

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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BONE-DEEP REVENGE/ SOOK OCHTU KEK (1967)

Kasymaly Bektenov (1910-1975)

Source: Bektenov, K. (1980). *The tale of a hero: Novellas and short stories* (Including the novella *Bone-Deep Revenge*). Frunze: Kyrgyzstan Publishing House.

OVERVIEW

Author **Kasymaly Bektenov** (1910, Kara-Oy village, Issyk-Kul District, Issyk-Kul Region – June 20, 1975, Bishkek) was a Kyrgyz writer, playwright, and actor.

From 1929 to 1934, he worked in the Komsomol committee in the Naryn district and at the state radio committee. He graduated from the A. V. Lunacharsky State Institute of Theatre Arts in Moscow in 1941.

During World War II, he served in the Soviet Army. From 1945 to 1947, he worked as an actor at the Kyrgyz State Drama Theatre and later as chief director of the regional drama theatre in Przhevalsk city. From 1952 to 1957, he served as director of the Kyrgyz State Drama Theatre. He also worked as deputy chairman of the Union of Cinematographers of Kyrgyzstan and, from 1964, at the Kyrgyz State Philharmonic. In addition, he appeared in several films.

He began his literary career in the 1950s. Between 1953 and 1955, he wrote the short stories *Among the Mountains* (*Too arasynda*), *On the Shore of the Blue Whirlpool Lake* (*Kok irim koldun jeeginde*), *At the Mountain Pass* (*Ashuuda*), and *People of One Workshop* (*Bir tsekhtin adamdary*). In 1955, his plays *Fertile Valley* (*Berekeluu oroon*) and *The Foot Resents the Head* (*But bashka taaranat*) were staged.

Bektenov is also the author of the works *Kuyruchuk* (*Kuyruchuk*, 1960); *Taabaldy Pudovkin* (*Taabaldy Pudovkin*, 1959); *Raikan's Laughter* (*Raikandyn kulkusu*, 1963); *Do Not Forget Me* (*Meni unutpa*, 1971); and the play *Bright Path* (*Aikyn jol*). He also wrote several books for children and other works.

Some of his works have been translated into Russian. He was awarded the Order of the Badge of Honor.

Novella Written in 1967, the novella *Bone-Deep Revenge* takes its title from a powerful Kyrgyz metaphor *sook ochtu kek* meaning "revenge and hatred so deep it reaches the bone and blood."

This title refers specifically to the resentment felt by the wealthy elite toward the Soviets after losing their land, power, and influence. Rooted in Soviet ideology, the narrative praises Bolshevik ideals and portrays Russians as essential allies in the liberation of the Kyrgyz and other oppressed peoples.

Linguistically, the novella uses many obsolete Kyrgyz words that are not common in modern literary Kyrgyz. The author writes in a style closer to the 1950s literary language, which gives the text an older tone. At the same time, the author includes traditional Kyrgyz medical terms, naming illnesses in ways used in folk medicine. Many of these disease names still remain recognizable today because they also entered modern Kyrgyz medical vocabulary.

Background In the early 20th century, the Russian Empire forced poor Central Asian men into labor armies. This forced labor service caused resistance and led to a brutal massacre that forced thousands to flee to China. Survivors who returned years later found their lands seized and their communities destroyed.

The story follows Ysmaiyl, a laborer who survives forced work in Belarus and returns to the Issyk-Kul region. Under the new Soviet system, he and other returnees struggle against extreme hunger and poverty. Without medical care, many people die from disease, and orphaned children must find shelter in new orphanages.

As nomadic families try to build permanent villages and schools, they face resistance from the

old wealthy elite. These former leaders seek revenge for their lost power and influence. They sabotage progress and oppose education for women through violence and rumors. The novella shows a people caught between imperial oppression and the difficult hope for a better future.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Ysmaiyl Choibekov - Revolutionary leader and former laborer fighting for land reform
Shaara - Ysmaiyl's wife and survivor of kidnapping by the traditionalist elite
Anya - Bolshevik organizer who saved Ysmaiyl and recruited him into the movement
Officer Titov - Cruel Russian military officer who oppressed laborers in Belarus
Vlasov - Russian doctor and Soviet ally providing medical and administrative aid
Chapyrashty Biy - Oppressive landowner leading the resistance against Soviet reforms
Toktobay - Corrupt merchant who embezzles funds and plots against Bolshevik rule
Mormon - Violent traditionalist who kidnapped Shaara and led an armed revolt
Mambet - Vulnerable peasant caught between tradition and revolutionary change
Moldoyisa - Loyal committee member who organizes and supports the poor
Beishebay - Committee member
Alma - Resilient woman supporting education despite being scarred by her husband
Balbak - Misled husband who attacked his wife due to anti-education rumors
Talgat - Wealthy conspirator plotting against the new revolutionary order
Vali Haji - Deposed elite working to sabotage Soviet influence
Berdibay - Influential orator promoting the anti-Soviet uprising
Chaarakeev - Russian merchant collaborating with elites to sabotage the revolution
Kokkoz - Landowner's brother who physically resists land redistribution
The Mullah - Religious leader aligning with the elite to oppose new laws
Aiyumkan - Widow whose death was used by the elite to discredit Ysmaiyl
Kochkorbay - Resourceful villager leading the community in building and farming

SYNOPSIS

The story begins in the frozen forests of Belarus, where Central Asian Muslim laborers suffer under the cruelty of Officer Titov. Among them, Ysmaiyl encounters Russian Bolsheviks who introduce him to the Pravda newspaper and the idea of a just world for the poor under Bolshevik rule. Hope grows as the Tsar falls, and after Anya kills Titov to save him, the laborers are freed and join the revolutionary cause.

Returning to the Ysyk Kol region, Ysmaiyl finds a land devastated by the 1916 exodus. Poverty, illness, and orphaned children define daily life, while fertile lands remain in the hands of wealthy elites. As a Soviet official, Ysmaiyl works to heal the community, redistribute land, and support the vulnerable.

However, the old wealthy system resists and seeks revenge. Wealthy figures spread fear, oppose education, and use violence to maintain control. Women are targeted, and traditions clash with new ideals. Corruption and hidden greed persist, even under Soviet rule.

The conflict peaks with arrests and a failed uprising by the wealthy. Gradually, change takes root. Villagers build homes, learn to farm, and embrace education. Despite hardship, a new life begins, symbolized by Ysmaiyl's family and the birth of his daughter.

