

Story 1117 (1966 Tape 5) Narrator: Hacer Ertemli

Location: Bursa

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Diet for a Laz<sup>1</sup>

*Physician*  
There was a man from Rize who became ill and went to Istanbul to see a doctor there. "What is your complaint?" the doctor asked this man.

"It is my stomach," answered the Laz.

"What do you usually eat?" asked the doctor.

"I eat fried anchovies, pickled anchovies, plain anchovies, and several other dishes made of anchovies."

"It is to be expected that your stomach would hurt if that is your steady diet. You should eat more plain foods." Saying this, the doctor wrote down a list of the plain foods that the patient should eat. "Eat these foods, and I am sure that you will feel much better."

The Laz took the list from the doctor, walked down to the waterfront, and boarded a ship to return to Rize. As the ship was leaving Istanbul, he took from his pocket the list given to him by the doctor. He wanted to see what food he

<sup>1</sup> Occupying extreme northeast Turkey along the Black Sea coast, the Laz people constitute one of the larger ethnic minorities of the country. Their exact origin is unknown. Stereotyping of the Laz has made him a definite folk type in oral tales.

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should order on the ship. As he was studying the list, a puff of wind blew it out of his hand and into the sea. Thus the man returned to Rize without any ~~remedy~~<sup>cure</sup> for his illness.

About five years later, a nephew of this man was preparing to travel to İstanbul. The young man said, "Uncle, is there anything that you would like to have me bring to you from İstanbul?"

"Yes, there is. Go to such-and-such a doctor in İstanbul and say to him, "My uncle came to consult you five years ago. You examined him and then gave him a list of foods that he should eat. But the wind blew the list into the sea. My uncle still does not know what he should eat. What should he eat?"

The young man went to İstanbul and found the doctor without any difficulty. He went to the doctor's office, however, at a time when the doctor was hurriedly preparing to perform an operation. The young man said, "Doctor, you examined my uncle five years ago, and then you gave him a list of foods that he should eat. But your list blew out of his hand in the wind and fell into the sea. What should my uncle eat?"

The doctor was annoyed by this, and looking at the young man, he said, "Tell him to eat my ass-end!"

The doctor then left the office quickly and entered the

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operating room. The young man waited and waited. He waited for three hours and then four hours. When the doctor finally came out of the operating room, the young man asked, "Doctor, should my uncle come here to eat your ass-end or will you go there?"