



## Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey

*Ozge Samanci*

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### **Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey** Ozge Samanci

Growing up on the Aegean Coast, Ozge loved the sea and imagined a life of adventure while her parents and society demanded predictability. Her dad expected Ozge, like her sister, to become an engineer. She tried to hear her own voice over his and the religious and militaristic tensions of Turkey and the conflicts between secularism and fundamentalism. Could she be a scuba diver like Jacques Cousteau? A stage actress? Would it be possible to please everyone including herself?

In her unpredictable and funny graphic memoir, Ozge recounts her story using inventive collages, weaving together images of the sea, politics, science, and friendship.

### **Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey Details**

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Author : Ozge Samanci

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## From Reader Review Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey for online ebook

### Yeliz says

Çevirisini merakla bekliyordum. Okurken çocuklu?uma gençli?ime döndüm. Otobiyografik bir romandan bir neslin kar?n a?r?lar?na nüfuz etmi?, çok ba?ar?l?.

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### Licha says

Buudy read with my daughter, her book choice.

Graphic memoir about a girl growing up in her country of Turkey, centered around the school system with insights into her family.

I always enjoy reading about how different cultures grow live.

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### Lola says

I'm sure we've all read books about people who deny themselves happiness because of their parents' expectations. Or maybe because they think that what their parents want for them will make them happy in some way in the end.

But this book is not only about that. Özge does want to please her family, especially her father, but she realizes early on that she could never become an engineer, the only profession her father deems acceptable for a woman who does not want to marry.

She doesn't have the grades to study engineering, but she also doesn't want to. So she turns to mathematics, hoping to still please her family who struggles so hard to give her sister and herself a good life. All along, though, what she wanted to align herself with most was the societal system itself. Not be an outsider, a rebel, a failure.

I loved how much this story focused on Özge's education. I'm at that part in my life where I'm confused too. Who am I? Where am I going? What am I going to do? When I was in high school, I wanted to become a librarian.

Then I created my blog, and suddenly I wanted to become a book publicist, because the book publicists I'm in contact with are so wonderful, rarely stressed out and I simply enjoy gathering media attention for a book. But then I got to university, and I realized how much the education system needs great professors who are there for their students, and I thought, "Hey, maybe I could be that professor".

So I understood Özge's confusion very well. Unlike her, I never felt the need to please one of my parents, because my dad passed away and my mom, who is a chief nurse, saw quite early on that science and I do not connect. She used to see me as a lawyer, but I feel too much what others are feeling to become one, which I explained to her.

I'm happy Özge didn't go through this alone, however. She and her (older) sister would help each other and support one another. In fact, I don't think I remember reading about them fighting. That is a healthy relationship to have with a sibling. It's rare, but it happens. Özge and her sister are always together, so it's only natural for the former to want to attend the same school as her sister. My brother and I certainly fight, but when I was young and we attended the same school, we would hang out together during lunch and I would try to get his attention surreptitiously as I went to the bathroom. I would wave or make silly faces through the door window.

I was bound to love this book.

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## Dogukan says

Here is the thing: Masterly drawn, and beautifully written, the book leaves you with a sense of incompleteness and a delusion that it should have been longer, braver and fuller, a much intended delusion aimed at and kept as a secret from you throughout the book victoriously by the writer; and you are hanging in time and space aching to find **closure**, only to realize it's the only thing the book hasn't offered you: Just like this country, Turkey itself. And you think, just for a second that this was an error, a defect, a misjudge the writer had come to in her writing process, and that second ends with a painful smile on your face only to show you that this has been the idea all along. I am incomplete, I've always felt incomplete, and this feeling I've been left with when the book ended, this was just the thing the book tried to achieve all along, and knowing its reader, it didn't take much to have done. Because this is the only thing this country makes you, "incomplete." And it's our diamond, and it's our curse. We will be torn apart because of it, and we will rise on it. Well done Özge Samanci?, the joke was on us all along. You truly are an artist.

While we are on the subject... Not to be painfully obvious, but seeing readers commenting they were disappointed to some extent by a book titled "Dare to Disappoint" is like seeing republican housewives who did not vote for Clinton on account of her being a woman criticize HBO masterpiece Girls on Facebook because the show was degrading women. I am sorry, but I just have to ask: Does the Pope shit in the woods?

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## David Schaafsma says

A graphic memoir about growing up in Turkey by now Chicagoan artist Samanci. I knew very little about Turkey so was interested. Also, it begs comparisons with Persepolis, as we get history of Turkey and the extent to which totalitarianism has affected its people. It sure affected Samanci, who was influenced by her uncle not to be a cog in the machine. It doesn't spare us some violence, so I wouldn't say its primary audience is necessarily kids, though it is a growing up story.

