

Story 1544 (1992 Tape 1

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Two Lazes<sup>1</sup> and Their Deadly Argument

There were once two Lazes who were looking out over the Black Sea. They saw flying just above the sea waves some seagulls, and they noticed that one of these seagulls was flying very close to the surface of the water. One of the Lazes said, "Look at how close to the water that one seagull is flying. Its wing even touched the water a couple of times!"

His friend said, "No, it did not get that close to the sea. Its wing did not quite touch the water."

it did!" said the first Laz

"No, it didn't!" said the second Laz.

The two started to argue over this matter. As they argued, they grew angry. As they continued their argument, they became even angrier. Finally one became so furious that he drew his knife and stabbed the other Laz.

<sup>1</sup>The Laz people are a large ethnic minority living primarily in extreme NE Turkey along the Black Sea coast. While there are Lazes throughout Turkey, the vast majority live in Rize, Trabzon, and Artvin provinces. Although their native language is a form of Mëngrillian Caucasian, most adult Lazes speak Turkish readily, though not without occasional dialectal pronunciations. Like the inhabitants of three or four villages elsewhere in Turkey, Lazes are often stereotyped as being stupid. Of course, they are not in fact any more stupid than anyone else; they are simply the butt of folk humor.

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When the police arrived at the seashore, they took the injured Laz to the hospital and the other one to the jail. The injured man recovered, and after a while he was able to return to his home. The other Laz completed his jail sentence, and he too was allowed to return to his own home

After four or five years has passed, these two Lazes just happened to meet each other on the street one day. When they saw each other, they both apologized for the fight that they had had. The first said, "We were absolutely ridiculous! fought about a matter of no importance whatsoever!"

The second Laz answered, "Yes, we were really very foolish to quarrel about such an unimportant thing. But now that that is all over, tell me this: Didn't that seagull's wing actually touch the water, and didn't you know that all along?"

"No, no! Its wing never touched the surface of the water at all!"

This started the argument all over again. As before, the argument grew more and more heated. At last they grew so angry that they both drew guns and shot each other dead