

Story 1452 1992 Tape 5)

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Temel¹ Cheats a Kayseri Man²

Temel went from his village near Rize to visit the city of İstanbul for the first time. There were many things in İstanbul that surprised him, but what attracted his attention most were the tall buildings.

One day while Temel was staring in amazement at some of the tallest buildings, he was observed by a man from Kayseri who happened to be in İstanbul at that time. This Kayseri man called, "Hey, friend! What are you looking at?"

"I am looking at these very tall buildings, and this one closest to me is most interesting

"Well, that may be," said the Kayseri man, "but do you know that there is a charge for viewing that building?"

"If that is the case, then how much do I owe you for looking?"

¹In comic jokes about the stereotyped Laz dummer or fool, the 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 when either of these names occurs in a Turkish folktale, the audience knows at once that it is a Laz tale.

²Just as people from the Black Sea coast, Karatepe, and Karakaya are stereotyped as foolish or inept, people from Kayseri are stereotyped as being very clever.

Story 1452

"The usual charge is 5,000 liras for every floor that look at."

Temel said, "Hm-m-m! Well, I have looked all the way from the first floor to the fifteenth. How much will that cost me?"

If you have looked at so many floors, I shall give you a special rate and charge you only 25,000 liras," said the Kayseri man.

"Very well," said Temel, and he paid the Kayseri man 25,000 liras.

After the Kayseri man had put this money in his pocket walked away, Temel continued to stare at the same skyscraper. After a while another man came along and asked Temel, "Friend, why are you staring so long at that building?"

"Why shouldn't I?" asked Temel. "After all, I have already paid the required charge for looking at it, and so why should I not continue to stare at it? Actually, I am enjoying the sight of this building even more than I did before I paid my viewing fee."

"Why is that?"

"Because I cheated the man who collected the fee. I paid him for viewing just the first fifteen floors, but I have actually been looking at all thirty floors!"