

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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A PAINFUL STORY

HALIT ZIYA USAKLIGIL

People

Agâh Aksel	The undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ali Turkgeldi	Ambassador to Tirana
Latife Usakligil	Muammer Usakligil's daughter and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's wife
Muammer Usakligil	Halit Ziya's cousin
Numan Menemencioglu	Diplomat and politician
Tevfik Rustu Aras	The minister of Foreign Affairs
Yunus Nadi	Journalist and the founder of the newspaper, Cumhuriyet

Synopsis

Halit Ziya loses his two children, Vedide and Sadun, due to an illness. While he and his wife are dealing with the illness of their third child, Guzin, Vedat is born. However, Guzin dies at the age of six. When Vedat was three and a half years old, his brother Bulent is born. As the brothers get a little older, Halit Ziya does his best to ensure that they receive a good education and enrolls them in Galatasaray High School. The outbreak of war disrupts everything. However, Halit Ziya uses his connections to enroll Vedat at a university in Germany at sixteen. After a while, when the political climate in Germany begins to shake up daily life, he allows Vedat to continue his education in Switzerland. But Vedat wants to study in Paris for two more semesters since he does not feel ready to graduate. Halit Ziya fulfills this demand by using his connections again. However, in Paris, Vedat spends his time in nightclubs. So, Halit Ziya establishes him as a clerk in the Ottoman Bank in Istanbul. When Halit Ziya's niece, Latife Hanim, marries Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Vedat gets the opportunity to show Ataturk his talents in music and foreign languages. And with Ataturk's encouragement, he decides to leave the bank and become a diplomat. Bulent, who works at the same bank as Vedat, follows the same path. However, while Bulent becomes a successful diplomat, Vedat is suspended in Prague for no reason. Fearing that this will happen again, he studies at the Faculty of Law in Istanbul to become a more qualified person in his profession. Afterward, he is assigned to Brussels. However, as his close friend is appointed ambassador to Tirana, he wants to work with him in Tirana, too. While working in Tirana, he learns that he is suspended from work again without any reason and then commits suicide at thirty-three.

Events

First Years

Halit Ziya's wife cannot breastfeed her babies due to an inflammation in her mammary glands, and she has to hire wet nurses. However, their babies are exposed to various diseases because of these hired wet nurses. Vedat is born in their home in Nisantasi at a time when Halit Ziya and his wife are busy with the illness of their little daughter, Guzin. Halit Ziya gives his father's name, Halil, to Vedat as a second name, because he shed tears at the funeral of his grandson Sadun, who died at a young age due to an illness, and could not see the birth of his second grandson, Vedat. This time, the mother wants to breastfeed her newborn baby herself. However, as the inflammation progresses, her mammary glands are surgically removed, and they have to find other ways to feed Vedat.

Although Halit Ziya and his wife devote most of their time to Guzin, who is sick, they lose her at six. She is their third child to die at an early age after Vedide and Sadun. They decide to move to the largest of the Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara because they cannot live with her memories any longer. Meanwhile, Vedat is a fragile child at the age of one and a half years old. After moving, they find a nanny named Lucia, a Greek catholic, and Vedat looks better thanks to the fresh air of the island and her care.

Examination

However, a memory of examination remains in Halit Ziya's mind from the days on the island. The brother of the Armenian Catholic patriarch, Dr. Ormanyan, is living on the island. While Halit Ziya is chatting with him, he mentions that Vedat cannot breathe comfortably and sleeps with his mouth open. Upon this, Dr. Ormanyan says that he can examine him at his home in the evening. Halit Ziya takes Vedat in the evening to his house. Because it is getting dark, the oil lamp is burning on the table. The doctor tries to prevent sooting, then puts Vedat on a chair. Without washing the oil from his hands, he takes an object that looks like a needle and puts it into Vedat's nose. Vedat does not cry, but when he starts to complain by making noises, Halit Ziya withdraws him. The doctor says that Vedat has nasal congestion and explains it, but Halit Ziya cannot listen to him because he is already distracted. Without showing any resentment, he goes out with Vedat and drives him around with his carriage. During this tour, Vedat sits quietly, gluing his skinny body to his father's. But Halit Ziya still has his little son's whines in his ears.

Bulent

When Vedat is three and a half years old, Bulent is born on a snowy day. Although they expect Vedat to be jealous of him, Vedat gives up his rights at every opportunity for the sake of his brother. Since he usually sleeps in the middle of his mother and father, he often says them "I don't bother you, I'll sleep somewhere else."

Education and Hurdles

The family first moves to Yesilkoy, but when Halit Ziya becomes the first secretary in the Dolmabahce Palace, they move to Nisantasi. Bulent has a wet nurse, and Vedat has a new Greek nanny named Veta. Halit Ziya, thinking that his son should start his education, sends him to the French Catholic School. But Vedat constantly gets sick because of a long commute time. In the absence of his brother, Bulent waits for him in front of the window and sometimes goes to the school with his nanny.

Halit Ziya gives up the idea of school, for these two reasons. He makes a deal with Madame Catherine, the governess of his daughter, Bihin. But this time, when Vedat retreats to the room to study with Madame Catherine, Bulent begins to cry at their door. In the end, he is allowed to listen to the lesson if he does not make noise. The governess subscribes to the library of the private French school, Dame de Sion, and makes him listen to the books she borrows from there. In this way, Bulent also begins to speak French.

