

Story 962 1973 Tape 10)

Narrator: Unidentified man

Location: Ağaköy village,
Province of Bursa

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The Three ^{was} Lazes¹ and the Millstone all

One day three Lazes were on their way to work when they saw a millstone by the side of the road. One of the younger said to the oldest of them, "Hey, Uncle Mehmet, why don't you take that millstone home with you? You could use it to grind our grain."

Mehmet thought that that was a very good idea. He said, "I'll put my head in the hole in the millstone and carry it from the middle, and each of you should carry it from one side. In that way we should be able to carry it very easily."

They all did just as Mehmet had said to do, but as they were lifting it, the two on the outside lost their balance and dropped the millstone. As it fell from their hands, it started rolling down a hill. The two younger Lazes followed it down the hill, running hard to try to keep up with it. When they reached the bottom of the hill, they found the

¹ After the Kurdish population of eastern Turkey, the Lazes, residents of the Black Sea coast, constitute the second-largest minority ethnic group in Turkey. The Laz is sometimes thought to be very shrewd--especially in Laz tales told by Lazes!--but in the great majority of cases he/she is thought to be very provincial, gullible, and, at times, even stupid.

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millstone, with Mehmet's head on one side of it and his body on the other side.

As they looked at the head, one of them said, "That is not Uncle Mehmet's head!"

"Yes, it is!" said the other

"No," said the first, "for Uncle Mehmet's head had a beard upon it. This head has no beard."

After they had argued some time about whether or not the head was that of Mehmet, the two younger Lazes decided to go and ask his wife if Uncle Mehmet's head did or did not have a beard. When they reached their village, they went to Mehmet's house and asked his wife, "Sister, did Uncle Mehmet have a beard?"

His wife thought for a minute and then she said, "Brothers, I do not really know. While he was drinking his soup this morning, he had his head bent down. Because of that, I was unable to see his face. I therefore could not tell whether he had a beard or not."