

Story 1866 (1995 Tape 5)

Narrator: Sengül Soytaş, 26

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A Laz¹ Effort to Win the Lottery

Every year a few people in Turkey won large sums of money in the national lottery. Temel² became more and more upset when he kept failing to win any of this money. He finally began to pray about this matter. He said, "Please, Allah, help me. I want to win the lottery." He made this request in his prayers day after day after day.

Temel's guardian angel heard his daily prayers to Allah, and after awhile she felt very sorry for him. Going to heaven, she said, "Dear Allah, a certain Temel is quite disturbed. He has been praying to you every day for some time with the request that you help him win the lottery. Please accept his prayer and help him.

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.

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Allah replied, "Almost every day I hear his prayer, and, believe Me, I really want him to win the lottery. But I am waiting for him to buy a lottery ticket so that I can help him win."