One day, when his friend Aurelio Lambardo tells Halit Ziya that his sons should learn German or English along with French, Halit Ziya objects stating that his sons do not speak French very well yet. This time his friend explains that his children can speak the language spoken at home, namely Italian, the language of the servants, Greek, and French, English, and German, then, Halit Ziya decides to employ the German governess of his friend's children who will soon be out of business.

The German governess starts teaching both German and piano to Vedat. Also, Lange, the band chief of the naval forces, comes once a week to listen to Vedat and supervise his governess. However, when the Committee of Union and Progress withdraws from the government, Halit Ziya's is dismissed, and the family returns to Yesilkoy. After a while, the Balkan Wars break out, and the governesses leave the country. Thereupon, Halit Ziya sends his children to a French seminary in Yesilkoy. He negotiates with the organist and violinist Mercenier residing in Bakirkoy through the priests for the music lesson.

However, with World War, everything changes. The seminary is closed. The boys attend a seminary in Bakirkoy for a while, but it is closed when the priests are forced to leave the country. Halit Ziya finally thinks of enrolling them in Galatasaray School and meets with the school's principal. Principal Salih Arif Bey recommends that children prepare at home until the second semester and start school in the second semester since the academic year has already started. He adds that when they start school, despite the age difference between them, he will allow the two boys to stay in the same dormitory.

Since Halit Ziya is not working anymore, he prepares his children in separate rooms until the next semester. Mercenier continues his music lessons.

Travel to Europe

In July 1915, when the Committee of Union and Progress proposes Halit Ziya to investigate Germany, he sets out with his wife and children. Since Vedat's mathematics teachers stated that he should not stay away from mathematics during the trip, Halit Ziya teaches Vedat for an hour every morning.

They travel from Sofia to Bucharest and Vienna, staying two or three nights in each city. When they are convinced that there is no place to see in Vienna, they move to Germany. During the day, they visit historical buildings, old churches, theaters, and museums in many cities and little towns in Germany. At night, they go to the operas. When it is time for the school to open, children return with their mothers. Halit Ziya stays for another five months.

Life Continues Despite the War

The only problem is nutrition. The war causes difficulties in food supply both at home and at school. Halit Ziya and his wife put meals for a few days in their children's bags, but they later realize that their children share these meals with their friends on their first day at school. But instead of being angry with them, they are pleased with their good manners.

Vedat improves his German with a teacher from outside the school and goes to composer Radeaglia's house for piano lessons every week. Bulent continues his violin lessons with the school teacher. But one day, Radeaglia furiously throws the notebook in front of Vedat, saying that he could not play a piece well. Unable to tolerate even careful warnings, Vedat takes the notebook on the ground and goes out without neglecting to salute. Since it is not possible to send Vedat to the same teacher again after that day, Halit Ziya convinces Grosser, one of the most famous musicians in Istanbul, to teach Vedat.

After a while, when the school is turned into a hospital due to war, boarding students are sent home. Since it is difficult for children to go to school from home, they stay with their older sister in Sisli, near their school.

Halit Ziya is angry with himself for not giving his child the opportunity to live a little bit of his childhood while the world is in such unrest.

Germany

Halit Ziya goes to Germany, taking Vedat and his three nephews, who will attend high school there. Since he is a member of the Turkish-German Friendship Association, he arranges accommodation for his nephews in different cities. But when he attempts to enroll Vedat at the university, he is informed that his son cannot be admitted to the university because he is only sixteen years old. The university suggests that he apply to the Prussian Ministry of Education, as he is a well-known figure of an allied country. Two days after Halit Ziya's application through a friend, the minister visits him to inform him that his request has been accepted.

He has a private meeting with Dessoir, one of the famous professors of the Faculty of Law, and then he and Vedat visit him at his home. Since the professor's wife is one of Germany's renowned singers, after learning about Vedat's interest in music, she puts him in front of the piano and asks which piece he wants to play. When Vedat says that he will play a composition of Schumann, she puts one of his compositions in front of him. In the end, the woman laughs and says that he plays very well for his age, but there is some nervousness in his playing, and she will recommend him to Sauer, one of Germany's most important pianists.

Halit Ziya finds a place for Vedat to stay through his connections. Dr. Brösicke, who does not leave his study room because his leg has been amputated, rents a room to him. Apart from Vedat, a young girl who moved to Berlin to study at the conservatory is another tenant. Vedat is so tired of the piano sounds this girl makes that each time he talks to his father, he complains about her, saying, "She will drive me crazy!" But he is happy with the house and the family. The family's one daughter is a nurse at the front, and one studies at the conservatory. While Vedat plays the piano, she accompanies him with her violin.

In the evenings, father and son go to operas together. For a while, Vedat also attends dance classes. But a part of him is always concerned because he never gets any news from his mother and siblings.

Halit Ziya says that Vedat left himself entirely in his hands and accepted whatever he said as correct and condemns himself for directing his son to economics instead of chemistry, his favorite class in high school.

