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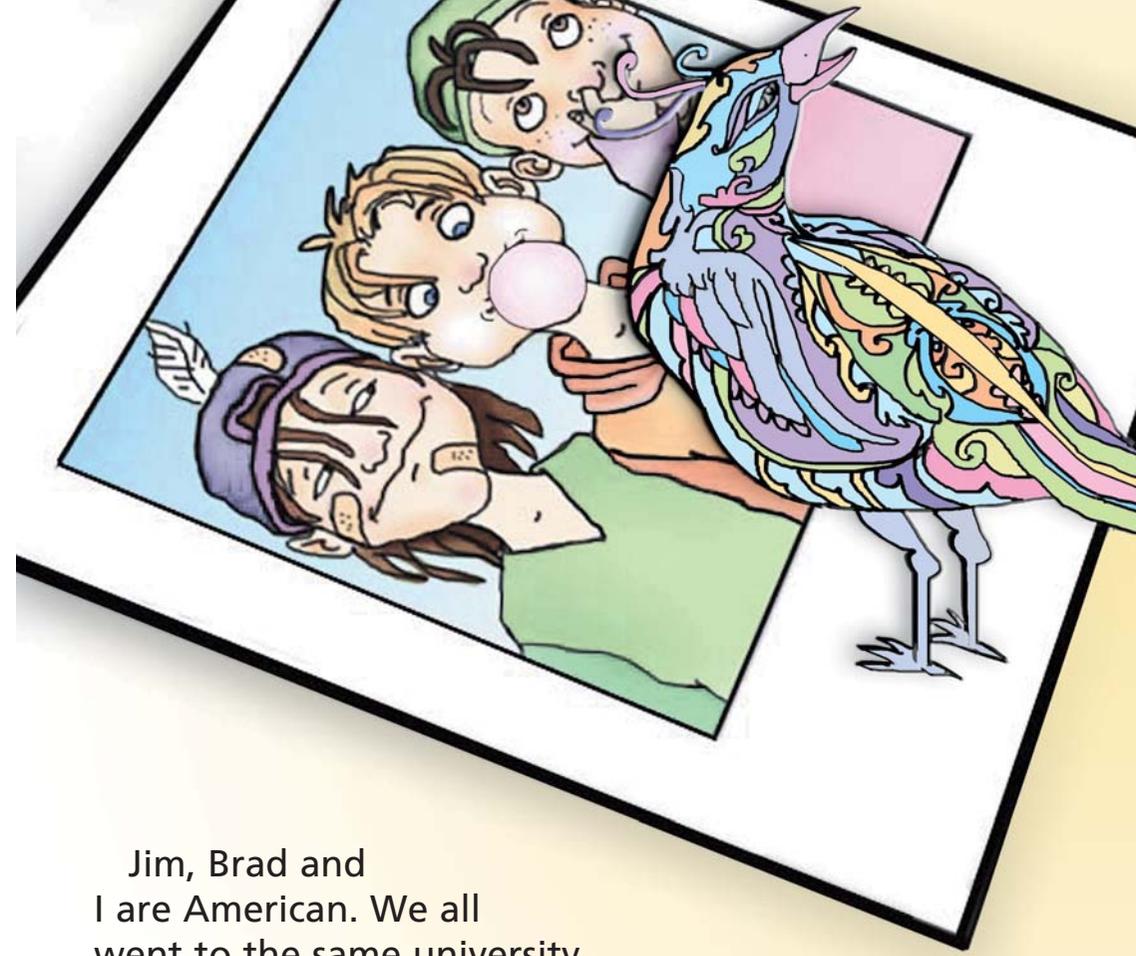
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Acknowledgement

This story is based on an original idea by Mahir Küfteoğlu ('Blue Bird').



Jim, Brad and I are American. We all went to the same university in New York City (Jim and I studied archaeology there). Two days ago, we all arrived in Istanbul to do our master's degrees.

Coming here was Jim's idea, of course. We both wanted to study Anatolian civilizations. Jim said: "If we want to do that, the best place is Istanbul."

I didn't like the idea at first. "Firstly, we've never been there and we don't know what it's like," I said. "Secondly, where are we going to live? Is it easy to find an apartment? We just don't know. And thirdly, we don't speak Turkish."



But

Jim thought differently.