Her stern Dad wants her to be an engineer, but she chooses math, which she is not so good at. Most of the book is about her learning to be herself and getting in trouble in school, and failing at math. It's not particularly about her being good at anything. There's no references to any artistic talent, really, until the very end, so that is surprising. Why be an artist? It's typical for people to start out doing things their parents want them to do to be successful, and many people just do those jobs, but it's not like it's this budding thing she always knew was in her heart. This part is Dare to Disappoint, the failure years.

After essentially failing at math, it's almost as if we are ready for part II, the artist part, or for her to do

something other than memoir with her comics art.

I liked the art work, it's very attractively laid out and colored, and I thought as a memoir it was solid, straightforward, likable, with very few surprises, stylistically or narratively. Still, I look forward to more work from Samanci.

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## Raina says

How much do outsiders know about the country of Turkey?

Here, a professor from Northwestern University tells what it was like to grow up in Turkey. She follows her early life, starting in 1981 (before she started school), and ends during college as she looks toward a professional path.

Graphic novels are an evocative medium for memoir, and Samanci uses the strengths of visual storytelling to great effect. Her thesis was on using comics in the digital context, and this is clearly a thoughtful work. Her own drawings are cartoonish in a slightly silly way, at first, and she integrates those drawings with elements of collage. There are no panel borders – instead, the images float on white pages. She uses color sparingly -- for instance, to make her blonde head stand out in a crowd scene – and keeps the pages alive with a wide variety of layouts.

Her story is a very personal one, in the vein of Marjane Satrapi's Persepolis and Zeina Abirached's A Game for Swallows, but she does take time to reflect on some of the larger issues affecting her world, such as governmental elections and the educational system.

This is an important story, and one which will be essential in public libraries, particularly given its relevance to current headlines. In the school context, it may be best suited to high school libraries, due to some of the author's experiences and the scope of this story.

\\professional review for another source

The Personal Touch:

Samanci is just a few years older than I am, so reading her story was particularly poignant for me. She also doesn't always thrive in school (which may or may not have to do with the school system in Turkey), and that was illuminating to watch, especially with the focus on her school experiences. She talks a lot about the reverence for one historical figure in Turkish history, and how that influenced her life - he was like a god.

**As far as trigger issues go**, there is an attempted rape scene, and it has pretty major life ramifications for her, but the scene itself is relatively tame. So there's that.

I had a hard time with the aesthetic at first, until I really sunk into the story -- and flipping back through it, I'm now struck by the beauty and creativity in her art. I love that she includes photos of actual ephemera from her life (transcripts, etc) in the vein of Middle School is Worse than Meatloaf. Her chapter openings are knockouts.

I'm very curious about what it was like for her to transition from this story to amerika. I hope she writes a sequel about that.

Extra star for the uniqueness of this story.

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## Blue says

Dare to Disappoint by Ozge Samanci is perhaps the quintessential tale of growing up in the 80s and 90s in Turkey in a middle class family. There is so much here that resonates with the experiences of many Turks who grew up in Izmir and Istanbul, went to cram school on the weekends in preparation for the national entrance exams, tried so hard to fulfill the expectations of many middle class families of parents working for the government, who, unable to bestow wealth to their children, insisted for them to be "good students" so that they could have a degree nobody could then take away from them and therefore a good future. The story is almost too familiar, down to Samanci's parents who work for the government (so did mine), her uncle who was politically active and a bit of a good-for-nothing youth (so was one of my uncles), the political climate of the 80s and 90s playing cruel tricks on the middle class and their aspirations, even her obsession with Jacques Cousteau (I was obsessed with him, too!)... Yet, Samanci makes the story her own, with her quirky childhood, her numerous attempts and failures to live up to the boring expectations of her parents, her struggle to be like her older sister... She also has a great eye for the things that are uniquely captivating about the Turkish childhood, like the ruler with shapes (including the unmistakable profile of Ataturk!!! I loved my ruler with its Ataturk bust, and had forgotten all about it until I read Dare to Disappoint.)

Some of the issues Samanci raises, the great divide between the conservative Muslim boys in school and the liberal girls, the economic hardships of the ever-poorer and smaller middle class, the wild political swings allowed by a not-so-solid democratic system, are some of the hard truths of Turkey. Samanci does a good job of explaining things in a way that anyone can understand them, making the memoir all the more real and universal.

At this time, Samanci's memoir might be chronicling a vanishing type of childhood and young adulthood (or not, hard to say, but the trendline doesn't have an encouraging slope...) It's a good primer to those who wish to understand the complicated past and convoluted ways of Turkey at the end of the past century, which may help understand what is happening today.

Recommended for those who like binoculars, plastic rulers, stuffed potatoes, and to those who hate national exams and cram school.