Food Shortage

Because of the war, there is no egg, no oil, no meat, no coffee, no tea, no milk, and no fruit. The meal eaten at home in the evenings consists of beet salad, potatoes, and a thin slice of bread. There are two Jewish women who left their homes to live in the pension where Halit Ziya stays. One day, while talking to them about the food shortage, the two women look at each other and agree with their eyes to say that he can obtain meat, eggs, and butter from a secret organization if they mediate. Halit Ziya gets butter, meat, eggs, and bread for Vedat through this Jewish masonic lodge. When Vedat comes to the hostel in the mornings, he puts food into his coat pockets in small packages, but Vedat does not touch any of them. When asked why he doesn't eat them, he always says that he is full.

Switzerland

One day, Halit Ziya's cousin, Muammer comes to Berlin with his daughter, Latife. In Germany, he has two sons, Ismail and Omer, who have settled in different cities with Halit Ziya's help. His wife, other son Munci, daughters Vecihe, Rukiye, and Latife also stay in Austria. Later, Halit Ziya figures that he came to take his sons from Germany to Switzerland with those who remain in Austria. Their departure to a safe country causes sadness and envy in Vedat. He sadly says to his father, "They are leaving; we are staying." Of the relatives, only Zeki remains in Germany. Halit Ziya invites him to Berlin on holidays to reduce Vedat's loneliness to some extent. After that, he takes Vedat to Berchtesgaden, a part of Germany that is likened to Switzerland. The meals served at their hotel are no different than in Berlin, but thanks to the head of the hotel staff, they have access to butter, cheese, and eggs. Instead of climbing the mountain like other people, they visit places in the town.

The Spartacists

One evening, Vedat buys two tickets to the opera for himself and his father. Halit Ziya takes his seat at the exact hour and starts to wait for Vedat. Although the second act ends, Vedat does not show up, so Halit Ziya comes out in anxiety. When he listens to the crowd outside, he learns that the Spartacists have occupied the university. When he asks an officer about the situation of the students, he finds out that all employees and students are safe. Yet he cannot sleep until the morning.

Vedat shows up in the morning and tells him what happened entertainingly. Unlike Halit Ziya, he is not afraid at all. When he wants to go to the school, Halit Ziya does not want to leave him alone and accompanies him. Near the school, they are caught in a gunfight between the police and Spartacists, but no one is injured.

As life in Berlin becomes more unsafe every day, Vedat cannot stand it and says that he does not want to stay there anymore. One day, Arif Cemil, the aide of Talât Pasha, comes to Berlin and informs Halit Ziya that Talât Pasha intends to send him to Switzerland and wants to meet with him. Talât Pasha is in Berlin because he had to leave the country. Halit Ziya meets with him in the hotel where he stays and states that he does not believe that he can do anything in Switzerland. However, Talât Pasha still asks him to go and negotiate in favor of the Turks. When Halit Ziya tells Arif Cemil that he wants to go to Switzerland with his son, Arif Cemil makes the necessary arrangements, and Halit Ziya and Vedat set off.

To Switzerland

To arrive in Switzerland, they plan to go to Munich and then take the ferry from Lindau to cross Lake Constance. When they board the train for Munich, an officer comes with a box and informs that the package was sent to Vedat by the wife of Ambassador Rifat Pasha, who is a close friend of Halit Ziya. After the officer leaves, they open the box and find cookies in it.

The train stops suddenly after a while. When Vedat gets out to see what is happening, he learns that the Spartacists have occupied the station. After a very long time, the train moves again. They arrive in Munich in the dark. When they are alone with their belongings, Halit Ziya sees a man in shabby clothes and asks him to carry his belongings for money. The man laughs, telling them that many hotels are under occupation, and then takes them to a hotel opposite the station. Since the beds are filthy,

Vedat lies down without changing his clothes, and Halit Ziya prefers to doze where he sits. In the morning, he goes out to find out if there is a train heading to Lindau.

There is a train, but its time is not clear. As soon as he learns it, he buys two first-class tickets and wakes Vedat. They find the train full of people even though it is very early. As he is about to take a seat, three German soldiers come and sternly ask what they are doing there. When Halit Ziya shows his tickets, one of the soldiers laughs and shows the sign "Reserved For Officers" on the door.

They go out dragging their bags and start looking for an empty place on the train. At one point, a woman hits the window and calls them to her side. They go in, but everywhere is full of people. Vedat sits next to the woman, and Halit Ziya sits on his bag. After a long wait, the train starts to move, but at night it stops suddenly. One of the passengers, wondering if there is an accident, gets off, and when he returns, he tells that the locomotive will take the first half of the long train to Lindau and return to carry them. So they arrive at Lindau around midnight and settle in a hotel by the lake.

In the morning, they explore the town. When it's time to board the ferry, officers search both their bags and their clothes. Due to the measures taken to prevent money smuggling, Halit Ziya takes a small amount of money on him and hides a significant amount in the lining of his coat. The hidden money is not noticed, but the officer orders him to deliver his money to the manager of the hotel where he stayed in return for a receipt to be encashed in Switzerland.

They arrive in a town called Romanshorn and check in a hotel by the lake. Due to the food shortage in Berlin, they rush into the hotel's dining room and eat the things that are not available in Germany. They wander around the town in the rain. After dinner, they retreat to their room, but the door is knocked when they are about to sleep. The manager invites them to a party at the hotel. They spend a long time having fun thinking that they will not be able to sleep somehow because of the noise. Eventually, due to fatigue and sleeplessness, they ask permission to return to their room and sleep deeply despite all the noise. The next day, they go to Zurich.

