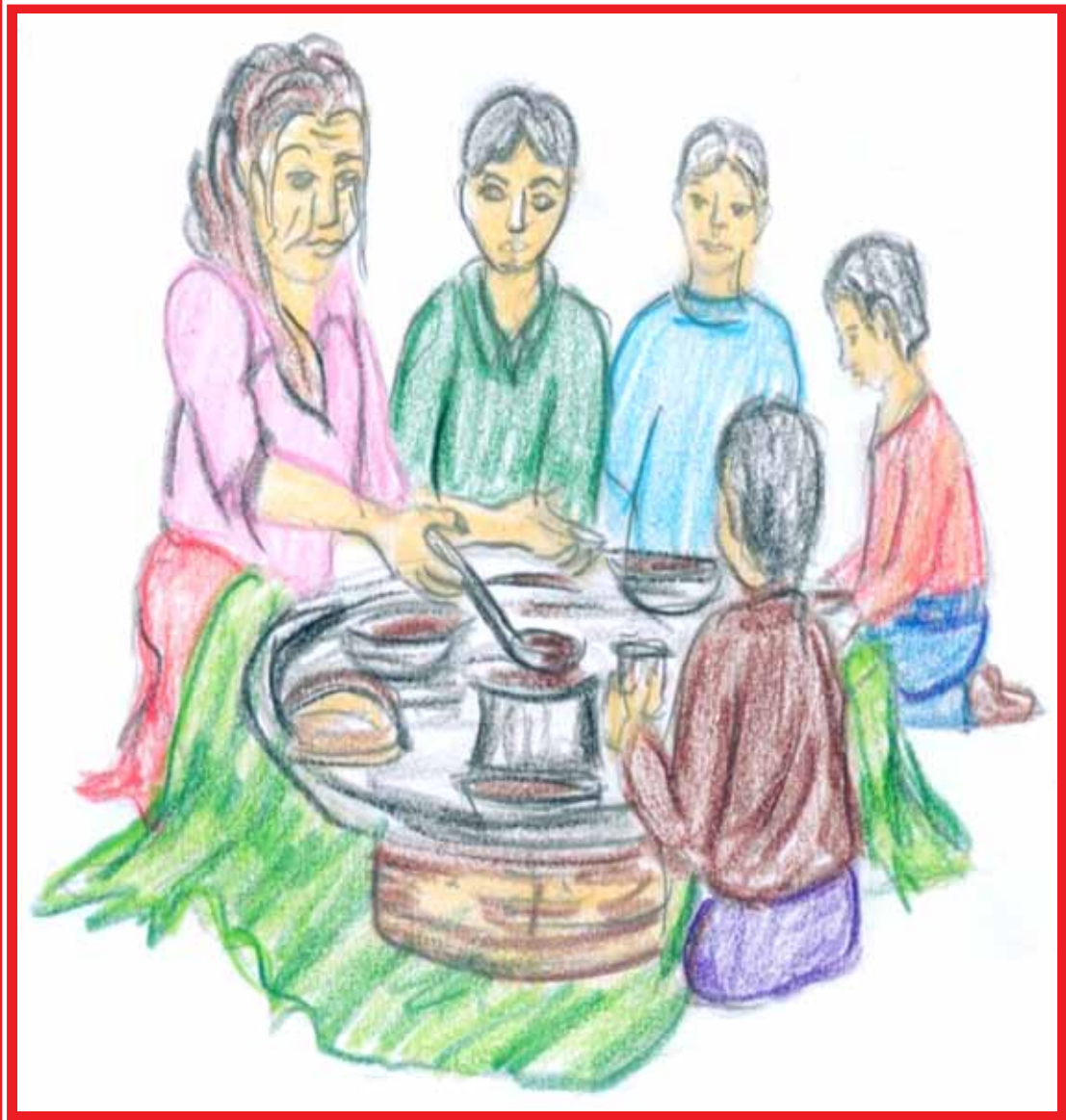


A MOTHER and HER SONS



Opera a cura di Annunziata Marciano

Hanno contribuito i Dirigenti Scolastici, gli insegnanti, gli alunni dei seguenti Istituti Scolastici
Partner del Progetto Comenius: *Knowledge of the roots and pluralism of European citizenship through
the paths of children's literature*

Direzione Didattica 1° Circolo - Formia (Istituto Coordinatore) - ITALIA

Istituti Partner:

Gimnazium nr 1 IM. Adama Mickiewicza W Reszlu ResZel - POLONIA

CEIP "Vergen De Luna" - Villeneuve de Cordoba - SPAGNA

23 Nissa İlköğretim Okulu - İçel - TURCHIA

Con la collaborazione dell'I.C. "V. Pollione" di Formia - ITALIA

Tutti i diritti riservati

A MOTHER and HER SONS



A MOTHER and HER SONS

Mersin is a big and beautiful city in Turkey. It is a city by the seaside. There was a family living in this city. Ahmet and Saliha had been marrying for seventeen years. They had been living in one of the suburb neighbourhoods of Mersin. It was a poor neighbourhood but they were very happy. Ahmet was a worker and Saliha was a housewife. They had four sons. Three years ago, while Ahmet was working, he lost his balance and fell down to the floor from the seventh floor. This event was a brea-



king point in Saliha's life.

It was a sunny day in Mersin. Saliha was making bread in her house. She thought about her life. Her four sons and the burden of life was Saliha's fate. The life was very difficult for Saliha without her husband. Her sons; Emin, Oktay, Hüseyin and Tayfun were the world of Saliha.

Oktay was 16 years old but he was very naughty at school and in the neighborhood and everybody was fed up with that. He didn't want to continue his edu-

cation because he thought education was worthless and unnecessary. Saliha and his teacher always tried to explain him the importance of being hardworking. But Oktay never listened to them. He always went out with his friends. After the death of his father, he became even more aggressive.

Hüseyin was 12 years old, he was short and fat and nobody was interested in him, they even didn't believe him. Neither his brothers nor his friends believed him. Oktay and Tayfun always thought that Hüseyin was weak and coward; but his mother believed that he would have become an important man in the future because he had always studied hard during his school life. He was quiet and shy, but he was an ambitious boy. He always read books about foreign countries or their traditional story characters. One of his aims was to visit a foreign country having become an important man. He liked the book "Don Quixote" very much and because of this, he especially wanted to visit Spain. His brothers thought that he was a dreamer and made fun of him.

Tayfun was 14 years old. He was tall and slim. He was



quite and composed. He was always a lazy student. Because of this reason, Saliha never wanted to go to his school and talk with his teachers. They usually complained because he never did his homework and sometimes he ran away from the school. Tayfun didn't have so many friends in the school. In the neighborhood he had a few friends, but they were older than him and they



were bad examples for him. He liked them very much and wanted to behave like them. As he wanted to be near them, he ran away from school. The director of the school often called Saliha to say 'Tayfun wasn't at the school'. The poor woman tried to find his son. After her husband died, Saliha had more and more responsibilities. These responsibilities were very difficult for her. Sometimes she felt helpless and started to cry. If she had a chance, she wished to move from this neighbourhood. But she didn't have money or energy. The salary left from her husband wasn't enough for their routine life. Sometimes she wanted to work but she thought that she couldn't find a job because of her age. Even if she could have worked, she couldn't have taken care of her children. Then everything would have been even worse. Emin was very sweet and a smart boy. Everybody loved him in the neighborhood. Saliha was mostly anxious

about him. As Emin was the youngest boy of the family. He liked football very much and spent his time playing football in the garden the whole day. He was not very interested in education like his brother Hüseyin and his main purpose in life was to become a professional footballer one day. His aunt had given him a ball as a present on his last birthday. Emin was always playing football with this ball in his free time. He liked playing football with his friends very much. Whenever he scored a goal, he got very happy. He felt more and more self-confident.

Emin was dreaming all the time and he was inside his dream world. One day; He dreamt of playing football in his sports suit on the grass and was smiling all the time as if he had fulfilled his dreams. In the morning, he woke up suddenly by his mother's loud voice and was frustrated that all this was just a dream.

Once at school, he directly went to see his Physical Education teacher. Serkan was young and very devoted teacher. He loved children very much. He always wanted to help his students. At that moment; he noticed that his naughty student Emin was very silent for the first time. "I want to be a footballer" said Emin.

It was short but a clear sentence and Serkan smiled. He was aware of the competence in Emin.

He answered back "Surely"

And he said "You are going to study a lot, ok."

"Ok, of course" said Emin with confidence.

The teacher talked to him about football players and their lives. He explained how he should have worked and what he should have done to be a good football player. He said:

"It is a difficult and long way. You should work very hard. You should be healthy. You should be hardworking and agile." And the most important sentence for Emin was "Never give up Emin. You will be very successful. You

will be a famous football player. I believe you!"

Emin thanked to his teacher and left happily. His teacher was aware of Emin's talent. Although Emin was younger, he accepted him to the school-team. The youngest student of the team was Emin. The other players were taller and stronger than Emin. But they liked him very much when they saw his talent.

