
THE FALL

SAROYA HUNG ON to the guardrail for dear life. “*Help! Help me!*” she screamed at the top of her lungs. But with the guests far off in the dining room and the ship bouncing around in the rough water, there was nobody on deck to hear her. “Oh, Mama, don’t let this happen!” the little girl cried as she felt her perspiring hands slipping from the railing. “Please help me, Mama, don’t let me fall! Please!”

Saroya looked below. The ocean was a deep-blue color with the moon’s light cascading over the water. *If I could just wipe my hands one at a time, I could get a better grip and hold on until someone finds me—Do it! Do it now!* one part of her mind said. *Wait!* the other side argued. *If only this were a dream, she thought, like the one I had this morning.*

But this was not a dream.

Saroya’s heart was beating so hard it felt as if it were being thrown against her chest. There wasn’t much time. “*Help me! Somebody, help me!*” she yelled as the wind whipped her golden locks into a frenzy. “I’m so scared, Mama,” she pleaded. “Please help me!”

Saroya felt her left hand slide off, and before she could wipe it on her emerald velvet dress and grab the bar again, her right hand had slipped off too.

Don’t be afraid. No matter what happens, don’t be afraid. The words from the little girl’s dream were spinning in her head as she plunged toward the deep dark sea.