Story 1589 (Dictated)  

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Location: İstanbul, İstanbul Province  
Date: May 20, 1993  

The Laz as Helicopter Pilot  

Temel worked in Germany for several years. When it was time for him to return to Turkey, he decided not to take an automobile back with him as most Turks were doing. He decided to take instead a helicopter. He took three or five flying lessons in Germany, but he had someone else pilot the helicopter back to Rize for him.

When Temel and the helicopter arrived at Rize, everyone there became very excited. It was the first private helicopter in Rize. Many people came to look at the helicopter, and soon one of Temel's friends asked him to demonstrate how this kind of airplane worked.

1The 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 İstanbul belies the folk image.

2In tales about the stereotyped Laz as dummy or fool, the male characters usually have one or another of five or six very common Laz names. Temel is the name used most often, with Dursun in second place. Thus if either of these names occurs in a folktale, the audience knows at once that it is a Laz tale.

3Turks often use the expression üç bes (three or five) to mean a few.
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Temel climbed into the helicopter and started the engine. The helicopter rose from the ground and went straight up very high.

Then, all of a sudden, the helicopter dropped back down and crashed in the garden of a restaurant. Temel's friends ran to him and asked, "What happened, Temel? What happened, Temel?"

Temel answered, "I went up very high—almost to the sky. I was getting so close to the sun that I was becoming very hot. I turned off the ceiling fan, and then this happened."