

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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THE BOOK OF MY MOTHER

YAKUP KADRI KARAOSMANOĞLU

People

Âfet Hanim	Kadri Bey's stepmother
Cemal	Yakup Kadri's friend
Hakki	Yakup Kadri's step uncle
Hulusi	Kadri Bey's old friend
Ikbal Hanim	Yakup Kadri's mother
Izzet Bey	Kadri Bey's father
Kadri Bey	Yakup Kadri's father
Lefter	Kadri Bey's nanny
Sahende	Hulusi Bey's spouse
Sevket	Yakup Kadri's cousin
Vehibe Hanim	Neighbor
Yakup Pasha	Kadri Bey's uncle
Yildiz	Zahide Hanim's freed slave
Zahide Hanim	Kadri Bey's mother

Important Terms

Bey	It is an honorific for men, equals to Mr. in English.
Hanim	It is an honorific for women, equals to Ms. in English.
Efendi	It is a title of nobility in the Ottoman Empire.

Synopsis

Yakup Kadri's mother, Ikbal Hanim, is brought up as an adopted child in the palace of Ibrahim Pasha, the nephew of Khedive Ismail Pasha. However, due to the Urabi Revolt, Ibrahim Pasha's mother, Semsi Hanim, wants to return to the residence of her stepfather, Yakup Karaosmanoglu in Izmir. Yakup Bey's nephew Kadri invites them to his residence in Manisa. After a while, Semsi Hanim decides to return to Egypt in order not to be a burden to Kadri Bey due to his financial difficulties. Since Kadri Bey is married to Ikbal Hanim, he settles in Egypt, too. Thus, Yakup Kadri is born in Cairo. After Ibrahim Pasha's death, Kadri Bey and his family move to Manisa. Kadri Bey dies here. Afterward, his family returns to Egypt for a while but settles in Istanbul in 1908. In this work, Yakup Kadri narrates his childhood memories in Manisa.

Events

Mother and Father

Yakup Kadri doesn't like his father's appearance, dressing, provincial accent, and demeanor. He is afraid to be a bald and stocky man like him.

He observes a contrast between his outer and private styles. For example, even though Kadri Bey dresses better than everyone around him, as soon as he walks into the house, he impatiently begins to take off all his stylish clothes and suddenly turns into a rude man. Since a part of his body is paralyzed, either the maid or Ikbal Hanim helps him undress. But he thanks none.

Despite her polite and arrogant nature, Ikbal Hanim takes on almost all domestic responsibilities. Since their only servants in the house are a cook and a maid, she lets her husband treat her as a nanny and butler.

In Egypt

Yakup Kadri and his sister cry silently in Manisa, thinking of their days in Egypt. There, they have carriage rides with their father. But, one day, their father leaves them alone in a garden and disappears. They get scared, thinking that they are abandoned. Although the waiter who takes care of them tries to calm them down with ice cream, they continue to cry. When the waiter finally leaves them, saying that he will bring their father, Yakup Kadri secretly follows him and catches his father sitting with a woman in a hidden place. As he expects his father to attack him, his father whispers something to the woman with a shameful attitude and then stands up.

He takes Yakup Kadri and his sister to their favorite toy shop. Yakup Kadri demands a British military uniform, as he wants to look like the guards before the British barracks. His father, Kadri Bey, wants to buy something that makes his son forget what he witnessed but gets angry because it is impossible to find a small uniform and tells him that a Zeibek shalwar and a jacket would suit him better. But as Yakup Kadri insists, he desperately promises to go to the tailor and have the uniform made the next day. He also buys a helmet resembling the helmet of the British from the toy store. As soon as Yakup Kadri puts the helmet on his head, he stares at the snare drum and a toy rifle.

When he comes home with a helmet on his head, a rifle on his shoulder, and a trumpet around his neck, people burst into laughter. The only person who does not smile is his mother because his father isn't home that night. As Yakup Kadri is about to tell them how he saw his father that day, his mother silences him as if she knows what he intends to say and asks him to play his drum with a forced smile.

Days in Manisa

Yakup Kadri has neither toys nor time to play with toys in Manisa. He wakes up in the early hours of the morning and goes to school by crossing muddy roads without having a chance to eat anything. However, the school makes him more depressed. The old doorman of the school used to be the servant of one of his grandfathers. So, whenever he sees Yakup Kadri, he either caresses his face or twists his ear for no reason. But Yakup Kadri is disgusted in both cases, as the doorman smells like the toilets that he cleans, and his hands are always wet.

