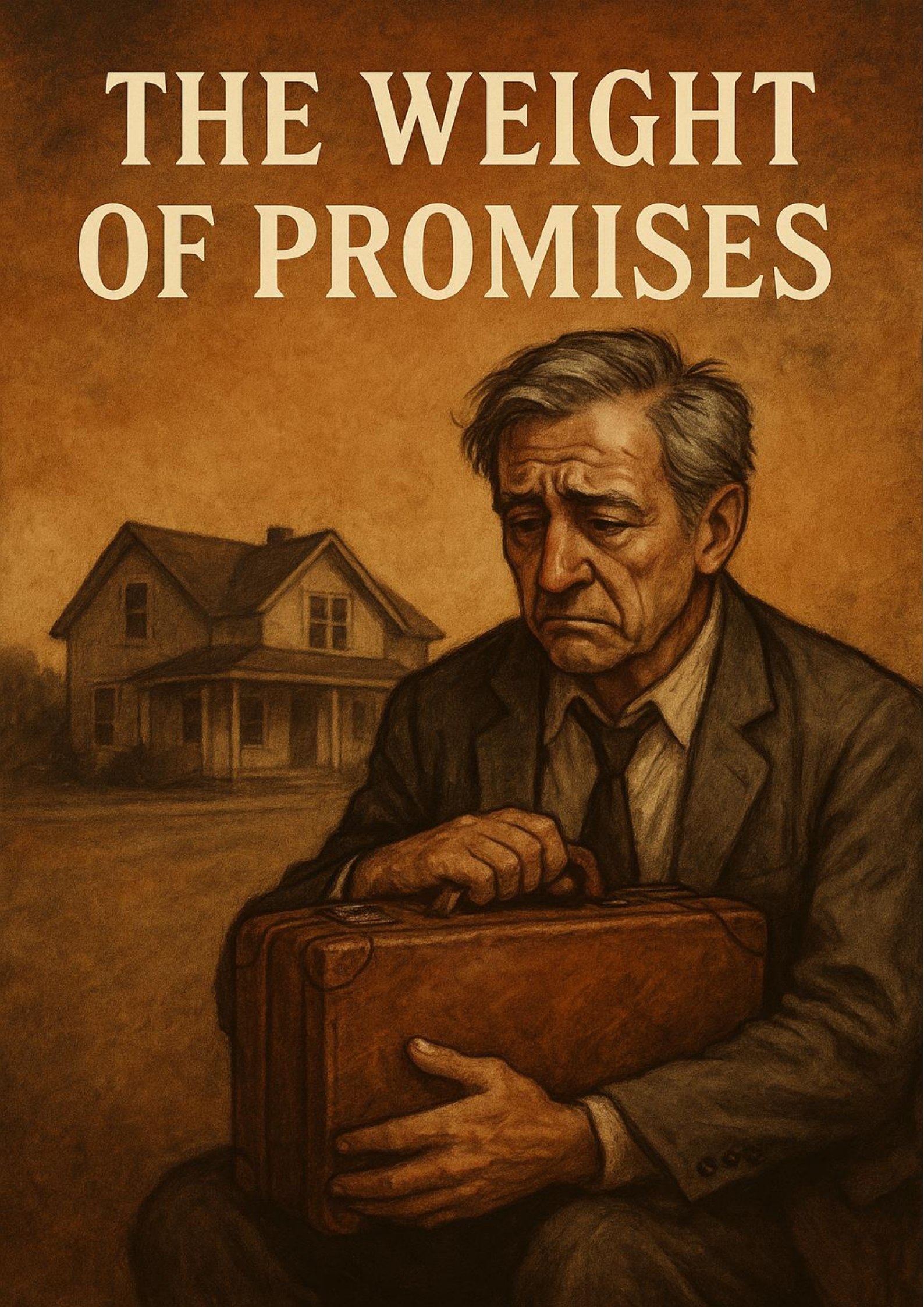
THE WEIGHT OF PROMISES



📖 Ön Söz (Spoiler) – The Weight of Promises

Sevgili okur,

Bu romanı okumaya başlamadan önce bilmeni isterim: karşına çıkacak olan hikâye sıradan bir adamın, Harold'un hikâyesi gibi görünecek. Ama aslında bu, hayallerin ağırlığı altında ezilen bir insanın, ailesi tarafından anlaşılmayan bir babanın ve toplum tarafından unutulan bir çalışanın trajedisidir.

