

Ema And Avni Tuncer



This is a picture of my mother Ema and father Avni Tuncer, dancing at a New Year's ball. The photo was taken in Istanbul in 1950. In 1945, when my father started working again, I was eight. By 1947 or 1948, a couple of years after the war, business was doing so well that they could afford to send me to the English High School for Girls of Istanbul, which was an expensive school, and they could buy a house in Büyükdada. Father bought a car, too, a pre-war 1938 blue Nash. It was like a tank. He was the first member of the family to own a car. He hired a Greek chauffeur, to give him driving lessons. When Father was at work, the chauffeur worked the car as a taxi. At that time, the license plates for private cars and taxis were not different. In two to three months, Father learned how to

drive. He used to take people for drives to the Bosphorus, to places like Tarabya, or on picnics to Circir. We were very proud to own a car, as nobody we knew did. The fruits of my father's hard work included then also a rowing boat, on which he installed sails after one year. He and I often went sailing together. Father learned to ride a bicycle at age 48. After that, we went touring around the island on our bicycles. We were friends, my father and I. We did all those things, including swimming, together. He taught swimming to my cousin Meri and myself by throwing us into the sea and saying, 'You'll learn to swim by splashing about.' And we did. When their finances improved, my mother and father made a list of the things they wanted to do or acquire. As my father was very methodical, their wishes were prioritized: first, a house on the island, which they bought; next, a car, which they also got; and then, a trip to Europe and a diamond ring. When the turn had come for the trip to Europe, my father could not get away from his business. He proposed to send my mother, anyway, but as she did not want to go alone, he sent her with his sister on a cruise to Italy, Nice and Marseilles. The year was 1950.