SCENES

Before the October Revolution

Muslim laborers from Central Asia in Belarus During World War I, Muslim laborers from Central Asia work under a cruel officer in Belarus. In the forest, they cut red pine, digging the frozen earth with simple shovels. They live in a damp, cold basement, rising before dawn and working without rest. Officer Titov mocks them, calling them wild and ignorant, saying they deserve only beating and death. Among them is a Kyrgyz man, Ysmaiyl Choibekov. One day, he meets a Russian worker who whispers that change is near, that freedom will come, and the poor will rule. In the frozen silence, hope quietly awakens.

A Voice in the Cold In the early morning, the laborers finish their thin breakfast. The officer orders them to line up outside. A Karakalpak worker is suddenly struck across the face. "What did I do wrong?" he asks. The officer shouts that no one understands his wild language and demands a translator. Ysmaiyl steps forward. "Why did you stay silent?" the officer asks. "I had no permission to speak," he replies. Asked to translate, Ysmaiyl explains that the man's left leg is frostbitten and he begs for mercy. The officer refuses. "You are strong men from Asia. No excuses." Then he turns: "You will translate. Today, you will also carry water to the kitchen."

Pravda: A Whisper of Truth Ysmaiyl sets out to fetch water, riding a sledge pulled by a horse for nearly two miles. On the way back, he meets a young Russian woman and a man named Trofimov, both members of the Bolshevik party. They are glad to meet someone who understands Russian. They say that Anya, also a Bolshevik, will visit soon, and that their numbers are growing. Anya takes out a newspaper, *Pravda*. Trofimov explains that it is Lenin's paper, published under his guidance. Ysmaiyl feels deep joy. Trofimov tells him to read it, but not to show it to the officers. He also says that some Bolsheviks will come to their basements the next day. Ysmaiyl promises to attend with his friends. On the way back, he repeats the word *Pravda*, meaning truth. The horse finds its way to the kitchen, where the cook grows angry at his lateness.

Hope Spreads in Silence Ysmaiyl shares the news with the Central Asian laborers. They cannot read the newspaper, but they listen with excitement as he tells them that the Russian Tsar may soon fall from his throne. A quiet joy rises among them. They begin to wonder whether such news might also reach Turkestan, where they too long for change. Across the empire, chaos grows within the Tsar's army. Soldiers are deserting the front, fleeing the war in fear and exhaustion. Others are dying from epidemic disease. The system is weakening, and discipline is breaking apart. Meanwhile, oppressed people in many regions of the Russian Empire begin to hope for a better future. For the first time, uncertainty carries not only fear, but also the possibility of change.

Between Fear and Silence One day, Central Asian laborers are cutting pine trees when Anya arrives and speaks about the situation in Russia. The men stop working and listen with quiet joy. Suddenly, Officer Titov appears and demands to know why so few trees were cut. The workers hide Anya among the trees. At that moment, a large pine falls near him. "Why did it fall?" he shouts. "You told us to work," they reply. That evening, Titov searches for Ysmaiyl. Failing to find him, he beats another Kyrgyz worker, Japar. Later, he brings Ysmaiyl into a warm room, questioning him. Titov claims he opposes the Tsar and supports the Bolsheviks. Ysmaiyl does not believe him and remains silent.

A Letter of Betrayal Officer Titov writes to the military court about Ysmaiyl, a Central Asian laborer who speaks some Russian and attends Bolshevik meetings. He calls him dangerous, claiming he spreads revolutionary ideas among other workers and speaks against the Tsar in his own language. Titov admits he tried to uncover his secrets but failed, insisting that Ysmaiyl must be judged by the military court. The next day, Titov rides out to deliver his letters. Anya, who serves as their clerk, sees him on the road and kills him. When the laborers and Anya approach, he is already dead. Searching his belongings, they find the letter written against Ysmaiyl.

The Fire and the New Order The laborers gather around a fire, warming themselves after a long day. Suddenly, they see a group of people approaching. The newcomers announce that the Bolsheviks have won and the Russian Tsar has lost his power. Excitement and disbelief spread among the workers. A revolutionary named Sokolov speaks firmly. He warns that there may be traitors among them, but says such people must be judged by the revolutionary tribunal. His words create both tension and hope. Then Anya steps forward and says: "You are no longer laborers. You are members of the workers' party. Please, line up." At the end, Sokolov is accepted as their leader.

A Homeland In 1916, many Kyrgyz flee to China to escape a brutal massacre. The journey is devastating: countless people die along the way, families are torn apart, and only a part of them manage to return to their homeland. Those who come back are exhausted, hungry, and ill, carrying the weight of loss and survival. When they return, they find that their fertile lands have already been taken by Russian settlers. In the village of Kara-Oy, in the Issyk-Kul region, two young men collect wild wheat just to survive. Suddenly,

a wealthy man, Chapyrashty Biy, arrives and angrily scolds them for gathering grain from his field. The young men, however, respond that the land no longer belongs to him, but to a Russian owner.

A Return and a Reckoning Chapyrashty Biy can no longer act as harsh and oppressive as before. Instead of shouting, he says they should have asked permission first. While the argument continues, a post-office sledge pulled by two horses arrives, and a soldier appears with it. The local people grow anxious, fearing that the Russian soldier might shoot them. But soon it becomes clear that he is Kyrgyz—Ysmaiyl Choibek uulu, the same man who was once exiled to the labor army by Chapyrashty Biy. Ysmaiyl approaches calmly and greets Chapyrashty Biy. The wealthy man pretends not to recognize him. Then Ysmaiyl speaks firmly, reminding him that it was he who forced him into the labor army.

Healing in a Wounded Village A woman named Aiyumkan falls seriously ill, her foot swollen and infected. She asks a local healer for help, but he can do nothing except take her only goat as payment. She has two sons and cares for two orphaned children of her late brother-in-law, while her own husband died during the rebellion against the Tsar's soldiers. Now called "soldier," Ysmaiyl is supported by Moldoyisa and Beishebay, who urge him to help her. Ysmaiyl brings a Russian doctor, who treats the wound, draining the pus. Aiyumkan finally falls asleep. They gather villagers for medicine against scabies, as many suffer from illness. Though many receive treatment, the doctor warns that Aiyumkan's infected ulcer is severe and may prove fatal.

