

Story 1934 (1995 Tape 4)

Narrator: Hakan Ünsal, owner of
a small business

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İstanbul Province

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A Laz¹ Outwits Trucking Regulations

Temel² was a trucker, and he moved shipments of various kinds. One day he was carrying a load of chickens in his small truck. As he was traveling along, he stopped from time to time. At each stop, he climbed down from his truck, walked around to its rear, and there beat loudly upon the tailgate. Each time that he did this, he frightened the chickens, and a number of them flew out of the truck.

At one stopping place a man observed this and asked Temel, "Why do you do this? You are causing some of the chickens to fly out of your truck."

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.

²Temel (like Dursun) is a name given to so many Laz males that it automatically signals Laz to most Turkish audiences. Because Lazes are stereotyped as being stupid people, the name Temel may, by extension, be applied to any stupid person, whether or not he happens to be Laz.

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Temel answered, "My truck is not supposed to carry more than one ton, but I put two tons of chickens into it. Occasionally I beat upon the tailgate to frighten the chickens and make some of them fly out. In that way I lighten my load considerably."

"But how can you afford to lose so many chickens?" asked the man.

"Oh, I don't lose any chickens," said Temel. "Those that are frightened out of the truck fly along behind it. You can't separate such a flock of chickens."