

Story 1962 (1992 Tape 4)

Narrator: Leyla Özdemir, 25

Location: Kırklareli, capital of Kırklareli Province (a Black Sea or Laz province)

Date: May 1992

A Laz¹ Waiter's Largest Tip

After the noontime rush of lunch customers had left the restaurant, several of the waiters began to exchange stories about some of their past experiences with diners. When it was Temel's² turn to reveal one of the interesting episodes of his years of work in the trade, he gave an account of the largest tip he had ever received. He said, "Once I received a very generous tip from an American tourist."

"How much were you given?" asked one of the other waiters.

"He gave me fifty dollars," answered Temel.

"Why did he give you so much money?"

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.

²In 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 a Laz tale.

Story 1962

“Well, he asked me how many children I had. When I told him I had five children, he gave me ten dollars for each child.

“Why didn’t you tell him that you had ten children? Then he might have given you one hundred dollars.”

“How could I tell him I had ten children? I am still not married.”