

Story 1724 (1993 Tape 3)

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Location: Olucak village,  
Suşehri kaza,  
Sivas Province

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The Laz<sup>1</sup> in the Skydiving Contest

Dursun<sup>2</sup> received a notice from the government to report for military service.<sup>3</sup> When he went to the military headquarters, he was assigned to the Turkish Air Force

After Dursun and the other recruits had been in training for a while, they were required to practice parachute jumping. They were all taken aloft in a large

<sup>1</sup>Although there is a small ethnic minority of Lazi who live along the Turkish Black Sea coast (mainly in the most northeasterly provinces of Giresun, Trabzon, Rize, and Artvin), the term Laz has come to designate any resident of the southern shore of the Black Sea. Residents of that area are generally and unjustifiably stereotyped as being stupid or inept.

<sup>2</sup>After Temel, Dursun may well be the second most-popular male name for Lazes in folktales. Cemal, İdris, and Hızır are other male names that occur frequently in tales about the Lazes.

<sup>3</sup>All able-bodied male Turks are required to perform military service. The lengths of their terms of duty vary from time to time and in accordance with the recruits' respective educational backgrounds. During the period between 1960 and 1980, recruits with minimal education often served for eighteen months.

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cargo plane, and when they had reached the proper altitude, they began to jump. After Dursun had jumped, he pulled the release cord, and the parachute opened. He then began floating slowly toward the ground

However, the parachute of one of the other soldiers did not open. That soldier began falling toward the ground at a very great speed. As this man went past Dursun, Dursun was offended and he shouted, "Hey, are you racing against me? Do you think you can beat me?" He took out his knife and cut himself loose from his parachute. Then he, too, began racing toward the earth