The Adventures of Twin Brothers

Once there was a padişah who had no children. As time went on, this situation worried him more and more, and he was unable to think of anything else. In an attempt to get away from this problem for a while, the padişah one day said to his grand vizier, "My vizier, let us go hunting for a while."

On the following day they set out for the hunting grounds together. After they had traveled for some distance, they were tired. The padişah saw a likely place to rest, and so he said, "Oh, my vizier, let us stop here and rest for a while."

As they were sitting there, they were approached by an old man. He seemed to be a villager, for he looked much like me. This old man said, "Oh, my padişah, what are you doing in such a place as this? Why are you walking around out here instead of sitting on your throne at home and ruling your people?"
I have a great problem," answered the padişah, "and that is my reason for being here so far from home. But tell me--what makes you think that I am the padişah?"

"I do not just think that. I know perfectly well that you are the padişah."

"In that case, then, you probably know also what my problem is," said the padişah.

"Yes, I know what your problem is, and I also know the solution for your problem." --That old man was not the ordinary villager that he seemed to be. He was instead Hızîr, (Peace be unto him!) Taking two apples from his pocket, the old man said to the padişah, "Take these apples. When you get home, peel one of them and then you eat half of its fruit and have your wife eat the other half. Then peel the second apple and give it to your mare to eat. As a result of having eaten these apples, your wife will bear twin sons

1 Once a water deity and fertility god--and still both those figures to most farmers in southern Turkey--Hızîr is more widely known now as a granter of wishes, a last-minute rescuer from disaster, and a special messenger and agent of God. In these latter three functions he appears fairly frequently in Turkish folktales. Not mentioned by name in the Koran, a chapter of that work was later named after him. He is assumed to be the person instructing Moses in Chapter XVIII of the Koran, where he is referred to by God simply as "our servant."

2 The term used here is Aleyhiesselâm.
your mare will bear twin colts. There is one restriction, however, which I am placing upon you. You must not give names to either your sons or your colts. I shall come at the proper time and name them." Having said that, Hzir vanished from the sight of the padişah and his vizier.

Abandoning their plan to go hunting, the padişah and vizier turned around and traveled directly back to the palace. There the padişah peeled one of the apples and cut fruit in half. He ate one half and gave his wife the other half to eat. Then, going to his stable, he peeled the second apple and fed it to his mare.

Time passed, and finally, on the same day, his wife gave birth to twin boys and his mare bore twin colts.\(^3\) The boys were very handsome, and their light-colored hair looked like strands of golden thread. When the two boys had grown to the age of five or six years, they were sent to school, even though they still had no names. Their lack of names bothered some of the younger viziers, and one day they said, our padişah, why is it that your sons are still

\(^3\)Although horses and human beings do not have the same periods of gestation, it is a convention of the folktale that creatures conceived at the same time via supernatural agency be born at the same time.
nameless? They have now reached school age, but no one knows what to call them. The same is true of the two colts that were born at the same time as the boys. Let us now give all four of them names."

"No, we should not do that!" responded the padişah.

While they were discussing this matter, Hızır himself suddenly appeared in the room. He said, "I shall now provide names, first for the boys and then for the colts. This boy on my right I name Abbar, and the one on my left I name Cabbar. The one horse will be called Wind Beater, ⁴ and the other will be called Desert Beater." ⁵ Then he vanished as suddenly as he had appeared.

Years passed, and the twin brothers grew into young men. One day Abbar said, "I am going to travel and see some of the rest of the world. Brother, here is a lock of my hair. If I should be gone too long, try to burn this lock of hair. If it resists the flame, you will know that I am well. If it is consumed by the flame, then know that I am in serious

⁴ The Turkish used here is Yelkesen, literally Wind Killer.

⁵ The Turkish used here is Cölkesen, literally Desert Killer.
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difficulty." Having said this, he mounted Desert Beater and rode away.

As Abbar was riding swiftly across a desert, he came to a large house owned by an Arab. As soon as the Arab saw Desert Beater, he was determined to have that special horse, and so he invited Abbar to be his guest. But during the night he had Abbar seized and thrown into a well along with a quantity of bread for him to eat. Then the Arab took Desert Beater as his own.

