

Harmful feelings of marginality, isolation, and alienation generate an array of consequences. In Virginia's case, she was driven to overeating: Armenian bread, halva, these and other rich Armenian foods served as substitutes that gave her some gratification. But now she was overweight and unattractive to the boys in her class. When she graduated from high school, she spent Prom Night alone in her room, crying.⁶⁸ Without a date, she couldn't attend the lavish party that every high school senior so eagerly anticipates (60–61).

In a short story titled "December 31,"⁶⁹ Vahé Oshagan depicts the case of a son's total estrangement in reaction to the perceived excessive demands of the family atmosphere. Vartges is the son of Barsegh Chelebian, a famous intellectual and the editor of *Hay khosnak* newspaper (the symbolic title means "the Armenian speaker"). "Vartges spoke Armenian fluently (շուրի պէս հայերէն կը խօսէր)," until one day he came home from school and declared that he had forgotten Armenian altogether. After he married an *odar*, he went away and never looked back, leaving his father helpless and alone, with no one to care for him in his old age.

Armenian social history and anecdotal evidence from second-generation survivors show that, like their parents, they too experienced prejudice and discrimination and sometimes insurmountable difficulty in adjusting, yet their challenges

⁶⁸ The prom (short for promenade), a popular tradition in the USA and gaining currency in Canada and the UK, is a semi-formal dance or gathering attended by graduating high school students at the end of their last term. They typically attend the event in couples. In many instances, the party turns into an unrestrained good time, and for some couples, a decisive moment in their future.

⁶⁹ Vahé Oshagan, *Dektember 31*, in *T'akardin shurj*, pp. 283–2.