Harold gençliğinde "başarının çalışmakla kazanılacağına" inanmış, ailesine büyük sözler vermiştir. Yıllarca evden eve, şehirden şehire dolaşarak satış yapmış, bir gün bütün hayallerinin gerçekleşeceğine inanmıştır. Fakat dünya değişir; onu bir zamanlar saygıyla karşılayan müşteriler, artık kapılarını kapatır. İş yerinde değer görmez, evde oğullarıyla çatışır, karısı Miriam'ın sessizliği bile ona ihanet gibi gelir.

Roman ilerledikçe Harold'un "başarı hayali"nin aslında ne kadar kırılgan olduğunu görürüz. En acı verici an ise kendi oğullarının gözünde bile artık "başarısız, yaşlanmış ve unutulmuş" biri hâline gelmesidir. Çalıştığı yılların emeği, taşıdığı bavul, verdiği sözler… hepsi boşa çıkmıştır.

Ama bu hikâye yalnızca Harold'un çöküşü değildir. Aynı zamanda bize şu soruyu sorar:

👉 Bir insanı ayakta tutan şey nedir? Para mı, başarı mı, yoksa ailesinin sevgisi mi?

Okurken Harold'un yalnızlığında kendinizi bulabilir, aile içi çatışmaların ne kadar derin yaralar açabileceğini hissedebilirsiniz.
Evet, bu bir trajedidir. Ama aynı zamanda, hepimize ayna tutan bir hikâyedir:
Sözlerimizin ağırlığını taşıyabilir miyiz, yoksa bir gün o sözlerin altında mı ezileceğiz?

In a quiet neighborhood of a large city, there lived a salesman named Harold, who was **respected** once but who was **forgotten** now.
He was a man who had worked for years, traveling from town to town to sell products which were needed in every house.
But the world had changed, and the man who was trusted by customers long ago became someone who was **ignored** by them now.

Harold had a wife, Miriam, who was **devoted** to her family.
She was the one who kept the house warm even when money was not enough.
They had two sons, David and Simon.
David was a dreamer, always talking about what he would do, where he would go, and how much success he would achieve.
Simon was quieter, the kind of son who was expected to be strong but who was often **forgotten.**

Every morning, Harold left the house to be seen as a man who was still useful.
He carried a suitcase which was filled with samples,
but the shops refused to open their doors for him because they no longer needed what he sold.

At home, he sat in the kitchen, drinking coffee while thinking about what had happened to his life.
He remembered the promises that he had made to Miriam—
promises which were spoken when he was young and full of hope.
He wanted to be remembered as a father who provided, not as a man who was defeated.

But the walls of the house, which were painted long ago, began to fade.
The laughter which was once heard inside grew weaker.
And Harold felt the pressure of dreams that were never realized.

Harold was a man who was known in his youth as a traveler who brought goods to every house.
He believed that success was something to be earned by working harder than others,
and he taught his sons that dreams could be bought by saving, by selling, and by never giving up.

But years passed, and the city changed.
The shops which were opened by new owners no longer wanted his suitcase.
The customers, who were once welcomed by Harold's smile, now preferred markets that were filled with cheaper goods.
Every door that he knocked on seemed heavier, every street longer.

At home, Miriam watched him carefully while preparing dinner.
She knew that Harold was tired, but she never told him what she feared:
that one day he would come home empty, not only from money but also from hope.

David, the older son, was always talking about plans.
He spoke of cities which were brighter, jobs that were bigger, and money that was easier to earn.
He promised his father, "One day, I will make you proud. I will show you what success means."
But Harold, who was once proud of such words, now felt doubt.
He wondered whether promises could be trusted, or whether words were only dreams spoken aloud.

Simon, the younger son, stayed quiet.
He was the one who listened while others argued,
the one who carried the small responsibilities that were left behind.
He wanted to be noticed, to be loved, to be remembered,
but he was the son who was **forgotten** most of the time.

