

My Mother At Home



There is no date on it, it is a picture taken in 1976.

My mother Varda Babakardash was a beautiful woman with a light complexion, medium height and brown eyes, she did not wear make-up but would dye her hair with henna.

My mother never went out with her head uncovered. In Adana, they would not look kindly on women with uncovered heads. She wore scarves. She was a very good housewife. Her first husband had died in war too but she did not have children. She was very fastidious about her clothing. They had 25 years of age difference with my father. She was quiet and calm. I would get the impression of a woman who had accepted her fate in my mother.

My mother had lost her first husband in war. My uncle Nesim Ipekeli takes her under his wing. When my uncle meets my father and becomes friends with him, he finds him appropriate for his niece. He says "Look, he has two children but he is wealthy, and a very good person. Get married, you will be comfortable". She agreed to marry my father because of poverty, the stress of being a widow, and most importantly, not being able to contradict the words of your family elder. My father was a friend of my uncle's family. My mother and father married in Iran. They had a civil marriage but I don't think they were married in a synagogue. They were married at home. This situation reflected on my mother's relationship with my father in reality. My father was both wealthy and handsome. He had two children, but he was older in years nevertheless, and "knew the value of a woman" according to the mentality of those times. My mother was an authoritarian mother. Because there was a large difference in age between them, whatever my mother said, was done. My father did all

the shopping. My mother did not even know how to buy bread.

My mother was a very clean woman, she cooked very well. Her time was spent that way anyways. She had jewelry. When I had measles, she would put that jewelry on me so I would not get up from bed and catch cold. She was obliged to sell all of the jewelry in time. In reality, even though my mother married because of pressure from her family, she demonstrated a very decisive and tough personality in her later years. After my father died, she took my older sister and me and came to Istanbul to prevent the family from dispersing.