After all, what makes him estranged from the school is not the sullen face of his teacher Mustafa Efendi or the stick of the school principal Huseyin Efendi, but the filth. His classroom is full of barefoot kids in shabby clothes and smelling like they've never seen soap in their lives. Because of that, he has to keep himself from fainting every time he walks in. When he goes down to the dining hall for lunch, he feels sick and doesn't eat the food in his lunch box because of the stench of the hall. As children see he is not eating, they bother him. In the end, he leaves his food to them and goes to the courtyard.

Due to his shyness, he cannot defend himself in any situation. Years later, when he goes out with his neighbor's boy, Cemal, who is a few years older than him, he wants to buy some pudding. Since Cemal tells him to save his pocket money, he doesn't say anything to him. But, after he puts his wallet back, he feels a hand in his pocket. He stares without doing anything as he holds the pudding with both hands. The person who reaches out to his wallet is an older boy he knows from the school. The boy looks into his eyes with a smirk on his face, takes his wallet, and then leaves. Yakup Kadri says nothing. Although he can ask for help from Cemal, who is bigger and stronger than him, he feels ashamed.

His Mother's Shyness

Yakup Kadri thinks that his shyness comes from his mother. For his mother, disaster means shame. When Kadri Bey's house in Egypt is confiscated because of his debts, she feels ashamed instead of sad for losing their belongings. When Kadri Bey has a stroke, she hides his illness from everyone in order not to damage his reputation and has to move to Manisa after people learn about his situation.

Hulusi Bey

Ikbal Hanim thinks that those named Karaosmanoglu help them when they settle in Manisa, but no one helps them except Kadri Bey's old friend Hulusi Bey. Hulusi Bey welcomes them at the station and then hosts them at his house for a while.

The Mountain

While they stay at Hulusi Bey's house, Yakup Kadri's attention is drawn to a distant mountain. When he sees it for the first time, he walks back and calls out to his mother in fear. He asks his mother what it is, and his mother says that it is a mountain, but as she feels that it is not a satisfactory answer, she begins to explain it in Arabic. After that day, every time Yakup Kadri looks at the mountain, he sees either a kneeling camel, a lion with an open mouth, or the corridors of a palace. In time, going to the mountain turns into an obsession for him, and eventually, Cemal takes him to it. But Yakup Kadri sees neither the small animals nor the people he imagined on the mountain. When they return, he exaggerates their experiences along the way without revealing his disappointment to anyone. In reality, Cemal is the one who overcomes different obstacles while carrying Yakup Kadri on his back and beating the neighborhood children who attack them in two separate places because they don't like Yakup Kadri.

Yildiz the Nanny

One day, Kadri Bey takes Yakup Kadri and his sister to this mountain, chatting with them like a friend. On the way back, Kadri Bey stops in front of a house, opens the door, and calls out to someone named Yildiz the Nanny, but he does not get an answer. Then, he enters the courtyard. Yakup Kadri discovers that this woman is the freed Circassian slave of his grandmother Zahide Hanim and grew up with his father like siblings. Although she looks much younger than his father, as his father calls her "nanny," he thinks she raised his father. Everyone in his family except his father calls her sister, but she reminds him of his grandfather's third wife, Âfet.

Granny Âfet

After losing her son, Âfet Hanim passes all her compassion to Yakup Kadri. He sleeps with her whenever she visits them. At night, he secretly leaves his mother's bosom to go to Granny Âfet's bed, but in the morning, he realizes that his mother is offended by his act. But his mother is not the only person offended by his fondness for his grandmother.

While they live in Egypt Âfet Hanim stays with them for a while, but after she leaves, he pretends to play with his toys so that the people in the house do not understand how upset he is, but when his eyes catch her empty mattress, he cannot help but cry. Upon this, his father gets angry and scolds him, saying he is with the woman who carried him in his womb for nine months. So, there is no reason to be sad. But Yakup Kadri hugs the mattress and continues to cry.