Late at night, Harold sat alone in the living room.
He stared at the old photos which were hanging on the wall—
photos of a younger man who was smiling, a wife who was hopeful, and children who were laughing.
He asked himself, "What happened to us? What happened to the man I promised to be? Which dream was broken first?"

His heart trembled while thinking about the future.
He wanted to be strong, to be **respected,** to be remembered.

But he felt the heavy truth: he was becoming a man who was **forgotten,** a salesman who was no longer needed.

One morning, Harold left home earlier than usual.
He carried the same suitcase, heavy not only with samples but also with years of **disappointment.**
The streets, crowded with younger men selling new products, reminded him of the truth that he tried to ignore.
He was no longer the salesman who was trusted—he was only a name **forgotten** by customers.

At the office, his manager, Mr. Klein, looked at him sharply.
"You must bring results," he said.
"These are not the times when **loyalty** matters.
These are the times when profit speaks."
The words struck Harold like a weight, because they reminded him that years of **loyalty** could be erased by hiring someone younger.

He promised himself to work harder, to be seen again as a man who was valuable.
But the shops refused him one by one,
and the people who once welcomed him closed their doors quickly.
Every **rejection** was a mirror, reflecting what he feared:
that he was becoming **invisible.**

At home, David returned late, full of new stories.
He spoke of friends living in cities larger than this one,
people earning money faster than Harold ever could.
"Father," David said, "you must understand that the world has changed.
You cannot live on promises anymore."
The words, spoken by a son who was raised by Harold, cut him deeply.

Simon sat quietly in the corner, watching his father.
He was the son **forgotten** in conversations, yet he was the one listening carefully.
He wanted to speak, to tell them what he thought,
but silence felt safer, because words often led to shouting.

Miriam, who was cooking in the kitchen, entered the room with tired eyes.
She said softly, “Harold, maybe it is time to rest.
Maybe you should stop traveling.”
But Harold could not accept to be seen as weak.
He raised his voice, insisting that tomorrow would bring better results.

That night, while sitting alone in the living room, Harold looked at his sons’ faces in the photographs hanging on the wall.
He wondered which future they would choose, and what role he would play in it.
The silence answered for him:
he was a man slowly moving towards an ending that could not be avoided.

The following week, Harold was called to the office of his manager, a room which was decorated with bright furniture and new machines.
Mr. Klein, a man who was **respected** by the young employees, looked at Harold without sympathy.
“You must understand,” he said, “that times are changing. We need men who bring results, not men who were trusted twenty years ago.”

Harold tried to defend himself, saying that experience should be valued.
He reminded Klein of the clients who were gained by his work, the long nights spent traveling, the promises that he had fulfilled.
But the manager only replied coldly, “Experience is nothing without sales. If you cannot sell, you cannot stay.”

Humiliated, Harold walked home slowly, passing shops filled with goods imported from abroad,
shops which were visited by crowds that had no memory of him.
He thought about what he could do to be accepted again, but every idea felt weaker than the last.

At dinner, the tension grew.
David, the ambitious son, spoke again about leaving the city to work in a company larger than his father’s,
to earn more money, to live a life freer than Harold’s own.

“You don’t understand, Father,” David said.
“You are fighting a battle that was already lost.”

The words struck Harold, because they came from a son who was supposed to inherit his dreams.
He shouted, his voice shaking, “Do not tell me what is possible and what is not!
I built this life to give you opportunities, and this is how you thank me?”

Simon, sitting quietly in the corner, tried to speak.
He wanted to tell his father that he cared,
but Harold’s anger filled the room, leaving no space for words to be heard.
Simon remained silent, the **forgotten** son watching carefully, the one who was **ignored** again.

Miriam placed her hand gently on Harold’s arm, whispering,
“Please, Harold. Stop fighting with your own family.
You must rest, even for a day.”
But Harold pulled away, because rest felt like surrender.
And surrender was something to be feared more than failure itself.

That night, while walking through the empty streets, Harold imagined his younger self—
the man who was admired by customers, the man who believed that hard work could change everything.
He asked himself, “Which promise broke first? The one I gave to myself, or the one I gave to my family?”