After the October Revolution

Blame and Rumors in a Time of Change Ysmaiyl leaves for another village for two weeks. When he returns, Aiyumkan has died. The local wealthy figures—Chapyrashty Biy, the mullah, and Berdibay—begin to accuse him, claiming that bringing the Russian doctor caused her death. At the same time, news spreads that the Bolsheviks have arrived in Pishpek, Tokmok, and other regions. Villagers who recovered from scabies ask for more help, as others suffer from malaria, smallpox, and typhus after returning from the exodus to China. Seeing the exhausted returnees, Ysmaiyl grows deeply heartbroken, thinking of his lost family. Supported by local young men, he continues helping, while the wealthy openly oppose him and also resent the Russian doctor Vlasov and his doctor wife.

Harvest, Rumors, and Rising Tension During the harvest, villagers struggle to survive. Some work for wealthy Russian landlords and receive small amounts of wheat, while others cut their own crops. When they ask Chapyrashty Biy for a horse, he demands an unreasonably high price, forcing the poor to borrow oxen from Russian settlers. Meanwhile, the mullah and Chapyrashty spread rumors that Ysmaiyl has disappeared, taking quiet pleasure in it. They also claim the Bolsheviks are not as just as people believe. Tensions rise as villagers like Mambet openly argue with the wealthy. Moldoyisa explains that Ysmaiyl is spreading Bolshevik ideas and searching for his family. Soon, the Russian doctor arrives, and Mambet invites him as a guest.

A Rescue in Karakol Ysmaiyl travels to Karakol to find the revolutionary committee, but no one knows its location. In the street, he sees a man forcing a young woman to become his second or third wife. The man is Talgat, the son of the wealthy Vali Haji. The woman resists, but he drags her. Ysmaiyl intervenes and rescues her. The woman says she is from a village near his own. She lost her husband and child during the exodus to China and now lives with her mother in poor huts on the outskirts, where many returnees stay. Ysmaiyl, searching for his family, goes there. The locals fear his uniform, but the woman assures them he is Kyrgyz.

Orphans and Revolution Ysmaiyl finally finds the building of the revolutionary committee in Karakol and introduces himself to its leader. He explains that he has just returned from World War I and describes the suffering he has witnessed. Together, they agree to help the many orphaned children returned from China, where families were torn apart on cold and icy mountain passes. The city is filled with wandering orphans, hungry and alone. Many die each day from starvation. Violence continues, as former Tsarist soldiers and wealthy elites seek revenge, shooting people, leaving bodies in the streets, and spreading fear among the population.

Power Shifts in Issyk-Kul Ysmaiyl hears that Bolshevik power is spreading across the Issyk-Kul villages, though local elites resist it. Some revolutionary committee members have already been sent to his village. Ysmaiyl gathers orphaned children begging for food and brings them to a newly opened shelter. He also collects sledges and horses from wealthy families, punishing those who refuse. Vali Haji mocks him, claiming Bolshevik rule is nonsense and that Alexander Kerensky still governs. Ysmaiyl shows a newspaper dated October Revolution proving otherwise. Defeated, Vali Haji and his son Talgat must surrender horses, carts, and men to serve the people.

Shadows of Provocation The former oppressors spread dark rumors across the villages of Ysyk-Kol, poisoning minds with fear. They secretly kill innocent people and place the blame on the Bolsheviks, turning grief into anger and confusion. Amid this growing tension, Ysmaiyl is sent to Cholpon-Ata district to serve in the revolutionary committee. Yet the regional leader warns him that it is too early to speak of peace. The old powers are not gone; they are watching and waiting. Ysmaiyl must stay alert, ready for any provocation from those who resist the new order.

The First Assembly and the Clash In Ysmaiyl's village, the first official Bolshevik meeting takes place. Vlasov, a member of the revolutionary committee, reads an official decree sent from Pishpek. The villagers react with surprise and frustration—why has it arrived two years late? The committee then explains the mission of the new authority: those who once oppressed the people cannot be part of the new government and must be excluded. Chapyrashty Biy stands up angrily, claiming he saved many people from hunger and asking why he is not included. He is firmly rejected as an oppressor. Other wealthy men also try to join, but none are accepted. The villagers then elect local representatives to form the revolutionary committee. As the meeting ends, tension erupts. The wealthy attack with traditional sticks while the poor defend themselves with stones. In the chaos, Ysmaiyl fires three or four shots into the air. The fight stops abruptly.

Shaara's Rescue Shaara, a young widow with two children, becomes Ysmaiyl's wife, but he is often carried away by the storm of revolution. In his absence, Mormon, a wealthy man with many wives, seizes her and mocks the powerless soldier. When Ysmaiyl first comes for her, he is beaten down, thrown back like a broken branch in winter wind. Shaara remains behind—imprisoned, wounded, silenced, her children taken away, her tears turned to stone. Mormon guards her like stolen gold, trusting no one. But Ysmaiyl returns again, not alone this time. With his friends, he breaks the darkness open, and Shaara is carried back into freedom. Behind them, pursuit fades into dust, and the night swallows the anger of the oppressor.

Gathering at Toktobay's Yurt In a mountainous valley, Toktobay, a wealthy Kyrgyz merchant, builds a large house and sets a spacious yurt beside it. While resting inside the yurt, he is informed that guests have arrived. Chapyrashty Biy, Talgat the son of Vali Haji, Berdibay the well known local orator, and the Russian merchant Chaarakeev visit to discuss the political situation. The hosts welcome them and offer food and drinks according to tradition. Chaarakeev is introduced as the owner of an oil factory. Talgat speaks about the growing strength of Soviet power. Even the wealthy families of Karakol and the head of the uezd, the former administrative district of the Russian Empire, are now forced to obey it. The revolutionary committees formed from the poor have become powerful as if they represent a new force

The Changing Order Talgat continues speaking about the changing order. In Karakol city, Fatih Haji was forced to sign an agreement increasing workers' wages, as the Soviets accused him of growing rich through their labor. In Ak-Suu village, Mormon was disgraced when he tried to take a seventh wife, but the Komsomol intervened and removed her; the man who took her is now the local municipal head. Chapyrashty Biy bitterly adds that they should have killed Ysmaiyl when he returned from the labor army, calling it a missed opportunity.

Fear, Strategy, and Shifting Alliances Chapyrashty Biy grows increasingly angry, not only at the rise of Soviet power but also at poor men like Beisheke who now speak boldly and challenge the old order, which he finds humiliating. Talgat asks who Ysmaiyl is, and Chapyrashty Biy replies that he served in the labor army and may have even become a Christian, calling him an infidel. The wealthy men conclude that open resistance to the Bolsheviks is useless. Instead, they suggest pretending to be poor and oppressed, even registering their own children as children of workers to avoid suspicion. They laugh at this cunning idea.