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### **Dov Zeller says**

I love the mischievous, rebellious sensibility that came through the pages early on in this book, much through the great relationship between Ozge and her sister and her parents. There is a lot to be said for the way these relationships are sketched out, and for the pluck of Ozge's young self. But somehow the book never quite came together for me. There were a lot of historical and relational moments I appreciated, but just as the Ozge of the book is trying to find herself, the book itself seems to be trying to find its voice and rhythm throughout.

So far there aren't too many reviews, but the ones I read I appreciated. I liked this one in particular.  
<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

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### **Evren Bay says**

Bir İzmirli ve Bozüziçi matematik bölümü mezunu biri olarak kendimden çok şey buldum bir kitap oldu için biraz yanı bir değerlendirilebilir :) Bir de Amerika'da uzun bir süre yaşam ve benzer şeyleri Türkiye'li olmayan arkadaşlar ma anlatmaya çalışmam biri olarak beni rahatsız etmedi ama yazarın konumu itibarıyla, kitabın "Amerikalılara-anlatır-gibi" ekilendirmiş olması, belki Türkiyeli okurlar için bir

handikap olu?turabilir. Öncelikle gerçekten çok titiz çal???lm??, çok aç?k yüreklilikle yaz?lm?? bir kitap oldu?unu söylemeliyim. Her bir karesinde çok büyük emek var. Bence bunda matematik okumas?n?n da etkisi var :) Özge Samanc?, bireysel hikayesini anlat?rken, hem bir k?zkarde?lik hikayesi, hem memur bir ailenin hikayesi, hem arkada?lık, hem de 80'lerde Türkiye'de ö?rencilik yapman?n hikayesini anlat?yor. Ço?umuzun ya?ad??? ve bir ço?umuzun kar?? duramad??? bu sistemden, ailesinin ve toplumun etkisinden s?yr?l?p nas?l kendi sesini buldu?unu anlat?yor. Okurken s?k s?k gözlerimin doldu?u, yer yer a?lad???m bir kitap olsa da, bu kitab? e?lenceli ve cesaret verici olarak hat?rlayaca??m.

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## Russell Taylor says

Dare to Disappoint: Growing up in Turkey felt like it should have been a longer tale. Özge Samanci's early years are richly detailed; as the protagonist ages, though, the granularity of the narrative stretches out, with discrete events replaced by more overarching sketches of longer periods of time and emotion. This may simply be an artifact of memory: disjointed and episodic recollections of early years giving way to more comprehensive understandings of later phases of life. This flow breaks down, though, near the end of the book when Özge decides to break with her and her father's expectations to pursue a career more meaningful to her. She reaches her decision point, but the audience is left with an inspiring moral on the virtue of risk-taking, but little evidence apart from the book in their hands as to how it unfolded for the protagonist. The narrative is snappy and funny, with an informed but child's-eye view of the dynamics of Turkish society in the waning days of the Cold War. Quite interesting are the hints and mentions of events and dynamics which go unexplored here, but which tie into well-known historical and current events: Samanci's elementary-school version of Turkish independence, featuring a map with a purple blot labelled "Armenian," a discussion of anti-leftist and -Kurdish censorship sprees by authorities, and a confrontation with a devout Muslim student illustrating the relatively elite, western, and minority perspective of the author's experience. The quirks and strange perceptions of childhood are brought to life by Samanci's fluid line, spare watercolor, and charming mixed media collages at the opening of most chapters. This is a graphic novel with precious few hard-edged panels. Scenes take place in isolated vignettes floating in whitespace or splashed across an entire page, but never does a full page of conventional rectangles appear. Never does this hinder the flow of the story; rather, while Samanci's figures and faces are simple and expressive, her layouts add dimension and energy, practically dragging the eye across the varied spreads.

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## Ludmilla says

B?rak Üzülsünler, çevrilmesini heyecanla bekledi?im bir kitapt?. ?leti?im'den ç?kaca??n? ve fiyat?n?n bu olaca??n? tahmin etsem (49 TL gibi bir rakamdan bahsediyoruz) beklemez, al?r okurdum. Neyse, B?rak Üzülsünler, 80 sonrası do?anlar için "bizi bize anlatan" bir hikaye. Özge Samanc?'n?n hayat?nda ço?umuza tan?d?k gelecek o kadar ?ey var ki... Bunun yan? s?ra renk seçimleri ve çizimler de oldukça ba?ar?l?.

Ama, tabii ki ama olacakt?, bölümler aras?nda kopukluk, son k?sm?n aceleye gelmesi gibi unsurlar?n yan? s?ra birazc?k derine indi?inizde B?rak Üzülsünler'in sadece ba?ka bir "ki?isel grafik roman" oldu?unu görüyorsunuz. En kli?e kendini bulma hikayelerinden biri daha. Geçen -san?r?m Goodreads'te- okudu?um bir yorumu akl?ma getirdi: Bu kadar hikaye ve olanak varken çizerler neden birbirinin ayn?s? ki?isel hikayelerini anlat?p duruyor?

