

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
Mürüvet Esra Yıldırım, Ph.D.

## The Fourth Company (1992)

Rifat Ilgaz (1911 – 1993)

### OVERVIEW

Author and Work Rifat Ilgaz is best known for his novel *The Chaos Class*, but he has written many poems, short stories, novels, plays, and memoirs. He began his literary career in 1926 with a poem published by a local magazine in Kastamonu. After his father's death, instead of continuing high school and university, he enrolled in a normal school and became a primary school teacher. However, in 1944, he was sentenced to 6 months in prison on the grounds that his poetry book, *Class* incited class hostility, and he could not continue his teaching career because he had a criminal record. As he earned his living as a journalist, his books were banned many times, his name was removed from the books, and he was sued many times because he was blacklisted. His book, *The Fourth Company* consists of three independent sections. The first section contains his military memoirs and gives the book its name. The second section contains some humorous articles about imaginary congresses, and the third section contains some short stories. In his military memoirs, he conveys how he creatively fulfills the order of his commander who asks him to do a job he does not understand at all, how rewards and punishments can depend on random conditions, and the reflections of status differences in daily relationships. In his imaginary congresses, he makes a humorous portrayal of Turkey's socio-politics. In these imaginary congresses, organized at different times by imaginary people belonging to various professional groups such as strippers, milkmen, tinsmiths, coachmen, physicians, cooks, grocers, and coffeehouse owners, and other imaginary people who do not belong to any professional groups such as smokers, absurd topics are usually discussed and absurd conclusions are drawn. In his short stories, similar issues to those depicted in imaginary congresses are conveyed through daily conflicts of imaginary characters. In these stories, there are patients exposed to irresponsible healthcare workers, men who feel oppressed because of their ambitious lovers, men who are alienated from women because of their pretentious lovers, men who violate a woman's privacy for the sake of personal pleasure and interest, a couple who are incapable of providing their children with the same opportunities that their boss provides for his dog, a man who falls ill because of national issues, a landowner who tries to evade the law by cunning, and family members who want to spend time alone on Eid that requires families to be together.

### CHARACTERS

<i>Şadi Barlas</i>	Battalion commander
<i>Mahir</i>	Army friend
<i>Adem</i>	Army friend
<i>Dursun</i>	Army friend
<i>Mehmet</i>	Army Friend

### SYNOPSIS

In the first part, which includes his military memories, Rifat Ilgaz fulfills his commander's request to fix the potholes and bumps on the road with a creative method, even though he has no idea about this job. His friend Mahir is first punished for not fulfilling his responsibility as a guard and then rewarded for being newly married. When Rifat Ilgaz gets sick, he recovers faster thanks to his chef friend. He hears a word for the first time in the army, but he doesn't want to show his ignorance about it. He understands well that a soldier shouldn't act without taking orders. In the second part, which includes imaginary congresses, strippers come to the conclusion that stripping is harmless because it has nothing to do with politics. Milkmen decide to solve their problems by bringing powdered milk from the US because their cows are unproductive. Tinsmiths complain about poverty so that they can continue tinning. Coachmen want to be valued as much as horses. Physicians imply that those who want locally-produced medicines can go to herbalists. Grocers protest supermarkets like Migros. Coffeehouse owners try to get around the bans imposed on them by cunning. Those who live long find the secret of a long life not in diet but in talking a lot. Smokers demand solidarity among smokers that doesn't allow anything related to cigarettes to get wasted. In the third section, which includes short

stories, Necati, who is allergic to penicillin, is thoughtlessly given penicillin. Hüsametdin, who can't finish high school due to his lover's pressure to get married, can't make his lover happy because she wants to be the wife of a manager or a chief. Nevzat, who is always with women who are obsessed with luxury cars, experiences what pretension means for women. A man, who rents binoculars to other men to spy on a young girl, doesn't care what happens to the young girl. Halil and his wife, who look after the landlord's dog, Prince, can't provide their son, Ali with the opportunities provided for Prince. When Recep, a drug addict, can't find his regular drug dealers at their usual place, gets himself arrested with a fake crime and thus gets a chance to reach them. A man, who feels sick, gets worse as he reads newspapers but gets better as he remembers the spirit of 1968. Hacı Şükrü Efendi, who thinks that some of his lands will be confiscated because of a new law, distributes his title deeds among his sons. Haşim, who wants to visit his manager with his family during Eid, is left alone by his mother, daughter and wife on the day of Eid.

