

relationship remained that of a father and daughter. In fact, it is symptomatic how Heranoush remembered Husein, her substitute father figure, as a kind man. It is obvious that this little orphan girl tried to cope, to adapt to the new situation and create as normal an environment as possible for herself in order to survive. Husein, a low-ranking police officer, had been a regular participant in the Armenian carnage. Heranoush herself related that Husein took part in the beheading of Armenian men and throwing their bodies into a deep well somewhere between Çermik and Çüngüş (in the province of Diyarbakir), but she hastened to add that he did not obey orders to throw the women and children into the well—for which he was punished. Her subconscious effort to purge Husein of his past guilt and remember him as a kind man was challenged by her granddaughter Fethiye: “Grandma, why didn’t Husein’s kind heart ache when he was beheading the Armenian men?” She pressed the question, and Seher’s response, after thinking a while, was a mysterious one: “I don’t know why” (Çetin, p. 64).

After Husein died, his wife married Seher off at the age of thirteen and sent her off. Seher tried to adapt herself to her new situation, live by her nature as a loving, caring, and kind person, give birth to children, and nurture the “other” in her bosom. She did not reveal her secret to her children, but they knew that they were different, not true Turks. They heard about this embarrassing truth from other children in the neighborhood, as they were cursed and called names every time they got into a fight with them out in the street. The first time it happened was a total shock. How could their playmates call them “brats of a renegade”? They learned that