Meeting Mevlevism

One day, his father takes him and his sister for a walk. After visiting Yildiz the Nanny's house and getting some hazelnuts from her, he crouches down by a water source and places a bottle he brought with him into the running water. Yakup Kadri and his sister are not used to sitting on the floor, so they stare at their father in surprise. While their father is trying to feed them nuts, Yakup Kadri sees three differently dressed men walking toward them. When he shows them to his father, his father hides the bottle and glass in his hand and stands up. The three men greet them and continue walking. His father says that the man walking ahead is the sheik of the Mevlevi lodge.

Thereupon, Yakup Kadri fancies becoming a dervish in the lodge. After seeing the whirling dervishes, he quits all the plays and starts to spin around like whirling dervishes at home, trying to ventilate the skirts of his nightgown.

Lefter

After staying at Hulusi Bey's house for a while, they rent a house of him, right next to his house. One day, Yakup Kadri lies curled up in the room since he grows teeth. In a moment, the door opens slowly, and an old black woman walks in. Seeing her walk weirdly, Yakup Kadri starts shouting in fear. Later, he learns that that woman is Lefter, his father's nanny. After his father saw her walk on the street leaning on the walls, he brought her home as she is blind because of eye disease.

Uncle Hakki

Hakki, his father's half-brother from his mother, comes from Istanbul and settles in their house. Since he is a young prankster, he scares Lefter with Yakup Kadri by pranks making her think that a thief is going through the things. However, he never eats with Yakup Kadri's family. They don't sit in the same

room. He goes in and out of the house without anyone seeing him. When his father and uncle get together, Yakup Kadri hears his father scold his uncle for leading an idle life. In the end, Uncle Hakki is taken away by the soldiers because he is a deserter.

The Change of Kadri Bey

Kadri Bey gets sicker day by day and becomes unable to go out. Since he spends time at home, he wears nothing but a nightgown, cardigan, fez, and slippers.

He prays for long hours sitting on his prayer mat, which he never lifts. When he forces Yakup Kadri to memorize a surah, Yakup Kadri gets upset because he has difficulty apprehending anything without reading it. He begins to get scared of his father and stays away from him. However, between the afternoon and evening prayers, he listens to the miracle stories his father tells them like a fairy tale. His father, for example, claims that a madman named Yusuf the Penniless made it rain during the drought, and when the flood came, he stopped the rain.

As Yakup Kadri gets older and finds his father's love letter drafts, his mother tells him who they were written for. Then, he begins to remember a princess who visited them often while they lived in Egypt. He recalls how he gazed at her every time she visited them and how she mocked him, saying that he looked at her like a man rather than a child. He is impressed by his father's use of poetry to express his love and does not want to accept that a man who liked poetry and read the most distinguished literary works of the period believes these ridiculous stories.

The Console Clock

When the London branded console clock breaks down, his father focuses all his attention on it. He spends time monkeying around this clock from early morning until evening, forgetting everything else. In the end, the clock does not work at all. Fearing that his father will try to force him to memorize a surah again, Yakup Kadri rushes to the kitchen as soon as he comes back from school and hast his dinner early to avoid his father and retreats to his room.

Sevket

One day, his aunt's son, Sevket, comes from Istanbul. Then, his father starts to spend his time chatting with him. Nobody can understand what they are talking about as Kadri Bey suddenly changes the subject, but both have a painful look on their faces. These conversations, which last until midnight, become distressing due to the cold in the winter, but since Kadri Bey cannot sleep, Sevket has to chat with him. Even though Ikbal Hanim wakes up and tries to put Kadri Bey to bed, Kadri Bey tells Ikbal Hanim he will finish his cigarette and then go to bed but continues to talk to Sevket. One night, Ikbal Hanim gets angry and asks him to leave Sevket alone, but Kadri Bey shuns her, saying that Sevket is his sister's son, so she should get involved with her own children. Then, Ikbal Hanim says nothing about their long conversations again.

Kadri Bey in a Dream World

On a summer night, Yakup Kadri wakes up and sees his father standing behind the mosquito curtain. Contrary to his latest messy style, he is well dressed and mutters something. He is even more surprised to see his mother move beside him. He can't understand why and how she lay next to him. When she jumps out of bed, he closes his eyes and begins to listen to her talk to his father. While his father says that it is the Night of Qadr, the adhan is recited and he is to go to the mosque, his mother says that it is not the Night of Qadr, none recites the adhan, and he cannot go to the mosque at midnight. By speaking like this, his mother prevents his father from going out.

