

Story 1696 (1993 Tape 5)

Narrator: Sabit Uzun

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

Date: June 1993

Collected by Jo Ann Conrad

The Comfortless Laz¹ on the Moon

There were three men who were recently sent on a mission to the moon. One was an American, one was a German, the third was a Laz. It was to be a very lengthy mission which was to last for more than a year. Because it such a long mission, each of the astronauts was to be permitted to take with him one item that he felt would be comforting to him. This was something in addition to their basic supplies. The German decided to take with him a couple of cases of beer. The American decided to take his wife. The Laz thought for a while about his choice and then decided to take two cartons of cigarettes. After they had been given permission to take with them these items they had chosen, the three astronauts were carried aloft by a huge rocket.

¹The Laz people are a large ethnic minority who live principally in Rize and Trabzon provinces in extreme north-eastern Turkey. They are stereotyped as being stupid or inept, but in fact they are no different from other people.

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It was a whole year before the mission was completed. After the rocket had landed back on earth again, the three astronauts climbed out. The American and the German both happy smiles on their faces, but the Laz looked very

The crowd of people who welcomed them asked the Laz, "What is the matter? What went wrong?"

The Laz answered, "I forgot to take my pocket lighter."