Story 1768 (1994 Tape 4)  
**Narrator:** Mustafa Yavuz  
**Location:** Bostancı village  
Suşehri kazası,  
Sivas Province

Casualties of the Salt War

Two Lazes\(^1\) went into partnership to raise salt. They planted salt for two years in a row, but their efforts produced nothing. One of them said, "We have now planted salt for two years, but we have not had any results from our work. Let us find a solution for our difficulty."

One evening they met at a friend's house to talk about this matter. He suggested, "It may be flies eating the salt."

One of the Lazes asked, "What shall we do about this?"

The other Laz said, "Let us take our rifles to the field in the morning and wait for the arrival of the

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\(^1\)The word Laz referred originally to an ethnic minority living primarily in Trabzon and Rize provinces, along the extreme eastern end of the Turkish Black Sea coast. More recently the word has come to be applied to any resident of the entire Black Sea coast. In the Turkish oral tradition Laz people are stereotyped as being stupid or inept. This stereotype (like most others) is unjustifiable, for the Lazes are, of course, much like other people.
flies.

next morning they went to their salt field. One
stationed himself on one end of the field, and the other
stood on the opposite end. Time passed, and around noon
it became quite hot in the field. That heat brought out
the flies. A fly landed on the nose of one Laz. He
signaled this fact only by whistling so softly that it
would not frighten the fly away. His signal meant, "One
of the enemy has landed! Shoot it!" The other Laz, who
understood the signal, raised his rifle, took careful aim,
and fired. He hit the fly.

Going over to where his friend lay dead, he said to
the flies swarming around, "One of yours is dead. One of
ours is dead. And we also lost a bag of salt."