

Story 1977 (1992 Tape 4)

Narrator: Leyla Özdemir, 25

Location: Kırklareli, capital of Kırklareli Province (a Black Sea or Laz province)

Date: May 1992

The Clever Wife of a Laz<sup>1</sup>

Temel<sup>2</sup> married the sister of one of his best friends. About a week after the wedding Temel met his brother-in-law on the street. The two men greeted each other warmly and began to talk. The brother-in-law said, “Just look at yourself, Temel! You have become a well-dressed gentleman in just one week! Before you were married, I used to see you with torn clothes and a button or two missing from your shirt, but your clothes are in much better condition now. Your marriage must be getting along very well.”

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<sup>1</sup>The 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.

<sup>2</sup>In 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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Temel answered, “Yes, I am very happily married to a very clever wife. It took her less than a week to teach me how to sew.”