

Story 1171 (1989 Tape 12)

Narrator: Şükrü Velioğlu, teaching assistant at Ankara College

Location: Taped at Ankara, but narrator originally from Trabzon Province

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The ¹Laz and the Cat's Fatal Bath

On a very cold day in winter Temel was bathing his ^{all}cat by the side of a brook. When his friend Hızır² passed by and saw what Temel was doing, he called to him, "Temel, don't wash your cat in this cold weather. It may chill him so badly that he will die."

But Temel paid no attention to this warning, and he continued with what he was doing. A short while later Hızır returned along the same path, and when he came to the bank of the brook, he found Temel there crying. He was holding in his hands his dead cat.

¹The Laz people constitute one of the larger ethnic minorities in Turkey. Their exact origins are not definitely known. The largest concentrations of Lazes are in extreme northeastern Turkey along the Black Sea coast. Reputedly stupid, they are made fun of in numerous folk anecdotes about fools. The frequent success of Lazes who move to İstanbul belies the folk image.

²Temel, Hızır, and Dursun are the most common names given to the Laz stereotype in Turkish folktales.

Story 1171

"Temel, didn't I tell you that it would be dangerous to wash your cat on such a day? Didn't I tell you that the coldness might kill it?"

Temel answered, "It wasn't the coldness that killed it. It died for some reason when I wrung it out to dry."