

## A Rumelian Legend: Safiye Erol and Ciğerdelen

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**Abstract:** *Ciğerdelen*, a novel of Safiye Erol first published in 1946, is an important study of Ottoman conquest idea and the Balkan adventure. We can say that the book contains intertwined a few novels. On the one hand the book can be handled as a post-modern romance, on the other hand, as a post-modern historical novel that focused on Ottoman's protection and defense of the Balkans. The book does not stay away from the tradition of Turkish folk narration, and has biographical features with the traces from author's life. Safiye Erol, as a daughter of a Balkan originated family, succeeded to carry the Ottoman's love of Balkans into a concrete ground with this novel. In this paper, we will try to analyze *Ciğerdelen*, one of the novels that get the Balkans to the center, by starting from its title and pointing out the couple meaning and repetition sprinkled by the author to the whole novel.

*Ciğerdelen* is one of the sad novels which are not appreciated, or whose value is not understood or not wanted to understand in Turkish literature history. This situation is totally related to the reputation of Safiye Erol but Erol is one of the special authors of the Turkish literature. Unfortunately, the same fate of oblivion and silence and abandonment is subject to her productive friend, Samiha Ayverdi.

*Ciğerdelen* is an important milestone for modern Turkish novel. The novel has a more complex fiction than her other novels and has a spiritual atmosphere based on inspiration when we look at the writing process of the novel. Safiye Erol, in an interview with her <sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup>, says that she lost twelve kilos, fainted twice while writing this novel and after completion she was still sickbed. Behind the strong influence of the novel on the reader, we can say that the writing of the author is as if she was living all the events herself.

*Ciğerdelen* can be evaluated as a novel that is fiction on a two layer meaning from the beginning to the end. There is an outer story and an inner story in the novel. The inner story consists of two interconnected stories that facilitate the cognition and make sense of outer story. While the outer story is opening the soul doors of an intellectual woman of 1940s Turkey, the inner story is presenting a woman who is loyal to her love of the years that are witnessing the conquest and protecting the Balkans of Ottomans. Canzi of modern Turkey and Cangüzel of the conquest days are common souls that are suffering from similar pains of love. In fact Canzi is carrying the fate of her ancestor Cangüzel. "Ciğerdelen" on the one hand represents strong loves of two women, on the other hand represents one of the frontier castles of Rumelia, an important castle if surrendered it will require us to come from all Rumelia.

Ciğerdelen Castle Legend is a legend in Armorer (Silahtar) History. As an influence of "Red Apple (Kızıl Elma)" ideal, Turks walked to the West, and fought for Ciğerdelen Castle and similar ones with conquest soul and faith. Border castles became grave for many innocent Turkish raiders, and brought them to martyrdom. Each conquer of a castle is something like a union with beloved; from now on it carries the danger or risk of losing. In the novel, strong faith to these castles with patient and love of sons of Fatih (evlad-ı Fatihan), and tolerance to every difficulty and at last martyrdom is consubstantiated to patient and faith for the love of opposite gender despite the rudeness and cruelty of human being. The conclusion is reaching the sainthood of lover soul by healing from all evils.

The basic hero of the novel, Architect Turhan Tuna, is the grandson of Bosnia Serhatli Koca Turhan Bey, the son of Hersekoğlu Ahmet Pasha who was the standard bearer of Sultan Fatih, the chief vizier of Beyazid, the second and Yavuz Sultan Selim. The heroine Canzi in other words Cangüzel is from the breed of Cangüzel, the wife of Mustafa Durakça from the roots of Yellow Spahis (Sari Sipahiler) of same family. These two grandchildren are going to live the continuing of their ancestors' stories in Istanbul three centuries later.

The novel starting with the separation of Canzi (Cangüzel) and Turhan Tuna is interrupted by returns and the narration of Rumelian Legends written by Canzi and with the completion of the legend it is back to the beginning for the result of the love of Turhan Tuna and Canzi.

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[1] Mehmet Nuri Yardım, *Safiye Erol Kitabı*, Published by Bensen, İstanbul, 2003, p. 62. (cited from Kandemir, *Edebiyat Alemleri* (Newspaper), Year:1, Number:13, July 28, 1949)

Canzi (Cangüzel) is a divorced woman. The common family stories about Rumelia recognized with Turhan Tuna by coincidence brings them closer to each other. This getting closer will not be enough for Turhan Tuna and the strength of his love will drag him to a diseased jealousy. Canzi is going to try to discipline Turhan Tuna with Ciğerdelen Legend. This way depending on getting a moral tradition will not be enough for the lover in order to open his eyes. In a moment when the suspect made him crazy without the lust of Canzi, Turhan Tuna owns her and is going to lose the love of Canzi. This process which is a beginning of a great pain for Canzi will make both hero and heroine ill. These two hearts that solve their mistake with heartburns that occurred centuries ago in Rumelia, will find cure for their illnesses by getting closer to divine love from human love.

