

Story 1926 (1995 Tape 4)

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Istanbul Province

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The Extended Death Toll of a Helicopter Crash

One day a small helicopter flying along the Black Sea coast developed engine trouble. When the engine stopped altogether, the helicopter crashed in a cemetery. Men from neighboring Laz¹ villages rushed to the scene of the accident to see if they could help the survivors. But, unfortunately, there were no survivors. The helicopter and its passengers plunged deep into the muddy soil of the cemetery.

They dug and dug and removed a number of bodies. Almost exhausted by all of this work, the Laz villagers finally sent an urgent message to the kaymakam² at the nearest kaza town: “The situation at this crash site is very serious. Can you send us help? We have pulled

¹The word Laz referred originally to an ethnic minority living primarily in Trabzon and Rize provinces, along the extreme eastern part of the Turkish Black Sea coast. More recently the word has come to be applied to any resident of the entire Turkish 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 Lazes are, of course, much like other people.

²The federally appointed administrator of a kaza center—similar to a county seat in the United States.

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sixty-seven corpses from the wreckage already, and the digging crews continue to find more!”