The day came when Harold was called to the manager’s office for the last time.
Mr. Klein, who was surrounded by younger men taking notes, looked at him and said,
“Harold, you are finished here. There is no space for men who cannot sell.”

The words echoed like a sentence.
It was not only a job that was lost; it was an identity, a lifetime, a promise.
Harold stood frozen, holding the suitcase which was filled with samples nobody wanted.
He tried to speak, to explain what he had given, but his voice was **ignored.**
The door was closed, and he was left to be **forgotten.**

Walking home while carrying the heavy suitcase, Harold felt weaker with every step.
The streets were crowded with men who were younger, stronger, faster,
men selling products imported cheaply, men who were replacing him without even knowing his name.
He realized that the world no longer cared who he was or what he had done.

At home, the final storm broke.
David, impatient and full of plans, shouted,
“Father, don’t you see? You are chasing dreams that died long ago.
You should stop **pretending.”**
His words were sharp, spoken like truth, but they felt like **betrayal.**

Harold, trembling, raised his voice:
“I worked my whole life to give you opportunities!
I was the man who was trusted, the man who believed that hard work was enough!
And now you tell me that everything I gave means nothing?”

Simon, the quieter son, stepped forward.
He tried to defend his father, but his voice was small, his words drowned while David shouted louder.
Simon was the son who was willing to stay, the son who was ready to listen,
yet even now, he was the son who was **forgotten** again.

Miriam, crying, begged them all to stop fighting.
But Harold could not stop.
He was trapped between what he had promised and what he had failed to achieve.
The room shook not because of noise, but because every word carried the weight of years.

At that moment, Harold saw the truth:
He was no longer the man who was **respected,**
no longer the father who was admired,
no longer the husband who was trusted to bring hope.
He was only a man to be remembered as a dreamer who was defeated.

The living room, once a place where laughter was heard, turned into a battlefield filled with anger.

David stood tall, his words sharper than knives.
“You cannot keep living in the past, Father. You are a man who was defeated long ago.
You are chasing a dream that no longer exists.”

Harold’s hands trembled.
He lifted the old suitcase, the same one which was carried for decades,
the same one that represented promises made but never fulfilled.
“This suitcase is my life!” he shouted.
“It holds every mile I traveled, every door I knocked, every hope I tried to sell.
Do you know what it means to be **ignored** after years of **loyalty?**
Do you know what it feels like to be **forgotten?”**

Miriam cried, her hands shaking while holding a broken cup.
She whispered, “Harold, please stop. You are breaking apart the family that you swore to protect.”
Her words cut deeper than David’s anger,
because Harold knew that she spoke the truth:
his promises, spoken to be kept, were now wounds that could not be healed.

Simon finally raised his voice, his eyes burning.
“Father, I am still here! I am the one who was always watching,
the one listening while you argued with David,
the one waiting to be seen.
Why can’t you notice me? Why can’t you see what I have carried in silence?”

But Harold, blinded by shame, could not hear his younger son.
He was trapped inside his own storm,
a storm made of promises that were broken,
dreams which were never realized,
and expectations too heavy to be carried by one man alone.

The silence after the shouting was heavier than the shouting itself.
Everyone sat still, afraid to speak,
afraid to admit what was happening:
the family was falling apart, piece by piece,

while Harold stood in the middle,

a man to be remembered not for victory, but for **collapse.**

The days after the argument felt longer than before.

Harold sat alone in the living room, staring at the suitcase which was placed beside the chair.

It was no longer a tool to be used for work; it was a coffin of broken promises.

Miriam moved quietly around the house, avoiding her husband's eyes.

She was the wife who had waited for years, the woman who was promised happiness,

but she had become someone who was forced to carry silence instead of joy.

Every glance she gave Harold was heavy, because it reminded him that he had failed her.

David stayed out late, coming home with new plans to escape the house.

He spoke of companies hiring men younger and stronger,

of opportunities that could be taken if one was brave enough.

But his words were daggers, piercing his father's pride again and again.

Simon, the quieter son, kept watching his father in silence.

