

Story 1319 (1988 Tape 8)

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Delayed Music for Dursun<sup>1</sup>

Late one night when Dursun returned to his house, he noticed a man sawing on the iron bars that covered one of his windows. Thinking this was very strange, Dursun called to the man, "Hey, my good fellow,<sup>2</sup> what are you doing there?"

"Can't you see what I am doing?" asked the man. "I am playing the kemençe."<sup>3</sup>

"What kind of kemençe is that? I do not hear any giy,

<sup>1</sup>Dursun and Temel are two very commonly used male names among the Laz people of extreme northeast Turkey along the Black Sea coast. Because the Lazes are stereotyped in folk humor as being stupid people, anyone named Dursun or Temel may, by extension, be thought of as being dull witted. Inasmuch as this anecdote comes from Laz territory, there is little doubt that Dursun is a Laz.

<sup>2</sup>The term used here by the narrator is ula, a shortening of ulan, a term that suggests contempt for the person so called. Very close friends may call each other ula (ulan) without offense, but otherwise it is an unkind or even hostile epithet.

<sup>3</sup>A small, three-stringed instrument played with a bow. About a third the size of a violin, it resembles that instrument in many respects. Some think it the ancestor of the violin. The strings are wire. The hacksaw of the thief could have resembled a kemençe bow, and so his response was quite clever.

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giy, giy."<sup>4</sup>

"Oh, the sound produced by this kemençe will not be heard until tomorrow morning!" replied the stranger.

<sup>4</sup>Onomatopoeia for the rather shrill sound of kemençe music.