They also recall disputes among themselves. Vali Haji has already filed a petition claiming Chapyrashty owes him 500 soms. Despite their quarrels, they agree that they must unite against the Bolsheviks to protect their position and influence.

Land, Power, and the Voice of the Poor The local wealthy gather before Ysmaiyl, complaining that their lands are being taken by poor villagers. Chapyrashty Biy insists the land is the heritage of his ancestors, while others protest the heavy taxes imposed by the new government. Ysmaiyl responds firmly that, by Soviet decree, the land belongs to the poor and the common people. He reminds them how they once forced the poor to pay excessive taxes, even demanding payments at moments as sacred as childbirth in the household of a provincial leader. The wealthy argue that they too are part of the community. Ysmaiyl rejects this, calling them oppressors. They leave deeply disappointed, unable to accept the new order.

A New Village Young people begin to claim land and build a new village, raising clay houses with their own hands. The Soviet government encourages settlement, and nomadic families slowly begin to live in one place. The air is filled with energy and hope, and the youth welcome these changes with joy. The sons of wealthy families are not accepted into the Komsomol, while ordinary young people join and take part in building the new order. Amid these transformations, Ysmaiyl's wife gives birth to a baby girl. Ysmaiyl is filled with quiet happiness. They name her Urmatkan, a child born into a changing world.

Building a New Life Amid Fear and Envy As the people begin to build houses, they face new challenges. Being nomads, they have little experience with clay construction. Among them, Kochkorbay proves more skillful and completes his house first. Others follow his example, copying his work and learning step by step. They also claim land for gardening, though this too is unfamiliar. Kochkorbay leads again, planting apple and apricot trees, and growing potatoes. Gradually, others begin to try. The wealthy, filled with envy, spread dark rumors. They say the village stands near a cemetery, that spirits rise at night, and that these homes will bring death instead of life.

Ploughing the New Land Spring arrives, and the people begin to plough together, helping one another as the land, now redistributed, opens before them. They turn the untouched but fertile fields that once belonged to the wealthy. Suddenly, Kokkoz, the brother of Chapyrashty Biy, rushes forward, shouting and blocking their way. He claims the land belongs to their fathers and forefathers. Another wealthy man, Toktobay, calmly asks whether they have any official document proving that the land now belongs to the common people. Moldoyisa and Beishebay, members of the local revolutionary committee, fall silent, their hope shaken. They have no document, only faith in the new order, and that silence weighs heavily on them.

The Decree and the First Plough Ysmaiyl, the head of the village municipal authority, arrives together with Vlasov. The locals complain that they cannot plough the land because the wealthy demand an official document. Ysmaiyl calmly replies that he always carries the decree on land redistribution. Vlasov reads it aloud in Russian, dated December 1918, but most people do not understand. Then Beishebay reads it again in Kyrgyz, clearly stating that the land and cattle of the wealthy are to be confiscated and given to the people. Toktobay, the rich merchant, is briefly pleased, thinking that trade is not mentioned. He asks to see the paper. Beishebay, offended, hands it over. Toktobay studies the stamp with relief, but Vlasov corrects him. Merchants, too, are counted among the wealthy, and their property is included. At last, the poor return to the fields and begin to plough.

Sweet Words and Hidden Trade Mambet, a local peasant, waters his field and looks with hope at the growing wheat, dreaming of a good harvest. Chapyrashty Biy approaches on horseback, smiling warmly. He praises the coming harvest and offers kymyz, the cool fermented mare's milk. Thirsty under the hot sun, Mambet drinks with gratitude. Then Chapyrashty speaks casually, asking whether Mambet has grown opium in his garden. Mambet admits he has a small amount. The biy's voice lowers as he says opium brings high prices in distant markets. He mentions that Toktobay, a merchant, visits Bishkek and, claiming to speak on behalf of the poor, proposes opening a trade association. The government provides funds, and a store is established. Quietly, he adds that Toktobay is buying opium.

A Coin, A Secret, A Warning Chapyrashty Biy places ten soms in Mambet's hand, smiling as he says he can buy fine silk for his wife. Then, almost casually, he asks him to sign a paper confirming the loan.

Mambet, unable to read, presses his fingerprint onto the page, puzzled but trusting. Chapyrashty quietly reminds him to keep their conversation secret. Soon they see a group of women passing by. They greet the biy with shy respect, following Kyrgyz custom. When he asks where they are going, Mambet explains that men and women now attend school to overcome illiteracy. Chapyrashty frowns and warns that such schools are dangerous for women. He urges Mambet not to send his wife, hinting that education might cost him his family.

Alma's Injury and the Village Decision Balbak agrees to send his wife Alma to school. As she prepares to leave, he says, "My lovely wife, I may not see you again," and suddenly bites her nose, leaving a deep wound and making her face scarred. The villagers gather in alarm. Moldoyisa, a member of the revolutionary committee, suggests Balbak may have been provoked and should be taken to court. But Alma defends him, saying he is a good man who might have been influenced by others, and she does not want him arrested. The people instead advise her to see the doctor in the Karakol city and Balbak must take her to doctor. The municipality urges support for women's education and care.

A Sudden Loss and a Divided Village During the meeting, Shaara, Ysmaiyl's wife, announces troubling news: Mambet's wife has run away with another man, the brother of a wealthy Kyrgyz lord. Mambet is devastated, recalling how he ploughed the land for her, grew wheat, and even borrowed money for her clothes. Some villagers whisper that women should not be sent to school, warning that education may lead to such losses. However, the local Soviet officials strongly encourage education for everyone, regardless of gender. At the same time, they condemn Karakoz, Mambet's wife, while the village remains divided between fear, tradition, and the promise of change.

Harvest Time and Hidden Greed At harvest time, both poor villagers and former wealthy landowners are required to deliver wheat to the government, though the wealthy try to avoid it. Toktobay, the merchant, and his son become arrogant after opening the first store in the region. He receives fifty thousand soms from the government but fails to account for forty thousand during an audit, claiming he returned only ten thousand. His large notebook lists debts of villagers, even though many have already paid. The inspector reads these false debts aloud, causing anger among the people. Chapyrashty Biy also demands Mambet repay one hundred soms for a loan of only ten. Despite Soviet power, exploitation and deception continue in new forms.

