

## **Hallo Grandpaaa!**

It was the first days of April. It has been exactly eight months since coming from the village. We were trying to live in the big city. We were sitting around the stove, watching television as my father's phone rang. It was my grandmother on the phone. My grandfather has fallen down while repairing roof of our house at the village and broken his arm and leg. He was already sick for a long time. My father and brothers got prepared to immediately leave and go. My father turned towards me and told me that household was my responsibility. I was starting to grow up.

By the way, I should introduce myself. I am Hanifi Korkuş. I was born in December of the year 2000. I am from Gaziantep. I like kebab and baklava very much. I am the third sibling among four sons and two daughters. It is a little bit unmannerly to say but I am a little bit hardworking and smart. We moved in to the centre from village when I won the exam that I took last year. My God, it is so hard to get accustomed to the crowd. My father left farming that he had been doing for years and took a job at cotton factory. It is really hard for someone to get used to living in a crowded city...

I was saying that it was the first days of April. Apricots were just starting to blossom. My father took my grandpa to us. Our home was a one storey, two roomed Antep house in Hoşgor neighbourhood. My mother laid down a mattress across the television. He has been sick for a long time but for the first time he seemed that much decrepit...

It has been a week since the accident and grandpa has lost weight visibly, they were going to the doctor every two days with my father. His heart condition going on for years, after the accident, his readings have worsened further. Nobody was in the mood to talk at home. At night, grandpa called my father, he raised at the mattress and said look Memik, I am a

goner now and I want to see my Halil before I die. Grandma started to cry.

My father nodded his head calmly and said that it is okay daddy, I will look into that matter.

My fathers are two siblings. My father Memik and my uncle Halil. I never saw my uncle. In fact, none of us saw him. He went to Denmark in 1987 and afterwards he never returned to Turkey. My father is very good in farming but my uncle was a failure. He wanted to study but Grandpa did not allow it. Later on, after he came back from military, he wanted to go for work but when Grandpa did not allow it neither, he left the home one day. From time to time he was sending letters to Grandma but Grandpa did not know that, he was furious with his son. I have never seen him mentioning his name but he talked about him and told that he wanted to see him. I couldn't understand whether people were becoming soft-hearted when they were close to death or they have always been soft-hearted but they hold themselves back because of their pride.

After a couple of days my father told that he has asked for my uncle around but couldn't find him, and he will continue to search for him. At that instant, a light shined in my mind, I told my father that I was going to an internet cafe to do my homework and left the house. All in all my uncle and I had the same surname and I could search for him over social media. Just I was saying that I couldn't find anything then I saw a shared photograph. It was me on the photograph but at its explanation "my father when he was little" was written by Lily Ayşe Korkuş. At that instance I understood why Grandpa looked at me that way, my uncle was just like me when he was a kid. I felt myself very weird. To my surprise I also had a cousin named Lily. I sent a message right away, telling that I was her cousin and asking about my uncle's health. Two days later I received the response I was waiting for.

It was a message written with a broken Turkish. She started her message with wishing well told that she knew she had cousins but she hesitated to write. She was the only child of my uncle. Like me, she was going to the ninth grade. She told her father about my message and uncle Halil has become sentimental when he saw my picture, I wondered why? It must be strange to face with your own childhood.

Like that, we started messaging with Lily but I told nothing about it at home. I thought my father would be furious. Now as soon as I came from school, I was going to the cafe after having something to eat.

Lily is a very sweet girl, he told me a lot of things; for example my uncle has fulfilled his dream. While working in Denmark he attended to the Life Long Learning Programme and afterwards he finished marketing. Now he was travelling all over Europe for the company he was working at. I was surprised. Because we have learnt at geography course that in order to go from one country to another, you had to get the permit called visa. However, there was right to travel among European Union countries, it was possible to go anywhere without a visa. Also there was right to work. I told her natural and historical beauties of Antep and turkey. I wish we were able to meet...

Grandpa's condition was getting worse day by day and I should do something. Even though I had a very important homework for my democracy class, I went to the cafe and we discussed on how to arrange a meeting between our fathers and came to an agreement. Lily was also curious about her uncle and Grandfather. When I told her that I had a homework on democracy and should leave early, she was a big help. She told me about fundamental values of European Union. Like Peace, Freedom, Equality, Human rights, Solidarity... Lily says that if we were to enter

European Union they could come here and we could go there easily. Also our standards of life would increase. Even she said that uncle Halil used to say “I wish there was my mother’s balcan kebab and I could have eaten it now”. If we were to enter European Union, they could have received Turkish products easier. Because Turkey’s agriculture was strong. My God, that Lily knows so much things. Do you know, Lily even has a course named Idea Generation? I envied her so much. I told her about the village, fields, deserts constantly. She was curious about here, sometimes she would check on here from internet...

It was the time of Hıdırellez. I told to my mother about Lily while we were throwing our wishes to the water near Alleben but she didn’t believe me. I couldn’t stand Grandpa’s condition any longer. After I got out of the school I went to my father’s factory. It was such a big factory. When I listened to Lily, I thought such factories were only in Europe. My father couldn’t leave until working hour was over. Lily has told me, they also worked in such discipline there. Along with it, health of workers was also very important at EU, they took harsh precautions. When my father saw me at the end of his shift, he was very surprised. “What are you doing here at this hour colt” he asked. I told him that I had something important to show him and took him to the internet cafe. He was very surprised when he saw lily. It was the first time that I saw him turning into a kid.

We opened a camera. We agreed on a meeting in the night when also my uncle will attend. There, night was later because of time difference...

My uncle and my father haven’t seen each other for nearly 30 years.

Although they were reproachful at first, they couldn’t keep it much longer.

Lily was surprised when she saw my uncle’s respect for my father. Then

I told about the respect shown to older here... My father and uncle were

reconciled.

My father bought a computer for us to be able to talk to Lily. I showed Lily my grandfather secretly. Lily could not stand any longer and she wanted to meet. Grandpa was drinking tea. I said “look whom I am going to show you” to my grandfather and put the computer on Grandpa’s lap.

“Hallo Grandpaaa!” said Lily;

You should have seen Lord Okkeş of years, he even spilled the tea on himself. But he understood everything. They talked at length. Lily had convinced her father saying that her grandfather was sick, he should empathise and leave the past behind. At their first talk Grandpa called me and to my uncle he said “I couldn’t send you to school but I will send him, forgive me”. Just come so that I can see your face.

I was waiting for Lily at the airport excitedly. In fact we had some differences but she was carrying a heart like I did, open to development, hardworking, tolerant, and the most important of all, she loved human beings because she was one. Intrinsicly we were one... We hugged each other really tight...

Kamil Kaya