

Senem's Journey to a New Beginning
Modified Version
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Chapter 1

Senem stood and looked at all the people from around the world at the party.

Everyone was having fun.

Her husband, Tarkan, was talking to their friend, Ruth, and her husband. Senem was tired. It was time to go back to their apartment and let Emine Bahar, their Turkish friend and baby-sitter, go home.

In the car, Tarkan said in Turkish, *"You looked so pretty tonight, and you were having fun at the party. I think we should have another baby."*

Senem was surprised. This was sudden. She felt unsure. She didn't know if she could raise two children and work when they went back to Turkey. Finally, Senem said, *"I'll think about it, and we can talk tomorrow."*

At their apartment, everything was quiet and dark. *Hello, Emine, we're home!"*

No one answered. Senem looked in the kitchen while Tarkan checked the bedrooms. No one. Senem felt scared. Where were Emine and Hasan?

At that moment, the telephone rang. Senem answered it.

"Hello?"

"Hello, Senem. This is Emine."

Senem smiled. *"Yes, Emine, where are you?"*

"Alex came over, and we decided to take Hasan out for a while. Don't worry at all," said Emine.

“Emine, it’s past Hasan’s bedtime. My English class starts tomorrow, and he has pre-school. I think you should come home now.”

There was a pause. Then Senem heard Hasan. *“Mama, we’re playing trip! We’re driving in the car to special places! We had ice cream and we’re going swimming when we get to the hotel!”*

Senem laughed, nervously. *“Staying in a hotel?”*

Tarkan was getting upset as Senem talked. Then Emine spoke again: *“Just don’t worry about us. We’ll probably be back later. Goodbye, Senem.”* She hung up.

“Did she hang up?” shouted Tarkan. *“Call her back. Tell them to come home.”*

Senem dialed Emine’s cell phone number. There was no answer.

“Call Alex,” said Tarkan.

“I don’t know his number. I don’t even know his last name. Oh, Tarkan, what should we do? Should we go and look for them?”

“Where? They could be anywhere.”

Senem sat next to Tarkan. Her voice shook. *“This afternoon Emine was crying. She said she will miss Hasan when she goes back to Turkey next week. This situation reminds her of her nephew. He used to live in Turkey, but now he lives in Germany, and she never gets to see him. I told her she would see Hasan in a year when we return. She is afraid he won’t remember her. She told me she is working so hard to finish her classes. And Alex wants her to stay and marry him. Emine told him she was not ready. After our talk, I thought Emine was okay.”*

Senem tried not to cry. *“I think she took Hasan. She doesn’t want to leave him behind when she goes to Turkey.”*

Tarkan squeezed Senem’s fingers. *“They can’t get far,”* he said. *“They don’t have his passport.”*

Suddenly they both ran into the bedroom. Tarkan looked in the envelope where he kept their passports. There were only two passports. Hasan’s passport was gone.

