

Story 1739 (1994 Tape 2)

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The Comfortless Laz¹ in Space

For an extended mission in space three astronauts were selected from three different countries. For this six-month mission they chose one man from England, one man from France, and Temel² from Turkey. Because they were going to be away from home for six months on this mission, each astronaut was permitted to take along with him sixty kilograms of anything which would comfort him during the long trip.

The Frenchman decided to take along his girlfriend, who weighed exactly sixty kilograms. The Englishman took along with him sixty kilograms of good whiskey. Temel chose to take with him sixty kilograms of cigarettes.

¹The word Laz can now refer to any resident of the Turkish Black Sea coast, though originally it referred to an ethnic minority living largely in Rize and Trabzon provinces, in extreme northeastern Turkey. Lazes are often thought of as being stupid or inept, though this is only the result of unjustifiable stereotyping.

²Temel is the most popular male name among Lazes in folktales and, to a somewhat lesser degree, in real life. For many Turks the word Temel is almost synonymous with the word Laz. The name is also occasionally used elsewhere in Turkey.

Story

Their lengthy stay in space finally ended, and after six months the three astronauts returned to earth. When the spaceship landed, the three astronauts climbed out of it, one at a time. The Frenchman came first carefully leading his pregnant girlfriend. The Englishman staggered out in a happy state of drunkenness. When Temel emerged, he rushed toward the first person he saw on the ground and exclaimed, "Do you have a light? Do you have a light?"