Bern

Halit Ziya leaves Vedat alone to explore Zurich and goes to the bank. He learns that the transfer has not yet arrived and wants to change the money he brought in the lining of his coat. The bank clerk doesn't ask how he got the money into the country and changes it. The next day, they go to Bern to enroll Vedat at the university.

In Bern, there are no family hostels like in Berlin, and all hostels are in terrible condition. Halit Ziya, not being able to leave his son in such neglected places, strains his budget a little and goes to one of the recommended villas. He likes Villa Frey, run by the old daughters of a family. It has a rich library, a piano, and customers who enjoy music. Since Vedat has five days before the classes, Halit Ziya takes him to Lausanne, where he plans to stay.

Lausanne

They settle in the hotel where Halit Ziya's cousin, Muammer stays in Lausanne. Friends of Halit Ziya visit him. While sitting in the crowded hall of the hotel, one of the guests asks Vedat to play the piano. Vedat hesitates to play in front of the crowd, and upon the insistence, he runs away from the hall. Halit Ziya, getting angry with his attitude, goes after him and scolds him with harsh language. Vedat collapses on the couch for what he hears, and Halit Ziya returns to the hall. However, he expresses his embarrassment and sadness for his rude behavior toward his guests and Vedat.

Summer Holiday and Return to Istanbul

Halit Ziya establishes Vedat in the house of a lawyer he met in Lausanne so that Vedat can improve his English because the lawyer's wife is English. She speaks English with her children and Vedat. Meanwhile, Halit Ziya also settles in a villa. Vedat visits him every day and plays the piano for him and other customers.

Thanks to an Italian consulate employee who helps Turkish people who want to return to their country, a young man named Harun has the opportunity to return to Istanbul and helps Halit Ziya return to Istanbul, too. Until the day of departure, Halit Ziya shows Vedat as many different places as possible.

When they come to Taranto, they settle in a hotel, but it is impossible to find clean water. They stop by the barbershops to wash their faces. Eventually, they get on the ship, but it is overcrowded. One night, one of the ship's employees, who learned that Vedat plays the piano, asks him to play the piano. Vedat says he cannot do it because his notes are in his chest, and the chest is in the warehouse. But after a while, the man returns to say that his chest is next to their cabins now. Then Vedat plays the piano while the man sings. The man is one of the artists of Italy, but since he is unemployed due to the war, he earns his living singing. When he finishes singing and starts collecting money from the passengers, Vedat is concerned that people think he collects money, too. Thereupon, Halit Ziya tells him to put money on the man's tray in a way that everyone can see. After doing this, Vedat feels relieved.

Letters

After a short stay in Istanbul, Vedat returns to Switzerland alone. This time, however, his family thinks he's going through a crisis. Because his requests for money become more frequent and he sends a letter explaining that he wants to continue his education in Geneva. Halit Ziya believes that this change is related to his son's desire to escape from a woman. He asks the son of Mr. Rambert, the former director of Regié, who lives in Geneva, to investigate Vedat. This person goes to Bern and talks to Vedat, and writes a letter to Halit Ziya informing him that his son has nothing to worry about.

However, Halit Ziya is still not convinced. When Vedat returns to Istanbul for vacation, Halit Ziya sees him hiding a jewelry box in his drawer. Since this jewelry box is usually empty, the key stays on it, but Vedat locks it and keeps the key in his pocket. Later, he says that he has a semester left to finish school, but because he does not feel qualified enough, he wants to graduate after spending two semesters in Paris. Halit Ziya accepts this and provides references to Vedat through his friends in France, and Vedat goes to Paris. He rents a room in a family house.

After a while, the person who arranged this family house for him comes to Istanbul and complains to Halit Ziya about the nightlife of Paris by telling him that he made a mistake in letting his son live in Paris. Halit Ziya writes a letter to Gustave Mendel, a friend he trusts, asking him to investigate Vedat's life and send him back to Istanbul immediately. Although his friend does not give information openly, he writes a reply affirming his thoughts and sends Vedat to Istanbul.

When Vedat returns, Halit Ziya takes him to his friend, the director of the Ottoman Bank, Steeg and tells him that he wants his son to be a bank clerk. When his friend gives a positive response, Vedat starts to work at the bank. However, Halit Ziya cannot help wonder who the woman was and only partially learns this after his son dies. After the funeral, his daughter Bihin and his son Bulent burn Vedat's secret letters in the jewelry box. They both swear they haven't read any of them. But Bulent admits that he saw a picture of an older woman and could only see a part of her name; *Baronne de Chan...*

Istanbul

Two brothers, Bulent and Vedat, become bank clerks. Since it is difficult to go to the bank from Yesilkoy, an apartment is rented and furnished in Sisli, near the bank. The family spends seven months of the year in this house. Two brothers make friends with famous writers and musicians of the period. Although the bank does not hire the locals as an inspector, it makes an exception for Vedat. For Halit Ziya, these days are the happiest days of his family.

Ankara

Years ago, Halit Ziya hosted Latife, daughter of his cousin Muammer, in his house for a long time, and during this time, he helped her improve her Turkish, French, and general culture. When Latife marries Mustafa Kemal, he goes to Ankara to congratulate them. Shortly after his return to Istanbul, Vedat goes to Ankara to perform with the music group he founded with Ekrem Besim and Muhittin Sadak. Meanwhile, he stays in the Cankaya Mansion as Latife's guest.

