**“My name is Saya “**

My name is Saya and this is Sami (the girl points to her stuffed kitten ). My daddy gave it to me for my eighth birthday. One month later everything changed. Our home was located at the center of Damascus. My mother used to be a teacher at my school, and my father was the owner of a bookstore. He was selling books, but not school ones. The other kind, which smell nice! I used to love the way his store was smelling from all these books (the girl stops speaking for a while). Everything happened all of a sudden. I remember how cold the weather was the night we escaped, me, my father, my mother and Omar (my 16 year - old brother). Everything happened so fast. We did not have the time to take any of our belongings with us. All of them were left behind. I only managed to grab Sami (she pauses again). We walked for months until we reached Turkey , at least, that’s what my mom said. For three months to be accurate. At first we were accompanied by two other families but we got separated during the journey. When we reached the coast of Turkey we started looking for a way to cross the Mediterranean Sea . We found some guys with a boat but they said they couldn’t take us with them. There was not enough space for us to board. My mother was

shocked. At the end, my father had to give them all of our money to ensure our way out. All around us there were families who didn’t have enough money to buy their tickets, so they got stuck there. ( tries not to cry) Once we were on board, my mother started crying. I was told ,our goal was to reach Greece and Sweden. But our boat was not in a good condition. It was turned upside down by the waves. We fell into the water. It was freezing. I can still remember the screams as I was struggling to keep myself afloat. I was terrified. My father managed to approach me. (Stops and thinks) The next thing I remember was another bigger boat and people yelling. I could not understand them. They rescued us. One by one. They gave us blankets. I was soaking. My father was holding me in his arms trying to calm me down. Once we were out at the shore, my father started crying and trying to find mom and Omar. I must have fainted because when I opened my eyes both my mother and brother were there. Everyone was crying. There were so many people all around us. A lot of people were from Damascus. It almost felt like home. Even if we were miles away.(thinks). We must have stayed there for two weeks. Only later did I find out that the place was an island called Lesvos.

Now I am 10 years old. I celebrated my birthday a month ago. We live in Sweden. In Goteborg. It is nice here. I am attending school and I am learning both English and Swedish. I have made some new friends Anita, Sofia and Greta. My mom got a job at a school near our home. While my dad works as a truck driver, transporting goods. The truth is I miss my old house. Especially at night when I sleep with Sami. I don’t know what I miss the most. I guess everything : my old place, my bed, my pillow, my old school, the park with the swings, my friends and my grandparents. Everything is still there. I miss everything that was once mine.