

Story 1717 (1993 Tape 3)

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Identifying a Pianist as Being Laz¹

Temel² was ashamed of the fact that he was a native of the Black Sea coast. After worrying about this problem for some time, he decided to move to another country where he could forget about his homeland and become part of a different culture. He packed his clothes and went to America.

Time passed in this new country, and many changes were made in Temel's life. One of those changes was his choice of a new career, that of musician. He became a pianist. As a result of years of study and practice, Temel became a prominent concert pianist.

¹Although there is a small ethnic minority of Lazi who live along the Turkish Black Sea coast (in the most northeasterly provinces of Giresun, Trabzon, Rize, and Artvin), the term Laz has come to designate any resident of the southern shore of the Black Sea, not just the Lazi. Residents of the southern shore of the Black Sea are generally (and unjustifiably) stereotyped as being stupid or inept.

²Temel is the most popular male name among Lazes. In fact, it is almost synonymous with the word Laz. The name appears elsewhere in Turkey, too, but most other Turkish citizens think Laz whenever the name Temel occurs.

Story

One day another Laz happened to visit New York City. There he saw an announcement of a piano recital, and he decided to attend that performance. He went to the recital hall at the proper time and took a seat

Temel came on stage, played extremely well, and, as a result, received a standing ovation. After the applause had ended, the visiting Laz shouted loudly, "Laz! Brother Laz! You played very well!"

Temel the pianist was amazed to hear this remark. After most of the other people had left, Temel invited the visiting Laz to his dressing room. There Temel asked him, "How did you know that I had come from the Black Sea coast?"

The visitor answered, "Oh, brother, when any other pianist sits down to play, he pulls the bench closer to the piano. When a Laz sits down to play, however, he pulls the piano toward himself."