One night, at a meeting with Ismet Inonu and Tevfik Rustu, Mustafa Kemal asks Vedat to play the piano and then makes him translate some newspapers from English, French, and German. When he finds out that Vedat works in a bank, he says that he should be a diplomat, not a bank clerk. After that night, Vedat begins to aspire to become a diplomat.

In Halit Ziya's second trip to Ankara, Mustafa Kemal asks him if Vedat still works at the bank, and when he finds out that he is still a bank clerk, he orders his aide to send a telegram to Vedat. When his aide goes out, Latife follows him, and when she returns, she tells Halit Ziya that because her husband usually forgets what he says, she did not let the aide send the telegram.

When telling what happened to Vedat, he says that Latife, as an older sister, probably does not find it appropriate for him to change his profession and live away from his family. However, Vedat opposes him, claiming that she does not prevent his brothers from working in Rome and Paris, and states that he wants to be a diplomat. Halit Ziya recommends that instead of resigning from the bank, he should switch to this profession by taking time off and points out that if Latife conflicts with Mustafa Kemal, his position may become fragile. Agreeing with his father, Vedat takes time off from the bank and goes to Ankara to become a diplomat.

However, after a while, a letter comes from Vedat. Latife left Ankara because of divorce. Before leaving, she told Vedat that it was not appropriate for him to stay there because he was her guest. But Vedat preferred to stay, saying that he would not do anything without letting his father know. Now, he asks what to do. Halit Ziya writes back that he is there as a guest of the president, not Latife, and at his disposal. Vedat receives the letter while playing the piano, and as reading it, Mustafa Kemal comes in. When he finds out that it is from Halit Ziya, he wants to read it, too and does not give it back.

The Brothers

Mustafa Kemal appoints Vedat to the London Embassy as the third secretary. The Ottoman Bank sends Bulent to London to improve himself. Thus, the two brothers rent an apartment and start living together. One evening, Halit Ziya and his wife arrive in London without notifying them, and when the maid informs Bulent, he throws the violin in his hand with excitement. Vedat, who comes twenty minutes later, welcomes them more calmly. After staying for twelve days, Halit Ziya and his wife return to Istanbul.

When the two brothers return from London, Bulent decides to resign from the bank and become a diplomat. This time, both of them settle in a house in Ankara. Some items, including the piano that Sultan Resat gifted to Vedat, are sent to the new home from Istanbul. However, since the income of the two brothers is not enough to maintain a house, Halit Ziya, as a father, gives them a monthly allowance, thinking that he has raised two good diplomats for the country.

Vedat is appointed to the Washington Embassy, but he prefers to go to Europe to earn his degree since is not a graduate of a university. Thus, Bulent goes to Washington instead.

Disappointment

After Bulent leaves, Vedat starts to live alone in Ankara, but in his letters, he constantly complains about the envy of his colleagues. After a long wait, he is appointed to Berlin as the first secretary. Before going to Berlin, he sells all his belongings in the house, including his piano, and settles in a hotel room.

A few days later, Halit Ziya receives the news that Vedat is waiting for him in Ankara. In Ankara, he finds Vedat collapsed. Two days ago, he attended an official invitation; while he was enjoying the excitement of going to Berlin a few days later, one of his colleagues notified him that his appointment was canceled. Halit Ziya offers a meeting with the minister first, but Vedat says that the minister always makes promises and will not treat him differently. Then, he thinks to meet with Mustafa Kemal, but this time, Vedat says that the president's compliments cause envy around him, so he wants to move forward in his profession without his support. Halit Ziya asks who his friends are and who has hostility toward him. Finally, he leaves his son in Ankara alone and returns to Istanbul.

Prague

After a while, a letter arrives from Vedat stating that he is appointed to Prague as the first secretary. Vedat sets off after seeing his family in Istanbul. However, when the ambassador dies in surgery, Vedat becomes the deputy ambassador. He soon becomes a well-liked person because he speaks to other ambassadors in their native language. The German ambassador pays a return visit within twenty-four hours, going beyond the ordinary. However, since the embassy is not suitable for accepting a visitor, Vedat buys a bridge set, tea and coffee cups, and cigarette sets, paying from his

pocket. He also orders a car from Washington through his brother. To complete the university, he enrolls at a German university in Prague.

Latife's Visit

One day, Latife calls Halit Ziya to say that she misses him very much, but she does not want to come to the house in Yesilkoy, where she has stayed for a long time before and wants to meet outside. They agree on the place and time, but later, Resit Saffet suggests they will meet at his home. Halit Ziya accepts the offer. When they meet, Latife asks questions, especially about Vedat, and praises him very much. Halit Ziya does not see Latife again until the death of her brother, Munci.

Another Disappointment

One day, Halit Ziya comes across a friend working in Foreign Affairs and learns that Vedat was suspended. To give the news to Vedat, Halit Ziya sends a telegram stating that he is wanted for a more critical mission in Ankara and sends his wife to Ankara to understand the situation. He also asks Resit Saffet to learn the reason for this decision. Resit Saffet states that the administration made the decision, and his wife returns the day she goes after meeting with a few of Vedat's friends. She learned that one day, Minister Tevfik Rustu hastily asked Haydar Bey to suspend Vedat. The disciplinary committee in the ministry stated that they could not oppose this decision, but rather than implementing such a decision without an unknown reason, recalling Vedat to Ankara would be appropriate.

