

Story 2167 (1999 Tape 9)

Narrator: Mahmut Ali, 30

Location: Çankaya, kaza town
of İzmir Province

Date: February 9, 1999

Gunfire and a Laz¹ Assassination

One day while Dursun was out walking, he came upon his friend Temel,² who was sitting on a street corner, deeply absorbed in thought. When Dursun got closer, he asked, "Temel, what are you thinking about so deeply?"

Temel responded, "Don't ask me, Dursun." After a few seconds, however, he answered Dursun's question. "Fadime and I have decided to meet somewhere, but we can't determine where and when to do so."

"That does not require so much thought and uncertainty. Take your rifle to the forest, and when you want Fadime to come, fire that gun. She will hear the sound and

¹The 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, for Lazes are much like other people.

²In 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 lead

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recognize it as your signal. You can do whatever you wish there and later return to the village."

After two or three months Dursun and Temel accidentally ran into each other again. Dursun asked, "Temel, are you still using the same signal to call Fadime to you?"

"Ah, don't ask that question."

"What happened, Temel?"

Temel answered, "Everything went very well at first, and Fadime always responded to my signal. But now that hunting season has begun, I haven't seen her for weeks

character in a folktale is named Temel, the Turkish audience knows at once that a Laz story will follow.