## **SECTION I**

### **EVENTS**

#### *Road Construction*

Rifat Ilgaz is a sergeant in the army, but there is nothing on his uniform that indicates his rank. He spends time with soldiers of all ranks. He has positioned himself above the ranks. One day, he is informed that the captain wants to see him immediately. He goes to the captain's room with curiosity and instead of saying "Yes sir!" as expected, he stands in front of him because the captain does not like such clichéd expressions. The captain tells him that the major wants to see him. When Rifat Ilgaz wonders why the major wants to see him, the captain says "He probably didn't call you to play backgammon!" Thereupon, Rifat Ilgaz laughs and the captain tells him not to embarrass him. Rifat Ilgaz goes straight to the major's room. Major Şadi Barlas shouts "Postal" as soon as he steps inside. Rifat Ilgaz quickly steps back.

The postal, who runs errands for the major, is not in front of the door. Rifat Ilgaz walks in and then says that the postal is in the bathroom. When the major says that he is expecting a sergeant from the fourth company, he informs him that the sergeant he is waiting for is him. The major asks how he can know if he is the sergeant he is waiting for. Rifat Ilgaz remains silent because a sergeant shows his rank by showing that he knows when to keep quiet. The major informs him that the regimental commander wants to see him. Rifat Ilgaz immediately goes to the regimental commander. At that time of the day, he is in the garden by the pool not in his room. The regimental commander, explaining that the sergeant at the regimental headquarters has been hospitalized, orders him to fill in for him. The next day the pasha is expected to visit the regiment, so he orders Rifat Ilgaz to gather men from each company to fix all potholes and bumps in the road. Although he does not know anything at all about this job, Rifat Ilgaz says nothing.

The soldiers he has gathered work all day long but still there are many large and small bumps in the road. A roller is needed to fix them. He permits the soldiers to take a break in the evening. While resting he asks if there are persons among the soldiers who can play the kemanca, the drum, and the pipe. Soldiers from the Black Sea region play the kemanca, while the soldiers from the eastern provinces play the pipe and drums. The rest accompanies them. While they dance, the regiment commander shows up and asks Rifat Ilgaz what he is trying to do. Rifat Ilgaz says that he is making the soldiers level the road. After checking the ground with his foot, the regiment commander is satisfied with the result and orders them to continue. The music starts again and the two hundred and forty soldiers continue to dance.

#### *Mahir*

#### **The Bite of the Beast**

The captain tries to figure out who fell asleep on guard duty because a mule named Beast came out of the barn and attacked the mules of the eighth company in the middle of the night. He finally learns that the person on guard duty is Mahir, one of the best soldiers in the company. However, Mahir claims that he did not fall asleep. But, the captain condemns him to groom Beast for 20 days. After a while, he asks Rifat Ilgaz to recount what has happened that night. Rifat Ilgaz tells him that Mahir misses his wife very much because he is newly married, that he doesn't sleep even in the ward, let alone during

his guard duty, and that this is the reason for his absent-mindedness during his guard duty. Upon listening to this, the captain decides to give Mahir a leave of absence.

One day, while working with Rifat Ilgaz, the captain calls Mahir to ask him how many days are left until his sentence ends. Mahir says there are 5 days left. The captain has forgiven those 5 days and gives him 15-day leave. Rifat Ilgaz looks at Mahir's face but sees no sign of joy. Mahir explains that he doesn't want to go to his village because Beast bit his arm while he was grooming it and his wife won't believe that this mark was caused by a mule. The captain, after thinking for a while, takes out a piece of paper, calculating that the gossip in the village will eventually reach the headman, writes a letter to the headman of Mahir's village explaining that Mahir was bitten by a mule.

