

Story 752 (1985 Tape 1)

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Keloğlan Guards the Door

There was a Keloğlan¹ who lived with his mother. He was a lazy and useless boy of fourteen or fifteen years of age. He liked to do nothing but play outside, and so he wasted all of his time. His poor mother, a widow, had to do all of the work that was to be done. One day she had to leave home for a short while, and before she left, she said to Keloğlan, "Take good care of the house while I am gone. Be especially careful to watch the front door so that nobody enters. Don't leave the door!"

After his mother had left, Keloğlan began playing in the front yard, close to the front door. He watched the door continuously to be sure that no one entered the house through it.

¹The word keloğlan means bald boy. More specifically, it means a boy who has become bald as a result of ringworm infection of the scalp. Uncleanliness makes people susceptible to ringworm, and in large families, the youngest children, who may often go unattended, seem to be most vulnerable. The high frequency of ringworm in young children often qualifies the definition of keloğlan. Any young child may be called keloğlan, whether or not he is bald. That seems to be the case in this tale.

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Debuma

A few hours later his mother needed some help in the work she was doing. She sent a message to Keloğlan, asking him to come and help her. When the boy received this message, he didn't know what to do. On the one hand, his mother had ordered him never to leave the door. On the other hand, she had just ordered him to come and assist her. How could he possibly carry out both of these orders? Finally, he arrived at a solution. He ripped the door off its hinges, put it on his back, and carried it to the place where his mother was working

When his mother saw Keloğlan coming with the door on his back, she was exasperated. "Keloğlan, Keloğlan, didn't I ask you to take good care of our house?"

Keloğlan answered, "Yes, Mother, you told me that I shouldn't leave the door. In order to avoid leaving it, I have brought it with me!"