

Story 1359 (1988 Tape 9)

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The Kayseri Man¹ and the Laz²

One day as they were crossing a desert a Kayseri man met a resident of the Black Sea coast, a Laz. The Kayseri man was struggling along slowly with a telephone booth strapped to his back. The Laz also had a very heavy load, for he was carrying a large iron anvil of the kind used by blacksmiths.

After they had exchanged greetings, the Laz asked the Kayseri man, "Why are you carrying that telephone booth?"

The Kayseri man answered, "There are many fierce lions

¹Throughout Turkey the people of Kayseri are thought to be especially clever and shrewd. ATON contains a whole section of Kayseri anecdotes.

²The 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 Istanbul belies the folk image.

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in this desert. I brought along this telephone booth so that if I see a lion, I can climb inside it and close the door. But now tell me something. Why are you carrying that very heavy anvil?"

"Well, I have also heard of the fierce lions that inhabit this desert. If I see one, I am going to throw this anvil at it and then run away