### Getting Drunk

While Rifat Ilgaz is in the infirmary because of malaria, the chef from the fourth squad visits him to tell him that he can bring him whatever he wants to eat. Then he fills his flask with grape compote. Rifat Ilgaz recovers in two weeks thanks to the special food brought to him by the chef. When the captain calls him to a hill where the squad is located, he stops by the mess hall before setting off. The chef puts something in his bread bag and serves him compote with a ladle. Rifat Ilgaz tastes a strong flavor of the vinegar in the compote but continues to drink. Then he fills his flask. When he gets up, he realizes that he is drunk. Because his friend did not put salt in it, the grape juice has turned into wine.

He goes to the barn, mounts an old mule, and sets off. However, a short while later, he finds himself on the mule in front of the barn. When the guard of the barn sees him, he asks what he is doing there. Then he gets off the old mule, complaining about it, and this time he mounts Beast. However, Beast throws him off after moving forward a little. When Rifat Ilgaz opens his eyes, he finds two medics standing beside him. They, thinking there is water in his flask, make him drink it. Rifat Ilgaz is parched with thirst, so he drinks the hot wine heartily. However, when the soldiers realize that he still can't get up, they try to pour the water in the flask over his head. At that moment, Rifat Ilgaz immediately stands up from where he is lying and says that if they do this, he will faint.

### Gasket

Rifat Ilgaz tries to read a newspaper and a novel while everyone in the ward is asleep, but later he gets hungry. He takes out a slice of bread, some olives, and a tube of anchovy paste. While he squeezes the tube a little and spreads it on the bread, the guard comes to tell him that the telephone operator expects him. He takes a bite and goes to the phone with curiosity. The company commander is on the end of the line. He asks him to send someone to the train at seven in the morning to get the gaskets sent from the twenty-third division. Since it is the first time he has heard the word gasket, Rifat Ilgaz asks what "gasket" is. The captain just laughs and tells him not to forget the word gasket.

Rifat Ilgaz returns to the ward thinking about what the gasket is. When he sees the guard, he first asks the number of soldiers in the ward then the number of rifles, then says, "Are the gaskets okay?" The guard states that he has not received them yet. Rifat Ilgaz asks who the sergeant of the guard is, and when he learns that he is Adem, he asks him to send Adem to him. He continues his meal. After a while, Adem shows up. After seeing that his bread is about to finish he leaves to get some bread. When he comes back, he starts eating bread and olives. When he sees the anchovy paste tube, he asks what it is. Rifat Ilgaz explains it, but he doesn't understand the answer and asks if it is edible, Rifat Ilgaz says it is a nice appetizer. Adem, thinking that Rifat Ilgaz is putting him on, says that he knows that the tube is toothpaste. Rifat Ilgaz tries to make him believe that it is something edible but then gets angry and changes the subject. He says that he has to go to the station in the morning to get the gaskets and asks him to load the gaskets on the mules to bring to the division. Adem, thinking that he is being put on, says that even though he is not as educated as him, he knows what a gasket is, which is used to prevent water from leaking between two pieces. Thus, Rifat Ilgaz can learn what a gasket is.

### *The Drill*

The soldiers are buried in holes they dug on the banks of a stream for the drill. After scolding the soldiers who can't camouflage well, the commander stands over Dursun who is very well camouflaged. He wants to grant him a leave of absence to reward him. He immediately asks him to read his identity tag and orders his aide to write down Dursun's ID. However, Dursun doesn't reply him. The commander calls out a few more times, but Dursun doesn't answer. After being prodded a

few times, he raises his head and sits up suddenly. When the commander asks him what he was doing, he says he was sleeping. The commander sentences him to prison. After his aide writes down Dursun's ID, the commander asks Dursun how the soldier should feel about sleep, hunger and cold. When Dursun says that the soldier is not to sleep, feel hungry or cold, the commander waives the punishment.

The commander asks what they should do to protect themselves from a plane that is releasing poisonous gas. Adem says that he hides in a pit. Another soldier says he runs to the hill, another to the forest. Finally, the commander shouts to the entire fourth company, consisting of 116 soldiers, that the planes are coming and then orders them to do something. While almost the entire company is running towards the hill opposite, Mehmet the Yellow trips and falls into the stream. After everyone hides somewhere, the commander looks around and says that Mehmet has found the best shelter against the poisonous gas and gives him 15-day leave.