Toktobay's Secret and Arrest Toktobay hides his money buried in the sheep yard beside the shed, believing it is safer in the soil than in the hands of the poor. He tells his son that whenever he needs money, he can simply dig it up. Toktobay plans to join Chaarakeev, the oil factory owner, and Talgat, Vali Haji's son, in Karakol to support anti Soviet movements and resist Bolshevik rule. Humiliated by the rise of poor villagers in power, he grows bitter and hateful toward them, then falls into a restless sleep. At dawn, Ysmaiyl arrives with government officials and a police officer, and Toktobay is arrested.

The Clash in Temir In the village of Temir, Mormon, a wealthy man, gathers his supporters and orders the arrest of local municipal officials, locking them in sheds. Anti-Soviet member Berdibay reports that they cannot extend control to other villages, leaving Mormon frustrated and disheartened. Poor villagers are also captured, while their wives cry in distress. Chaarakeev arrives with his group, and Berdibay declares that it is time to rise against the Soviets. In violence and chaos, they slaughter Mambet's only mare despite his desperate protests. Mambet is taken prisoner. However, Soviet soldiers soon arrive, arresting many of the wealthy rebels, while some manage to flee.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Ysmaiyl Choibekov

As the protagonist, Ysmaiyl represents the transition from an oppressed colonial subject to an enlightened Soviet leader. His journey begins in the silence of forced labor, where he learns the power of language and ideology. Upon his return to Issyk-Kul, he becomes the moral and political center of the community. He is not merely a politician; he is a social healer who addresses hunger, medical crises, and the plight of orphans. His character serves the Soviet ideal of the "New Man" who prioritizes the collective good over personal gain or ancient tribal loyalties.

Resilient Ysmaiyl survives the freezing labor camps in Belarus during World War I. He works in the damp forest cutting red pine with simple shovels. He sleeps in a cold basement and eats very little food. Despite the cruelty of Officer Titov, Ysmaiyl never gives up. He endures the long journey back to a homeland ruined by the 1916 exodus. He returns to find his family lost and his village in pain. This inner strength allows him to transition from an oppressed prisoner to a revolutionary leader.

Compassionate Ysmaiyl cares deeply for the suffering people around him. In the city of Karakol, he sees many hungry orphans who lost their families in the cold mountain passes. He gathers these children and brings them to a new shelter for food and protection. He also helps a young woman escape a forced marriage to Talgat. When he sees the widow Aymkan suffering from a painful infection, he brings a Russian doctor to treat her wound. His actions show a heart that seeks to heal his wounded community.

Courageous Ysmaiyl stands up against the powerful wealthy elites who once controlled the land. He openly confronts Chapyrashty Biy and reminds him of past injustices. He carries the official land decree and tells the rich men that the fields now belong to the common people. When the wealthy attack with sticks, he fires his gun into the air to maintain order. He also leads his friends to rescue Shaara from Mormon's house. He is not afraid to take horses and grain from the rich to feed the starving.

Parallels: The Archetype of the New Man: Duishon and Ysmaiyl

In Soviet Kyrgyz literature, the New Man is a hero who breaks away from ancient tribal loyalties to build a future based on equality and rational progress. Both Duishon, from Chyngyz Aitmatov's *The First Teacher*, and Ysmaiyl, from *Sook Ochtu Kek* by Kasymaly Bektenov, serve as the primary examples of this transformation. They are pioneers who return to their isolated villages to dismantle the old world.

The Mission of Enlightenment

Both characters return from the outside world carrying a mission of progress. Duishon returns from the Red Army, while Ysmaiyl returns from the labor camps in Belarus. They do not seek personal wealth or traditional power. Instead, they focus on the enlightenment of the poor. Duishon's battleground is the schoolroom where he teaches children to read despite having no supplies. Ysmaiyl's battleground is the village municipal office where he enforces land redistribution and brings in medical doctors. For both men, literacy and modern medicine are the foundations of the new society.

Resistance and Infidelity

As the New Men, they are immediately viewed as enemies by the wealthy elite. Because they challenge the religious and social authority of the old order, they are both branded as infidels. The wealthy use the villagers' fear of change to isolate these heroes. Duishon and Ysmaiyl face the bone-deep hatred of those who lose their land and influence. They are mocked, beaten, and threatened, yet they remain unshakable. Their resilience in the face of this social pressure is a key trait of the archetype.

The Liberation of the Oppressed

A central part of being a New Man is the rejection of the traditional view of women and children as property. Duishon risks everything to save the orphan girl Altynay from a forced marriage because he sees her potential as a future scholar. Similarly, Ysmaiyl rescues Shaara from the house of the wealthy Mormon. By treating women as human beings with the right to education and freedom, they strike at the heart of the feudal system.

Sacrifice and Loneliness

The New Man is often a lonely figure who is not fully understood by the people he tries to help. Both Duishon and Ysmaiyl sacrifice their personal comfort and safety for the collective good. They live in a time of hunger and poverty, often facing these hardships alongside the villagers while shouldering the responsibility of leadership. They represent the painful but necessary bridge between a nomadic past and a modern future. Through their sacrifice, the next generation is born into a world of new possibilities.

Chapyrashty Biy

Chapyrashty Biy serves as the primary antagonist of the novella. He is a wealthy landowner and a powerful Biy who embodies the oppressive feudal system of the past. He is the man responsible for exiling Ysmaiyl to the brutal labor camps in Belarus. When Ysmaiyl returns from the labor army, the Biy pretends not to recognize him and shows no remorse for his past actions. When the Soviet government begins to take his land and power, he refuses to surrender. He remains a shadow over the village and leads the wealthy elite in a silent struggle against the new revolutionary order.

Cruel Chapyrashty Biy shows extreme cruelty toward those who have less than him. He used his influence to force Ysmaiyl and other poor men into the labor army while protecting his own family. When the exhausted people return from the exodus in China, he shows no mercy for their hunger. He scolds young men for gathering wild wheat in the fields of Kara Oy. He demands high payments from the poor who need horses to harvest their crops. His only concern is maintaining his wealth at any cost.

Arrogant He possesses a deep sense of superiority over the common villagers. He believes that the fertile lands of his ancestors are his birthright and can never belong to the poor peasants. He is deeply offended when ordinary men like Beisheke speak up to challenge his authority. He looks down on Ysmaiyl as a traitor and calls him an infidel for following the Bolsheviks. His pride makes it impossible for him to accept a society where the workers and the wealthy are treated as equals under the law.

