

Story 1485 (1992 Tape 6)

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60

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Tale Told by Cemetery in Blood-Feuding Village¹

Temel and Cemal² had been friends for many years, and they each knew many people in the other's village. One day Temel went to Cemal's village to visit.

After they had greeted each other and had talked together for some time, Temel asked, "Where is everybody? I have not seen any of our old friends here in the village."

Cemal said, "Come with me and I shall show you where they are." He led Temel to the village cemetery. Going up to a tombstone, Cemal said, "Here is our friend, Nuri. You can see what it says on his tombstone: 'He killed and he killed, and then he himself was killed.'" They walked a short distance and Cemal said, "Here is another one of our friends." Temel looked at this second tombstone, and it too said, "He killed and he

¹This is an in-group tale despite the fact that the in-group may include millions of Turks. Without the title--which is ours, not the narrator's--this anecdote could be quite meaningless. It is based upon a knowledge of massive blood-feuding along much of the Black Sea coast--an ongoing tragedy of many decades. Unlike family feuds in 19th-century America, these feuds involve extensive fighting between villages and even groups of villages. In the 1960s we talked with people who had lost friends and relatives in such feuds, and at the large Sinop Penitentiary (now closed) we collected tales among a group of 200 men convicted of murder--mainly in feuds.

²Laz dialect includes deviations from standard Turkish in the pronunciation of certain consonant sounds. Kemal becomes

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killed, and then he himself was killed.

Temel then pointed to another tombstone and asked, "Who was this? What happened to him? There is nothing on his tombstone."

"Him? Oh, he just died.

Cemal (English Jemal); peki (roughly, OK) becomes peci (English peji); Dursun (male proper name) becomes Tursun.