After he being accepted to the school team, Emin realized that he should have worked very hard as it was a difficult job to reach his aims. Afterwards, he was no more a naughty and lazy boy. He was decided. His teacher's speech affected him and that speech became the starting point to success for him. Every day, he was doing sports, was studying very hard and trying to keep himself away from the negative sides of the neighborhood. He didn't play with the naughty boys of the neighborhood anymore. His mother was proud of the change in his son and believed that Emin was going to be an important sportsman in the future.

Hüseyin and Emin were trying to do their best and were on the right way, but Tayfun and Oktay were doing the opposite. Each day, their mother received complaints from the school. Tayfun was not even going to school



regularly and nobody knew what he was doing or who he was making friendship with. Saliha was not enough for all the sons and these moments reminded her the absence of her husband insistently. Saliha suspected that her son. Tayfun was smoking cigarettes and the other harmful things. But she couldn't do anything about it.

Hüseyin and Emin were her only consolation. Approximately three years later, Hüseyin became very successful in the high school entrance exam. This small boy embraced his mother excitedly at the end of the exam and said:

" Yes, finally I have done."

They got very happy. Saliha said:

"I always believed you. I am proud of you, son." She smiled.

At night everybody, even the dog, was sleeping. A car stopped in front of their house and the door was harshly knocked. There were a lot of policemen and police cars in the garden. The police were asking for Oktay. Poor mother, Saliha was very surprised and started trembling of fear. Oktay had not even come lately. She had tried



many times to speak with him but all her efforts were in vain. Every time, Oktay quarreled with his mum like he did all the time. Saliha was living the results of her fear. She said Oktay was not at home. She asked why they were looking for her boy. The police did not want to explain anything but, they took the woman with them. She brought Hüseyin with her on the way to the police station. She thought that if her husband had lived, she would not have experienced all that.

Once they arrived at the police station, the police started to ask many questions to Saliha and Hüseyin. Later, they learnt that they were looking for him because of robbery. After she heard this, her world scattered for a few moments. She worked very hard to provide good life standards for her boys for many years. Now, she was receiving the praise for her hard difficult years. She did not want to believe it, her son could not do such a bad thing. He could have been a naughty and lazy boy but could not be a robber. She thought that somebody was blaming him.

The police said Oktay did the robbery together with his friends, Saliha had never liked those boys but still she

did not want to believe. She felt like in a dream. Once, the police showed the security camera records, Saliha felt like fainting. There was nothing left to do. Everything was clear. The police took them to the hospital and after she felt better they took them back to their home. Saliha couldn't sleep the whole night. She felt as if she was ten years older now. She was helpless now. She didn't know what she should do, who she should call. She only wanted to sleep and forgot everything. She wanted to be in a dream. She couldn't think about anything anymore. Only, she thought that she was unsuccessful. She had struggled every day. She gave love only to her sons. But now, she understood that she had made some mistakes. She was very sad. She didn't want to think that Oktay would have been arrested. They weren't rich. What could she do for him? He might be worse in a prison. He would have had bad friends, he would have become a more rebellious person. She also thought her other sons. What would they have thought in this condition? Would this event have been a good lesson or a bad example for them?





A few days ago, Oktay wanted money. When Saliha said “no”, he shouted at her and said:

“I will find so much money and do whatever I want and you won’t find me then.”

And he went out angrily. She hadn’t thought that he said the truth. When she remembered this event, she started to cry.

She didn’t have any relatives in Mersin and she didn’t have any close friends for help. Suddenly, she thought she could have called the sons’ uncle. He had been living in Adana. Adana was near Mersin. The distance between Adana and Mersin was 70km. The uncle Ali visited them twice after his brother died. He didn’t take care of them. He had a small grocery store and he had always said that he was a poor man and couldn’t give money to them. Also, Saliha didn’t want his money. She only wanted her sons to forget the absence of their father. But, because of his words, her sons never liked him. However, there was a very important event and she needed someone’s help. She thought she had to call him, but she couldn’t decide. While she was sitting on the sofa, Saliha fell asleep. She saw her husband in a dream. As if

he was alive. They were eating their dinner. He advised his sons in the dream.

“Don’t take anybody’s money or things without permission. Work hard. Go to your schools regularly and study hard. If you work, you can win. If you don’t work, you can’t earn your own money. You know I have been working for you for years. Thanks to my hardworking, we built this house. If I die, don’t leave your mother alone. If you work hard, you will be happy.”

In the morning the phone rang. Saliha ran to the phone. She thought it might be Oktay. She answered but she didn’t know the man’s voice. She thought he was a policeman and they found her son, Oktay. But the man on the phone wanted to talk with Emin. He introduced himself to Emin. He was the manager of a football club. Emin had been successful in a football competition and deserved to go to this football club for training. He was very excited. After a bad night, this event made them very happy. As if the sun rose into their house for a while.

At that moment, someone knocked the door harshly. Who was it? Oktay or policemen or someone else? They looked at each other anxiously. Saliha opened the door and she saw her son Tayfun who wasn’t at home for months. She hugged her son. She was happy but she was also angry. Tayfun’s face was very dirty. He was very regretful because he ran away from home. He couldn’t say anything or reacted. He only said “May I come in, mom?” Saliha nodded her head and she was worried about him. She wanted to ask where he had been lately, but couldn’t ask. She thought what happened to him, what he did without them for days. She asked “Are you hungry?” and went to the kitchen before he answered. She wanted to prepare a perfect breakfast for her son, but she hadn’t enough food or money. She ran to their neighbor Aliye. They liked each other very much. She

borrowed some money from Aliye and went to the supermarket. At this moment, Emin woke up and saw his elder brother and got angry as he hadn't been at home for months. He shouted at him.

"Don't you pity us? Where were you for months?"

Because of the noise, Hüseyin woke up. He was watching them, but didn't say anything. He was so calm. Tayfun was also so calm and couldn't say anything to Emin who was shouting him angrily. At this moment Saliha came in and she thought that they were quarrelling and she screamed.

"For God's sake, don't fight!" She shouted.

Tayfun looked at her mother lovely and said:

"We are speaking, mom. There aren't any problem. Don't worry."

They all understood his look. They realized that Tayfun had changed. They were sure about the change. They went to the kitchen and when Tayfun saw a special breakfast for him, he got shy. Saliha looked at his son, she missed him very much. Tayfun said:

"I want to have a bath and to sleep after the breakfast."

During the following three days, he didn't talk so much. He only ate and slept. Saliha, Hüseyin and Emin were worried about him and waited for him to speak.

In the morning, all of the family were in a hurry because Oktay's lawsuit was that day. They were shy and sad. Saliha, Hüseyin and Emin left home to go to the law court. Tayfun was at home and Saliha also thought about him. Tayfun shaved off his beard and got dressed in the new clothes which her mother gave. He wanted to stay at home.

The judge was in his fifties. He was fat and had got white hair. He seemed a likable man. When Saliha saw the man, she felt relax and thought he was a good man. He was fair. He might have released her son. She told these

thoughts to Hüseyin.

"I think he is a good man. He may release Oktay."

Hüseyin got surprised and said with anger:

"Mom, how can you believe this? Oktay was a robber!"

Saliha was very sad to hear the truth. Hüseyin was also sad and tried to relax his mother.

"Don't worry, mom. Everything will be good in the future. God helps us."

In that moment Saliha remembered her childhood. She had been living in a village and she had liked the rural lifestyle very much. She had been very happy then. She had had unlimited dreams and happiness. She wanted to be a doctor. But her father didn't wanted her to study. He had been a very strict man. He had never smiled. She had thought her father had never liked the children. He hadn't bought any toys to them. Because of these reasons, she loved Ahmet and got married at the age of eighteen.

"Stand up, everybody!"

Saliha returned the real life with these words. The judge postponed the lawsuit till the next month. Oktay was very regretful. When Saliha realized that she felt more unhappy.

When they arrived home, they saw Tayfun who was waiting for them. He was different and wanted to talk them. After they sat on the sofa, he started to speak.

"I know I made you very unhappy, mom. I didn't come to home for months. I went to whenever I wanted, I slept in the streets. I didn't think about the results of these. I only thought that lifestyle was easy. I didn't have any responsibilities. No school, no job! It was easy. I thought that my free time and smoking were my victories. I never thought that life was wrong or dangerous. But I saw a beautiful girl in the street last week. I looked at her eyes and smiled. However, she looked at me pityingly. A day later, she passed me in the street and looked at me

with the same feelings. I got very angry and clenched my fists. I wanted to scream, but I couldn't do anything. I stayed there in a silence while she was walking. Suddenly, I thought my father and you, our happy family. I thought that for two days. I looked at the mirror. It wasn't me. I didn't know this boy. It was very dirty and pity. I didn't have any aim in this world. I saw a lot of happy families in the streets. I saw happy fathers who wanted to go back home in a hurry. I thought I would have been happy too, I also have a family. I can start from the beginning."

When he finished his speech, all of them were excited. Saliha started to pray. But Emin said to Tayfun:

"I know, you will go away again when you'll get bored. No, I don't want to live all this again. Go, now!"

Saliha got surprised and couldn't say anything, but Hüseyin said:

"You don't know what could happen. He is very regretful. You can't treat him like this."

