

Senem's Journey to a New Beginning
Modified Version
Barbara Vaille and Jennifer QuinnWilliams

Chapter 10

"Tarkan, Tarkan, wake up," said Senem.

"Time for work?" mumbled Tarkan.

Senem shook his shoulder. *"I'm having contractions. I timed them. They're every ten minutes."*

Tarkan rolled toward her. He opened his eyes. *"What?"*

"Contractions! The baby's coming! Tarkan, wake up!"

"Time to get up," muttered Tarkan.

Senem gasped as a contraction hit. She lay on her side, breathing deeply, until it passed. By that time, Tarkan was on the telephone with Ruth. He was wearing blue jeans and his pajama tops. Senem wondered whether she should tell him. Then she decided she should be happy he was up and half-dressed. He could worry about proper clothes later.

"Why are you calling Ruth?" she asked. *"Hulya is here."*

Tarkan hung up. *"Oh, yeah, you're right. Everything is ready. Let's go!"*

"We have to wake up Hulya, don't we? Why don't you wash your face and get her, and I'll make some tea?"

She felt the wave of the next contraction and held her arm out to Tarkan. *"Help me to the sofa!"* she said. Tarkan gently took her hand and put his arm around her. He helped her to the sofa. He rubbed her back while she breathed through the contraction. He finally seemed to be awake and ready to take charge.

“Senem, that wasn’t ten minutes.” He rushed to Hasan’s room and woke up Hulya. She kissed Senem on the cheek and waved them away to the hospital.

At the hospital everything went quickly and smoothly. Senem labored for six hours, and then, with a final push, delivered a beautiful seven-pound baby girl. The nurse put the red-faced infant on Senem’s chest. She took a deep breath, inhaling the wonderful, earthy, newborn smell of her daughter.

She looked at Tarkan, and he looked at her.

“Say hello to Ruhane,” said Senem.

“Hello, sweet Ruhane,” said Tarkan quietly.

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Ankara, Turkey, September 6

Dear Ruth,

Here in Turkey, I still don't have my own home and stay in the home of my mom. She takes care of Hasan and Ruhane when Tarkan and I are at work. Ruhane is big, happy baby.

Tarkan and I talked, and we think it is better to live in the town. Traffic is terrible. I cannot drive in that kind of traffic! There is no rule, everybody drive like it is their backyard. If we live in the town, I don't have to drive. Now we are waiting for our new apartment.

Ruth, when we left Denver you and Karen and Martha were so kind. You gave us party and presents. You know that we never forget any of you! I can't forget your friendship, your support when I was sad, and your generosity. You are very brave because you gave your car to a new driver like me!

Give everyone a big, big hug for me, and tell them I think of Denver and my wonderful life there often.

Love,

Senem