However, Kadri Bey wants to go to Istanbul once in a while and starts to pack his belongings into suitcases. The only thing stopping him at these moments is his daughter's tears. He loves her by saying that she looks just like his mother, and Ikbal Hanim secretly empties the packed suitcases.

Zahide Hanim

During his childhood, Yakup Kadri hears many praises about his grandmother, Zahide Hanim. Everyone, including his grandfather's other wife, Granny Âfet, talks about what a kind, gentle, humble, and dignified woman she was. However, when he is old enough to make various judgments about

people, he wonders why his grandfather Izzet Bey doesn't speak highly of the woman who was his uncle's daughter and his wife. He wonders why Izzet Bey has other wives, and more importantly, how come he caused her death by having a child with his sister, Ayse Hanim's concubine.

He thinks that his father sanctifies his mother Zahide Hanim, disregarding that he commits similar disloyalties to his own family. Kadri Bey often visits his mother's grave and wills to be buried next to her when he dies. However, they can't execute his will for some reason, and he is buried in the cemetery where his father Izzet Bey is buried. After years, this cemetery is left as a pile of stones by the Greek invaders and then turned into one of the busiest streets in Manisa. Thus, Yakup Kadri's family cemetery is destroyed.

The Death of Kadri Bey

Kadri Bey, who is waiting for the month of Ramadan with joy, decides to go to Istanbul again. This time, however, he is more serious about his plan. Before the month of Ramadan, he is to shop and then set out. Ikbal Hanim can't resist this serious plan any longer and starts to prepare his belongings. As he planned, he goes to the barber's, shaves before he sets off, does some shopping for the month of Ramadan, and comes home with porters. Yakup Kadri thinks that he looks younger. But Kadri Bey suddenly falls ill the following evening.

Sahende Hanim, Hulusi Bey's wife, takes Yakup Kadri and his sister to their own house. Yakup Kadri's jaw trembles with fear as his sister silently cries as they are to spend a night away from their mother for the first time. Although Sahende Hanim wants to look as cheerful as possible and keep them entertained, it doesn't work out. The siblings cry for hours.

When Yakup Kadri finds himself in a strange room in the morning, his nerves get worse, and then he starts to cry. Hulusi Bey and Sahende Hanim tell him that his father is fine to calm him down, but he is not interested in his father's illness. He cries out that he wants to go to his mother. When they finally return to their own home, they feel like strangers because it is now a crowded funeral house. At night, their mother comes into their room and cries, saying that her children are now fatherless. As she acts like this, Yakup Kadri pretends to be asleep and desires to go back to Hulusi Bey's house.

The following morning, Sahende Hanim comes to their house, opens the bedroom door, and shows Yakup Kadri the corpse of his father lying on the mattress in the middle of the room. She says he is sleeping peacefully now. Yakup Kadri looks at his father's body carefully. His whole body is covered with a shawl, and on top of him is a sword. He gets angry with Sahende Hanim because she lies that his father is sleeping comfortably, and without saying anything, quickly breaks through the crowd in the house and goes out to the courtyard.

However, the courtyard is no longer the courtyard he knows. Some men set up tents, while others place a big cauldron on three large stones. On one side, a wooden bedstead rests against the wall. A little later, he throws himself into the street, unaware that his father's body will be bathed on the wooden bedstead in the tent with the hot water in the cauldron. When he sees their neighbor's garden gate is open, he directly runs there.

After Kadri Bey's Death

Yakup Kadri and his sister stay at Hulusi Bey's house for a few days, and after returning to their home, their mother informs them that their father is dead. While his elder sister and mother are weeping, not a tear falls from Yakup Kadri's eyes. He stands petrified. Later, he gets out of the house, feeling ashamed because he is unable to cry. His avoidant state continues until Granny Âfet and Sevket visit them.

One day, Lefter comes to the room where they are sitting and announces that she is about to die. However, none takes her seriously. Granny Âfet and Ikbal Hanim look at each other and laugh, thinking that Lefter has lost her mind. But Lefter calls in Granny Âfet and tells her what she wants to be done after her death. About an hour later, some noises come from Lefter's room. When they walk in, they see that she is dying. Yakup Kadri rushes out of the house in fear because he can't stand the way she is. After these two deaths, the house turns into a tomb for him, and he does not want to spend time at home.