He talked to our professor in New York and this professor talked to a friend of his, a professor at Istanbul University. "I think it'll be OK," he said. It was. Brad's subject at university was the history of architecture. He wanted to come with us because he wanted to study Seljuk architecture in Istanbul. So that was easy - we all had a good reason to be there. After that, everything happened very quickly. In a few weeks, I found myself in Istanbul - a stranger in a foreign city.

This place makes me nervous. I have a bad feeling about it - something tells me things aren't going to go well for me here.

My Indian grandmother always told me: "You have a Wisdom Bird. It's blue. Always look for it and it will help you."

Before we came here, I didn't see my Wisdom Bird for a long time. Then, this morning, I looked out the window ... and there it was. But its colours weren't the same as before - it wasn't so blue.

Jim isn't worried. Nothing ever worries him, anyway. Being in a strange country is exciting for him. He loves seeing new places and meeting new people. He's in heaven!

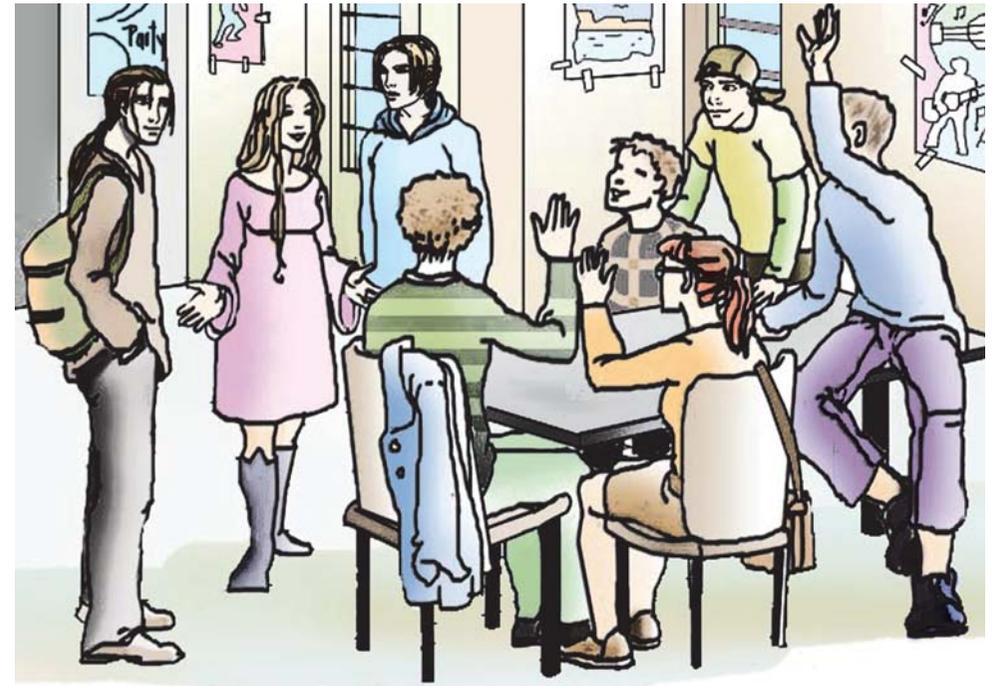
And Brad - well, he's worried, but not as worried as I am.



Anyway, we have one friend here - Mary. She's my friend Eric's cousin and she lives in Istanbul. She's been here for a year now. We're staying in her apartment for the moment - until we find our own place to live. Mary is a nice, friendly person and she will be our guide in Istanbul.

On our first day here, we went to the university. Mary showed us around. It took us a long time to find our department in the Faculty of Archaeology. Long corridors, wide staircases, more long corridors ... but in the end we found it, and Brad met his professor in the Faculty of Architecture.

The university is always full of people, but I like the place. And we aren't the only foreigners here: there are quite a lot of students from other countries.