### *Learning the Right Timing*

During the drill, the fourth company, with 120 soldiers and 8 mules, reaches the assembly point in 58 minutes and comes last among the 12 companies. Since the captain is not there, the regiment commander calls Rifat Ilgaz as a sergeant and asks him why. Rifat Ilgaz says that the fourth company is using heavy machine guns and that the mules are being naughty. The regiment commander condemns the fourth company to barn watch until morning. In the morning, the captain finds them in the barn. They are all about to faint from exhaustion. He scolds Rifat Ilgaz and orders them never to come last again.

Rifat Ilgaz becomes friends with the regiment's switchboard operator. One evening, the switchboard operator comes to the fourth company to inform Rifat Ilgaz that there will be a drill at night. When Rifat Ilgaz asks where he learned this, he says that he heard the colonel and lieutenant colonel talking on the phone and that they said that they would finish the inventory work. Rifat Ilgaz says that drill is different from inventory work but thanks him and goes to the ward. He orders those who are getting ready to sleep to get dressed again. Everyone will be ready to go to the assembly point. As soon as they hear the sirens, the company stows the guns onto the mules and reaches the assembly point in exactly 18 minutes. However, the colonel, the lieutenant colonel, and the general don't pay attention to them. They continue talking to each other. Finally, the general dispatches the companies that will be on duty during the visit of the president to different places one by one and orders the companies using heavy machine guns to remain in the regiment. Thereupon, after the battalion commander sends the companies in question, he asks Rifat Ilgaz and his friends which company they are from. The captain of the company immediately explains that they are the fourth company and that they arrived there before the orders were given. The colonel scolds them by saying that they come either before or after the orders are given because they are not used to receiving orders. Then he assigns everyone in the fourth company to guard posts in the regiment. Rifat Ilgaz thinks that they can't get rid of being on guard duty irrespective of being early or late.

### THEMES

#### QUEST

**Creativity** His commander orders Rifat Ilgaz to fix all potholes and bumps in the road of the regiment. But Rifat Ilgaz does not understand anything about this job. As a man who knows the society he lives in very well, he finds a social solution for a technical problem. He is aware that the kemancha can make the people of the Black Sea region dance as the pipe and drums can the people coming from the eastern provinces. He asks them to play the kemancha, the pipe and drums. While dozens of soldiers dance to the music, the road is leveled.

#### PSYCHOLOGY

**Shame** When the mule named Beast bites Mahir's arm, Mahir is ashamed to go to his village and doesn't enjoy the 15-day leave that his commander grants him. He thinks that he isn't able to convince his wife and his fellow men that the mark on his arm was caused by a mule. His commander finds this shame justified and sends a letter to the headman of his village explaining the situation.

When Rifat Ilgaz hears the word gasket for the first time, he can't ask anyone openly what it means. For example, he tries to learn what it means in a covert manner by asking the guard he sees at the door, "Are the gaskets okay?" He feels ashamed of not knowing something.

## RELATIONSHIP

**Friendship** When Rifat Ilgaz is in the infirmary with malaria, his friend, the chef, prepares special meals for him to recover quickly. Thanks to the meals he prepares, Rifat Ilgaz recovers in a shorter time. However, when he is about to set off on a journey, he gets drunk because of the compote his friend filled into his flask and can't go where his commander ordered to go.

## POLITICS

**Power** When his commander tells Rifat Ilgaz to send men to the morning train to get the gaskets, Rifat Ilgaz doesn't understand what gasket is. Although his commander knows that Rifat Ilgaz doesn't know what gasket is, he prefers not to explain it. He wants him to learn it on his own. Rifat Ilgaz can't insist on the commander to explain it because of the difference in rank between them. The same evening, Adem sees the anchovy paste tube, thinking that Rifat Ilgaz puts him on because of educational difference between them, says that the tube is toothpaste not something edible. The power relationship resulting from the differences in rank and education thus becomes part of the politics of daily life.