Two Personalities of Yakup Kadri

Yakup Kadri oscillates between two sources of inadequacy. At home, he is ashamed of his school personality and at school, his home personality. His mother tries to raise him like a delicate flower, but he gets rude at school since his school friends make fun of his attire and polite demeanor. Upon this, his mother finds a fourteen-year-old assistant master to take him to the school. This assistant master does not leave him alone even during break times, making Yakup Kadri even more embarrassed as he sees weaker children spend time alone.

They often watch fights among children after school together. However, each time, his assistant master appreciates the child who beats other children and spits in the face of the beaten. One day, he pushes a brutally beaten child with the back of his hand, and then Yakup Kadri starts to hit and insult him. The assistant master is confused about what to do in the face of this reaction. He stands petrified for a while, then throws Yakup Kadri's bag and lunch box on the ground and leaves.

After that day, Yakup Kadri's self-confidence is refreshed, and he starts to take an interest in weapons. One day, while he is secretly fiddling with the guns left by his father on the roof, a rifle falls on his barefoot, and his mother and nanny run to him. Even though his mother sees him crying, she takes the rifle from the ground without saying anything, puts it back, and then leaves. Her attitude hurts Yakup Kadri more than anything else. In the following days, his mother continues to punish him with her silence, even though his foot is bruised and his nail is broken. He makes noises as if he is having nightmares at night to get her attention, and does things to alarm her, but it all is in vain. His mother doesn't care.

Finally, his sister tells him that the main reason for their mother's attitude toward him is not his interest in guns but his misbehaviors, and their mother is upset because she believes that her son is not capable of being a decent man. Upon hearing this, Yakup Kadri bursts into tears and apologizes to his mother for his misbehaviors.

After this incident, his hodja at the school places him and the grandson of the civil chief before his lectern. He doesn't let the two of them talk to anyone. Even during recess, when they try to mingle with the crowd of children, he prevents them. Yakup Kadri later learns that his mother went to the school principal's house, complaining about his deteriorating condition. Upon this, the school principal decided to put him in moral quarantine.

Hatice

The most joyful time in the Aydin province is the Nowruz Festival. During the festive days, everyone puts on their summer clothes and enjoys themselves. Yakup Kadri's family goes to Yıldız's summer house. While everyone in the family stays here for only one night, he stays with Granny Âfet for a few more days. Hatice, Yıldız's daughter, takes care of him these days. They spend their days playing like two boys under a cherry tree, but when they lie together at night, Yakup Kadri wants to hug and kiss her. He falls asleep thinking of her, sees her in his dreams, and wakes up in the morning snuggled into her.

Hatice's father has a shop where he sells toys and firecrackers. One day, while he and Hatice are preparing the firecrackers in the garden of their house, an explosion happens, and Hatice's whole body is burned. At that time, Yakup Kadri is together with his mother and Granny Âfet. After they hear the explosion, Granny Âfet goes where the voice came from to find out what happened. Yakup Kadri secretly follows her. As soon as he learns that there is an explosion in Hatice's house, he runs to her and sees her on a floor bed, with a quilt up to her chin, smiling at the people around her with a blackened face. When Hatice notices him, she says, "Don't be afraid, little man," but Yakup Kadri runs back home without saying anything. Later, she loses her life.

Summers

Yakup Kadri and his family stay at Yıldız's summer house, Hulusi Bey's country cottage, and on the farmhouses of relatives from Izmir, but İkbâl Hanim gets nervous because she cannot keep up with the peasant lifestyle. For example, it disgusts her to eat from the same tray. Since she does not find the guest rooms clean enough, she sometimes makes the homeowners uneasy by cleaning the things. Yakup Kadri is disturbed by the state of his mother as she cannot share his pleasure.

However, since most of his friends stay in their country cottages, he feels alone when they are back at home. He plays all the games he can play on his own until noon but feels like he is in prison. One day,

while wandering around, he sees some children crouching on the ground in a circle and playing games. He watches them from afar to understand what they are doing. The children are dragging a piece of bone, but when they notice him, they run away. The following day, when he goes to watch them again, they do not let him join them but allow him to watch themselves. Yakup Kadri feels better because he does not feel alone with children, whose families do not have a country cottage like his family.

