

Story 1947 (1997 Tape 1

Narrator: İmren Oturak, 23

Location: Akkent village,  
kaza of Çal,  
Province of  
Denizli

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Toilet Setting for Ticket Fraud

Temel<sup>1</sup> was once traveling by rail. In the same compartment of the train were two men from Kayseri.<sup>2</sup> Wish-  
to impress Temel with their cleverness, the Kayseri  
said to the Laz, "We are two people, but we always  
travel with just one ticket

Curious about what they said, Temel asked, "How do  
you manage to do that?"

"When we see the conductor coming along, we go to

<sup>1</sup>In folktales Temel is the most common male name among the Laz people. The term Laz originally referred to an ethnic group living primarily in Trabzon and Rize provinces, along the extreme eastern end 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. Lazes are stereotyped as being stupid or inept, though in fact they are no more so than any other people. Although they themselves tell tales which picture the Laz as a numskull, they also narrate anecdotes that counter the stereotype--as this tale does.

<sup>2</sup>Just as the Laz is stereotyped as stupid, the resident of Kayseri (both city and province) is delineated as being clever, shrewd, and almost impossible to defeat in any game of wits. Thus in their efforts to disprove their own

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the toilet and hide there. If he discovers that there is someone in the toilet, we open the door just a crack and push our ticket through that crack to show it to him.

After hearing this explanation, Temel said, "That is clever, but you still have to buy one ticket. I always travel without any ticket at all."

"How do you do that?" asked the Kayseri men.

Temel answered, "When I see the conductor coming along, I begin to groan. Then, holding my hand over my mouth, I rush to the toilet and begin pounding on the door.

purported stupidity, Lazes show themselves as outsmarting not just any other people but the most intelligent of other people.