

Story 1659 (Dictated)

Narrator: Ekin Akin, 18

Location: Ankara--but recorded  
in Houston

Date: April 23, 1994

Two Laz<sup>1</sup> Parachutists

Temel and his son, Dursun,<sup>2</sup> were returning to Trabzon on a military plane. Before they reached their destination, however, the plane on which they were traveling began to have engine trouble. When one engine failed completely, the pilot ordered all passengers to parachute to safety.

After they had strapped on their parachutes, Temel said to Dursun, "We shall jump from the plane together, but do not pull the cord to open your parachute until I tell you to do so."

"All right, Father," answered Dursun. Soon after they had jumped from the plane, Dursun asked, "Shall I pull the cord now, Father?"

<sup>1</sup>The 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 Istanbul belies the folk image.

<sup>2</sup>Temel (like Dursun) is a name given to so many Laz males that it automatically signals Laz to most Turkish audiences. Because Lazes are stereotyped as being stupid people, the name Temel may, by extension, be applied to any stupid person, whether or not he happens to be Laz.

Story 1659

not yet," said Temel.

A few seconds later the earth seemed to be getting much closer to them, and again Dursun asked, "Shall I pull it now, Father?"

not yet," said Temel.

When they were just a short distance above the treetops, Dursun shouted, "Now, Father?"

don't bother to pull it at all, because we have just arrived."