Deceptive He is a very cunning man who prefers to use tricks rather than open force. He approaches the peasant Mambet with a warm smile and offers him cool kymyz on a hot day. While Mambet is drinking and feeling grateful, the Biy convinces him to accept a small loan of ten soms. He tricks the illiterate Mambet into putting his fingerprint on a legal document that demands a much higher amount later. He also encourages other wealthy men to lie to the government by pretending to be poor.

Malicious Chapyrashty Biy uses psychological warfare to spread fear and division among the people. He creates dark rumors that the new clay houses are haunted by spirits because they are near a cemetery. He warns the men that sending their wives to school will lead to the destruction of their families. When the widow Aiymkan dies from an infection, he maliciously blames Ysmaiyl and the Russian doctor for her death. He uses every opportunity to poison the minds of the villagers against the new order.

Shaara

Shaara is the wife of Ysmaiyl and a young widow who represents the transformation of Kyrgyz women during the revolution. Her journey from being a victim of feudal kidnapping to a free member of the new society symbolizes the broader shift from patriarchal oppression toward gender equality and personal liberation.

Vulnerable At the beginning of her journey, Shaara is trapped by the harsh customs of the old world. While Ysmaiyl is away serving the revolution, a wealthy man named Mormon seizes her as if she were property. She is imprisoned, wounded, and silenced, while her children are taken away from her. During this time, she is guarded like stolen gold, reflecting the historical suffering of women who were treated as objects to be owned by the powerful elite.

Resilient Despite the physical and emotional trauma she endures while being held by Mormon, Shaara maintains her inner strength. Even though her tears turn to stone and she is treated like a broken branch in a winter wind, she survives her captivity. When Ysmaiyl and his friends finally break into the darkness of her prison to rescue her, she is able to leave her past behind and return to freedom. She does not let her wounds prevent her from starting a new life.

Assertive As the new Soviet order takes hold, Shaara becomes a voice within her community. She no longer lives in silence but actively participates in the social life of the village. During a public meeting, she is the one who steps forward to announce the troubling news about Mambet's wife. By speaking openly in front of the villagers and officials, she demonstrates the revolutionary shift where women are encouraged to participate in public affairs and education.

Nurturing Shaara represents the hope and the fertile future of the new generation. Her personal happiness with Ysmaiyl leads to the birth of their daughter, Urmatkan, whose name signifies honor. This child is born into a world where the land has been redistributed and the old oppressors have been defeated. As a mother, Shaara nurtures a new life that will never have to experience the same feudal slavery or forced labor that she and Ysmaiyl once endured.

Mambet

Mambet is a local peasant who represents the common people caught between the collapsing feudal system and the rising Soviet order. While he benefits from land redistribution, he remains vulnerable to the manipulation of the wealthy elite. His life illustrates the struggles of a simple man trying to navigate a time of radical social change.

Hardworking Mambet is deeply dedicated to his labor and the promise of the soil. He waters his fields under the hot sun and looks at his growing wheat with great hope for the future. He dreams of a successful harvest that will sustain his family and justify his effort. He works tirelessly to plow the land and grow crops, showing his commitment to building a stable life under the new laws. His identity is firmly tied to his work and his connection to the earth.

Gullible He is easily manipulated by the cunning members of the old wealthy elite. When Chapyrashty Biy offers him a cool drink of kymyz on a scorching day, Mambet accepts it with simple, unsuspecting gratitude. He is blinded by the Biy's false kindness and agrees to a small loan for silk. Because he is illiterate, he presses his fingerprint onto a document without understanding that he is being trapped in a massive debt. His lack of education makes him a constant target for those who wish to exploit him.

Heartbroken Mambet suffers deep personal and material loss during the social transitions of his village. He is devastated when his wife runs away with the brother of a wealthy lord, leaving him to recall with pain how he plowed the fields specifically for her. His grief is further compounded during the anti-Soviet uprising in Temir when the rebels slaughter his only mare despite his desperate protests. He represents the ordinary person whose personal life and small property are torn apart by the chaos of the era.

Persecuted Despite the promises of the revolution, Mambet remains a frequent victim of the old guard's violence and deception. During the clash in Temir, he is taken prisoner by Mormon's supporters and locked away. He is caught in the dangerous crossfire between the wealthy rebels and the arriving Soviet soldiers. Even when he tries to follow the new rules, he is still exploited by men like Toktobay who keep false debt lists. His character shows that the path to true freedom was filled with constant danger for the poor.

Alma and Balbak

Alma and Balbak are a married couple whose relationship illustrates the violent friction between traditional family life and the new Soviet push for education. Their story reveals how the "dark rumors" spread by the wealthy elite could turn a household into a place of tragedy and fear.

Aspiring Alma is a woman who embraces the opportunity for a better life and a new way of thinking. She agrees to attend the newly established school to overcome illiteracy despite the many warnings from her community. She prepares to leave her home to learn how to read and write, showing her willingness to challenge the old customs that kept women in the shadows. Her desire for education represents the hope of Kyrgyz women to gain a voice in the changing world.

Misled Balbak is a husband who becomes a victim of the psychological warfare used by the wealthy elite. He listens to the rumors spread by Chapyrashty Biy and the mullah, who claim that schools will cause wives to abandon their families. Because he lacks the knowledge to see through these lies, he becomes trapped in a state of deep suspicion and fear. His mind is poisoned by the idea that education is a threat to his marriage and his honor.

Violent Driven by an irrational fear of losing his wife, Balbak commits a horrific act of physical cruelty. As Alma is about to leave for her lessons, he tells her that he may never see her again and suddenly bites her nose. He leaves her with a deep wound and a permanent scar, hoping that a disfigured face will prevent her from leaving him or being noticed by others. This act shows how traditional possessiveness could turn into brutal violence when threatened by social change.

Forgiving Despite the physical trauma and the scar on her face, Alma shows a surprising level of loyalty and resilience. When the village revolutionary committee wants to arrest Balbak and take him to court, she steps forward to defend him. She tells the officials that he is a good man who was simply influenced by the bad words of others. She chooses to seek medical help in the city rather than seeing her husband punished, highlighting her role as a healer within her broken family.

HEMES

Oppression Oppression runs throughout every layer of the novella. The most obvious form is the imperial oppression inflicted by the Russian Empire, which forces poor Central Asian men like Ysmaiyl into brutal labor camps in Belarus. These men are worked like animals in frozen forests, sleeping in damp basements and eating very little food. They are mocked, beaten, and told they deserve only death because they are considered wild and ignorant.