## APPEARANCE

**Deception** During the drill on the banks of a stream, one of the soldiers appears to be very well camouflaged. The commander is fooled by his appearance, thinks he has successfully completed his duty and wants to reward him with a leave. However, the soldier has actually fallen asleep. In the same drill, the soldiers who are asked what to do to escape the poisonous gas run towards a hill while one of them falls into a stream. After everyone has taken up a position, the commander wants to reward the soldier in the stream by saying that he is the one who did the right thing.

## SECTION II

### CONVENTIONS

#### *The Congress of the Strippers*

The first of the imaginary congresses written by Rifat Ilgaz is organized by the strippers. The congress president argues that striptease shouldn't be banned because it has nothing to do with politics. After criticizing the governor's opposition to nudity on stage, they decide to go on stage dressed to protest.

#### *The Congress of the Milkmen*

The milkmen complain that their new cows don't produce as good milk as the old cows and that they can't find molasses. Molasses increases the cows' productivity, but what they really want is to have cows like the cows in Holland. Those cows produce enough milk for both their calves and their owners. Finally, they decide to import powdered milk from the US.

#### *The Congress of the Tinsmiths*

The tinsmiths discuss whether tinning is a man's job or a woman's job. After concluding that anyone who wants to tin can tin anything, they decide to ask the government not to import aluminum pots. In this way, copper pots and pans will continue to be used and they won't be unemployed. However, there is one thing that kills tinsmithing; poverty. Even if everything is portrayed much better than it is on the radio, there are people who can't feed themselves. Therefore, if there is no food to cook in the pot, no one will have their pots tinned.

#### *The Congress of the Coachmen*

When the coachmen list the needs of their horses, they complain that they can't find barley. Someone claims that the government is planning to establish a feed plant, they do not believe it. They emphasize that no coachman had a traffic accident in 1957. Despite everything, they express that they

can't agree with the Society for the Protection of Animals, complaining that they don't give value to them as much as they give value to horses. They remind that the wheel is a great achievement for civilization and question whether civilization is the work of horses or those who use them.

#### *The Congress of the Smokers*

The president says that smoking causes cancer and asks if anyone has had cancer. When no one comes out, he says that the second biggest problem is finding where to throw the butts. The butt collectors say that they are tired of looking for butts in the garbage and ask the smokers to keep their butts in a box. Thereupon, the scroungers step in and remind the smokers that they should share their cigarettes with the scroungers.

#### *The Congress of the Centenarians*

The doctors discuss at length what the president of the society of centenarians should eat. Finally, they decide that the creature that talks the most and lives the longest is the magpie, and that in this case, in order to live long, one must talk a lot and sleep while listening to those who talk.

#### *The Congress of Those Wearing White Shirt*

Physicians complain that good physicians can't be trained because too many students are accepted to universities and decide that there should be one student for every professor. They then discuss the criticisms about physicians prescribing imported medicines although local medicines are available. They ask how they can prescribe senna or black cumin. They state that if prescribed medicines are not available in the pharmacy, they are definitely somewhere in the country, such as the Spice Bazaar.

#### *The Congress of the Coffeehouse Owners*

The governor has banned gambling in coffeehouses. The president asks if there are any gamblers among the coffeehouse owners. They say that their customers are free to do whatever they want. The president demands that they don't allow gambling for money, no matter what. One of them asks if cockfighting is also prohibited. The president says that they can only have cockfights in the courtyard of the mosques. This time they start talking about the governor banning children from entering coffeehouses. They claim that a child can only learn humanity in a coffeehouse and that they need a coffeehouse to properly socialize. When the president states that the ban must be implemented, they argue that all these bans are for coffeehouses and that if they call their enterprises chickpeahouse or beanhouse, the problem will be solved. Finally, they decide to call it a democrathouse instead of coffeehouse.

#### *The Congress of the Cooks*

The cooks complain about the state raiding and closing down restaurants. Since they don't get involved in politics, they want politicians not to get involved in their business. Then, they start discussing which oil to use when cooking. Cities such as Kars, Trabzon, and Antep, which were used to produce their own oil, are among the cities that use Vita sunflower oil the most. After the complaints are over, they close the congress and eat the sandwiches they brought.