What Ikbal Hanim Tells

Some nights, Yakup Kadri and his sister snuggle with their mother, afraid of the owl's voice they hear. Although Ikmal Hanim is also afraid of this voice, she reads novels aloud, sings, and sometimes dances to distract them, trying not to show her fear. As she realizes that Yakup Kadri and his sister are still listening to the owl in fear, she begins to tell about her childhood and youth memories. Even if Yakup Kadri does not understand some of his mother's words, he listens to her carefully. As he listens to her, a tale world comes to life in his imagination.

In this way, he learns the story of his mother and father's marriage. Accordingly, in Egypt, a man named Arabi incites all the villagers against the Khedive family and the government. Khedive Ismail Pasha and his relatives flee to Alexandria when the uprising leads to the massacres of the Turks and Circassians with the slogans "Egypt belongs to the Egyptians." Since Ikbal Hanim is an adopted daughter in Ismail Pasha's nephew's household, she also runs away. A few days later, Cairo falls. Ismail Pasha goes to Istanbul by order of the government. His nephew Ibrahim Pasha decides to go to Izmir at the insistence of his mother Semsî Hanim. Semsî Hanim is also the adopted daughter of Karaosmanoglu Yakup Pasha, and Yakup Pasha advised her to return to Izmir when something bad happens.

But when they arrive in Izmir, they see that the Karaosmanoglu family is not well known. Yakup Pasha's nephews Kadri and Nazif are married to the daughters of a celebrated family, but both reside in Manisa. Moreover, Kadri Bey lives separately from his wife. That's why other relatives of Yakup Pasha host them. After a while, Kadri Bey invites them to his mansion in Manisa, where he lives with his sister. They stay there for a while. Then, Semsî Hanim decides to return to Egypt not to be a burden to anyone. Since she is fond of Kadri Bey, she marries Ikbal Hanim off to him. Consequently, Kadri Bey goes to Egypt, too.

Religious Experiences

Yakup Kadri loves the months of Ramadan as it provides an opportunity to mingle with the grown-ups. After school, he visits mosques with Cemal and listens to the sermons given after the prayers. He follows the hodja delivering the sermon with excitement, as he depicts the Day of Judgment and hell very vividly. But he is afraid when the hodja is talking by directly looking at him. That's why he spends most of his time during Ramadan in the mosque of the Rufai sect, like his family members.

But a few years later, rumors spread that Vehbi Efendi, the son-in-law of the sheik, drinks raki and is a Bektashi. Drinking raki is tolerable, but Bektashism is no different from murder and theft for the people of Manisa. People tell Yakup Kadri that his father stopped seeing his sister because she was a Bektashi. As he notices that Vehbi Efendi greets his aunt differently every time he visits her, he thinks that what people say about her is true. But he does not like the rituals of the people in the Rufai sect. Men who gather to make dhikr with frightening sounds and sometimes act outrageously scare him.

The religious place that Yakup Kadri is fond of is the lodge of the Mevlevîs. Here, people calmly talk to each other, and occasionally, sit in a circle and make dhikr silently with a giant rosary with walnut-sized grains. When Yakup Kadri demonstrates his dedication to listening to the religious conversations and making dhikr here, he is entitled to perform the Sufi ceremony, known as *sema*. For training, he first starts spinning on a circular training board. He spins with his left big toe and second toe around a nail in the middle of the board and rotates his body like a cylinder. His interest persists until his mother sees him with a dervish hat. Because his mother, who wants him to become an officer, commander, or pasha in the future, does not hide her disappointment and anger when she sees him. Then, Yakup Kadri moves away from the Mevlevî lodge not to upset her again.

Refik, the Grandson of the Civil Chief

While their hodja is dozing off at school, all students recite the Quran, shivering with cold. But one day, the hodja tries to punish Refik for playing with the Quran. The strongest kids in the class make him lie on the ground to whip his feet, but they cannot do anything because they don't know how to take off his fancy shoes.

Yakup Kadri and Refik are the boys with shoes and trousers in the class. After the hodja sits them together, they become friends. One day, Refik shows Yakup Kadri the knife he just bought, and Yakup Kadri shows a toy his grandmother brought from Izmir. They want to exchange them, but Refik wants extra money for his pocket knife. Yakup Kadri cringes on behalf of his friend because of his attitude. Since the civil chief is the tenant of one of Yakup Kadri's relatives, Refik, like most of the people of Manisa, thinks that he lives in prosperity like his wealthy relatives. And that is the reason for his behavior.