Below the imperial level exists the internal oppression of the wealthy elite over the poor peasants. The Biys like Chapyrashty Biy and Toktobay exploit their own people through excessive taxes, high prices, and manipulation. They treat common villagers like servants who must beg for the privilege of working on land that once belonged to their ancestors. Women are also victims of this oppression, seen as property to be given away or taken by force, as shown in the kidnapping of Shaara and the forced marriage attempts by Talgat.

The novella also presents the oppression of hunger, disease, and the lack of medical care. Villagers suffer from scabies, malaria, smallpox, and infected wounds because there are no doctors or medicine. Orphaned children wander the streets of Karakol, starving and dying alone. This physical suffering is a direct result of the colonial and feudal systems that kept the common people in poverty and ignorance for generations.

Revenge ,The revenge is not that of the oppressed against their masters, but rather the bitter resentment of the wealthy elite toward the new Soviet system that strips them of their land and power.

This psychological revenge is the "bone-deep" hatred that drives characters like Chapyrashty Biy, Toktobay, and Mormon. They cannot accept their reduced status and fight back through rumors, sabotage, and lies. Chapyrashty Biy spreads dark stories about haunted houses to frighten villagers away from their

new homes. He blames the Russian doctor for Aiymkan's death to turn the people against the revolution. This quiet, venomous campaign represents the deep-seated malice of those who refuse to let go of the past.

Physical revenge appears in the violent uprising in the village of Temir. Mormon and his supporters capture and imprison local municipal officials and loot the property of the poor. They slaughter Mambet's only mare and take him prisoner. This armed rebellion is the result of accumulated rage from the wealthy class, who feel humiliated and powerless under the new order. Their failure to adapt peacefully shows that revenge, when left to grow unchecked, can only lead to violence and more suffering for everyone.

Illustrative moment: The most powerful moment demonstrating this revenge occurs during the meeting in Toktobay's yurt. The wealthy elites gather to discuss their strategy. Chapyrashty Biy speaks bitterly, saying, "We should have killed Ysmaiyl when he returned from the labor army." Talgat nods in agreement, reminding everyone that the old powers are now forced to obey the poor. This conversation shows the "bone-deep" hatred simmering beneath the surface.

Medicine: Absence of Medical Care The novella vividly portrays how the lack of proper medical treatment becomes both a consequence of feudal oppression and a devastating legacy of the 1916 exodus, hunger, and mass return from China.

Before the arrival of Soviet doctors, the poor suffer and die from preventable diseases with no access to proper care. The absence of medical infrastructure becomes catastrophic after the 1916 exodus to China. Thousands return from the icy mountain passes sick, exhausted, and traumatized. The villages are filled with people suffering from scabies, malaria, smallpox, and typhus. Without trained doctors or medicine, the illness spreads rapidly through entire communities. Ysmaiyl is deeply heartbroken when he sees the condition of the returnees, many of whom are dying slowly in makeshift shelters on the outskirts of towns. In Karakol, orphaned children wander the streets begging for food. Many die each day from starvation and disease, their bodies left in the streets. The scale of suffering reveals how colonial neglect has turned basic health into a privilege reserved for the wealthy.

The novella powerfully illustrates the devastating consequences of medical neglect in colonial and feudal societies. For generations, the common people of Central Asia had no access to modern medicine or doctors. They relied solely on local healers who possessed limited knowledge and often required payment in exchange for ineffective treatments. This absence of proper medical care becomes a quiet killer throughout the story.

Illustrative moment: When Ysmaiyl brings the Russian doctor to treat Aiymkan, it marks a turning point in the story. The doctor drains the infected wound and finally allows her to sleep without pain. She also gathers villagers to distribute medicine for scabies, treating many who had suffered for months. However, she warns that Aiymkan's condition is very severe and may still prove fatal. Despite her efforts, she dies two weeks later while Ysmaiyl is away. This moment shows both the promise and the limitations of the new system. Medical care has arrived, but it comes too late for many who have already been weakened by years of neglect.

The wealthy elite immediately exploit Aiymkan's death for their political goals. Chapyrashty Biy, the mullah, and Berdibay publicly accuse Ysmaiyl and the Russian doctor of causing her death. They claim that bringing modern medicine to the village was a mistake and that the old ways were safer. This malicious propaganda turns a tragedy into a tool of fear, attempting to make the villagers reject the very doctors who are trying to save them. The absence of widespread trust in medical care allows the elite to frame every failure as proof that the Bolsheviks are dangerous.

Education: Eliminating Illiteracy The novella presents illiteracy as more than just the inability to read and write. It is a tool of oppression kept alive by colonial and feudal systems to maintain power over the common people. When the poor cannot read documents or newspapers, they are easily tricked, manipulated, and kept dependent on the wealthy elite who control all information.

In the frozen forests of Belarus, Ysmaiyl encounters the power of the written word for the first time. The Bolshevik Trofimov hands him a copy of Pravda, the newspaper of Lenin. "It is truth," Trofimov explains. "Read it, but do not show it to the officers." Ysmaiyl feels deep joy holding the newspaper, but he cannot read a single word. He repeats the word "Pravda" silently to himself, understanding only that it means truth.

This moment reveals how illiteracy keeps the oppressed in darkness, unable to access the ideas that could free them.

After returning to Issyk-Kul, Ysmaiyl makes the fight against illiteracy a central part of his mission. He gathers villagers for school to overcome their ignorance. Men and women sit together in the same classroom, learning to read and write for the first time. The local Soviet officials strongly encourage education for everyone, regardless of gender. This represents a revolutionary shift in a society where knowledge was historically reserved for religious leaders and the wealthy.

The wealthy elite see education as the greatest threat to their power. Chapyrashty Biy spreads dark rumors to sabotage the schools. He tells the men that sending their wives to school will lead to the destruction of their families and the loss of their honor. He warns that educated women will abandon their husbands and run away. These lies are designed to turn the community against the very idea of learning.

The conflict over education turns violent in the household of Balbak and Alma. Balbak has been poisoned by the rumors spread by the wealthy elites. He tells his wife Alma, "My lovely wife, I may not see you again," and suddenly bites her nose, leaving a deep wound. Her face becomes permanently scarred. This tragic moment shows how the fight against illiteracy is not just political but deeply personal and dangerous.