#### *The Congress of the Grocers*

The grocers are disturbed by Migros, Switzerland's supermarket chain that started to do business in Turkey. They complain that it collects the cheese and eggs in the market leaving nothing behind for people. They claim that what Migros does is trade but what they do is service to the public. They even say that they increase the number of readers because they turn unsold newspapers into paper bags.

## THEMES

### POLITICS

**Conflict**                      These imaginary congresses written by Rifat Ilgaz usually feature groups that are in conflict with the state or other institutions. For example, strippers consider themselves harmless because they don't engage in politics and only undress. In order to be harmful, it is necessary to engage in politics. Tinsmiths conclude that in order to tin, the pot must boil. For this, the state must

take steps to eliminate poverty instead of making everything look better than it is. Coachmen clash with those who defend the rights of animals. They attempt to prove that they work as hard as animals.

## FLAWS

**Cunning** Coffeehouse owners don't want to comply with the bans imposed on them and think that the bans are imposed on "coffeehouses," and therefore if they change the name of their business to something like beanhouse, they won't have to comply with these bans. Finally, they change "coffeehouse" to "democrathouse."

## PSYCHOLOGY

**Irony** Irony is embedded in almost all imaginative congresses. Physicians who are asked to prescribe domestic medicines state that medicines that are not available in pharmacies will be available in herbalists. The centenarians decide to imitate magpies that talk a lot and live long and ironize politicians who talk constantly and never break away from politics until they die.

## APPEARANCE

**Dishonesty** Cooks complain about the oil they use in their meals and don't want the government to interfere in their business in any way. However, they don't eat the food they cook. Instead, they prefer to eat sandwiches. Milkmen also find it appropriate to bring powdered milk from the US because their cows are not productive enough.

## SECTION III

### STORIES

I

One day, Necati, who lives in the basement, gets sick. He can't even get up to get his thermometer on the table. He punches the wall to call the janitor who lives next door. When the janitor arrives, he asks him to call a doctor. The janitor calls a needler who lives in the apartment. After the needler gives the injection, Necati says he is allergic to penicillin, the needler assures him that nothing will happen to him and then leaves. Necati condemns the needler's bag being full of penicillin, even though there is no penicillin in pharmacies, and tells himself that he needs to stay alive.

II

Whenever Nevzat comes to Beşiktaş with his lover, his lover leaves his arm, saying they are in her neighborhood. Nevzat understands that she is afraid of being seen by her sister and neighbors. One day, while returning from Emirgan, they get into a luxurious taxi. This time, his lover lets him come in front her house and looks around to make sure the neighbors see her as she gets out of the taxi. That moment Nevzat realizes that her only purpose is to show off and doesn't want to see her again. He finds another lover living in Şişli. However, this lover doesn't allow any luxurious taxi to approach her house. Nevzat breaks up with her too. He finds another lover in Şişli. While dropping her off at home, he sees his previous lover getting out of a Mercedes in front of her house. At that moment he understands that her limit of being seen by others starts with a Mercedes.

III

Hüsametdin drops out of high school because of his girlfriend Sevil, who wants to get married. He starts to look for a job after returning from military service in order to get married and finds a job as a guard at a university thanks to a relative. He doesn't know how to explain this situation to Sevil, who can't accept being the wife of a guard, and lies that he works as a clerk. One day, when he is given a uniform, he wraps it in newspaper. He runs into Sevil on the way home. As Sevil tries to find out what is in the package, she thinks that the uniform is military uniform and faints out of fear that Hüsametdin will join the army.

IV

A man rents a pair of large binoculars for a few minutes. As two men pass by, one of them greets him. Many men are waiting in line. The friend of the one who greets the man doesn't make sense of this line. Finally, he looks through the binoculars and sees a young girl on the balcony of a house up ahead. A man comes up to the girl, and they start kissing. After a while, some men enter the scene and attack the man. The man leaves the binoculars and tells people to go help the girl. No one cares and the next person picks up the binoculars and continues to watch what is happening.

