

Oljada Zani

English 100

**Home of The Brave**

It's one of those summer nights when the sun is at its darkest, but yet full of stars that shine in atmosphere around. I open the window, and the fresh air of the night gently refreshes my face. It is June 19, 2015, around 11:00 pm, there are only two hours left before we would begin the journey. The calmness strikes everywhere, and I feel that everything has fallen into a deep sleep, except for me and the non-stop tick-tock of the clock. I wish I could stop the clock right there, so tomorrow would not arrive before the blink of my eye. I take a deep breath and I am going up and down the room. All of my memories appear in front of my eyes, so there are too many memories from this house where every object reminds me of different experiences. Emotions that I have experienced during these 28 years. Moving back to my parent's house where I grew up one year ago (of the only purpose of being closer to our parents as long as we would stay in Albania) makes it that much harder to leave it again. Suddenly by the other room I hear my parents whispering, I try to listen to their conversation, but it is impossible because it's too muffled. I feel my tears flowing from my eyes down my face and thousands of thoughts flood my mind within the second. I throw my eyes around the room to memorize the objects I see and hold them in my mind. The fear of lost memories and leaving overwhelms my mind, thinking that one day I will not be able to remember any of this. I look at my bed of 28 years where my daughter is sleeping now, I look at my desk in the corner of the room where I studied from dusk to dawn for 16 years. I look at the precious pictures hung on the walls from the most important events of my life. My eyes pause on a 6-year old picture that shows my wedding, with my husband, brother and parents all next to me. I think of the hardship I endured when I left my parents once I got married, and how much harder it will be in this time. I merely moved two

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blocks away from my parents, and now it would be thousands of miles away across the ocean towards the United States of America. My emotions are conflicting with themselves in my head, those of curiosity for another continent so much appreciated by many people around the world versus the emotions of sorrow of my leaving from my parents, relatives, friendships and my homeland. Pieces of conversations disappeared into the fog, and suddenly the last conversation with my husband appears.

We are sitting on the dining table while my daughter watches her favorite show on T.V. I stopped for a moment, turning to my husband and ask him, “Gerti are we making the right decision for our family?”. I turn my head towards my daughter and with the trembling voice I ask him “Is it right for our daughter to be taken away from her loving grandparents? This decision will also affect our parents emotionally.”

“Darling, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity, we shouldn’t let it slip through our hands. So many people desire to be in our place, so we must take advantage of it. We should thank God for this chance.”

“I know so many people want to do what we have available to us, but it is so far away, another continent, another world with a different tradition, culture, and a language. I fear we will not be able to adapt the society and life there”.

“Sweetheart, we’ve tried everything that our small country has offered us, and you know how much opportunity I had to leave and I refused. Our economic future is impossible here, all of the opportunity lies in America.”

“Yes hun, I know the economic difficulties we’ve had here, but to think that it’s just going to be us three too far away from our family, my hearts starts to shake and the reason loses the logic. I

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often think we shouldn't have chased the American Dream, and we wouldn't have to face this hard decision. Our economic future must be better there than here, but to think of our parents, and that we are the light in their lives, our departure will leave a big gap in their hearts."

Tears flow like water down my face, my voice gets shaky. Gerti comes next to me, he kisses my forehead, and whispers in my ear, "Everything will be fine, we will have each-other as the biggest support, maybe one day they can join us there..."

Rajna, our daughter looks at us with big, fearful eyes, filled with confusion as she listens to our conversation. She approaches us with an innocent look, asking, "Why are you crying mommy? Don't worry, grandma will come too."

"Yes baby they will."

Gerti squeezes my hands and whispers in my ears, "We have to think for the future of our daughter, for her education. Please don't take that away from her by not going to America. Our mission as parents is to sacrifice for her future."

All of a sudden, I hear the door knock, and I return to reality. I hear my mom's voice reminding me that is time to wake up. I open the door and look her red eyes and swollen and her crying face.

"Hajde shpirt te behemi gati ne kohe qe te mos humbasim avionin" (Come on Hun, let's get ready in time so we will not miss the flight)", my mom says and trying to hide her tears.

"Mami me ke premtuar qe nuk do derdhesh lot" (Mom you have promised me you wouldn't cry)."

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“Jo shpirt nuk jane lot trishtimi, ju po shkoni per nje jete dhe te ardhme me te mire, dhe gjithcka ne duam eshte lumturia dhe mireqenia juaj” (No sweetheart, these are not tears of sadness, you are going for a better life and future, and everything we want is your well-being and happiness).”

I hug her tightly to my body, kissing every part of her face and telling her for the thousandth time the phrase that has become our life’s refrain since the day it completely changed it.

“Mom, we will talk and see each other every day through Skype and Messenger, and these feelings will fade. The physical separation between us will lessen because our hearts and minds will be together.” I keep repeating these words over and over to convince myself too. I need to control the emotional explosion going through my body.

My father that is approaching nearby turns to mother saying” Leri femijet te shkojne te qete, e di qe do jete shume e veshtire, por per ne e rendesishme eshte mireqenia e tyre, le te shkojne ta provojne dhe nese nuk I behet mire atje, shtepia e tyre eshte e hapur dhe ne do ti mirepresim krahe hapur, (Let the kids leave in peace, I know it’s going to be really difficult, but their well-being is most important to us. They have to try, and if they don’t succeed, the door back home is always open.)”

He kisses me and for the first time in life I see his tears shedding from his eyes.,

“Shkoni bab, zoti jua befte mbare, nese ju jeni te lumtur qofte edhe pertej oqeanit, te lumtur do jemi edhe ne. Lumturia e juaj eshte edhe lumturia jone me e madhe (Go sweetheart, God is watching over you, even if you’re across the ocean, your happiness is our happiness).”

These feelings were too overwhelming to bear. All my being was trembling from the emotions that had invaded every cell of my body.

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