

Story 1546 1992 Tape 1

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The Laz¹ Engineer and the Left-over Dirt

There was once a Laz who graduated from college and became a civil engineer. He very quickly found a good job, and in a short time he began working at a construction site. One day he ordered the crew of laborers to dig an especially large hole. By the time they had finished digging that hole, the engineer realized that he had made a mistake. He therefore told the workers to fill up the hole again. They set to work at once doing this, but after the hole had been refilled, there was some dirt left over.

The laborers then said to the engineer, "We have filled the hole up, but there is some dirt left over. What shall we do with that extra dirt?"

¹The Laz people are a large ethnic minority living primarily in extreme northeast 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 Megrillian Caucasian, most adult Lazes speak Turkish readily, though not without a few 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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The Laz engineer was annoyed by this question. He answered, "Do I have to tell you everything? You cannot figure out anything by yourselves! Just dig another hole and place the leftover dirt in it!"