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Limiting Laz<sup>1</sup> Tall Tales

Temel<sup>2</sup> and Cemal<sup>3</sup> were both great liars in the stories they told. One day they had a contest in telling tales of exaggeration.

Cemal said, "Oh, Temel, I once wrote a holy book, a kind of Koran."

Temel said, "Listen, Cemal! Once while I was cross-

<sup>1</sup>The Laz people are a large ethnic minority who live principally in Rize and Trabzon provinces in extreme north-eastern Turkey. In the folk imagination they are stereotyped as being stupid or very inept. In fact, they are not intellectually different from other people.

<sup>2</sup>Temel is the most popular male name among the Laz. It is so common that Temel often seems to be a synonym for Laz.

<sup>3</sup>Cemal (pronounced Jemal in English) is a Laz mispronunciation for the Turkish name Kemal.

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ing the Bosphorus from Eminösü<sup>4</sup> to Kadıköy,<sup>5</sup> I lighted my cigarette from the beacon light on Kızkulesi."<sup>6</sup>

Cemal did not believe that, and so he said, "No! That is a lie!"

"Well, Cemal, if I am telling a lie, may your Koran strike me dead!"

<sup>4</sup>Eminösü is a district in İstanbul on the European side of the Bosphorus. It is on the Golden Horn. One end of the famous Galata Bridge (which crosses the Golden Horn) is in Eminösü.

<sup>5</sup>Kadıköy is a district of İstanbul on the Asian side of the Bosphorus.

<sup>6</sup>Kızkulesi (Maiden's Tower) is also known as Leander's Tower. It is the subject of much legend. It is closer to the Asian side of the Bosphorus.