

Story #614

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Location: Narrator from Eski-
gehir but taped at
Ankara

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Never Mind, I Have the Key!

There was once a Laz from the Black Sea coast who was returning home by ship. He had been away from home for a long while, working at various jobs. He had worked so long and so hard that he had accumulated quite a large amount of money, ^{chest -- wooden} which he now carried in a wooden chest. He was lying on the deck happily with his wooden chest alongside him.

Some other Lazes aboard were dancing one of their regional folk dances to a very lively tune.¹ It was not long before the Laz with the wooden chest got up and started to dance also. He danced and danced, and as he did so, he kept singing the simple dance tune. After a while the sea became rough,² and the ship rolled from side to side. During one of these rolls the man's chest slid off the deck and into the sea.

One of the passengers shouted at him, "Alas! Your chest has fallen into the sea!"

Not missing a single step, the Laz responded in the tune he had been singing, "Never mind, I have the key! Never mind, I have

¹They were dancing the Horan, according to the narrator. This is one of the best-known of Laz dances.

²The Black Sea is known for its sudden and unpredictable storms and squalls.

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the key!"³

³To appreciate fully this ethnic anecdote one must be familiar with two alleged characteristics of Lazes: their simplicity or stupidity, and their great fondness for song and dance.