

Story 2165 (1999 Tape 9) Narrator: Mahmut Ali, 30

Location: Çankaya, kaza town
of İzmir Province

Date: February 9, 1999

Laz¹ Research on a Flea

Temel² found a job by reading employment lists in a newspaper. He gained a position in a scientific laboratory. Temel was given a microscope and some other equipment. His first assignment was to study the behavior of a flea

Temel took the flea and placed it under the microscope. He then said to the flea, "Jump!" The flea jumped up and down a couple of times. Again Temel said, "Jump!" and again the flea jumped up and down.

Then Temel cut off the legs of the flea and put it back under the microscope. He then said to the flea, "Jump!" The flea remained motionless. Temel then repeated his order several times, but the flea did not

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

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move a bit. Angrily then Temel shouted, "Jump!" but there was still no movement by the insect.

Then Temel took pen and paper and wrote a report on what he had discovered. He wrote, "When a flea's legs are removed, that insect becomes deaf."

of five names: Temel, Dursun, Cemal, Hızır, İdris. By far the most popular of these names is Temel. When a lead character in a folktale is named Temel, the Turkish audience knows at once that a Laz story will follow.