

Story 756 (1985 Tape 1)

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Keloğlan and the Three Magic Gifts

One day back in those old times Keloğlan's¹ mother sent him to market to buy some chickpeas. Keloğlan, as usual, dallied about and spent on other things some of the money his mother had given him for chickpeas. Late in the afternoon he finally remembered that he was supposed to buy chickpeas for his mother. He bought some with the money he left and started for home. Along the way he felt a desire to taste the chickpeas before he got home. He began to taste them and taste them and taste them until, before long, were all tasted up--finished. When he realized how angry him mother would probably get over this, he began to cry, "Off! My chickpeas! Off! My chickpeas!"

¹The word keloğlan means bald boy. The baldness referred to is of a particular kind: that caused by ringworm infection of the scalp. Uncleanliness encourages ringworm infestation, and the younger children of very large families, often not attended properly, seem to be victimized by the disease most frequently. So strong is the correlation between (1) youngest child and (2) ringworm infection that any youngest (or very young) child may be called Keloğlan whether or not he/she is actually bald, whether or not he/she has ringworm infection. Such seems to be the case here.

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As soon as he said that, the ^{Jinn} Off Jinn,² who lives in the river,³ appeared and said, "O Master, what would you like to have me do?"

"Off! I want my chickpeas back. What am I ever going to tell my mother?"

"I shall give you something far better than chickpeas," said the Off Jinn. "Here is a magic sofra.⁴ Take it to your mother, and she won't beat you. If you say, 'Open, sofra!' it will open, and forty-one different kinds of food will appear on it. If you say, 'Close, sofra!' it will close again and the dishes will disappear."

Keloğlan accepted the sofra from the jinn and took it to his mother. She was angry at first because he had failed to bring back the chickpeas she had ordered, but when learned about the magic of the sofra, her attitude changed. She and Keloğlan sat down at the sofra and ate all of the

²Turkish people exclaim Off rather than Oh when they are exhausted or exasperated. When the word Off is used, it may call up the Off Jinn, usually a benevolent being who will accomplish difficult tasks or provide magic objects to aid the person in trouble or under duress.

³Although various jinns, magic horses, and other supernatural beings are said to live in rivers in Turkish tales, this is not usually said of the Off Jinn.

⁴A sofra is a very short-legged table whose surface is usually about ten inches above the floor. It is used as a dining table by many country people in Turkey. Diners sit before it on the floor, with crossed legs, tailor fashion.

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food which it provided. After dinner the sofra was closed and put away.

After that, Kelođlan and his mother ate all their meals from what the magic sofra provided. Unfortunately, one of their neighbors became curious about where they were getting their food. He watched the two of them carefully, and after a while he saw the magic sofra. He waited until a day when Kelođlan and his mother were not at home. Then he entered their house, stole the magic sofra, and left an ordinary sofra in its place.

Later that day when Kelođlan returned, he was very hungry. He went at once to the sofra and said, "Open, sofra!" but nothing happened. The sofra neither opened nor provided the delicious food it had in the past. Kelođlan then realized that the magic sofra had been stolen, and he feared that his mother would beat him because of its loss.

Kelođlan then went to the river crying, "Off, my sofra my sofra! I want my sofra back!"

The Off Jinn soon appeared and said, "O Master, order what you will!"

"I have lost the sofra, and I know that my mother will beat me for this. I want my sofra back!"

Although the Off Jinn was disturbed that Kelođlan had the magic sofra, he said only, "Oh, that is all right.

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I shall give you something else much better than the sofra. It is a magic goose. When you say to it, 'Lay eggs, goose!' it will lay golden eggs."

Kelođlan accepted the goose from the jinn and took it home to his mother. "Look, Mother, look!" he said. "We may have lost the magic sofra, but I have found a magic goose!" Mother and son sat down by the goose, and Kelođlan said, "Lay eggs, goose!" Immediately the goose laid several golden eggs. This continued, day after day, until they had grown very rich and could buy anything they wished.

The neighbor who had stolen the sofra wondered how they had suddenly become so rich. Before long he discovered that it was the magic goose that provided all of their great wealth. Of course he wanted the magic goose for himself, and so one day when Kelođlan and his mother were not at home, he entered their house and stole the goose.

When Kelođlan returned home, he found that the magic goose had disappeared. He looked everywhere for it but he could not find it. He became so upset over this that he began to cry, "Off, my goose! Off! My goose! I have lost my goose!" As he was crying this way, Kelođlan came to the river.

The next time Kelođlan repeated his complaint, the Off Jinn appeared and said, "Yes, Master. What is your wish?"

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Keloğlan told him that he had lost the magic goose. "It was gone when I returned home today."

This time the jinn became quite angry. He said, "First you lost the sofra, and now you have lost the goose! I am going to give you just one more thing--the last magic object I have to give. Don't you dare to lose it this time!"

"What is it?" Keloğlan asked.

"It is a magic stick which will beat a person if you say, 'Beat, stick, beat!' It will continue to beat until the person says, 'I'll give you the sofra and the goose. Then it will stop beating."

Keloğlan took the stick and returned home with it. Wishing to test the power of this magic object, he said, "Beat, stick, beat!" The stick started at once to beat Keloğlan, and Keloğlan was unable to get away from its blows. He finally remembered the magic words to make it stop, and he said, "I'll give you the sofra and the goose." Then it stopped.

The neighbor again found out about the magic object, and he wanted to have it for himself. Before long he had managed to steal that, too. He knew that the stick would beat people, and he wondered if it would beat those people whom he did not like. Quite joyfully he said, "Beat, stick, beat!" and the stick immediately began beating him rather than anyone

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else. He tried to escape its blows, but there was no way of escaping them. The stick beat and beat and beat the neighbor.

Keloğlan finally got to the neighbor's house in time to him. He asked the neighbor, "Was it you who stole my sofra and my goose?"

"Yes, it was I who stole them. But please help me now before this stick kills me."

"If you say that you are going to give me back those two things, then the stick will stop beating."

The neighbor at once said, "I will give you back the sofra, and I will give you back the goose!"

When the stick heard these magic words, it stopped beating him. He was so afraid of that stick that he at once brought out the magic sofra and the magic goose and gave them to Keloğlan

Keloğlan then picked up the three magic objects belonging to him and went home with them. After that, the mother son lived very happily.