

Story 1447 (1992 Tape 5)

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How Temel¹ Cheated the Railroad

There was a Laz from Kastamonu² who planned to visit İstanbul. He took a bus to Ankara, and there he went to the railroad ticket office to buy a ticket to İstanbul. He asked the ticket agent, "How much is a ticket to İstanbul?"

"Fifty liras."

Temel asked, "How much would it cost for a round-trip ticket?"

"That would cost you 100 liras

The Laz from Kastamonu bought a round-trip ticket to İstanbul. When the train was ready to leave, he climbed aboard and entered one of the compartments. A few minutes later another man entered the compartment and began talking with Temel. He asked Temel, "Where did you come from, and where are you going?"

¹In the comic jokes about the stereotyped Laz fool, male characters usually have one or another of five or six very common Laz names. Most frequently used is Temel, with Dursun in second place. Thus in a Turkish folktale when either of those names is used, the audience knows at once that it is a Laz tale.

²To describe a character as a Laz from Kastamonu is to place him under double jeopardy. The Laz is often stereotyped as stupid, and Laz jokes are legion, but there is also a smaller body of jokes and anecdotes about regular non-Laz residents of Kastamonu that picture people of that province as duffers.

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"I come from Kastamonu," answered Temel, "and I am going to İstanbul, but I shall return from there to Kastamonu by bus."

Looking at the round-trip ticket still in Temel's hand the man said, "If you are going to Kastamonu from İstanbul by bus, why did you buy a round-trip railroad ticket?"

The Laz from Kastamonu laughed. He said, "I am having fun cheating the railroad company. I said that I would use the train going to and coming from İstanbul, but I won't use the train on the return trip. I'll go back by bus!"