While these are happening, Numan, who always protects Vedat, is not in Ankara; Belgrade Ambassador Haydar Bey acts for him. Halit Ziya met this person when he acted for the principal clerk Sevki Bey at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was disturbed by his rudeness. Thus, he doesn't want to contact this man again on this issue. But through a friend, he asks the minister about the reason for the decision. The minister explains that he made such a decision because he was under pressure, but he does not share who put pressure on him.

Vedat is in Istanbul

Vedat returns to Istanbul in a miserable condition. He does not go to Ankara and decides to study Law to advance his career. Halit Ziya supports his son's decision to study at university for the second time. A hall is reserved for him at home. But bad luck does not leave Vedat alone. The moving company brought his chest to Turkey. In the chest are the things he bought for the embassy, the clothes he brought from a tailor in London and a statue of a young man who is about to fall. When he brings the chest home from the customs, he opens its lid to show the statue to his father and realizes that his clothes have been stolen. However, his coat, which has never been worn like his stolen clothes, remains. He wears that coat for the first time a year later when the Red Crescent President Ali Riza Pasha invites him to iftaar. At the end of the evening, he goes downstairs with everyone but cannot find his coat. On a winter night, he goes out to look for a taxi, and after that night, he has a long-lasting illness.

Halit Ziya is unhappy that his son studies at university at the age of twenty-five and gradually becomes more depressed. Vedat escapes from people, preferring to hide. He doesn't even like the music anymore. Whenever the radio is open at home, he complains; eventually, Halit Ziya gives the radio to his daughter and starts to listen to the gramophone, but Vedat is uncomfortable with it, too. Whenever he is asked to play the piano, he does not want to play. One day, this request is repeated by Halit Ziya on his sickbed, but Vedat apologizes and says he cannot play it.

Halit Ziya is devastated when he sees that people around him feel sorry for his son, too, but he believes that misfortune has existed in his family for a long time. His grandfather Haci Ali Efendi was always successful, while his brother Huseyin Efendi spent his whole life trying to stop harm and loss. While his father, Haci Halil Efendi, struggled with deprivation, his uncle Sadik was successful. While his older brother Etem spends his life in sorrow, he leads a beautiful life except for his loss of children. Vedat makes these comparisons between himself and his brother Bulent, too, and always says, "I am the Etem Bey of this family." Halit Ziya likens him to his brother, saying that whenever he lies on his bed studying, he shakes his right foot on his left foot, just like his brother Etem used to.

Returning to the Profession

Vedat is considered to have resigned because of a long break by the ministry, but he is ready to return to the profession after his graduation from the Faculty of Law. He does not know how to do it, though. As a family, they fear that the ministry will cause difficulties. The minister thinks that Vedat was employed in the Foreign Affairs on Mustafa Kemal's order, and to return to the profession, he needs Mustafa Kemal's order again. Although Halit Ziya is angry with this way of thinking, he can do nothing but go to Ankara and meet with his son's colleagues, who are close to Vedat. He feels frustrated for his unemployed son, despite all his years of study, and as a father, he has no other choice but to go door to door for his son.

He meets with Bulent in Ankara. Bulent takes him to General Secretary Hasan Riza. While Bulent is waiting outside, Halit Ziya enters his room; Hasan Riza immediately gets up, shows him a comfortable place to sit, pulls up a small chair in front of him for himself, and states that it is appropriate to write a petition. Upon this suggestion, Halit Ziya returns to the hotel to write a petition to be presented to the president, telling what happened after Vedat started his career. Bulent takes the petition and takes it to Hasan Riza. On the same day, while waiting in his room in the hotel, the phone rings; it is Hasan Riza who calls. He informs that he has submitted the petition to the president; he is very sorry for what has happened and will contact the ministry for Vedat to return to the profession. As soon as Halit Ziya gets the news, he informs Vedat. Then, he meets his two friends, and they recommend he write a letter to the minister, as he will be disturbed by Vedat's return. Halit Ziya follows this advice and leaves a note to the minister before leaving Ankara.

A Wedding and a Funeral

After Vedat returns to the profession, the family tries to marry Bulent off, but Bulent likes no girl mentioned by his family. One day, Vedat comes from Ankara and says that he found the girl Bulent wants to marry. The girl is Yunus Nadi's daughter Leyla. He met her at a party in Ankara; they danced and had a long conversation, and he admired her. While he is telling these, Bulent smiles, indicating that he has seen Leyla before. Halit Ziya visits Yunus Nadi and briefly explains his family's intention. When Yunus Nadi receives the approval of his daughter, an engagement ceremony is held in Istanbul immediately. They do not want to delay the wedding and prepare a ceremony for hundreds of guests in Ankara.

While Halit Ziya and his wife are waiting for the ferry's time at home to take them to the train to go to the wedding, the phone rings, the caller informs Halit Ziya that his wife's brother, Mehdi, died on the way to Ankara. After that, Vedat calls to say that there will not be music at the wedding. Halit Ziya leaves his wife in Istanbul and goes to Ankara. In the evening, the funeral is held under the light of the cars, while it is raining. The next day, the wedding is held at noon. When Halit Ziya tells Vedat that he must have already married because he is older, Vedat says he does not want anyone to share his misfortune and that he cannot marry without reaching a level of prosperity in life.

