

Story 1451 1992 Tape 5)

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Temel's¹ Anticipated Child

Once while Temel was fulfilling his required military service, he wanted to get a leave of absence. Going to his commanding officer, Temel saluted him very properly

"Yes, Temel? What is it?"

"Sir, I should like to request a leave of absence for three or five² days."

His commanding officer said, "Son, why is it that you want a leave of absence, and why do you want it for exactly that amount of time?"

"Because my wife is going to have a baby."

"Ah, yes!" said the officer. "And when is the baby due?"

"Nine months after I make this visit to my village, sir."

¹In the comic jokes about the stereotyped Laz dummer or fool, the male characters usually have one or another of five or six common Laz names. The most frequently used of these names is Temel, with Dursun in second place. Thus in the Turkish folktale whenever one of those names appears, the audience knows at once that the narrative is going to be about one or more Laz people.

²When Turks wish to say a couple, three or four, or a few, they very often say üç beş--three or five.