

## Sewing Day

Written by Sevim Ak

It had got cloudier, and there was a real **nip** in the air. The snow had begun to fall. Mum is getting ready. She's placing the handheld sewing machine into its case and I'm quietly putting on my coat.

"There's no need to come today" says mum. "Stay at home, it's nice and warm here."

I don't want to **hang out** alone at home. I **shrug** my shoulders and insist: "I'll come with you, please!"

Mum is a tailor. This is what she does...She stays in someone's house for a day or two...She **sews** dresses using fabric which the owner has bought...She finishes sewing the dresses right there and then in the house.

Sewing days are like women's parties. Rice with chickpeas is cooked for lunch and Turkish "gozleme" is served with tea. Time **flows** smoothly; neighbourhood gossip...laughter...I sit in a corner and play with the kids of the house. We make puppets from the fabric cut-offs. We invent our own games...I love those days!

Mum says, "This time is different. I'm not going to anyone's house. I'll be sewing in Selda's Hair Salon. No other children to play with, no snacks...Just women trying on clothes. You'll get bored."

"I can **hang around**."

"It's **freezing** outside. Where will you hang around?"

"I won't get bored, I'll come with you. I can have a look at the magazines in the salon."

I was already out the door with my hat on.

Mum had prepared Aunt Selda's dress for the **fitting**. There aren't any customers in the salon yet. Aunt Selda goes behind the **changing screen** with mum to try on the dress.

She gives me instructions. "I'm trying on this dress. If any customers come, welcome them, take their coats and make them sit in front of the mirror. I'll be with them as soon as I can."

I look at the walls. There are photos hung up from one end of the salon to the other. Different hair styles in each of them. When I look carefully, I realize that they are our neighbours. The ones who come to Aunt Selda's hair salon...Aunt Aysel, Aunt Gulcan, Ipek, Sena's mother, Gulser's older sister... This is a new game for me to play...The 'Who's That in the Photo Game'!

Then, I take a magazine from the coffee table. I try to choose the best hair style. Which one will I want to look like the most when I grow up? Which kind of haircut shall I try? I mark the ones I like.

Every now and then I look at myself in the mirror and watch the **flakes of snow** from outside reflected there.

I can hear the hair dresser's **whispers** and laughter coming from behind the changing screen.

The salon doors open all of a sudden...The postman enters.

"You've got mail" he says. He throws an envelope onto the coffee table. He closes the door and walks away. His nose is almost purple from the cold.

Aunt Selda comes out with her dress attached with **pins**. She **tears** the envelope open and reads it straight away.

As she reads it through her face turns yellow and her shoulders drop.

I could hear Aunt Selda's **sobs**...I don't know why she's crying...I can hear mum still talking behind the changing screen.

The snow gets heavier. The road is completely covered with snow by now. Only one or two people pass by. Noone stops by the salon.

As mum completes her sewing, Aunt Selda calls me:

"Come sit in front of the mirror."

"Which hair style did you like? I'll do your hair the same."

I show the one with a **fringe**. It is the same length as my hair.

While she's cutting my hair, I catch sight of the letter she left by the mirror. It's wet and the ink is scattered. Deep in her eyes, I try to find out what has made her so upset, but I can't. She speaks to me **cheerfully**.

She really does cut my hair in exactly the same way as the model's hair in the magazine...I feel very good about myself and my new hair!

For the very first time ever, I leave a hairdresser's without crying. On the way home, I tell mum "Aunt Selda can cut my hair from now on. Can we go to a photography shop now? The photographer can take my photo and the hair dresser can put it on show in her shop window."

Mum **ignores** me. The **blizzard** is stronger now. She **drags** me home pulling my arm.

About a week later, I pass by the hair salon. There are no sounds of women...No laughter. The door is wide open. I stick my head inside. All the furniture has gone. There are no photos of women hanging on the walls. Only empty frames!

It seems that this was my first and last haircut there by Aunt Selda...Her husband has rented a house in the city where he works in a factory...He and Aunt Selda have moved there.

The tears wetting the letter were the tears of **separation**.