

Story 1968 (1992 Tape 4)

Narrator: Leyla Özdemir, 25

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

Date: May 1992

Laz¹ Testimony Against a Bank Robber

There was once a bank robbery in the city of Giresun.² Policemen and detectives questioned everyone at the scene of the robbery in order to obtain evidence which would enable them to catch the culprits. Among those questioned were all of the people who worked at that bank. Unfortunately, the robbery had been completed so swiftly that none of the witnesses had observed the robbers closely enough to be able to provide details about their appearance that would identify them positively. One thing that all of the people in the bank had observed was the fact that the robbers wore women's stockings over their heads in order to disguise themselves.

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.

²Small city which is capital of Giresun Province, just west of Trabzon Province.

Story 1968

After the policemen and detectives had finished interrogating everyone on the scene, they gathered up their papers to depart. As they left, they said, "If any of you think of any other evidence, call us at police headquarters and report this to us."

As the investigators were walking away, Fadime, who worked at that bank, remembered a further piece of evidence that she had seen. Running out and overtaking the policemen and detectives, she said, "Here is some information that I forgot to tell you about. There was a run in the stocking that one of the robbers was using as a mask."