When six months had passed and Abbar had not returned, Cabbar decided to test the lock of his brother's hair in the flame. As soon as the flame touched the lock, it ignited the hair, and the lock was entirely consumed. Knowing from

6 In Turkish folktales there is a wide range of what may be called life tokens. Talismans and amulets are often much more than simple good-luck charms, for they are integrally related to the physical condition or even the life itself of a human being or other creature. Some life tokens are separable souls hidden in some secret place—a box, the stomach of a deer, the stomach of a fish—in order to protect the lives of their owners. If you can find the separable soul and destroy it, you thereby kill its owner. Sometimes, on the other hand, the life token must be kept in the possession of its owner. If it is taken away, the owner may lose consciousness or be transformed into some other form. Sometimes a life token is a gauge of a person's condition and is watched closely by its owner's friend or relative in order to keep posted on the welfare of the owner. It may be a gem which changes color if its owner is in serious trouble; it may be a knife which turns rusty for the same reason.
that his brother was in serious trouble, Cabbar mounted Wind Beater and set off in the direction that Abbar had taken. He crossed the same desert and arrived at the same house owned by the Arab. Because Cabbar looked exactly like his brother, the Arab thought that Abbar had returned to take his revenge. The Arab therefore attacked Cabbar, but the swiftness of Wind Beater made it possible for Cabbar to defeat and kill his opponent. When Cabbar found Desert Beater in the Arab's stable, he knew that Abbar had been in that area.

Cabbar searched for his brother, but at first he found no trace of him. Then one day he heard a faint noise that sounded like Abbar's voice. Following the sound, Cabbar came to the well in which Abbar had been imprisoned. He lowered a rope down the well and pulled Abbar up to the surface. Abbar was in very bad condition, for he had almost starved to death in the well. Cabbar fed and took care of his brother for several days before Abbar had regained enough strength to travel back to their father's palace.

After they had been home together for some time and Abbar had completely recovered, Cabbar one day said, "Now I should also like to travel in order to see some other
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of the world." On the following day Cabbar mounted Wind Beater and rode away.

When Cabbar reached the foot of a mountain, he came upon a shepherd grazing his flock of sheep. Cabbar exchanged clothes with that shepherd, and then he bought a sheepskin from him. Turning the sheepskin inside out, he put it upon his head to hide his hair and make himself look like a keloğlan. Then Keloğlan mounted Wind Beater again and rode on until he came to another land. There he was given the job of tending the rose garden that lay behind padişah's palace.

The padişah of that land had two daughters, the elder of whom was a world beauty. One day while Keloğlan was sleeping behind a rosebush, that beauty entered the garden and saw him there. She noticed some blond hair sticking out from beneath the sheepskin he wore on his head, and from this she understood that he was not really a keloğlan at all. The padişah's daughter visited the garden several times.

7 The word keloğlan means bald boy, but the baldness is not that caused by aging. It is caused by ringworm infestation of the scalp. This disease often strikes the younger and perhaps improperly tended younger children of large peasant families. It is encouraged by uncleanliness. In folktales the keloğlan is a definite personality type, a winner, and a sympathetic figure. In tales the keloğlan image is
times after that and became Keloğlan's girl friend.

In the meantime, each of the viziers sought to have the padişah's elder daughter given as a bride to his son. To settle this matter, the padişah said to his viziers, "Order all of the unmarried young men in the land to pass beneath the balcony of the palace. My elder daughter will shoot an arrow into the ground before the feet of the man she wishes to marry." On the day set for the selection of a bridegroom, all of the young men, including Keloğlan, passed before the balcony. When the princess shot her arrow, it landed in front of Keloğlan. The padişah was not pleased with the choice his daughter had made, and so he required that another selection be made. But when all of the young men again passed beneath the balcony, the arrow of the princess landed before Keloğlan for a second time. Very disturbed now, the padişah said, "How can this be? There were several sons of viziers who passed beneath the balcony, but both times you placed your arrow before the feet of that fellow Keloğlan. It is very strange!"

often used as a disguise. Disguisers hide their hair by covering it either with a sheepskin turned inside out or with the cleaned lining of a sheep's stomach.
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His daughter responded, "Father, he is my destiny. Do not interfere with what is my destiny." She knew, of course, that the young man she had chosen was not really a *keloğlan*.

The padişah said nothing further about the matter, but he was very disappointed and ashamed that his elder daughter had chosen to marry a *keloğlan*. Shortly afterwards he gave his younger daughter to the son of the grand vizier and ordered a great wedding celebration in their behalf. The elder daughter married Keloğlan, but they were not included in this festivity.