Tayfun envied Hüseyin and Emin. They were hardworking. He admired them. They were good models for him. He wanted to work and earn his own money. Tayfun fell in love and he felt better thanks to love. He wondered where she was. He wished he could see her again.

Everyone was sad and immersed in his thoughts. They couldn't do anything before the judge gave his sentence but the future appeared daunting for them. Saliha gathered her four sons and told them: "Whatever happens, remember that we are a family and we will always be together. All of you are very different but everyone has his own qualities that can help all of us. Don't forget that your father wanted us to be responsible and work hard. It's time that Oktay and Tayfun support the family. You know that we don't have any family nearby and all depend on us and our work."

All of them were excited during the days in which Oktay and Tayfun – the older brothers – were working, and Emin and Hüseyin let their imaginations fly. Hüseyin felt like a character in the books he was so fond of and Emin, the athlete, thought that if he was the eldest of the family, he would have played for one of their favorite teams and so he could have helped them all.

Then came the fateful day when they had been summoned to hear the judge's sentence. Little did they know about the extent to which their lives would have changed.

The two older brothers and the mother walked briskly. That morning, everyone was tense.

"Try to show that you are sorry for what you did," said Oktay's mother. The sound of her voice shook Oktay and made him ashamed of being the cause of her concern, so he decided to behave properly and away from his old friends.

His mother greeted several people along the way and near the courthouse and they saw someone they knew: Ali, Oktay's uncle, who lived in Adana and enjoyed a comfortable life.

"See you when you leave," the mother said, after the greetings.

Ali coolly nodded and murmured uneasily as they entered the building: "My nephew is an embarrassment for the whole family, he should pay for what he has done and correct the course of his life."

Upon arriving to the room, they found it full of curious onlookers, just as it was every Thursday, packing the seats for the public. In the front row were the people who Oktay had robbed.

Oktay crossed the aisle and heard his sentence: The judge said he would have to return the money he had stolen and pay a large fine, effective within a week.

"Our responsibility is that young people are not violent

and it is the duty of society to respond to their actions," the judge said to the audience.

He won't go to jail because it was the first time that he committed a crime, but Oktay felt like he got an exemplary sentence and it was his turn to pay for what he had done because of his unfortunate company.

Saliha collapsed because she didn't have the money. Moreover, to the people Oktay robbed it seemed like a very mild punishment so they were very angry.

On the street Saliha found her brother-in-law Ali and received the answer that she expected: he wouldn't have lent them the money they needed.

When she explained what happened to her children, Tayfun thought that he could have sold the house and pay the fine with those money. The problem was that they would have to live on the street like what it happened in Spain with those evicted by the banks.

Saliha accepted, since there was no other solution. Oktay felt very embarrassed that both his brothers and his mother would be homeless because of him.

After losing their home, Saliha and her family were on the outskirts of Mersin and there they found an abandoned building where they took refuge. A neighbor had given them some food, but for just one day. They found a shepherd looking after some goats in a field nearby. This man, generous despite of his poverty, did not hesitate to approach them and offer them milk and cheese from his animals but just a little more, since he was almost as poor as they were.

That night they hardly slept, all silent, thinking that nothing worse could have happened to them.

They were wrong, because the next day, they received a visit from their neighbor telling them that people who were angry with Oktay were looking for revenge. They were a large and aggressive family.

"I will flee to the nearby mountains so they cannot find

me," Oktay said.

"We all have to stick together, it's best thing to do for defending ourselves. Furthermore, even if you're not here, they may retaliate against the rest of us," replied his mother.

"You all must flee now," said the neighbor. "They know your whereabouts."

They were wandering around the city because they didn't know what to do or where to go. Walking hurriedly, they went to the port of Mersin. The night hit them and they did not know what to do. Among the many boats, there was one that caught their attention, with its luxurious walkway which was bound to the port and because they saw no one in it.

Almost instinctively, they boarded the boat. They went down stairs and heard people inside the cabin, then climbed down to the depths where they found a room that seemed quite dark. It seemed to be the ship's hold, based on the smells that emanated from there. They ate some of the fruit that was already there, and then because of tiredness and nerves, all fell asleep.

When they awoke, they noticed that the boat was rocking and discovered that they had sailed. At no time had they thought of the consequences of getting on the boat:

"What will happen to us?" Saliha said.

Indeed, a sailor of the ship that went down for supplies found them the next morning. Soon the news was communicated to the captain.

The captain, a Turkish citizen, was a lean, serious man, with an air of natural authority but at the same time you could see honesty in his eyes.

He observed them in a severe manner and very seriously told them that he could not tolerate the presence of in-

truders on his boat. Tayfun explained that his family was fleeing assailants. The captain's attitude softened somewhat, but was firm in his decision that they would disembark at the next port, which, unfortunately, wouldn't be until two weeks from then because the crew was destined to do some work at sea.

They were allowed to sleep in the gym provided that they helped the crew with their work.

The whole family agreed and thanked the captain for



what he did for them. Once everything had calmed down, they could see the place and the people around them. It was a boat with a crew of multicultural men and women, biologists and scientists dedicated to research on the Mediterranean.

It seemed like the Tower of Babel, as they heard numerous languages: Spanish, Italian, Turkish, Polish and English mainly. Oktay and Tayfun regretted not having studied languages when they were in school, now they would have been helpful.

The ship's mission was sponsored by the European Union and it was doing a study on the flora and fauna of the Mediterranean.

The ship was called Hispania and was 82 meters in

length, had 29 crew and 58 scientists. A third of the ship was used for propulsion and steering system.

It had spaces like the kitchen, the gym, screening room, dining room, library and nursing. The cabins were small, for one or two people, with a very small closet to store little clothing and personal belongings. There was a bathroom for every three rooms.

The scientists' work would have lasted three years and it was supposed to end in Cyprus, Greece (Volvos), Sicily, Tunisia, Genoa, Marseilles and Valencia.

The first part of the expedition was to last three months, with a break of one month in late summer.

The vessel deck was open to allow scientific equipment installation and manipulation of the samples.

All laboratories, along with the captain's room, were in the bow near the deck. Glassware, tools, vials, etc. were stored in secured cabinets so they would have not broken with the ship's movements. Laboratory tables were anchored to prevent them from overturning and breaking scientific apparatuses.

One evening, after a day of hard, intense work aboard the Hispania, they heard through the megaphone:



"You who hold the sky and sea, you make the calm and the storm.

Have mercy on us Lord,
mercy, Lord,
Lord, have mercy.

Hispania, good night!"

And as the sun was setting and light disappearing in to the horizon, an atmosphere of peace spread on the ship. All that weren't on duty but retired into their cabins to rest. The five members of the family laid on some gym mats. They were tired, disoriented and confused; their lives had changed so much in one day! But at the same time they were happy and grateful to have found a place where although they had not been accepted, at least they were not thrown out to sea. They were alive and together. They were grateful and now they had to adapt to life on the boat.

"Tomorrow is another day!" Saliha said. And they all fell asleep from exhaustion and emotion.

The next morning the captain told them that the older brother, Oktay, could work in the engine room and help with cleaning and maintenance of the diesel engines, and their utensils and tools.

The mother would have helped in the kitchen, especially collaborating with the master baker. Later he would have thought of other duties for the rest of the brothers. Oktay went to the engine room, where he was taught how to deal with the generators, boilers, compressors, pumps and everything necessary for the normal operation of the ship. The boss told him that if he observed everyone's work and he worked hard, he could have learnt the trade work and it could have helped him in the future.

At first, Oktay did not like this job very much, especially because he was always greasy. He was a tall boy, handsome, dark-eyed and very cocky, so he did not like

others to see him dirty and disheveled. He thought his life would have been different if he had money. Perhaps it would be better to continue stealing and have an easier life. But gradually he became interested by the operation of the engines and did not mind having his face and hands black. Moreover, as he was always busy, he did not have much time to think about the past.

But what Oktay liked best was listening to the stories the captain told.

Stories like when Hurricane Hugo was about to sink



the Hispania in Puerto Rico and was kept afloat by its crew for three weeks, or when they had to struggle with some giant waves over ten meters tall around the coast of East Africa, and the many adventures he had lived in the more than three hundred thousand nautical miles crossing Antarctica, the Amazon, the Panama Canal, Australia, South America, United States, the North Atlantic, the Pacific Ocean...studying Oceans, coasts, coral reefs, animals, lakes, sea and climates. They were real adventures that excited and captivated everyone who listened. Meanwhile Saliha, the mother, was very happy with her work in the kitchen. She collaborated with the master baker and was specialized in pastry. He had given her

the recipes for baklava (puff pastries filled with pistachios and honey), a Turkish specialty that she could make very well and was very appreciated by the crew. She also cooked the typical kebab with lamb meat. Her work was hard and she had to spend many hours working at meals, but she did not care because she was used to working hard at home. After she had finished working each day, she was very tired, falling asleep quickly and she barely had time to think about the situation of their family.



Navigation was calm with northwest winds and the boat glided majestically with no problems through the Mediterranean Sea, on its way to the port of Valencia in Spain.

