

Story 1901 (1995 Tape 4)

Narrator: Güler Soytaş, 45,
attorney

Location: Antalya, capital of
Antalya Province

Date: August 15, 1995

A Proposed Laz¹ Discount on Sin

Temel² was born in Rize, a city on the Black Sea coast, in the northeastern corner of Turkey. Both boys and girls studied in the primary school and the middle school that Temel attended. But when he went to high school he discovered that all of the students in his classes were boys. Next door to that boys' high school was another high school which admitted only girls. On the pavement between the two schools a broad line was painted. Any student who crossed that line was punished with quite a heavy fine.

¹The word Laz referred originally to an ethnic minority living primarily in Trabzon and Rize provinces, along the extreme eastern part of the Turkish Black Sea coast. More recently the word has come to be applied to any resident of the entire Turkish Black Sea coast. In the Turkish oral tradition Laz people are stereotyped as being stupid or inept. This stereotype (like most others) is unjustifiable, for Lazes are, of course, much like other people.

²In tales about the stereotyped Laz as dummer or fool the male characters usually have one or another of five or six very common Laz names. Temel is the name used most often, with Dursun in second place. Thus if either of these names occurs in a folktale, the audience knows at once that it is a Laz tale. İdris and Hızır are also popular Laz names.

Story 1901

Temel was found guilty of having crossed that line all too often. He was fined several times, and this punishment took most of the pocket money that his father gave him each week. Finally Temel went to the business office of the school. He said to the director of the school, "It has cost me much money paying fines for crossing the line between this school and the girls' school. Is it possible for me to buy a season ticket that would be less expensive?"