#### V

A man feels bad while climbing the stairs to his apartment, so he takes out a newspaper on the third floor and starts to read it slowly. However, the news is so bad that his heart starts beating even faster, and he gets even worse. Since he is afraid of doctors who always ask him to do something to feel better, he decides to find a member of parliament who walks on the streets to see how things are going. The MP checks his pulse and sees that his heart rate is 68 beats per minute. This is normal. So, the man goes to work but feels bad again, and when he checks his pulse, he sees that his heart rate is 80 beats per minute. When he informs his manager about the situation, his manager sends him home. He gets home, but when he feels worse alone in the house, he asks the neighbors for help. While the neighbors gather around him and try to understand the situation, one of them tries to call a doctor. Then the man jumps up immediately. His heart rate is 68 beats per minute again. He says he is fine.

#### VI

The landlord, Hadi, hands over his dog, Prince, to the janitor, Halil. Now, Halil takes care of Prince, but everyone in the neighborhood makes fun of him for being a servant to a dog. When Halil's wife and son Ali return from their hometown, Halil hands over the dog to his wife. His son, Ali, has become weak because of malaria, so much so that when he holds the dog's leash, the dog drags him on the ground. Hadi orders the dog to be fed on ten meatballs along with some bone broth at each meal. Halil's wife prepares the dog's meatballs every day. One day, Hadi goes downstairs to check on Prince. He thinks he has lost weight and is hungry. He asks Halil's wife to bring him ten more meatballs. The woman prepares the meatballs and feeds them to Prince. Hadi increases the daily number of meatballs to forty. Then he buys the vitamins recommended by the vet and gives them to Halil. One day, Halil's wife gives Prince's leash to Ali. This time, Ali manages to make the dog walk like a lamb. When Halil realizes that his son is able to control the dog, he asks his wife how this is possible. The woman says that she feeds the meatballs and the bone broth bought for the dog to their son.

#### VII

Kadriye forcibly gets her grandson Güler out of bed and forces her to get ready for Eid. At that moment, first the garbage collector who hasn't come to collect the garbage for days, then the watchman and then the postman come to the door. Each of them aims to get a tip. Haşim tries to convince his family to visit his manager's house. Kadriye is the first to object. After the family leaves the house, she says that the manager's mother is two months younger than her and that the younger ones visit the older ones during religious festivals and leaves them to go to her friend's house. Then Güler says that she has an appointment with her friend to listen to new records and goes to her friend's house. Haşim and his wife Süheyla are left alone. However, after they get off the bus, Süheyla says she wants to go to the cinema and leaves Haşim alone. Haşim finds a phone booth and calls his manager's house to tell him that they can't visit him because they have many guests at home. Feeling relieved, he goes to the pub he frequents.

#### VIII

The prisoners in the hospital can't understand why Recep was taken directly to the hospital without going through the same torture that everyone jailed goes through. Recep is constantly moaning and can't speak to anyone properly. At that moment, they read a story in the newspaper that a young girl was killed. The next day, they see a photo of Recep as the murderer in the newspapers. A little later, Recep is taken by force to meet with the prosecutor. A few hours later, he comes back seeming very calm and healthy. The prisoners are surprised. Later, they figure out that Recep did not kill anyone, that the young girl in question disappeared because she went to her lover's house, and that Recep seems relaxed because he took drugs from drug dealers on the way to the prosecutor.



## IX

Hacı Şükrü Efendi, who is afraid of a law aiming to seize a portion of the lands of those whose lands exceed a certain amount of acres and distribute them to landless peasants, distributes his land titles to his sons. However, his son Halil begins to live a self-willed life. Since Hacı Şükrü Efendi doesn't approve his son's behavior at all, he sends a message to the commissioner to admonish his son for living this way. The commissioner arrests Halil for gambling. Hacı Şükrü Efendi steps in to save him. Later, Halil is caught committing adultery with a woman he brought from Istanbul. Although even his betrayed daughter-in-law begs him to save Halil, Hacı Şükrü Efendi decides not to get involved in this incident. He requests his lawyer to start a guardianship case to get back the title deeds in his son's hands because the law won't be passed.