Brussels

Sukru Kaya, who acts for Minister Tevfik Rustu Aras, assigns Vedat to the embassy in Brussels with the promise that he will become the first secretary after staying there for a few months. Vedat rents an apartment for himself in Brussels and hires a helper who is a master cook. He frequently meets with the Weyl Family, who are friends of Halit Ziya. When Bulent is appointed to London, they visit each other whenever they find the opportunity.

But the Consul of Antwerp commits suicide by taking many sleeping pills. Upon that, the ministry decides that the embassy will carry out the business of the consulate, too. Vedat stays with the consul at his last hours, takes care of the funeral. After the funeral, he goes from Brussels to Antwerp by train every morning and finishes the paperwork there until noon, comes to his home in Brussels for lunch, and then carries out the embassy's work. Halit Ziya says that everyone feels that this heavy workload repulses Vedat from Brussels.

When his friend Ali is appointed ambassador to Tirana, he reminds Vedat of a previous conversation between them. Ali asked Vedat if he would come to where he is appointed ambassador, and Vedat said he would. Reminding this conversation, he jokingly asks if he is willing to come to Tirana; Vedat says he is. By comparing Brussels with Tirana, Halit Ziya thinks this is not a good idea, as the status of the first secretary has not yet been achieved. However, he cannot do anything.

A Building

Vedat sends his belongings in a chest to Tirana with a moving company. After a while, Halit Ziya is amazed by the detailed list of these items because they are adequate for a family with children. When he teases Vedat telling that the furniture is ready, but there is no house, Vedat says that he and his brother Bulent are planning to build an apartment in Ankara. He wants something left in their hands because they lost everything they had. He buys a land auctioned by the General Directorate of Foundations Administration in his mother's name. When the building is completed, they discuss what name they will give to it, and in the end, with the suggestion of Vedat, it is named after Sinan Agha, who built a mosque and a school in the neighborhood. One day, while chatting, Vedat jokingly tells his parents, "I married your son off; I built a building for you, too."

Tirana

A year after Vedat's death, Bulent tells his father that the items Vedat sent to Tirana were stolen, just like before. Among those stolen is the statue that he loved, along with the dresses made by his tailor in London, so he ordered the same statue from Prague. However, his sofa set, designed especially for his house in Brussels, and other belongings rot in the warehouse.

Vedat loves life in Tirana. He finds himself in a community that closely follows Turkey. Among the people he likes, some read the books of his father. One of them is King Zogo. So he shows an unofficial affinity to Vedat at the first ceremony they meet. Since Vedat is good at organizing, he organizes all receptions and does it so well that when other embassies have reception, they ask for their support. Thus, thanks to Vedat, the embassy has a rich wine cellar.

Meanwhile, Bulent is appointed the first secretary to Bucharest. That disappoints Vedat because he is now at the same level as his younger brother despite the difference in age and seniority. His promotion is postponed as in Brussels. That is why, despite his beautiful life, he can never be happy.

In the end, he writes a letter to his friend Numan, complaining that the ministry promoted some of his peers even though they do not deserve it and that he is dragged to resignation. However, when he sends that letter, Numan is in Europe to undergo a surgery. Halit Ziya then writes a letter to a friend in the ministry to ask for help. But his friend is also hopeless because he cannot do anything without the support of Undersecretary Agâh Bey.

Halit Ziya is devastated when he sees the increasing unhappiness in his son's letters. Vedat explains that the ministry tries to overwhelm him with too much workload. During his assignment in Brussels, he requested an assistant because he finished the paperwork of both the consulate and the embassy; however, only after he moved to Tirana did the ministry fulfill this request. Halit Ziya says that the same thing happened in Tirana; Vedat performed the work of several people until he died, and only after he died did the ministry turn the embassy into a full-fledged one.

Meanwhile, Halit Ziya starts receiving anonymous letters shortly before his son dies. Since there are many ugly expressions in them, he burns all but one. However, he later discovers that Vedat also received such letters.

A Dream and the News of His Death

Halit Ziya has a dream in the last month of 1937 on the night of Eid Eve. Although he does not usually see Vedat in his dreams, that night, in his dream, Vedat stands right in front of him, looking at him without saying anything. He hugs him, kisses his face and first licks, and then bites his chin. He is very impressed by this strange dream but does not say anything to his wife. He sees the news while reading the morning edition of *Son Posta* to linger before going to the market to buy some eid candy. On the news, it is written that the Ambassador of Tirana, Yakup Kadri, hit a woman with his car in Split, Yugoslavia. The news is incorrect because Yakup Kadri is ambassador to Prague. Considering this mistake, Halit Ziya thinks there may be other mistakes in the news too. He goes to the bazaar without sharing anything with anyone, buys eid candy, sends it home with his servant, and then goes to the executive council meeting in the Regié Company. When he shares the situation with his friends, his friends decide to call the ministry. On the phone, Halit Ziya speaks to Undersecretary Agâh Aksel about the news in the newspaper. Agâh Bey coldly says that the statement is wrong and that such an event did not happen. While Halit Ziya is so hectic, he is strangely calm. Halit Ziya's anxiety continues even after he hangs up the phone.

