

Story 1168 (1989 Tape 12)

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narrator was originally
from Trabzon

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Laz¹ Description of Torpedo Firing from Submarine

After Hızır had completed his military duty, he returned to his village in Rize Province. There he was questioned about his military service by Temel, a man considerably older than Hızır.² "So, Hızır, my son, have you now completed your military service?"

Yes, I have, uncle."

"Where did you serve while in the military forces?"

I served in İstanbul, uncle."

"What branch of the service were you in, my son?"

"I was in the navy, uncle."

"On what kind of ship did you serve?"

"I was on a submarine, uncle."

"What kind of ship do you mean when you say submarine?"

¹The Laz people constitute one of the larger ethnic minorities in Turkey. Their exact origins are not definitely known. The largest concentrations of Lazes are in extreme northeastern Turkey along the Black Sea coast. Reputedly stupid, they are made fun of in numerous folk anecdotes about fools. The frequent success of Lazes who move to İstanbul belies the folk image.

²Hızır and Temel are two of the most common names given to the stereotyped Laz in Turkish tales.

"Well, uncle, a submarine is like a pontoon that plunges into the water and goes beneath the surface. It sails along near the bottom of the sea, and it fires very large bullets called torpedoes at enemy ships. It fires torpedoes at enemy ships in order to sink those ships. Then it quickly flees from that area

"Hm-m-m. When a submarine fires a torpedo from the bottom of the sea, what keeps the water from rushing in and filling the submarine?"

"How can I explain this? Well, uncle, have you ever gone swimming?"

of course I have.

"When you were in the water, did you ever fart?"

"Yes.

"When you did that, did you then fill up with water?"

"No."

"Neither does a submarine when it fires a torpedo."