

and where her wicked Turkish-speaking stepmother did everything she could to make Mary's relationship with her father more stressful, she took a job with the United Nations World Health Organization that involved a lot of traveling. Leaving Cairo, she started work in Alexandria, then took an assignment in the Congo, followed by travels in Europe and postings in Togo and Lebanon, before she finally settled in the United States.

Mary knew that in venturing out she had "left [her] identity behind." She felt "lost in this Babylon of United Nations," and when she tried to explain what an Armenian is to a class of fellow UN recruits in Leopoldville, she felt "like a hybrid, not knowing exactly what the Motherland looks like...." At that point, she realized "the need to redefine" herself (xv-xvii). She needed a moment of self-realization in order to realistically face the world and life ahead.

As an added challenge, Mary had to endure her family's overt gender discrimination, in contrast with the privileges and the impunity enjoyed by her older brother. The imposition of this Old World mentality implanted feelings of inferiority and inequality in her. At home, her every failing was pointed out and she was always being put down, despite her struggle to be an obedient daughter and to do well in school, to be the first in her class, even "the pride of the class." She tried to do whatever was expected of her, "whatever 'it' is—correcting papers, teaching math, mentoring a student, or doing household chores.... [but] I would have been much happier being me" (64-5). All that effort, as if to compensate for her fault in having been born female. Even so, her father complained every time he had to pay for her school tuition or