Emin, the youngest son, who was thirteen, spent his free time engaged in his favorite hobby: playing soccer. He was hoping to finish his work and then go on the deck to play with a ball that he had found in the gym. At night, when he went to sleep, he dreamt he was a famous soccer player, playing center forward and that many important teams worldwide fought over his signing. Perhaps the Galatasaray, Real Madrid, Bar-

celona...He saw all the stadium lights lit and he heard everyone cheering and on their feet, after he scored a headed goal. He would have earned a lot of money; he would be a millionaire, and lift his family out of their troubles. They could have returned home and lived in peace. Recently, he had been admitted to a soccer club



in their city, so he was looking forward to returning there. To be a good soccer player you have to train a lot, so whenever he could he was playing ball. He remembered when he played with friends in a field after school. How fun it was! How he missed it! When he



remembered them, he got excited and felt very sorry for having to leave their home. All because of his brother!

The family was on the boat for several days.

It was the month of June. One Sunday when everything was calm, there was a big gust of wind. Soon it got dark, and a black band appeared on the horizon. In a few minutes the wind was blowing very strongly. It was a big storm! (Navigating through the Mediterranean in summer is very safe, but unexpectedly, a storm can quickly appear and be as dangerous as a winter storm). The heavy rain was accompanied by hail and huge waves



swept the deck of the ship.

Suddenly, a wave dragged Emin to the sea! He only had time to scream in terror: "Help! Help!"

Oktay, without thinking twice, jumped in after him and tried to save him even though the sea was very rough. A sailor threw him a rope so that he could grab onto it. Finally, after some time, which for everyone seemed like an eternity, Oktay was able to pull Emin and himself back on the boat.

Emin had fainted. He was placed on the deck face down, with an outstretched arm and with his head turned to the same side. Then Oktay placed his hands over him and put pressure on his ribs, while he was counting:

one, two, three...he continued until Emin started breathing and his eyes widened.

"He's conscious!" they all shouted.

His mother, who had come hearing the anguished cries, ran to embrace him.

Well, really, she hugged both of them. She was thrilled, weeping with joy and kept repeating: "You've saved him! You've saved him! I do not know what I would have done if you had not jumped into the water despite the waves and storm. You have been very brave!"

The other two brothers also came to congratulate Oktay for the feat he had accomplished, and to kiss Emin, who they had been on the verge of losing.

All sailors and scientists recognized the value of the boy, who had not hesitated to risk his life to save his brother and from then on everyone, including his family, respected and admired him greatly. He was no longer a common thief and a bad child, but a young, brave, and admirable: a hero.

After what happened the day of the storm, everyone realized that their lives could end at any time, especially their mother's. Saliha thought many times that her life was slipping away through her hands. She felt she had not enjoyed life enough. She had dedicated herself to the care of her husband and children and had not noticed the inevitable passage of her youth. She was very thin after so many disappointments and problems happened to her family. Once she was an attractive young woman with piercing black eyes. Since the accident her husband she had not paid much attention to her appearance. She lived by and for their children. Thanks to the other women of the Hispania, she felt the need to care of her look, grooming and makeup. Finally she was more peaceful, now that her children were busy, happy and most important thing, they were all together! She felt happier and her happiness was obvious on her face.

Her joy increased every moment. She felt the need to please the people around, especially a certain person... Since the captain had treated them so well from the beginning and was concerned for the welfare of her family, Saliha felt the need to thank him as much as possible. In the kitchen she prepared delicious Turkish dishes with care and affection. She knew that the way to win men over was through their stomachs. Each day, the captain became more aware of her presence. He sought her out to hear of the years they lived in Mersin. He wanted to talk about her children, the work on the boat, trivial things ... the object was to be together and spend as much as possible time together (if their jobs would have permitted) and share unforgettable moments like the amazing and beautiful sunsets of the Mediterranean ... Saliha felt protected with him. She knew that nothing bad could have happened to them if she was close to the captain.

By midsummer the ship was docking in a port of the Italian island of Sicily for supplies and to refuel the ship. The next morning, the Hispania left port bound for Spanish lands. All remained quiet on the ship's deck and Saliha was curious because the captain had not forced them off at any port where they could have dock ... Her

heart was relieved to see that the captain wanted them on the boat.

Meanwhile, at sea, all the tasks for the Hispania were shared and it was smooth sailing. Even the young children found their niche and developed their skills feeling valuable.

Hüseyin, who had spent most of his childhood and adolescence reading every book he could get in his hands, soon realized that his place was in the ship's library. It seemed incredible that in such a small space they could fit so many books and of all types. Of course, the majority of the books dealt with the oceans and the wildlife that live there, but he found other vast numbers of novels and magazines, encyclopedias, atlases and other very different things.

He kept reading because it was his passion, his life and he could also count on the help of internet. The ship was equipped with the latest technology in communication and laboratory gear. He researched on internet about the expeditions of other boats and also of the Hispania. He knew he could ask and help scientists in the laboratory.

He was a highly educated and intelligent boy and his curious spirit didn't let him rest at any moment. He was documenting each sample that was collected from the depths of the Mediterranean. He was happy and felt fulfilled. He thought he was born to investigate and research and also had very good teachers who, with patience and dedication, explained to the boy everything that was in his hands.

Tayfun knew he didn't have the preparation of his brother. He hadn't attended school recently and now realized his mistake: "If I could go back in time, I went to school and studied..." he thought many times. However, he did not give up and tried to communicate with the crew in the many languages which they understo-



od. At first it was hard, but he was a smart kid and soon learned how to handle and perform the maintenance of diving gear, oxygen tanks, wetsuits and neoprene suits. He also dealt with the cages to protect the crew from the dangers of the sea floor. It was a big responsibility



because the lives of many men going down to collect samples of ocean wildlife depended on his work. The cylinders had to be charged and ready whenever there was an expedition.

By chance, in one of these expeditions, they found a few ancient coins, very full of soot and corrosion and embedded with sensitive algae. They couldn't have imagined that it could be a treasure trove of silver doubloons from a galleon sunk between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Because they noted the exact coordinates of every dive, they returned to dive again in the same area, with a vacuum to collect samples as quickly as possible because of the dangers of the deep sea. Each of the pieces of their finding had to be reported to the relevant authorities, but their coordinates indicated they were in an international zone between Spain and Italy. They had to be sure of the nationality or origin of the treasure before declaring anything. They carefully cleaned each piece of currency and the fixtures they found. The-

re were also bowls and vases inlaid with semi-precious stones.

Once cleaned and collected, everyone realized the historical importance and economic value that luck had brought them. The family was elated even though they knew that the treasure was not for them or even for the crew of the Hispania. They were proud to be part of the expedition, to be a grain of sand on the mountain. They were finally completely happy!

The ship was still sailing, reaching the coast of Spain. The crew and her sons were excited because of their discoveries, they were thinking about their fame and popularity. Saliha didn't share their joy. She didn't feel like a participant of the discovery, she was just an ordinary kitchen worker. She felt that she wasn't so important among the multinational crew. She started to worry. What would her fate be? She was dreaming about stepping on the land but on the other hand she was afraid. Until they were on the ship, they felt safe. The



past and the troubles were left far behind. She knew that one day the cruise would have been over and they will would have to face the new challenges. But what were the challenges? What could they expect on a new, strange and unknown land? What would have happe-

ned to her and her sons?

She was observing Oktay. He had changed a lot during the cruise and became a serious young boy. He worked very hard. He did everything what the captain or sailor told him to do without a word. When the crew met on the dock in the evenings to watch beautiful sunsets Oktay wasn't with them. He was sitting around alone. She saw him in the evenings standing on the board looking at the abyss of the sea or turning his sight to the east, where Turkey was..... "He feels homesick"- Saliha thought.

She was missing Turkey too, but she knew that there was no way back, not yet. She had helped her son to get away from the judiciary system and unkind people. She was looking at her younger sons. They were happy. Huseyn was behaving like a real scientist- discoverer, he didn't step the older people aside, he took part in the discussions, the older people treated him very kindly and answered all his questions seriously. She saw he was trying hard not to be treated like a child or a stranger, or an accidental passenger. Her heart was full of tenderness. "My clever son..."- she was thinking. She observed the youngest son as well. Emin all days long was playing with a ball on the board. Sometimes the crew joined him and in the evenings they played foot-



ball matches. He was a talented boy- she was sure about that. Is there any chance that one day he will be able to develop his talent? She knew nothing about that sport, she had never been interested in football matches and the Olympic Games. But now she listened with pleasure how her young footballer was always highly praised. She didn't want to show her worries, but she needed to talk with someone who could advise her about what to do. One evening the captain started the conversation. Saliha has understood that she found an ally in him. For her he was a stranger in any respect, but also he was so close. She liked his appearance -a tall, blue-eyed man with fair hair- so different from her husband and sons. As a ship captain of the multinational crew he could speak many different languages, but he wasn't able to speak Turkish. Saliha didn't speak English very well, but during the cruise she has improved it, understood more but spoke less, but it was enough to understand that he had a romantic interest for her. Jan noticed the worry on her face and he was trying to prepare her for the unexpected in a new place.

Saliha was afraid that a new country wouldn't have been friendly for them, but Jan promised to complete all the formalities when they would have stepped ashore. The captain invited them to his summer house where he was living during the breaks between his cruises and allowed them to stay there for some time.