In the Soviet narrative of the novella, literacy is directly connected to health, freedom, and justice. Educated people can read official decrees and understand their rights to the land. They can protect themselves from being tricked into signing documents with hidden debts. They can make informed decisions about their families and their future. The novella suggests that eliminating illiteracy is just as important as redistributing land, because an informed people cannot be easily oppressed.

Illustrative moments: Before the arrival of Soviet power, illiteracy serves as one of the primary mechanisms through which the wealthy elite maintain their dominance. The poor cannot read official documents, legal agreements, or account books, leaving them vulnerable to constant exploitation. When the merchant Toktobay and his son open the first store in the region with fifty thousand soms from the government, they fail to account for forty thousand during an audit. Their large notebook lists debts claimed from villagers, even though many have already paid. When the inspector reads these false debts aloud, anger spreads among the people who realize they have been cheated. Because they cannot read the records themselves, they have no way to prove their innocence or challenge the lies written against them.

Similarly, when Chapyrashty Biy tricks Mambet into accepting a loan, the peasant has no defense. The Biy approaches him with a warm smile and offers cool kymyz on a hot day. While Mambet drinks with gratitude, Chapyrashty gives him ten soms to buy silk for his wife. Then he asks Mambet to sign a paper confirming the loan. Because Mambet cannot read, he presses his fingerprint onto the page without understanding that the document claims he owes one hundred soms instead of ten. Later, Chapyrashty publicly demands repayment of the full amount, and Mambet has no written proof of the deception.

Ownership: Land Disputes In the novella, land is the ultimate source of power, survival, and identity. The central conflict arises from a harsh historical reality: land never belonged to the poor people. For generations, the fertile soil was the exclusive property of the wealthy elite (*Biys*) or Russian settlers, while the common people were merely tenants on their own homeland, forced to pay rent and taxes just to survive.

The theme begins with the tragic return of the Kyrgyz people from the exodus to China after the 1916 massacre. Families come back exhausted and hungry, only to find that the land they once roamed is now completely out of their reach. In the village of Kara-Oy, two young men try to gather wild wheat just to eat. When the wealthy Chapyrashty Biy arrives and scolds them for stealing, the young men reply that the land no longer belongs to him, but to a Russian owner. This moment highlights the double oppression the poor faced: whether the master was a Kyrgyz Biy or a Russian settler, the result was the same, the poor had no right to the soil that fed them.

The disputes center on two opposing views of ownership. The wealthy elite, led by Chapyrashty Biy and his brother Kokkoz, argue that the land is their ancestral heritage. They believe the soil belongs to them because their fathers held it for generations. They view the poor as servants who have no claim to the earth. On the other side, Ysmaiyl and the revolutionary committee introduce a radical new idea: the land belongs to those who work it. Ysmaiyl rejects the Biys' claims, reminding them that they used the land to enslave the poor with excessive taxes. He insists that by Soviet decree, the land must finally be taken from those who hoard it and given to those who actually plow it.

Land disputes in the novella serve as a map of the social revolution. Every field plowed and every house built is a victory against the centuries-old truth that land never belonged to the poor. The struggle shows that while the Soviet system provided the legal decrees, the people had to fight for every inch of soil through physical courage and the rejection of ancient fears.

Illustrative moment: A pivotal moment occurs when the poor villagers attempt to plow the redistributed fields for the first time. As they turn the untouched, fertile soil, Kokkoz and the merchant Toktobay rush forward to block their way. They demand an official document to prove the land has changed hands. Because the poor have never owned anything in writing, the local committee members fall silent and lose their confidence. It is only when Ysmaiyl arrives with the official land decree of December 1918 that the dispute is settled. This scene demonstrates that without the "paper" of the new government, the poor remain invisible to the old masters who only respect the power of written ownership.

Power In the novella, the shift of power from the wealthy elite and religious authorities to the poor is not presented only as an abstract idea, it is dramatized through concrete scenes.

Before the revolution, power clearly belongs to the wealthy Biys and influential figures. One striking example is the scene in which Chapyrashty Biy confronts two young men gathering wild wheat in Kara-Oy. Even though the young men are starving, the Biy feels entitled to accuse and punish them. The land, though once freely roamed by the Kyrgyz people, is treated as private property controlled by elites or Russian settlers. The poor cannot even collect food from the soil without fear. This scene demonstrates how economic power—control of land, translates directly into social authority.

Chapyrashty Biy offers him ten soms but prepares a document claiming one hundred. Because Mambet is illiterate, he presses his fingerprint onto the paper without understanding its contents. Later, the Biy publicly demands full repayment. Here, power lies not only in wealth but in literacy and access to written documents. The written contract becomes a weapon. The poor man has no defense because he cannot read. Authority belongs to the one who controls the "paper."

Religious and traditional authority also reinforce this imbalance. When rumors spread that educating women will destroy family honor, many men believe them without question. Fear of losing honor defined by conservative and elite values, drives violence within the household. Power operates not only externally but psychologically.

After the revolution, however, specific scenes illustrate the transfer of power. A key moment occurs when poor villagers attempt to plow the redistributed fields for the first time. Kokkoz and Toktobay try to stop them, demanding official proof that the land has changed ownership. At first, the villagers hesitate; they are not used to claiming rights. But when Ismail arrives with the December 1918 land decree, the balance shifts. The official document, once a tool used only by the wealthy, now supports the poor. The "paper" that once enslaved them now legitimizes their claim. Authority begins to move into their hands.

Similarly, the establishment of mixed-gender literacy classes represents another transformation of power. Men and women sitting together to learn signals a new social order. Education, once restricted to religious leaders and elites, becomes accessible to everyone. Knowledge is no longer monopolized. Through literacy, the poor gain the ability to read decrees, understand contracts, and defend their rights.

Illustrative moment: In Ysmaiyl's village, the first official Bolshevik meeting takes place. Vlasov, a member of the revolutionary committee, reads an official decree sent from Pishpek. The villagers react with surprise and frustration—why has it arrived two years late? The committee then explains the mission of the new authority: those who once oppressed the people cannot be part of the new government and must be excluded. Chapyrashty Biy stands up angrily, claiming he saved many people from hunger and asking why he is not included. He is firmly rejected as an oppressor. Other wealthy men also try to join, but none are accepted. The villagers then elect local representatives to form the revolutionary committee. As the meeting ends, tension erupts. The wealthy attack with traditional sticks while the poor defend themselves with stones. In the chaos, Ysmaiyl fires three or four shots into the air. The fight stops abruptly.