He was the boy waiting to be noticed,

the one sitting in corners while others fought,

the one who was ready to share the weight.

But Harold, blinded by despair, never saw what his younger son carried inside.

Nights were the worst.

While lying in bed, Harold listened to the emptiness of the house.

He asked himself again and again, "What am I now? A man who was **respected?** Or a man who was defeated?

Which memory will survive after I am gone? What will they remember?"

But silence was the only answer.

The world outside moved on quickly.

Shops were filled with new faces, streets crowded with buyers who had no idea who Harold was.

He became a ghost in his own city,

a man to be **forgotten,**

a salesman who was erased by time.

Harold stopped going to the office.
He was the man who was once seen traveling every day,
but now he was the figure sitting endlessly at home,
his suitcase resting in the corner like an artifact which was no longer needed.

Miriam, while preparing meals, left his plate on the table without a word.
She was tired of arguments, tired of hope, tired of waiting for a change that would never come.
Her silence was heavier than anger, because it meant that she had given up.

David began spending nights outside, telling friends that his father was finished.
He was ashamed to bring anyone home, ashamed to be connected to a man who was defeated.
He looked at Harold as if he were a burden to be hidden, not a father to be honored.

Simon, on the other hand, tried to sit near Harold whenever he could.
He was the only son who was still loyal, the one who was still waiting to be heard.
He whispered softly, “Father, tell me what you feel. Tell me what I should do.”
But Harold, lost in his own despair, could not answer.
His silence was a wall that separated him from the one person who cared.

Nights became endless.
While lying in the dark, Harold spoke to himself in whispers.
He asked, “What was I living for? Which dream betrayed me first? What will remain when I disappear?”
The questions circled, but no answers came.

The photographs on the wall, which were taken in better years, stared back at him.
They showed a man who was smiling with his family,
a man who was believed to be strong,
a man who was trusted to lead.
But Harold could no longer connect that man with himself.
He was a stranger to his own reflection, a prisoner of his own silence.

One evening, while sitting alone in the dark living room, Harold realized that his dreams had become heavier than his body.

They were weights that could not be carried any longer,
expectations which were impossible to meet,
and promises which were spoken but never fulfilled.

At that moment, he understood the **cruel** truth:
his life was not a story to be remembered for success,
but a warning—a man who was crushed by the weight of promises.

The house grew quieter with every passing day.
Harold, the man who was once **respected** by his neighbors, became a shadow in his own home.
He sat for hours without speaking, waiting to be remembered, waiting to be seen, but no one looked at him anymore.

Miriam focused only on keeping the house together.
She was a woman who was promised happiness but was given silence instead.
Her eyes no longer searched for Harold's approval, because she had accepted that nothing would change.

David prepared to leave for another city, a city which was filled with new opportunities.
He told his friends that his future was waiting elsewhere,
and he spoke of himself as if he were a man who was free from the weight of the past.
For him, Harold was not a father anymore, but a story to be **forgotten** quickly.

Simon, however, stayed close.
He was the son who was **ignored** for years, the son who was expected to be silent,
but in Harold's final days, he was the one who listened.
Even while sitting in silence, Simon's presence was the last comfort Harold could feel.

One night, Harold did not rise from his chair.
The suitcase, still resting in the corner, was the only witness.
It was the same suitcase that carried his youth,
the same one which was filled with dreams never realized,
and now it was the silent grave of his ambitions.

The next morning, Miriam found him sitting there, motionless.
He was gone, a man to be remembered not for success, but for his **struggle.**
His life, which was filled with promises made but never kept, ended quietly, without applause, without recognition.

The family moved on.
David left, chasing new dreams.
Simon stayed, carrying the memory of a father who was broken by the world.
Miriam, tired but steady, continued her days, whispering only once in a while,
"He tried to give us everything, but the world gave him nothing back."

And so, Harold's story became what he had feared the most:
a lesson.
A reminder that dreams without roots **collapse,**
that promises which are too heavy to carry destroy the one who makes them,
and that silence is the only crown of a man who was **forgotten.**

After Harold's death, the house seemed lighter, almost **relieved.**
The man who was once the center of the family had disappeared, leaving behind only silence.
Miriam folded his clothes, one by one, and placed them into a wooden chest.
They were shirts which were worn during years of travel, ties which were bought to be seen by customers, and shoes that were polished again and again to be **respected.**
As she closed the chest, she whispered, "These are memories too heavy to be carried any longer."