Saliha started to cry, she didn't want to be a problem for the captain, but she knew that with his help it would have been absolutely easier to start a new life abroad. She thought that the cultural and religious differences aren't the biggest obstacle to be kind to other people. If you are a good person, you always see the good points, not the bad ones.

When they finally reached Spain, the captain invited them to his house. The woman was very happy, when

she saw that place. The house was modestly furnished but the views around delighted all the family.

Saliha thought that over last lately their financial situation was tragic. They used to live in comfortable conditions in their house, they had quite a lot of money, but now they were the outlaw escapees. The family situation was getting worse and worse, one of the sons broke the law (that was for Saliha the most difficult thing), they lost their neighbors' trust, and in the end their house. Now for the first time for so long the family felt that their good luck was back. The captain, having some warm feelings for her, dealt with all the law matters as he didn't want to bother Saliha with them.

Months were passing. The captain didn't hurry to be back on the ship and lengthened his holiday. Saliha's sons started to like him more. The youngest boys went to school, where they were learning a new language, the older were working occasionally, everything was



seen through rose-coloured spectacles, and since then the things have taken a different course. One warm evening the man invited Saliha for a supper in the garden. There were some candles and the table was laid. Saliha was surprised and couldn't say a word. Jan knelt down

in front of her, took a small red box from his pocket and with a tremulous voice asked: "Saliha -will you marry me"?

Saliha had been waiting for that day for long time, but now when it came, she didn't know what to do. She decided to stop thinking about the past and become Jan's wife, a Polish man from a distant country, about which she learnt long time ago at school, but she didn't know the realities of this place nowadays. The sons were happy because of the wedding. The two older sons in fact were adults and decided not to interfere with their mother's personal life, who for their safety many months ago didn't hesitate to leave their home country and afford the unknown. They congratulated their mother and captain on the decision they had taken. The youngest of the sons, Emin was happy not just because of his mother's happiness but also because of the possibility of travelling to another country, another place, where finally his dreams might have come true and he would have found the right school and sports club, where someone could have noticed his talent for sports.

Those days when Emin was on the ship, many times he heard from the Italian people from Turyn about an



unusually talented Polish footballer- Zibi, the football supporters' favourite, who played for Juventus for many years and many times was called an excellent shooter. He also heard about other excellent footballers from Poland playing for different European clubs and now he was dreaming about a new place where someone at last could have given him a chance to become a number one. Only Huseyn wasn't happy because of his mother's decision. At the Spanish school he studied hard, he was in contact with the scientists met during the cruise and was dreaming that after the exams he would have been able to come back on the ship and carry out research on the flora and fauna of the Mediterranean. He feared that his mother would have been afraid of leaving him alone in a strange country and would have asked him to go with her and his younger brother to Poland.

Finally after three months the wedding was held.

The ceremony was beautiful. Saliha was wearing a traditional Turkish costume, Jan was wearing a naval uniform. The most beautiful part was the wedding vows. The lovers, looking deeply into their eyes, said that they would have loved each other, remaining faithful and they would have never left each other until death. Af-

ter the ceremony the honeymooners started getting ready to go to Poland. Jan wanted to introduce his wife to his family and friends. Saliha was anxious, but there was no way back. Jan hoped that soon he would be able to introduce his new wife to his relatives, but two older Fatima's sons had many doubts about a trip abroad. It appeared to them that they had already found the right place to stay, they were pleased with their job on the ship. Apart from that, the trip to Poland took them away from their homeland –Turkey. In their heart of hearts they were dreaming of coming back to Turkey. But not yet... When they are ready – they will come back. Huseyn will fly with his mother, but just on holiday. If he wants to come back to school, which he already liked, his mother will allow him to do that. Older brothers will look after him...

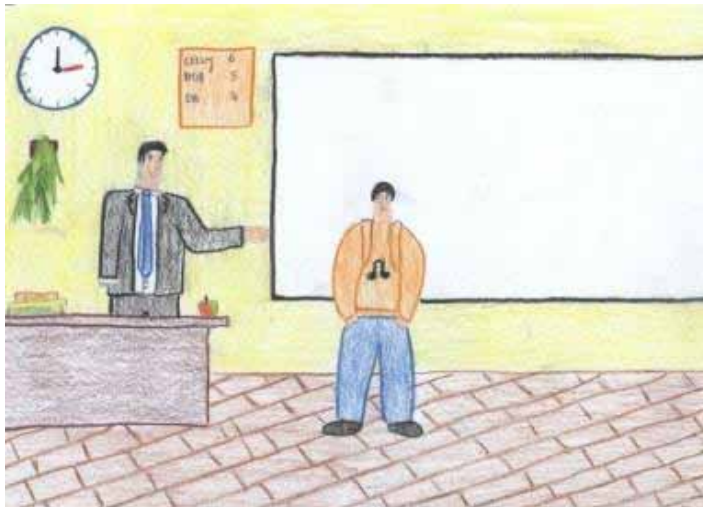
A week after the wedding they went on a journey to Poland, the country which for Saliha and her sons seemed to be exotic, they did not know it at all. The flight was long, but finally the plane landed on the airport in the capital of Poland- Warsaw. They decided to stay there for a few days and later set off to Jan's home town. In Warsaw they had a nice time, went sightseeing visited museums, palaces and admired other attractions.

In Poland Emin went to school. It was a sports-oriented school- Gymnasium. Pupils developed their skills, they played football and handball. It's easy to guess that a new student joined the class where there were more boys than girls, and each of them was a great lover of football. Emin was afraid before the first meeting with the Polish colleagues, he didn't know how they would have welcomed him. He knew from Jan that in this small town there aren't any foreigners, the local population consists of Poles born and bred. The boy was wondering how he would have been welcomed, but at once he was curious about a new school, pupils and teachers.



It turned out that the first meeting wasn't so kind. The class was prepared to welcome a new student. To the classroom he went with the tutor, who was also a football coach.

He introduced Emin, said that he was a great footballer and he is hoping this new pupil will help the team to enjoy the sweet smell of success on the playing field. He was warmly welcomed with applause, later he was asked to tell something about himself. It was a real challenge. The boy spoke Polish a little bit, but in that moment he felt he was running out of words. He spoke in English, which he had learned in Turkey. New friends were listening to his stories with great interest, they were laughing from time to time because



of some language mistakes. The friends dropped him missing words and they all together had a lot of fun. If any stranger was listening to what was going on during the lesson, he would have got the impression that this place was the tower of Babel. Everyone was speaking at the same time, but Emin felt that new friends took a positive attitude towards him. He came back home satisfied and said to his mother that he was given a polite welcoming at the Polish school. But that's not all. In the

afternoon he had a training session with his team. He knew that it was a kind of a test. Surely he would be asked to present his skills, all team would be watching and judging him. He was afraid of that, he thought that maybe he had too high opinion of himself; he said in class how he loved football and he took the pitch like a duck to water. Now he will have to prove his abilities. But what if his abilities weren't good enough? What if his new friends were excellent, fit and strong footballers and he wasn't equal? They could have made fun of him and what then? If that happens he will force his mother to come back to Spain to his older brothers. He was walking for the training very slowly, deep in dark thoughts. He was stuck to his beliefs how hopeless he was. He looked around and felt uncomfortable. Did he get lost? Jan wanted to guide him to the stadium, but Emin didn't allow him to do that.

He was afraid what his new friends could think about him, he didn't want to be seen as a born loser, not able to find the way to the stadium. Besides, the boys explained to him that in their small town it's really hard to get lost because all roads lead to the church, to the market or to the stadium. Jan showed him the way and Emin went there. But now he understood that he had just got lost. What to do? Phone home? The mother will worry. Suddenly he saw a group of boys and girls approaching him. He thought that they could be his classmates and went to their direction. However, he quickly understood that he was wrong. The teenagers were a little bit older than him, but they were watching him with interest and one of them asked: "What are you doing here?". He was wearing a black blouse. Emin couldn't see his face because of the hood covering his face although it was a warm day. "I am going to the stadium"- he answered in English. The strangers started to laugh. "To the stadium? Maybe there are the Word Championships"?-they were

still laughing, looking at his face. "I have got the training session"- he answered with a faltering voice because he felt that dark clouds gathered over him. He did not like those young people and knew they did not have any positive attitude towards him. He started speaking in Polish "I have got the training with my team". They surrounded him full of amusement. "With your team? In our town there are not any strangers". Emin felt that it was the right time to show a clean pair of heels and started to escape.

While he was running he heard that they started chasing, him shouting something, but he did not look back, he was just escaping. In the distance he saw a green pitch of the stadium. A group of boys stopped the warm-up and for a while they watched the pursuit. The footballers quickly realized the situation and went out to meet Emin. He rushed to them breathless. The attackers backed out. The boys were joking: "Emin- you said that you are a good footballer but you are a better sprinter"! The boy changed his clothes quickly and joined the



training. He did his best to show his abilities. Emin ran very fast, scored the goals well and won recognition in his friends' eyes. The boy came back home very happy. With a flush on his cheeks, he told his mother and Jan

about the training. Next day after school, Emin noticed that the parents were preparing a ceremonial dinner. After the meal they announced that in a few months the family would have become bigger. Emin was happy. The trainings lasted. Emin did his best, he wanted to prove that the team can count on him. Soon the important match was going to be played and the most important teams' selector in the country was expected. He was watching the match very carefully and has chosen Emin. Since then everything has changed. Emin left home and started to go to a sports school in the capital city of the region. He also lived in a boarding house. There the young footballer trained, every day he was becoming better and better at playing football. The most important match came, Emin invited his parents. His friends from the old team came as well.

