

Story 1489 (1992 Tape 6)

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Cemal¹ Bears Bad News Gently

While Temel was doing his military service in the army, there was a very large fire that burned much of his village. He lost both of his parents in the fire, as well as their home, their barn, and all of their personal property. Temel's relatives wrote a letter to the commanding officer of Temel's company asking him to inform Temel of this disaster. The company commander thought and thought about how to break this bad news to Temel, but he could not find the courage to do. Then he remembered something: "Cemal is Temel's best friend. I shall have Cemal explain the unfortunate situation to Temel." Calling Cemal to his tent, he explained what had happened, he then ordered Cemal to tell Temel the bad news.

Cemal went at once to Temel and asked, "Temel, have you had any recent letters from your village?"

"Yes, Cemal, I have. I received a letter a week ago."

"Oh-h-h, a week is really a long time. There are many things that can happen during a week."

¹Laz dialect involves a shift in pronunciation of certain consonants. Standard Turkish Kemal becomes Cemal (pronounced Jemal in English), and peki (which means O.K. in English) becomes peci (pronounced peji in English).

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"What kinds of things?" asked Temel.

"Do you remember the yellow cow which you were so fond

"Oh-h-h?"

"Well, that yellow cow died in the fire that destroyed family's house and barn. Your father tried to save the but he couldn't."

"Aman!² How is my father?"

"Oh, he and your mother died in the same fire that killed the cow."

²A mild expletive which in a negative sense may mean "Alas!" or "Oh, dear!" and which in a positive sense may be considered the rough equivalent of "Wow!" or "Golly!"