Meanwhile, Numan encourages Halit Ziya to call the minister. Halit Ziya calls the minister this time. Before he asks anything, the minister tells that they are doing their best for his son's well-being. Upon this expression, Halit Ziya collapses. In the following report, it is written that Vedat, like the consul in Antwerp, committed suicide by drinking many sleeping pills. The next day, those who received the news come to express their condolences, those who did not come for the eid celebration. However, nobody asks for an explanation. Halit Ziya says that everyone knows what happened to his son, so they never asked him any questions.

His Last Day

That day, while Ambassador Ali Turkgeldi and Vedat are at lunch, a telegram is delivered stating that the ministry suspended Vedat from work without any reason. Having read it, Vedat hands it to the ambassador with a dull expression. When the ambassador sees what is written, he states that he will object to the lawless decision and immediately writes a response and has Vedat read what he wrote. Vedat appreciates what is written, but he proposes to sleep on it and then gets permission to wander outside.

When he returns, he asks employees not to disturb him. However, a few minutes later, he summons an attendant to warn him not to forget the flowers of the tables since a feast will be held at the embassy for eid celebration. When he is on his own, he writes a letter to the ambassador. The letter begins with the sentence, "There was no other solution for this." He asks his debts in Tirana be paid from his salary, not knowing that the ministry has already confiscated his last paycheck.

When he does not go out the following day, his door is knocked, but no answer is received. The ambassador is informed. Afterward, one enters from the terrace. Besides Vedat, he finds four empty tubes of Luminal, his mother's photograph, a letter written to his mother, and two more letters written to the ambassador.

After the incident, Ambassador Ali Turkgeldi corresponds with the ministry not hesitating to use harsh language. In this correspondence, he clearly states that Vedat committed suicide because he could not tolerate the injustice done by the ministry.

The Funeral

Ali Turkgeldi explains that after the death of Vedat, the Greek ambassador visited the embassy and cried for him, the Italian ambassador lowered the flag, and the Romanian ambassador stated that such a secretary has never come to Tirana until then. Some diplomats insisted that his body be exhibited at the embassy, but he opposed it because it is not religiously appropriate.

To bring his body to Istanbul, Bulent goes to Tirana from Bucharest. But first, a ceremony is held there. The funeral procession starts at the embassy, as agreed with the Albanian government. The flowers sent by the Albanian ministry and Vedat's friends follow a marching band. An inspector sent by King Zogo, Halit Ziya, and Bulent walk before the ministers, deputies, ambassadors, and the mayor. Some shopkeepers also attend the funeral. The coffin is carried by notable figures, including the Tirana Chamber of Commerce president. After the funeral prayer, the mufti of Tirana reads Qur'an and Nebil Cika, one of the important journalists of the country, gives a speech praising Vedat. The foreign minister expresses to Halit Ziya how real the grief shown by the people is; after everyone says goodbye to Halit Ziya and Bulent, the ceremony ends with a military salute. That day, many of the people wear signs of mourning while other embassies lower the flags.

Since the roads are closed due to snow, the body is sent by ferry from Durrës to Piraeus. A crowded funeral is held in Istanbul, too. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs neither sends a person nor a bunch of flowers representing the ministry.

The Silence of Ankara

When the news of Vedat's death arrives, his family receives telegrams and letters from many people sharing their pain. Still, only one telegram is sent from Ankara by Numan. No expression of sorrow reaches Halit Ziya from Vedat's friends and colleagues. All of those who write to him are ambassadors and their attendants abroad. The minister sends a short letter 16 days after Vedat's death. Halit Ziya adds that the minister sent that letter upon the recommendation of one of his friends.

The ministry's indifference hurts Halit Ziya so much that he writes a reproachful letter to Undersecretary Agâh Aksel. This letter ends by asking the undersecretary if his cat were dead and buried in his garden, whether he would not attend its burial for the last farewell. However, he keeps this letter to himself.

Themes

Overprotective Parenting Halit Ziya does whatever he can do to raise his children as he desires. He always finds a way to overcome every obstacle to his children's education – even the conditions created by the World War. He enrolls Vedat at university, decides which department he will study in, and arranges his place to stay through his friends. When he thinks that his son is dragged into an inappropriate love affair, he uses his circle of friends to investigate his son's life. He enables influential figures in his circle of friends to act as intermediaries helping his son realize his vital decisions. This situation does not change when his son starts to work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. When Vedat decides to return to the profession after studying in the Faculty of Law, he writes the required petition as his father.

Fatalism Halit Ziya prefers to evaluate what happened to his son Vedat in a duality he recognizes in his family history. According to him, his grandfather and granduncle, his father and uncle, he and his brother, and Vedat and Bulent have the same pattern in life; one sibling is fortunate while the other is not. His fatalism serves to normalize what happened to Vedat. However, misfortunes happen to Bulent as well. One of the most notable examples of that is that his uncle passes away the day before his wedding.

Resentment The feeling of how distinguished a character he was dominates all Halit Ziya's memories about Vedat. The insensitive attitude of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs toward the suicide of his gentle, thoughtful, and well-mannered son, whom he has worked hard to raise, hurts him. He points out the difference between the concern shown in the funeral in Tirana and the insensitive attitude in Turkey to express that his son was subjected to unfair treatment he did not deserve at all.

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