Punctually at 8:30 p.m on the stadium took place the match for which young footballers and their families had been waiting for a long time. It was an important meeting. If Emin's team "Orlęta" won it was possible that they would qualify for the Polish Championship. They sang the national anthem and after that the captains of both teams exchanged pennants and the coach started the match. At the beginning the match was not so interesting. Emin's team played so slowly and they were thinking for a long time before every pass, while the opponents were playing very fast. The supporters of both teams did their best. From time to time it was possible to see some interesting action in front of the goal. The tempo of the game raised violently after the excellent perpendicular pass in 45 minute of the match, so just before the half-time Emin scored a goal and Emin's team started to win 1:0.

The supporters were cheering: "Emin! Emin!" and later: "one more goal, one more goal". The coach whistled and finished the half time of the match.

After about 15 minutes the footballers went out of the locker room again. They had changed the halves and the match was continued. The game started to be more interesting and exciting. Emin's team played more calmly and defensively. Two of the players from the opposing team posed a threat to "Orlęta" goal. The opponents' team had to play in attack with great concentration.



But Emin's team took control over of the game. Another single goal for "Orlęta" determined the fate of the match when after unsuccessful opponents' score the goalkeeper dropped the ball just under Emin's legs. He lobbed the ball over his opponent and scored the second goal. The supporters stood up and were cheering again: "Emin! Emin! Emin!" All footballers were tired now and the opponents had a chance to change the score from 2:0 to 2:1, but luckily for "Orlęta" it was a missed shot. It was a very risky shot because the goalkeeper acted in the exactly opposite direction than the ball was passed. The coach added three more minutes and after that the whistle announced the victory for "Orlęta" and the team's promotion to Polish Championship. The fireworks let off above the stadium and the song "We are the Champions" was played through a megaphone. The supporters were cheering in turns "Orlęta! Orlęta!"

or "Emin! Emin!"; and Orlęta's team made a stunning fall on the grass. After that they were throwing the coach up into the air because just after taking up a coach position he had promised the team's great success.

Soon Saliha gave a birth to a son. Jan treated her and their newborn son with exceptional care. He dedicated a lot of attention to her and did all the house duties.

It was necessary to choose the name for the child. Jan wanted his son to be named after his dead father, but Saliha, who wanted to keep up with the tradition, hoped that just like her other sons the newborn would receive a Turkish name. Emin helped them by suggesting a good solution- the child should have had two names. Hassan Antoni was baptized just before Christmas. For Saliha these were at the same time happy and difficult moments. Far away from her home country she felt lost. Different religion and ceremonies did not allow her to be fully happy. She felt weird in the church which didn't remind the mosque from her home town. A baptism ceremony was a beautiful and significant event, but in the church was only Jan's family. She was in a dilemma: she was missing her sons whom she has not seen for a long time, years spent abroad helped her to forget about unhappiness in her home country – husband's death, tur-



ning the family back on her when she needed help, her son's problems. But time heals all wounds. Saliha was filled with nostalgia again, the memories of her home country were still alive in her. She decided to get accustomed to the life in her new home country, but there was still some hope deeply in her heart that one day she would return to her roots. Saliha was trying to hide her dilemmas and sadness from her husband. She has been learning the Polish language, got to know the Polish traditions and customs. Especially she was interested in the Polish cuisine and she started thinking about opening a restaurant where the Polish and Mediterranean dishes would be served. To carry out her plans she began to experiment with the dishes.

Together with Jan she often invited the closest family and friends to the parties. She served light Turkish meals. The meals prepared by Saliha tasted delicious and she came to believe that her plan might come true.

Meanwhile, Emin was very committed to his training sessions. Nobody paid attention to his exotic appearance and nationality any more. He was one of them: an excellent footballer, the responsible friend who everyone can rely on. Once on the training camp the accident

happened. On the pitch during the training Emin started to feel pain in the right knee. Ignoring the problem, the footballer did not give up hard physical exercises. Despite of terrible pain he took part in the match. When he was running to the opponents' goal, he lost his balance, fell down and could not stand up on his own. The game stopped. He couldn't stand the pain. In hospital all examination were done and diagnosis was not so optimistic: the kneecap was broken. Emin had to have a minor surgery under anesthetic so he stayed in hospital. The doctors put plaster on his leg, he stayed there for six weeks. He was depressed, he came back to his mother and Jan. They wanted to make him more optimistic and self-confident. They knew that his rehabilitation would be long and very painful. In spite of their efforts, day by day, Emin was losing hope that in the future he would have return to his good form and play matches.

Because of Emin's bad psychological condition, Saliha decided to look for a psychologist's help. Emin claimed that he would have coped with his problems by himself. Unexpectedly his friends came with help. They persuaded him to cooperate with the psychologist. They knew that his mental condition was important and surely it would have helped him to recover.

His friends used a strong power of persuasion and Emin believed in it. But most importantly, he believed in himself and his dreams.

The rehabilitation lasted longer than the doctors said at the beginning, and he could not take part in the most important matches of the football season. But he knew, that the most important match was yet to come...

The mother, anxious because of Emin's sadness, decided to search another specialized center in Europe. She asked Huseyin to help her: he was an expert in scientific research and Internet. They found something in a forum





of athletes, Giovanni's story, which was very similar to Emin's problem, so they sent him a message. And after some days, Emin received a phone call: it was Giovanni, from Formia.

Emin talked with him in English, trying to explain his own problem, and Giovanni invited him to go to Formia. He told: "In Formia's CONI (the Italian National Olympic Committee), there is a great doctor, who follows the best Italian and world athletes, and who can visit you. I am sure that he can solve your problem, he has done miracles, and however in this way you can also be known in Italy". Emin felt again the hope to try to realize his own dream, but he didn't know what his mother and Jan could think. He talked with both of them; the project was very expensive, but they accepted. Saliha and Jan wanted to try anything and they were disposed to any kind of sacrifice to see again Emin playing at his full abilities; they talked a long time to analyze each minimal detail: the distance, the lodging in an unknown country, where they didn't have any friend and Emin hadn't reference but this boy known in the forum, the heavy travel for Emin's health, the uncertainty of the results which, if negative, could worsen Emin's psychological status, the impossibility to be close to him during the surgery, because they had not the chance to move: Hassan Antoni

was too young and besides they had to work, to face all the expenses for Emin.

Saliha decided to inform the other sons. Oktay, Huseyin and Tayfun, after the phone call, decided to reach their mother in Poland, since each decision, above all those difficult and painful ones, must be taken all together: it was necessary that the family was gathered, also to hug after so much time and to plan the present and the future.

Saliha was deeply happy to see again all her sons. Oktay, who always felt the regret to have forced his family to go away from their country a long time before, where the mother had left her heart for love of their sons, said: "Dear mother, we have faced many troubles, but we have always found the hope just in our union and our reciprocal love. Now you and Jan must have care of our little brother and we have to ensure that each of us is fine. I will go with Emin and, together with Huseyin and Tayfun, we will never leave him alone. We will inform you about everything and, if it will be necessary, we will bring you to him in Italy".



Tayfun said: "We are fine if each of us is fine. Don't worry, take care of yourself and help us always with your strength. Jan, please, stay closer to her".

Huseyin confirmed her all their love with a simple sentence: "Mom, we love you". And the mother, even if she hadn't ever left alo-

ne anyone of her sons, hugged her boys and, together with Jan, wished Emin to come back happy and healthy. Emin was impatient to depart and a deep hope opened his heart, thanks to his brother, the mother and Jan. Immediately, he kept contact with Giovanni and wrote him that he was preparing everything necessary to go in Italy. Giovanni was very happy to have the chance to help this new far friend; strangeness or miracle of Internet and these new media! Then, he began to write, through the forum, about the CONI, to describe to Emin the beauty and the importance of that sport center. He wrote that the "Stadium of the Orange Trees" had been built in the old orange grove of the royal family of Savoia, for the nice temperate climates: fresh in summer, mild in winter. This weather was one of the most favorable in Italy for the health, so it was appreciated by the King and the royal family in the past centuries, and besides it was considered the most suitable to the training of all the best athletes of the world for the entire year. The sportive center can be considered a real garden, for its meadows, bushes and trees. Emin was very fascinated, reading these news, and Huseyin was very interested too, since he was more and more involved in studies for researches about the Mediterranean flora and fauna, through a continue contact with the scientists met on the ship some years before.



The day of the departure arrived. Emin and his brother Oktay were going to Rome.