Vehibe Hanim

One of the neighbors who stay with them on long winter nights is Vehibe Hanim. Vehibe Hanim is the mother of Hediye, who was Yakup Kadri's nanny in Egypt. She is a woman who makes everyone around her laugh with British humor. For example, when the cat in the house is gagging to throw up, she stops those who want to take the cat out, saying that maybe the cat has something to say, or when someone knocks on the window to inform one of the women inside that her father is home, she turns to the oldest woman in the room and says that her father is home and it is time to go.

But her life is full of tragedies. After her daughter Hediye comes to Manisa, she gets married and dies at a young age. Vehibe Hanim is kidnapped by one of the famous villains of Manisa. She tries to defend her reputation as a married woman against him, but he sprays her with bullets. Luckily, she can escape without injury. When arguing, she sits across from him at a table, and the first bullet hits the lamp, darkening the room. In the dark, the other bullets cannot find their target. Vehibe Hanim makes everyone around her laugh by funnily narrating these tragic events. Some nights, she curses the bad-hearted men in the French novels that Ikbal Hanim reads aloud, comparing them to the villain who kidnapped her.

The Count of Monte Cristo

While Yakup Kadri is away from the Mevlevi dervishes, Hulusi Bey's nephew Osman, who is studying at the military school, stays in their neighborhood. Yakup Kadri is impressed by everyone talking about him so highly that he begins to dream of being a student at a military school like him. But, when the winter comes, his mother reads *The Count of Monte Cristo* at night, and he is captivated by this novel. As soon as he comes back from school, he tries to read it each day. He learns to read in this way. As he read the novel, all the people he admires are erased from his mind one by one. He does not want to be a Mevlevi dervish or a soldier anymore. Now the only person he aspires to be like is the Count of Monte Cristo.

Themes

Household Yakup Kadri's mother and father come from households, which are small-scale copies of the Ottoman Dynasty. In these households, slaves, assistant apprentices, and other attendants are considered family members attached to the head of the family. Therefore, Yildiz, Yildiz's daughter Hatice and Leter are like relatives for Yakup Kadri.

Downward Mobility Yakup Kadri spends his early years in a royal household in Egypt. However, when they have to move to Manisa due to Kadri Bey's illness, they do not receive any support from anyone other than Kadri Bey's old friend Hulusi Bey. Although the Karaosmanoglu Family is a well-known wealthy family, none stick with them. Thus, they cannot maintain the household system they are accustomed to.

Privilege Despite the loss of status they experience, both Ikbal Hanim and Yakup Kadri continue to distinguish themselves from other people. The fact that his schoolmates do not have the same living standards disturbs Yakup Kadri. For example, their neglect of cleanliness is a source of disgust for him. Similarly, Ikbal Hanim is not satisfied with the conditions of the country cottages hosting her and her family during summers and unintentionally reveals her discontent to the hosts. She wants to raise her son with courtly habits like herself. Thus, the only child deserving Yakup Kadri's friendship becomes the grandson of the civil chief.

Conflict As Yakup Kadri spends time with his school friends, he starts to clash with the moral qualities that his mother tries to instill in him. He tries to cope with this conflict by developing two separate personalities at home and school. In the end, his mother and teachers intervene in this situation, and the only child who is thought to be a good friend to him is Refik, the grandson of the civil chief. However, Refik is a child far from grasping his reality. Other children at school are immoral enough to steal the wallet in Yakup Kadri's pocket, but Refik, thinking that Yakup Kadri is wealthy because his all relatives are wealthy, tries to take advantage of him when he gets the chance.

Oppressed Women Yakup Kadri is sensitive to the stories of oppressed women. It bothers him that his grandfather Izzet Bey has a baby with his sister's concubine, causing the death of his spouse, Zahide Hanim, and does not speak well of her, whom everyone speaks highly of. It also bothers him that despite his father's fondness for his deceased mother, Zahide Hanim, he betrays his wife, Ikbal Hanim, like his father. Thus, Yakup Kadri's observations of men around him are about their inconsistencies, while his observations of women are about their oppression.

Bibliography

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