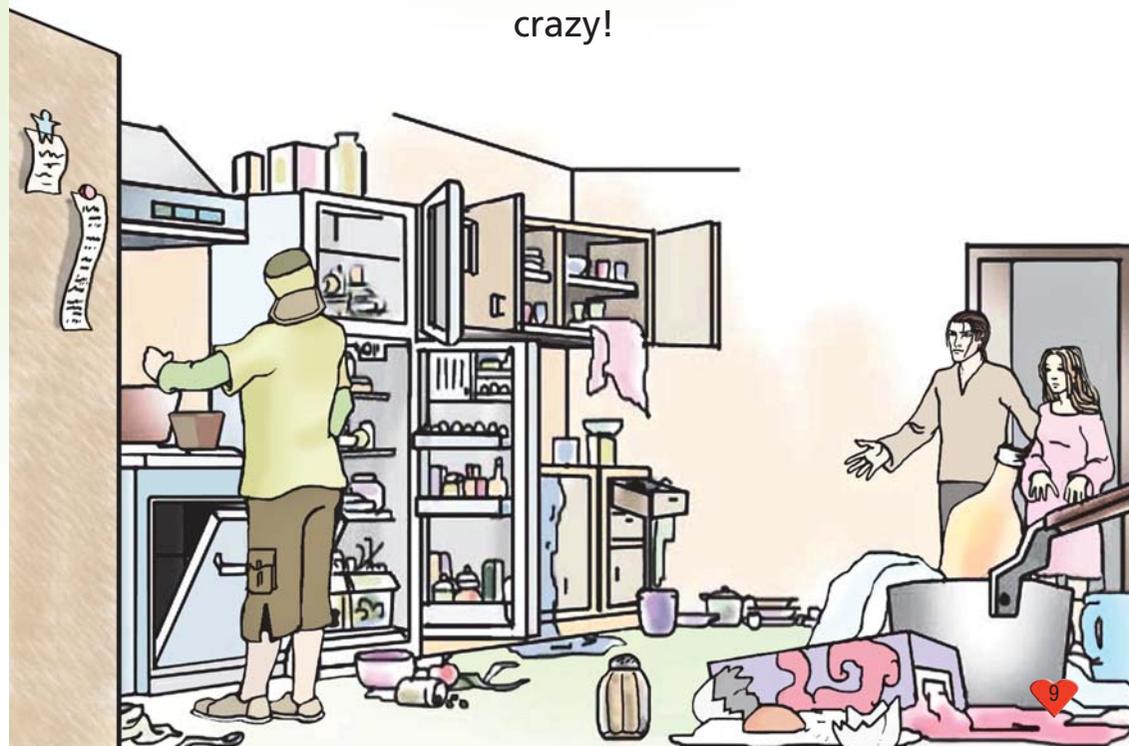


Jim never takes anything seriously. He's always laughing and joking, so he makes friends easily. At the university, we met two American guys called Mike and Tony. They've been here for two years and they speak very good Turkish. They invited us to visit them. "Come and meet some of your fellow students," they said. When we left the university that day, we all ate some strange things called 'lahmacun'. They looked a little like pizzas. With them we drank a drink made from yoghurt mixed with water and salt. They called it 'ayran'.



Today was our second day in Istanbul. Mary took us to the local markets and then to the Grand Bazaar. It was tiring walking round all those narrow, crowded streets, but it was fun. People shouted out to us in English, German, Russian, Spanish, French - those guys spoke a lot of languages! Brad didn't look at any of the shops, however: he was only interested in the girls. I may be wrong, but I think he likes Mary.

This evening, when we got back to the apartment, Jim cooked a meal for everyone. He turned the kitchen upside down - we spent hours cleaning up after him. There were pans, plates, cartons, bits of food and rubbish everywhere. "For heaven's sake, Jim," I said. "Can't you do anything without making a mess?" He didn't take any notice, of course. "Don't worry," said Mary. "Leave him alone. We'll clean up later." But she doesn't know him - he's hopeless. One day Jim will drive her crazy!



VOCABULARY

American English

apartment (page 3)

realtor (p. 12)

British English

flat

estate agent

'in terrible shape' (p. 18) means 'in very bad condition'

"What's she got to do with it?" (p. 26) means "What's the connection between her and the subject we're talking about?"

CULTURAL NOTE (p. 14)

Taksim Square is the most important square in the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Pages 3 - 7

Before reading

Skyhawk, Brad and Jim have not been to Turkey before.

What things do you think they found strange when they first arrived in Istanbul?

After reading

- 1 Why did Skyhawk and Jim come to Istanbul?
Why did Brad come? What is Mary doing in Istanbul?
- 2 Skyhawk is worried. You are Skyhawk's 'Wisdom Bird'. Give him some advice.

Pages 8 - 10

Before reading

Jim is a very untidy person. He is staying in Mary's flat.

What problems do you think there will be?

After reading

- 1 You work in the Grand Bazaar selling carpets. You want Skyhawk and his friends to come into your shop. What will you say to them?
- 2 Jim has cooked a meal in your house. The kitchen is in a terrible state. What will you say to each other?