

Story 1577 1987 Tape 3)

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Epitaph of a Laz<sup>1</sup>

There is a famous epitaph of a Laz on a tombstone. It is addressed to the doctor of the Laz who lies buried beneath it.

"Oh, you doctor! You once told me not to visit a certain woman, and I didn't go. At another time you warned me never to drink alcohol, and I never did. You told me to stay away from the pleasures of night life, and I did stay away from them. You told me not to gamble, and I have never gambled, not even once. You told me at one time or another to avoid several other things, and I avoided every one of them. then what happened in the end? I died anyway!"

<sup>1</sup>The 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.