

Story 1917 (1992 Tape 3)

Narrator: Leylâ Özdemir, 25

Location: Kırklareli, capital of Kırklareli Province

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Mute Fish

This is another story about Temel's¹ childhood. One day while Temel was still attending grade school, the teacher was giving the students an oral examination. After testing the students on history and geography, she began asking them questions about biology.

One of the questions she asked was this "Why is it that fish cannot talk?" She asked student after student this same question, but none of them was able to give an answer.

Finally Temel spoke up. He said, "Teacher, if I were to put you under water, you would not be able to speak either."

¹In tales about the stereotyped Laz as dummer 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 probably a Laz story. İdris and Hızır are also popular Laz names. --The word Laz originally referred to an ethnic minority living primarily in Trabzon and Rize provinces along the eastern end of the Turkish Black Sea coast. Nowadays it can refer to any resident of the entire Turkish Black Sea coast.