Some time passed after the weddings of the padişah's two daughters before anything unusual happened. Then one day the padişah suddenly became very ill. None of the doctors of the land was able to cure his illness, but finally one doctor discovered a remedy. He said, "The only way to cure the padişah's illness is to have him drink lion's milk and eat lion's flesh. If he is given that diet, he will recover; otherwise he will die." This was explained to the vizier's son, the son-in-law of the padişah who had married the younger princess. When he heard this, the vizier's son left the palace and headed for the mountains to seek lion's milk and lion's meat. He searched for days and days...
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In the meantime, the younger daughter began to direct reproachful remarks at her sister. She said, "My husband has been searching the mountains for lion's milk and lion's meat to cure our father's illness. What is your husband doing besides sitting about and sleeping in the rose garden?"

Offended by these remarks, the elder sister went to her own husband and said, "My sister has been taunting me with accusations of your failure to seek the cures for our father's illness."

"Very well, then," said Keloğlan. "Bring me my weapons, and I shall set forth at once to find some lion's milk and some lion's meat." Taking the weapons from his wife's hands, Keloğlan mounted Wind Beater and departed.

When he reached the foot of the mountains, Keloğlan ascended to the level of a large flat plateau. There he came upon a lioness in great pain. It had an injured foot which had become so swollen that she could not walk upon it. Fearful of getting close to the lioness, Keloğlan took careful aim and shot an arrow into the swollen foot. The lioness roared in pain, but the wound made by the arrow allowed all of the pus to flow from the swollen foot. After a few minutes the lioness said, "Oh, human being, if this had happened at any other time, I should have killed you, but
because your arrow wound has reduced my great pain, I now forgive you. Wherever you are, come out of hiding and know that I shall not harm you in any way. Tell me what you want as your reward for helping me.”

Coming forth from the place where he had hidden, Keloğlan said, "I want just two things: some lion's milk and some lion's flesh to take back to my ailing padişah."

The lioness replied, "Ah, Keloğlan, one of your requests places me in a very awkward position, but I shall help you nevertheless. Over there are two of my cubs. Take one of them and get your lion's meat from it, but do not allow me to hear its cry when you slaughter it, for if I should hear that, I might lose control of myself and kill you.

Keloğlan took one of the lioness's cubs some distance away, where he slaughtered it without letting its mother hear its cry. Then he returned to the lioness and milked her. Returning to the palace with both of the things he had sought, he said to his wife, "Oh, Wife, take this lion's milk and this lion's meat to your father so that he may be cured."

In the meantime, the son of the vizier had returned with what he said was lion's milk and lion's meat. These had been fed to the padişah, but had not relieved his condition in any way, for they were not really what the son of
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the vizier had claimed they were. Instead of being lion's milk and lion's flesh, they were sheep's milk and sheep's flesh which had been bought from a shepherd. As soon as the ruler ate and drank the food which Keloğlan had brought, he began to recover immediately.

Some time after the padişah had been cured of his serious illness, he was faced with another difficulty. His country was attacked by the forces of a neighboring country, and a full-scale war developed. All of the padişah's subjects except Keloğlan rushed to the frontier to defend the country. Again the younger sister came and reproached Keloğlan's wife, saying, "Oh, sister, our father, my husband, and every other man except your Keloğlan went to fight in the war. They have been fighting night and day. What has Keloğlan done during that time but sit and sleep in the rose garden?"

The elder daughter went to her husband in tears. She repeated to him what her sister had said. When Keloğlan heard this, he said, "Bring me my horse and my weapons." Just as soon as these were brought, he leaped on the back of Wind Beater and rode off in the direction of the battlefield. As soon as he arrived there, he pushed his way to
the front of the padişah's troops and led them in a great
drive against the enemy. So many of the enemy troops were
killed in this attack that the padişah's forces were even
able to capture and hold some of the enemy territory. With
this accomplished, Keloğlan rode swiftly back to the palace
on Wind Beater and returned to his garden.

At the scene of battle few had recognized who their
leader was in successful counterattack against the enemy.
They did not realize that their leader was Keloğlan. Even
the padişah failed to identify Keloğlan. As soon as he
arrived back at his palace, he called his viziers together
and asked them, "Who was the great warrior who led our
counterattack? Part of the time it appeared that he himself
was challenging the whole enemy army!"

"It was Keloğlan, your son-in-law, our padişah."

At first the padişah refused to believe this. When
the viziers insisted that Keloğlan was their hero, the
padişah understood that his son-in-law was not actually a
keloğlan at all. "During the battle, he was a very handsome
warrior!" he said.

After the padişah realized this, he said, "Now we shall
make a new wedding celebration for my elder daughter and her
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husband—the kind they deserve." Those wedding festivities for Cabbar and the padişah's elder daughter lasted for forty days and forty nights.