Evet, ayn? soruyu ben de soruyorum. Özellikle de o ki?isel hikaye derine inemiyor, kli?e yumaklar?ndan ibaret kal?yorsa. Yoksa geçenlerde okudu?um S?radan Zaferler de, Parantez de had safhada ki?isel ve iyi hikayelerdi. B?rak Üzülsünler'den ise yabancılar için "Türk E?itim Sistemi" tan?t?m?n?, bizim için

"a?inal???" ç?kar?rsan?z geriye pek bir ?ey kalm?yor maalesef. Bu aç?dan k?yasland??? Persepolis'e göre de zay?f kalm??. Yine de -fiyat?ndan gözünüz korkmad?ysa- keyifle okuyabilir, kendinizi mutlu ve iyi hissedebilirsiniz. 3/5

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## Barb Middleton says

This graphic novel is well done, but I'll have to send it up to the middle school library as it is too young adult for elementary students. Ozge Samanci's minimalist illustrations and dry sense of humor make this an excellent look into what it was like growing up in Turkey. The heart of the story is about Ozge trying to figure out what she wants to do in life and the difficulty of trying to live up to her father's expectations and imitate her brilliant older sister. She recounts the political and cultural upheavals growing up and the dangerous culture she lived in. A near rape, prejudice from extreme ideologies at school, and fierce competition of trying to make it into prestigious schools make this a page turner. Ozge never takes herself too seriously though and the humor and lightness balance out the dark incidents. A terrific read.

Ozge grew up in a middle class family with two parents that were educators and nonreligious. They raised Ozge to be strong and wanted her to have a good job. Getting into the top high schools and universities was competitive and difficult. Ozge chronicles this difficult journey that show flaws in an educational system many will relate too. Her path of self-discovery follows first in her sister's footsteps and she fails, next she tries to follow her father's path and fails, and last she tries to follow her own heart and fails. She never gives up and finds, with the help of family and some loyal friends that help tutor her through her classes so she can pass, that she is able to discover her passion for drawing. It is the failures and resilience to learn from her mistakes that are a part of Ozge's journey of discovering what she wants to do with her life - something we all can relate to. She is one brave person that is easy to cheer on as she works through issues.

The author does a good job explaining the different leaders of the country and how they affected her country. A funny bird crops up on many of these pictures with some wisecrack comment. She shows the leaders saying one thing but doing the opposite in private while the bird hangs upside down on the president's speech bubble saying, "Liar." Later, she's trying to get the courage to tell her mom about her teacher's corporal punishment of all the students in the classroom and the bird is making light of the incident. Ozge is a strong-willed girl willing to stand-up for herself. She's a bit of a loose cannon as a young kid and her yellow hair that shoots out all over the place reflects her high spirits. There are pictures of her friends with rock star posters in their bedroom and Ozge has Jacques Cousteau because she's going to be a famous diver. Later, she humorously "talks" to Poster Jacques trying to sort out what she wants to be in life. The page where she is suspended for speaking her mind at school and criticizing the play chosen for the theater production is a hoot. The close-up photo of the suspension letter with her miniaturized and sliding down its folded edge off the page with the bird and its speech bubble saying, "Bye," is one of my favorites. I'm sure you'll find your favorites too.

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## Ev says

This book was more sentimentally rated as a 5 - the colorful innocence in Ozge's imagery, as well as the acute awareness of self in the context of family and society, were marvelously poignant and led me to realize more about my own self.

Ozge adroitly illustrated the shifting sands of identity and stability as we navigate life. She bravely showed her vulnerability, and it made the reader - this reader - braver too.

Is this not the purpose of art? To touch another's soul, and to purpose enlightenment?

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### **Elizabeth A says**

This graphic memoir is not labeled as such, but would work really well for kids, especially girls, fourteen and up.

It's the coming of age story about a young Turkish girl who struggles to reconcile her dreams with those her father has for her. Can she be both an engineer and a scuba diver like Jacques Cousteau? It's a delightful tale of family, friendship, and self-discovery, and while it touches on some of the social, political, and religious issues of the day, it does so lightly, and readers not familiar with the backdrop can read up on the events mentioned. When there are so many voices telling you how act, and who to be, how does one have the courage to listen to her inner voice? Can she please everyone she loves without making herself miserable?

I really liked the art, the use of collages, and the fact that unlike most graphic novels, there aren't many rectangular boxes in this one. The whimsical style and light watercolors work really well for this memoir. Like memory itself, there's a bit of disjointedness, but I was rooting for young Ozge the entire time. A lovely, and quite feminist read, that I'll be putting in the hands of my nieces before too long.

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### **Leylak Dal? says**

Bir k?z çocu?unun Türkiye'de büyüme ve meslek seçme öyküsü çizgilerle ancak bu kadar güzel anlatıl?rd?...  

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