The landscapes at their eyes were wonderful: between the clouds, they could see, before, the grand mountain range of the Alps, with their perennial glaciers, and then, while they were landing in Rome, a part of the seacoast. At the airport of Rome Fiumicino, there was Giovanni with other sportive friends, waiting for Emin and his brother. Giovanni was a nice racy boy, a young sprinter. He loved sport and he dedicated the most of his spare time to the training, without neglecting the school duty. He was tall, thin, with black eyes.

Despite they hadn't ever met, Emin saw Giovanni between the crowd, they greeted in English and then they went towards the car.

During the travel towards Formia, Emin was amazed, above all while they passed through the "Ulysses' Coast", between Sperlonga and Gaeta; he observed, with his brother, the extraordinary colours of the sun, which at the sunset painted the sea of a golden orange, and he went back to the memories of his childhood, when his



parents brought him to the sea, in Mersin. Yes, before the death of his father, their life was happy and now, even if everything went better than some years before, those images of their infancy seemed to be not part of their life. Their friends, however, were very nice, so

Emin and Oktay let go their memories.

In the meantime, Giovanni, with his speeches, tried to prepare Emin to his long lodging in Formia. After the Gaeta's harbor, he showed him Formia, situated on the sea and surrounded by Aurunci Mountains. Giovanni told him that Formia was founded, according to the legend, by the Lestrygonians and that it was a Greek colony. Then, it was inhabited by the people of Ausoni and Volsci, before to be conquered by Romans. The fishy sea and the temperate climate made it a famous resort since the Roman period. Everything was very interesting for Emin and, besides, it distracted him from the concern about his accident. They spent the night as Giovanni's guests, but the day after they began to search a small apartment to take for rent, to have the chance to welcome Emin's mother, Jan and the little brother, in case of necessity. The boys felt almost in family, thanks to the warm welcome by their Italian friends. But they missed their parents and, despite the affectionate approach, they hoped to solve as soon as possible this problem too. In the meantime, Giovanni organized soon the appointment with the specialist doctor at the CONI; he had understood that it was an urgent situation, both for Emin's health and for the continuation of his competitive activity. Emin, on the other hand, waited with anxiety the meeting with the doctor who could answer his distressing questions about his future as football player. The next day, the specialized doctor visited Emin. He had a serious and authoritative aspect, he was tall, thin, bald, but he was paternal and jovial too. Before to start the visit, he asked Emin about his origins, his family, his experiences and his expectations. Oktay, who assisted his brother, wondered about all those questions, so that he was almost annoyed, but stayed silent. The visit was extremely scrupulous; the doctor noticed that the previous therapies were right, but not so efficient to allow

Emin to come back to his full physical form.

He told Emin to not worry and sent him to the Radiology unit of the hospital, to have a clear and complete overview of the situation about his health.

But he asked Oktay to stay: "It's not necessary for you to go with your brother. You can wait for him here; rather, I'd like to have a chat with you too".

Oktay's heart was pounding, but he looked at his brother as to tell him to trust in the doctor and that he would wait for him with the doctor. When Emin went out with another doctor, Oktay told him: "Doctor, I am worried and I am responsible for my brother now. And I want to know the truth, even for my family, which is far and worried too. We have trusted in Giovanni, even if we didn't know him, and we hope now, but it is right that I know the truth before than Emin, so I can prepare him to the worst". The doctor smiled and told: "I asked you to stay just for this reason.



I think that your brother can solve his problem with a specific rehabilitation and without undergoing to the surgery. But the results will be slow; the process has to be gradual; I can follow him directly, but he should stay in Italy for a long time". Oktay, extremely excited, stood up and went to hug the doctor, who caressed him; he had seen a deep sadness and concern in Oktay's eyes;

besides, the story of their family had touched him very much. But he told Oktay that Emin could not be left alone and, above all, he had to tell to Emin that he could continue his brilliant career only with the maximum effort and attention to the medical prescriptions. Oktay accepted everything and asked the fee, but the professor told to postpone the payment at the next meeting. When Emin came back, he was very pale, he didn't ask anything to the professor, who prescribed a pharmacological therapy and a precise rehabilitation. But he looked at Oktay: he searched for an answer, or rather THE answer! They went out and found Giovanni and other two boys, waiting for the response. Oktay stared his brother and said: "The bet is hard, but you can do it: are you ready to sacrifice yourself? The hopes are higher than our expectations, but you have to face many sacrifices, you have to be constant, you have to follow strictly the prescriptions and, above all, you have to stay a long time far from our mother". Emin couldn't believe his ears and said: "I will not delude you. I will come back to trust in myself and in my dreams. Let's call mom! And Huseyin and Tayfun".



"Sure, I will do it, but you have to begin to do what the professor has prescribed for today".

In fact, the doctor ordered as first therapy long walks on the beach to improve his mood. Emin looked at him, perplexed: he didn't know how to move in Formia. He spoke English quite well, but he felt insecure. But Giovanni told him

to not worry: he would have gone with him. Oktay had to arrange the rent and call their mother and brothers to organize the assistance to grant to Emin. He could not stay with his brother for all the time, because of his work, so he needed the help of the other brothers.

The mother told him to not worry, saying that his generosity had been already great and that his brothers and Jan were ready to go in Italy. Oktay told about the visit of the specialized doctor and the mother was moved, thinking that their father was protecting them.

During the period of rehabilitation, Emin attended with Giovanni the CONI and noticed that there were many athletes coming from every part of the world to do practice in any athletic discipline.

One day, Emin heard a familiar language; he looked around and saw an athlete who was very similar in the somatic features: he was a Turkish sprinter.

They began to talk friendly and their faces showed a deep emotion. Both of them told about their life and the sprinter invited Emin to run with him on the azure track when he had to run during the path of the rehabilitation.

Emin was very enthusiastic and felt a great emotion, while he felt that his body was able to challenge the strength of the wind. This helped him to forget the physical difficulties which still limited his performances. He trained day after day with his friend Giovanni, without feeling any pain to the knee.

He was more and more optimist and, day after day, each result was a great conquest. In the following days, he knew new friends and trained with new athletes from Spain and Poland, in preparation of the traditional international meeting of Athletics, which every year took place in the CONI. For the traditional meeting, there were rumors about the presence of important football players of the National Teams of Germany, Poland

and Spain, and obviously Italy, such as Ozil, Khedira, Poldowski, Casillas and Pirlo.

Emin spent in the CONI hard days of rehabilitation, but Formia's friends didn't leave him ever alone. This was a real cure-all for his mood, and this allowed him to hope to come back to play for the most important match of his life: the match of his return on the football field.

The group of friends that he met out of the trainings was curious to know his culture, his traditions and customs of his original Country. And so, Emin could know even the tradition of the city where he was living in that important moment of his life.

In the meantime, the day of Oktay's departure came; however, he had known a woman, an Italian doctor named Denise, who worked with the specialized doctor of the CONI, and he had fallen in love with her. Denise followed Emin with attention and care and, with the same care, she had helped Oktay, who had told her about his tormented past and who felt understood by the sweetness of the doctor.

The continuous exchange of ideas and stories, besides, had solicited and made curious the doctor for the Turkish language and culture, and this helped Emin too. Oktay, in his heart, didn't want to go away anymore, but he was obliged to come back to his work.

In the meantime, Tayfun arrived in Italy. In his solitude, he thought again to his mistakes, to the forgiveness received from his mother and his brothers, to that girl who looked at him with pity in Mersin, to his new work on the ship. Now, he had become a good boy; he was a point of reference for the divers and he was very able in the diving. He didn't want to lose time neither in Formia; he had already lost too much time in his life; so, he went to a seaside resort, in a place called Vindicio, to give lessons to children and adults. In this way, he could even help his family with all the expenses.

And however, he always had in his eyes the glance of that girl... in fact, he hoped to come back as soon as possible to Mersin to search for her. But now he had to help Emin.

Oktay recommended him to stay close to his brother, who was reacting well to the staying in this new city and who had to observe absolutely the protocol of the specialized doctor. He asked a meeting with the doctor, throughout his dear Denise. The doctor was very kind and explained to Tayfun the current conditions of Emin. He told to the brothers that Emin needed at least other three months of rehabilitation to be sure to have the chance to come back on the field. Tayfun confirmed his disposability and expressed all his deep gratitude to the doctor for the miracle he was realizing on Emin, a vital miracle for all his family.



The doctor Denise accompanied in station Oktay, who told her all his love and, surprisingly, said he wanted to go back soon to Italy, because he had to tell her an important thing. Denise wasn't surprised for Oktay's words, rather she greeted him affectionately and told him that she would wait for him. But now both of them had to think to the work and to the good of the others, first of all.



Tayfun had the same Oktay's feelings in Formia. The sea gave him a deep nostalgia for Mersin and its sea, but that sea offered him a great inspiration.

Emin, in the meantime, continued regularly his rehabilitation. He felt a lot better, but he was scared to believe it. However, the doctor didn't give him never the security of the healing, even if he knew perfectly all the important progresses. Thanks to the faraway help of Jan, to not lose years of study, he started to attend the Secondary School, just when he had acquired a certain skill in the Italian language. Now, it wasn't necessary anymore to talk in English, rather his Italian friends had fun to learn Turkish too. And every time they went out in the evening, the only food was kebab! And pizza never missed too!