David prepared his departure quickly.
He told people that he needed a fresh start, a life to be lived without chains.
To his friends, Harold became nothing more than "a man who was trapped in old dreams."
David's **ambition** carried him forward, but also erased the man who had sacrificed everything to raise him.

Simon, on the other hand, stayed.
He was the son who was always **ignored,** but now he was the only one who kept his father's memory alive.

At night, while sitting in the empty living room, he opened Harold's suitcase.
Inside, he found letters which were written but never sent,
lists of customers who were once loyal, and promises that were never fulfilled.
Simon touched the pages, wondering what his father had truly felt, and why the world had been so **cruel.**

The neighbors spoke of Harold for a few weeks, but their words soon faded.
"He was a man who worked hard but failed," they said.
"He was a man to be pitied, not admired."
And then, as new stories filled the streets, Harold's name was buried beneath the noise of life.

Still, in quiet corners, his absence was felt.
Miriam, while preparing meals, sometimes placed an extra plate by mistake.
Simon, while reading, thought he heard his father's voice whispering.
Even David, far away, found himself asking, "What if Father had been right? What if dreams really mattered?"

Years later, the suitcase remained in the attic, untouched.
It was a relic, a silent reminder that promises, when too heavy, can destroy the man who makes them.
Harold's life, though **forgotten** by many, survived as a shadow in the hearts of the few who had truly known him.

And so, the story of Harold,
the salesman who was once **respected** but who was later defeated,
became more than a tragedy.
It became a warning to those who dream without balance,
a lesson that success without love is empty,
and a truth that silence is the final destiny of those who are not heard.

📘 Vocabulary Practice – The Weight of Promises

1. Match the Words with Their Meanings

Aşağıdaki kelimeleri anlamlarıyla eşleştiriniz.

a) respected
b) ignored
c) devoted
d) disappointment
e) loyalty
f) rejection
g) invisible
h) humiliated
i) betrayal
j) struggle
k) ambition
l) collapse

1) saygı duyulan
2) görmezden gelinen
3) adanmış
4) hayal kırıklığı
5) sadakat
6) reddedilme
7) görünmez
8) küçük düşürülmüş
9) ihanet
10) mücadele
11) hırs
12) çöküş

2. Fill in the Blanks

1) Harold felt _____ when the manager dismissed him in front of others.

2) His wife Miriam was a _____ woman who never gave up on her family.

3) Years of hard work ended in _____, not success.

4) David’s words felt like _____ to his father.

5) Harold’s life became a long _____ against failure.

3. Translation Challenge

1) İnsanlar onu artık görmezden geliyordu.

2) O, küçük düşürülmüş hissetti.

3) Hırs bazen insanı yıkar.

4) Hayal kırıklığı gözlerinden okunuyordu.

5) Bu çöküş bütün aileyi etkiledi.

4. Make Your Own Sentences

Her kelimeyle kendi cümleni yazınız:
- respected
- betrayal
- ambition
- collapse
- loyalty

📖 Extended Reading Comprehension Questions – The Weight of Promises

1) How did Harold view success when he was young?

2) Why did the shops and customers stop trusting him?

3) What did David believe about the modern world, and how did it clash with Harold’s beliefs?

4) How was Simon’s attitude different from David’s toward their father?

5) What role did Miriam play in keeping the family together, and how did Harold react?

6) What did Harold’s suitcase symbolize throughout the story?

7) Why was Harold described as 'invisible' in society?

8) In what way did Harold feel humiliated at work?

9) What kind of betrayal did Harold experience from his family?

10) How did ambition affect David’s relationship with his father?

11) Why can Harold’s life be seen as a 'collapse of promises'?

12) What lesson does the story teach about loyalty and struggle?

13) Which moments in the story show Harold’s strongest desire to be respected again?

14) How did the family remember Harold after his death?

15) If you were Simon, what would you have done differently to support your father?