

Story 1692 1993 Tape 5)

Narrator: Selim Pul

Location: Trabzon, Trabzon
Province (at bakery
that was a front
for the arrange-
ment of call-girl
appointments)

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Collected by Jo Ann Conrad

The Laz¹ Wish That Ended All Wishes

There were three men who somehow managed to save themselves from a ship sinking during a storm at sea. These three were a German, an American, and a Laz. They were able to save their lives by swimming to a small island. There they remained for quite a long period of time. Finally one day the Laz discovered a bottle lying on the shore of the island. When he opened the bottle, a jinn² came forth from it.³

¹The Laz people (a large ethnic minority) live principally in Rize and Trabzon provinces in extreme northeastern Turkey. They are stereotyped in anecdotes as being stupid, though in fact they are no more so than anyone else.

²There are two different kinds of supernatural beings who are called jinns. In Moslem mysticism jinns are unseen forces which may affect human life in one or another way. Then there are visible jinns who may work magic power to the benefit or detriment of mortals.

³Solomon supposedly captured most of the visible jinns, sealed them in bottles or jars, and threw them into the sea. In folktales fishermen sometimes catch one of these sealed containers in their fish nets.

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The jinn said, "You have saved me! Now each of you may wish for whatever you want, and it will be granted to you. Remember, however, that you may make only one wish."

The German said, "What I wish most is to be returned to Munich." As soon as he had said that, he was immediately carried to Munich.

Then the American said, "My wish is to be returned to New York." His wish was also quickly granted, and he found himself back in New York.

When it was the Laz's turn to make a wish, he thought and thought about what he should request. He finally reached a decision and stated his wish to the jinn: "This island has now become a desolate place, and I am lonely. Bring my shipwrecked companions back to me!"