

A film directed by Halit Refiğ

Based on the novel *Aşk-ı Memnu* (1900) by Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil

Aşk-ı Memnu (Forbidden Love) (synopsis)

A rich and “westernized” family in İstanbul at the end of the nineteenth century. Adnan Bey, a well-to-do older man lives with his daughter Nihal and son Bülent after the death of his wife. The children have a French nanny who takes care of them. Adnan Bey marries a young girl, Bihter, whose mother Firdevs Hanım is a well-known “easy” woman. Firdevs Hanım can not accept old age and resents her two daughters Bihter and Peyker who by their presence remind her of it. She is further disturbed because Adnan Bey marries her daughter instead of her. Bihter agrees to marry Adnan Bey both because he is rich and also because she feels that with such an ill-reputed mother she will never be able to find a proper husband.

Nihal, Adnan Bey’s ill-tempered daughter, can not accept this marriage and shows her resentment to Bihter. After a year of marriage, Bihter realizes that her old husband can not satisfy her sexually and tumbles into a relationship with her husband’s young nephew Behlül. She feels guilty about this affair but can not stop it. Behlül, on the other hand, is an insensitive womanizer. After the first fire blows over, Behlül grows tired of this relationship and with Firdevs Hanım’s encouragement decides to marry his cousin Nihal. This drives Bihter crazy and she threatens Behlül with disclosing everything to Adnan Bey. Nihal overhears this conversation and faints and the young black slave Beşir, who is in love with Nihal, tells Adnan Bey all that has happened. Bihter who can not bear to be branded as an “easy” woman like her mother commits suicide. Behlül flees. Adnan Bey and Nihal are left alone to go back to their old life together.