It wasn't easy for Emin to start again studying, but by now he was resolute to go on with tenacity; he knew to have the help of a great doctor, of a careful physiotherapist, of sincere friends and of doctor Denise: she gave him much safeness, and he knew that he could confide her all his doubts.

In the meantime, Tayfun matured a project in his mind. His life could not continue on the ship, not because he

was not fine, but because he wanted to go back to Mersin; he wanted to stay there and start again, showing to everybody, above all to his uncle, that he was changed. In Formia, he had understood to have the chance to open an autonomous activity for shipping and diving tools. Besides, he could direct swimming trainings for children and adults.

This was his project and he decided to realize it. As soon as Emin was fine, he would have talked with his ship companions and would have explained them his decisions: they would have understood him. And his mother would have been proud of his choice.

One day, he was called by the professor who followed Emin. He was very scared, because he was always afraid to receive some bad news. Instead, the doctor told him that the rehabilitation of Emin was finished, that they had repeated all the controls for several times, and now he could say with security that Emin was perfectly healed. Tayfun asked the doctor to sit: his legs trembled for the joy. The doctor said smiling: "Now you can call your brother, tell him to come here and talk together about this matter. If you want, you can tell it to your family". Tayfun called Emin and told him to go immediately to the CONI, because the professor wanted to meet them. Emin began to run; he was fine, he felt resistant to



the efforts, but... what did he want to say? He had been careful to the protocol; he was working hard at school too; he trained with his friend Dimitri only when the doctor allowed... and then? But Tayfun's voice was not worried... or maybe it was his impression, because we wishes to hear good news! While he thought all of this, he arrived in the medical center. There was Denise, but she didn't say a work; she only told him that the doctor was waiting for him.

The professor told him: "Well. You've done a great race and you've arrived soon. How do you feel?". Emin answered: "I'm fine. I feel good. But... what do you have to tell me? Tayfun, please". The professor looked at him and said: "You've been good. It wasn't easy to reach this objective but you've been really good, you have followed carefully the protocol and you have trusted in me and in doctor Denise. Dear Emin... you are healed! Now you can go back home". And Emin: "Really?! Tayfun, Denise, is it true? Oh, thank you, professor, you're great, you have given the life again to me; but... now I have to call Giovanni, and then mom, and Oktay, Huseyin and Jan!". Yes, Giovanni; thanks to him, his dream had been realized. He called him and told him everything, then they met and held each other hands: great Giovanni and great the friendship which had healed him. Giovanni was very happy; he called the other friends and they decided to organize a party all together. Tayfun offered the dinner and he was glad to have been a protagonist of this wonderful day. He called his mother in Poland: Saliha cried very much, Jan couldn't stop calm her! Then, he called his brothers and everybody were deeply happy. Emin was stunned by the great news and, even if he wanted to go back to Poland to play again in his team, something still held him in Italy: he wanted to complete his year of study.

But Tayfun had to depart; he had to give an order to his

life to realize what he wanted: to go back in Mersin. Now Emin could even stay alone in Formia, to complete his studies, trusting in his friends. In the next days, Emin started to train with the football players of the local team. Very soon, everybody admired him so much that they proposed him to play in the match organized for the international meeting of Athletic, at the presence of some famous football players. Denise informed Oktay about the event, and Oktay called his mother immediately. Saliha, knowing that Emin had to take part to this important, even if unofficial match, told to Oktay and Tayfun that she would have gone to Formia with Jan and Hassan Antoni.

For Emin, it would have been a real surprise: to have his parents and his brothers to cheer for him!

Only Huseyin would have been absent, because he was studying to become marine biologist and he could not leave his studies, neither to relieve his brothers when Emin was in trouble. But Jan thought to solve this problem.

When Saliha arrived in Italy with Jan and Hassan Antoni, there was Denise to welcome them at the station. After a long chat, Saliha confided to Denise all her sadness and told her that, to fill her time, she was trying to open a restaurant of Polish and Mediterranean cooking. She was so happy that she didn't know how to express all her gratitude. Thanks to Denise, she could obtain a meeting with the professor who had followed Emin and she told him that he had given the life again to her.

Then, she met Emin's friends, and hugged affectionately Giovanni, saying that he had become as another son.

For the day of the meeting at the CONI, they had to organize a lunch and Saliha proposed herself to prepare some typical cakes of her country, such as baklavas.

Finally, the day of the match came and Emin, by trai-

ning before the match, tried to release the tension. The presence of the mother, Jan and the brothers gave him a great strength! Emin was again on the field!

His heart was pounding... the arbiter whistled the start of the match. Emin ran fast as the wind, behind him there was a Spanish player which followed him. More than one time, Emin arrived quite close to the goal, but he couldn't complete the action. Suddenly, after a good passage from a teammate, the first goal!

From the stands, he heard loudly his name. He turned around: his brothers, with Giovanni and his friends, stood up enthusiastic, waving the Turkish and Italian flags, drawn in a big heart.

Emin saw all his family, happy around him; he almost wanted to cry, instead he took from this the strength to realize other two goals. At the end of the match, he asked to meet the family to hug all of them, but Denise, who had followed him from faraway, even to observe his physical reactions, told him that some important people wanted to talk with him. He saw a famous Turkish football player going towards him. He couldn't believe his eyes and couldn't avoid to cry for the deep happiness. The player complimented him and told that he couldn't lose time: the same evening, if Emin wanted, he could have departed with him to do a proof in the Turkish team of Galatasaray.

Emin was upset, but, as a real champion, didn't lose the control. He didn't hesitate and immediately accepted. He ran to his mother and the brothers, apologizing to have already decided alone, but he had not the time to discuss with them. The mother talked on behalf of everybody: "My beloved son, we're here for you and for your happiness. Your success is ours too, we couldn't hope something better. Now you have only an important duty: go to Giovanni". He ran to his friend, his best friend who saved his life, as his elder brother already

did some years before on the Hispania; the boys hugged, they didn't say anything but a promise: they felt brothers and, as brothers, they would have never lost each other. Emin wished success and happiness to Giovanni and gave him a lucky charm, a little medal with a tulip, promising to return to Formia each time possible. And then, he was leaving in Formia an important part of himself.

In fact, Oktay had come back in Formia to not depart anymore: his life would have continued in Formia with Denise. He didn't want to come back to Turkey, unlike the family.

Tayfun was very excited. When he knew the decision of Oktay, he jumped of joy: he, who decided to go back to



Turkey, would have been never alone. Surely, Emin's life would have been very busy, but they could have lived together in their country. So, he decided to depart with his brother that evening. Emin was very happy to not depart alone; he told to his brother that they would have taken a home together, but

above all they had to do anything possible to buy again the old house of their family, where they could welcome everybody, when they wanted to go back there. Their thought, even if no one expressed it, was for their father. And then, there was another research to do in Turkey: that girl who looked at Tayfun with pity had to

be absolutely found!

But the greatest surprise for Emin was to see again Huseyin! He asked him how his studies were going on, and Huseyin apologized to not have been close to his brother, in Italy, in a such difficult period of his life. He told about his studies, his researches and the important proposal of work that he had received, but about which he would have never talked, if Emin's problem would had not been solved.

As everybody knew, Saliha wanted to be always close to her sons, and above all she was worried for the two youngest. But it was the moment for Huseyin, too. The researches carried on about the flora and the fauna in the Medditerranean had been analyzed by some experts, known on the ship and continuously in contact with him. His researches had been considered very important for the safeguard of the marine flora and fauna, and these experts wanted him on the ship to deepen these studies in the Mediterranean sea, but even in the Oceans. This meant for Huseyin to go very far from his mother, more than his brothers, and until that moment he had not had the courage to tell it.

The mother had not words; she was assisting in few mi-

minutes to a total change of her life and her sons' life. Surely, she had found again all her family and each piece was going at the right place, but she was understanding that she could not have close her sons anymore, as she had dreamed some years before, in Turkey. The experience of sufferance had made them grow, and their love for her was grown and matured too, but now each of them had to follow their own path, even far from her. They would have not gone back to Turkey, but just for going to see sometimes Emin and Tayfun; surely, they would have gone to Italy for Oktay and Denise; and then, they would have profited by Huseyin's studies to do a "cruise". Saliha would have lived forever in Poland with Jan and Hassan Antoni, her youngest son to whom, she hoped, the future would have reserved great chances, as it had been for his four brothers.





Annunziata Marciano

Dirigente scolastica, laureata in Pedagogia e Dottore di ricerca internazionale in Teoria e Storia dei processi formativi. Collabora con l'Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale, nei Corsi di Laurea di Scienze dell'Educazione e di Scienze Motorie e della Salute, e con l'Università degli Studi di Roma Tre, nel Corso di Laurea in Scienze della Formazione Primaria. Esperta di Letteratura per l'infanzia, è autrice di libri, articoli, saggi in libri collettanei di carattere pedagogico-letterario; collabora con riviste specializzate del settore.



Comenius Project

Knowledge of the roots and the pluralism of European citizenship
through the paths of children's literature

FORMIA

RESZEL



MERSIN

VILLANUEVA DE CORDOBA

2011-2013