

Story 2208 (2001 Tape 1)

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Province of İzmir

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Oral Narrative.

Lazes<sup>1</sup> and Lifesavers

One day Temel and Dursun<sup>2</sup> were eating grilled fish near the lower end of the Haliç Bridge.<sup>3</sup> All of a sudden a man fell from the pedestrian level of that bridge into the water below. Unable to swim, the unfortunate man began to shout for help. "Aren't there any lifesavers along the shore of this body of water?"

After approaching the water's edge, Temel and Dursun shouted back, "We are here, but we are Lazes."

<sup>1</sup>The word Laz originally referred to an ethnic minority living along the extreme eastern end of the Turkish Black Sea coast, mainly in Trabzon and Rize provinces. As time has passed, the term has broadened to include all Turkish residents living along the entire Turkish Black Sea coast. The Laz people are stereotyped as being stupid or inept, and there are countless jokes and anecdotes that so picture them. This stereotype, like most others, is baseless.

<sup>2</sup>In folktales Laz males are usually given one or another of five names: Temel, Dursun, Cemal, Hızır, İdris. By far the most popular of these names is Temel. When a leading character in a folktale is named Temel or Dursun, the Turkish audience knows at once that a Laz story will follow.

<sup>3</sup>This inlet from the Bosphorus is nowadays usually called the Golden Horn.