

Story 1243 (1988 Tape 1)

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of Nevşehir
Province

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The Laz¹ and the Tired Olive

There was once a Laz who went on a visit to Istanbul. morning after he arrived there, he went into a restaurant for breakfast. He ordered a glass of tea and a bowl of salad.

This Laz was not accustomed to using a fork, but when he looked around the restaurant, he noticed that all of the other customers were eating with forks. He therefore picked up his fork and tried to eat his olive with it. He aimed his fork at an olive, but it slipped away. He tried and tried to stick his fork into the olive, but it kept running away.

One of the other customers noticed the difficulty that the Laz was having. After watching him for several minutes, he went to the Laz's table and asked, "May I help you?" Taking the Laz's fork, he easily speared the olive on his first attempt.

Embarrassed by the quick success of the other customer, the Laz said, "It was because I had exhausted the olive that you were able to spear it the first time you went after it!"

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 Istanbul belies the folk image.