## X

When the train starts, a man standing looks around; an old man sitting by the window is sleeping, the young couple across from him are huddled together, the woman in her thirties, standing over the old man, is wiping her sweaty face with a white lace handkerchief. The man feels urge to meet the woman. On the one hand, he is also saddened by the state of the woman with two children. He wonders whether he would give his seat to the woman with two children or the woman with the handkerchief if he were sitting. At that moment, the woman with the handkerchief drops her handkerchief on the sleeping man's lap. The zipper of the man's trousers is open and the handkerchief is right on top of the zipper. The woman, embarrassed to take the handkerchief, quickly takes another handkerchief out of her bag. The old man wakes up a little later and thinks the handkerchief is his white shirt stuck in the zipper and pushes it into his trousers. Everyone laughs at him, but no one is aware of where the handkerchief came from. The only person who saw everything from the very beginning is the man who is watching everyone.

## THEMES

### SOCIETY

**Class** The landlord, Hadi entrusts his dog, Prince to the janitor, Halil. He states that his dog has a special nutrition program and then provides the ingredients for the bone broth and the meatballs Prince will be fed on. But as Halil's wife sees that her son, Ali is weaker than the dog, she feeds him on everything bought for the dog. Ali grows up and becomes a stronger child. In this way, Halil's wife overcomes the class difference between them and the landlord.

**Gender** The man who rents his binoculars to spy on a young girl and other men waiting in line act according to a brotherhood agreement and ignore the fact that what they are doing is a crime. They don't care about what happens to the girl at any cost. In no case can the young girl go beyond being a spectacle and gain the status of a "human being."

### JUSTICE

**Corruption** When Recep, a drug addict, can't find his regular drug-dealers in their usual place, he wants to be put in prison. He is first taken to the hospital because of his addiction. When he is taken to the prosecutor the next day, he easily buys the drugs, and when he returns to the hospital, he proudly tells what he did.

### PSYCHOLOGY

**Shame** When the woman with the handkerchief drops her handkerchief on the sleeping man, she doesn't pick it up. Instead, she immediately takes another handkerchief out of her bag. Although she has nothing to do with the zipper of his trousers being open, she feels ashamed of this situation.

### RELATIONSHIP

**Individualism** On the day of Eid, first the garbage collector who hasn't come to take the garbage for days knocks on the door. The watchman and the postman follow him. Their only aim is to get a tip under the pretext of celebrating Eid. After Haşim sends them away, he sets off with his family to visit his manager, to whom he wants to show how good a family he has. However, his mother

leaves them to go to her friend's house, saying that his manager's mother is two months younger than her. Then, his daughter leaves them because she wants to listen to news records with her friend. Finally, his wife leaves him halfway to go to the cinema. When he is left alone, he calls the manager and lies and then goes to a pub.

## FLAWS

**Pretension** Nevzat's girlfriend distances herself from Nevzat, saying that she is afraid of being seen by someone whenever they go to the neighborhood where she lives. However, when Nevzat takes a luxury taxi, she allows him to come near her house. That day, Nevzat realizes that his girlfriend's real concern is being seen getting out of a luxury car. When his subsequent girlfriends act the same way, he sees how much importance the women he chooses to be with give to showing off.

**Greed** Hüsamettin, who accepts to be a watchman in order to marry his girlfriend Sevil, who constantly pressures him to find a job, doesn't know how to explain this situation to his girlfriend. His girlfriend wants to be the wife of a manager or a chief. When he runs into Sevil on his way home after receiving his uniform from work, he can't hide the uniform from her. As soon as Sevil sees the greenish uniform, she faints in fear, thinking that Hüsamettin has been called up for military service again. She is so sure that Hüsamettin has a desk job. She can't imagine another possibility other than the one in her dreams.

**Cunning** Hacı Şükrü Efendi, who thinks that some of his lands will be confiscated due to a new law, distributes the title deeds of his lands among his sons. However, after his son, Halil begins to live a life of his own. Convinced that the law won't be enacted, Hacı Şükrü Efendi makes his son arrested. In this way, he wants to prove that he is mentally unstable and then files a guardianship case against him.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Considering the three sections of the book, what would you say about the conflict that is most prevalent in Rıfat Ilgaz's world? For example, is it class-based, cultural, or gender-based?
2. According to Rıfat Ilgaz, what methods do people in Turkish society use to cope with their conflicts in their social and private relationships? Do the methods they use serve to resolve the conflict or to get through the day?