

lost homeland. "We are Armenians and nothing will ever change that," her parents kept repeating. They instilled in their children the importance of keeping their faith and their language, as Armenians had done for centuries, and Mary grew up "insulated from the world" (11).

But all that couldn't last forever. When Mary graduated from primary school, she was ready to begin a new phase of life, but her father's iron-clad rules mercilessly smashed her dreams.

I reach the threshold of my teens without displaying any signs of normalcy defined by the image that Father imported from his native provincial town in Historic Armenia, now Eastern Turkey. That image has been frozen in his memory for forty years and at this time I have to live up to it as a young girl in Cairo—a bustling, Westernized, modern city. The generation gap, in our case, is an abyss. Is it any wonder that whenever we meet, we collide? (119)

The generation gap, the collision of the old and the new, the younger generation's resistance to the old ways had dire consequences, including alienation in many cases. In spite of the conservative comportment Mary adopted for herself, she was not prepared to compromise with her father and stepmother and fit herself into the traditional mold as they wanted her to do. She cringed every time her father started off with, "back in our time," or whenever he repeated his perennial question, "What do girls need education for?... Once a woman earns money, you can't control her" (119-20). Mary grew more and more determined to go her own way as her studies and her intense reading habit met with remarks like "Those books are raping your mind!" Her father didn't