farther," his older brother shouted. And obediently Keloghlan turned his horse around and hobbled toward home. By
the time he arrived, his brothers had already unsaddled their horses and were rubbing them down. "At the rate you rode home, we could have unsaddled forty horses," the younger one scolded. But they told him all about the contest, anyway.

"How I wish I could have seen it!" Keloglan said wistfully.

"Never mind. There'll be another contest tomorrow, and perhaps you'll ride fast enough next time to get there before the affair is over!"

Both brothers agreed that Keloglan should have a better horse the following day, so on Wednesday after the boy had saddled the other two horses, he saddled and mounted his own, and they rode off together. Still, the horse was an old one, and before long his brothers had ridden clear out of sight, impatient to see the contest.

Slipping from his horse's back, Keloglan tied the scrawny beast to a poplar tree. Taking the three hairs from his pocket, he chose the black one and rubbed it between his thumb and forefinger. Phut! there stood a gleaming black horse, and with it a fine black suit and a turban for Keloglan to wear. Donning the black suit and the turban and mounting his black horse was the work of but a moment or two. Then, in a great cloud of dust Keloglan rode off for the padishah's palace, arriving there well before his brothers.

This time the padishah's daughter had arranged a high hurdle for the horsemen to jump. And this time, resolved that the victor should claim his prize, she had hidden two women behind the hurdle with red stamps in their hands. When a horseman had succeeded in jumping the hurdle, the women were to stamp him on each side of his forehead so that later he could be identified. Again, one contestant after another tried the task and failed. Finally
Keloghlan came riding up on the black horse. Urging his horse forward, he bounded over the hurdle so easily that another horseman could have cleared the hurdle beneath him. The two women were ready for him, however, and as he landed they quickly stamped each side of his forehead with the bold red seal of the padishah's daughter.

Again the victor disappeared, but this time the princess was determined to find him. After a hasty conference of the padishah with his viziers, the padishah's own crier made a new announcement: "Tomorrow, every man in the kingdom will come to the palace to be viewed by the princess."

"Every man?" "What is the princess looking for?" "How will she know?" Questions of all kinds buzzed among the crowd, for of course no one but the princess and the two women knew about the stamps that had been put on the forehead of the remarkable horseman.

When the two brothers returned home, they found Keloghlan waiting for them in the stable, with his head all bandaged.

"What happened to you?" one asked.

"Oh," replied Keloghlan, "I was hurrying toward the padishah's palace, and I fell off my horse and hit my head on a stone."

His wounded head did not excuse him from unsaddling and rubbing down the horses, however, so Keloghlan set to work, listening with interest as his brothers almost in a single voice told him of the contest. "And," the older one finished, "tomorrow every man in the kingdom is to appear at the padishah's palace to be viewed by the princess."

"Whatever for?" Keloghlan was curious.

"Who knows? Perhaps she hopes to find the gentleman who rode the black
horse. At any rate, we must all go, stupid as it seems to take you with us. If the padishah's crier said 'every man,' he doubtless meant even Keloghlan!" said the younger brother.

Thus it was that Keloghlan went with his brothers the next day to the padishah's palace, arriving later than the rest and falling into line at the very end. Man after man was examined, but none bore the red seal of the princess. Suddenly looking up, the padishah's daughter saw a young man with his head all bandaged. "Bring that man to me," she ordered, and her attendants immediately to Keloghlan and led him to the princess.

"Unwrap your head," she demanded. And when Keloghlan had removed the bandage, there was his bald head shining in the sun—and there were the two bold red marks of the princess's seal.

"A Keloghlan!" laughed all who saw. "Surely that Keloghlan has not won the daughter of the padishah! There must be some mistake."

But the princess knew the secret of the red seal, and—bald or not—this young man had won her hand. "Why did you hide, when you earned the right to marry me?" she asked.

"I am just a Keloghlan, and not worthy to be your husband," replied the in a voice little louder than a whisper.

"A man is judged by his work. And, Keloghlan or no Keloghlan, you have the skill as a horseman which won you the prize. Nothing was said of hair or beard, or fine manners or famous name, either." With that, the padishah's daughter presented Keloghlan to her father and his viziers. And soon after, Keloghlan married the padishah's daughter, with a wedding celebration that lasted for forty days and forty nights.

So much for Keloghlan... As for what became of the hairs—I haven't seen them.