

Story 2086 (1966 Tape S21)

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Location: Dođla village, Karacabey kaza, Bursa
Province

Date: Summer 1966

Kerem and Aslı

There was once a boy named Kerem who was desperately in love with Aslı, an Armenian girl. Although the son of a ruler, he willingly gave up all claim to the throne and title in order to follow his sweetheart to the distant place where her family moved. He expressed his deep love for her in poems he composed and sang to the accompaniment of a saz¹

Aslı was equally in love with Kerem, but she could not for some time find an opportunity to tell him so. When they finally met and Aslı expressed her love for him, Kerem was suddenly consumed by the flames of love. Aslı sat steadily by the flames for forty days and forty nights. Thinking then that they had all burned themselves out, she began

¹Three-stringed and lutelike, the saz is the principal instrument of Turkish folk music.

Story 2086

sweeping up the ashes with her long hair. But the one remaining spark that still glowed ignited her hair, and thus she too died in the flames of love.²

²This is a brief summary of Kerem and Aslı, a long cante fable filled with sung dialogues between the lovers. Both the words of the summary and the tune for the songs in Kerem and Aslı were recorded by Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) and kindly sent to ATON and to the Texas Tech University Music Department. They are on ATON Tape No. S21.