The Rumelian Legend presented to Turhan Tuna in the novel is as follows under three topics:

**Yellow Spahis:** Bosna Serhatli Koca Turhan Bey, son of Hersekoğlu Ahmet Pasha, settles to the land given in Stulni-Belgrade County with his whole family after the bravery that he showed in the Balkans. He makes a big farm house. His son Veli Bey and his grandson Sinan Bey, lived in this farm house for three generations and contributed to the protection of this area. Turhan Bey and his grandson Sinan Bey became martyr near Ciğerdelen; his son Veli Bey trains and grows up Mustafa Durakça, the grandson of Sinan. When Veli Bey retired from fighting, Mustafa Durakça started to become a hero in Rumelia. On one hand having education with his friend young Hafiz Nuri, the imam of the farm house, on the other hand he was staying in Hungarian villages and having tendency to wine with him. Durakça, fighting in the borders with Hafiz Nuri, falls in love with Mariska Kemeni, the daughter of Hungarian Governor Kemeni. Despite all the anxiety of his mother Sümül Hanım, the support of his grandfather Veli Koca encourages him. He goes into action after the information that Mariska will be kidnapped by her cousin Graf Stefan. Mariska abandoned her nationality, religion and family for Mustafa Durakça. After a little battle with Graf Stefan, Mariska is taken to the farm house as the wife of Mustafa Durakça. Wounded Graf Stefan was brought to the farmhouse as well. He was treated there. Durakça showed great respect to Graf Stefan after saying that Mariska's cousin cannot be my captive. Graf Stefan was affected from the bravery of Mustafa Durakça and Hafiz Nuri after his friends' betrayal. Graf Stefan who lost his lover had a great soul exam. His enemy Turks became new friends never leave him alone. Graf Stefan ranges to Turkish side and becomes Muslim and changes his name to Feridun Bey (Hungarian Feridun). Mariska Kemeni becomes Muslim and changes her name to Cangüzel before marrying Mustafa Durakça. At first she has no problem with her new living style as a result of her love, later starts to miss the Hungarian habits and entertainments. Most of the time, she cannot find Mustafa Durakça next to her. Her pregnancy unites with rebels. The newly born child is given his grandfather's name, Sinan. Cangüzel's exam starts with loving Sinan idolatrously. In the world, who loves anyone or anything more than God (Allah); the exam will be from there; cruelty and torture will give no respite. Stefan Graf passed love exam and found Islam. Mustafa Durakça became martyr while defending Ciğerdelen Castle like his father and grandfather. Cangüzel is separated from her first love in this way. She becomes thoroughly addicted to her son and closes her eyes with his torment. Sinan was a scapegrace son and ruined his mother. To any entity should not go to extremes in love.

**The Secret of Lovers:** In this section Turhan Tuna tries to analyze his torment in the days that he falls apart from Canzi. He nestles to the story of Kerem and Asli. His strong love to Canzi broke off him from Canzi. First love is a spiritual disease, and then spreads to the body. Architect Turhan Tuna working for the reconstruction of Thrace lies in bed with fever. He cannot sleep, cannot eat, struggles with the delusions among the dreams of his ancestors.

**Seven Veils:** The second story related to Canzi's family continues around Sinan the scapegrace son of Cangüzel. The venue is again Şahin Konağı. Cangüzel and Veli Koca had passed away. Hafiz Nuri, old and faithful Advıye Molla, Hungarian Feridun are managing the house. *"What wisdom is that the hardest sorrow comes to the men from the most beloved ones."* The plot of this story is this sentence written in the beginning of the story. One day Advıye Molla asks Hafiz Nuri: *"Does loving too much mean the greatest crime in the life?"* Hafiz Nuri replies: *"Loving too much is attributing a partner to God."*

After causing to death of his mother, Sinan who has no signs from the bravery of his father and grandfather will become a difficult exam for Zühre - the daughter of Hafiz Nuri. While Şahin Konak becomes a ruin, Hungarian Feridun and Hafiz Nuri try to protect the honor of Yellow Spahis. After the Martyrdom of Hafiz Nuri in Ciğerdelen Castle defend, his daughter Zühre is brought to Sahin Konak without obeying to his will in which he wanted his daughter to be sent to Bosnia. Zühre's exam with love starts here. Her father trained her very well but she falls in love with Sinan. Sinan is a monster with seven veils. He did not love anyone really, and caused many of the women's death beside his mother. Zühre will face his seven big cruelties after coming together with him. Zühre behaves resignedly to every cruelty, and first gets marry with Sinan. He devotes Zühre for his sister-in-law Duriye Hanım as he wants Duriye Hanım's assets. He gets divorced from Zühre and gives all the assets of Zühre to Duriye Hanım as a wedding present. When Zühre gives birth to Sinan's son, Sinan

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[2] Safiye Erol, *Ciğerdelen*, Published by Kubbealti, İstanbul, 2007, p.120.

[3] Same book, p.120.

marries Zühre with old Saraç Ismail and keeps her in front of his eyes near his house. Sinan Bey cannot come closer to his son as he is scared from Duriye Hanım. He becomes such a dishonest person that he forces Zühre to serve Duriye Hanım. Zühre will endure all the events with patient; with her heart opened to God she will pass away as a holy person in the borders. Her son Nuri will be a proud for his ancestors but also will die in Ciğerdelen.

These stories will help to recover jealousy disease of Turhan Tuna to Canzi (Cangüzel) and obsession for one person more than everything. When Turhan Tuna recognizes God, after purifying his love, like all other lovers, will meet Canzi's mercy and the love will turn to union with beloved.

The events occurred around Ciğerdelen Castle, the stories of souls with obsession to love, grudge, ego, and ambition, stories of people who recognize the exams in the world and who do not put the basic plot of the novel. Everybody has a Ciğerdelen. Who serves what will get the return. A soul devoted to God and his path will be away from all sorrows of the world. Everybody has a Ciğerdelen Castle inside him or her.