

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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THE NEW KIN / JANGY TUUGAN (1973)

Asanbek Stamov (1938-2010)

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OVERVIEW

Author

Asanbek Stamov, a People's Writer of the Kyrgyz Republic, was born on August 28, 1938, in the village of Murake in what is now Moscow District of Kyrgyzstan.

He graduated from the Department of Kyrgyz Language and Literature at Kyrgyz State University in 1962. That same year, he began his career as a teacher at the Toktogul Boarding School in the city of Tokmok.

From 1964 to 1966, Stamov worked as an editor and senior editor for the State Radio Committee. From 1967 to 1969, he served as a senior editor at the Kyrgyz State Publishing House.

From 1969 to 1971, he worked as an instructor on the staff of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, the republic's principal political institution within the Soviet system. From 1971 to 1973, he served as director of the Kyrgyz State Publishing House.

In 1973, Stamov was appointed First Deputy Minister of Culture of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (Kyrgyz SSR). From 1985 to 1987, he served as chairman of the republic's State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting. From 1985 to 1990, he was also elected to the Supreme Soviet of the Kyrgyzstan, the republic's legislative body under the Soviet system.

In 1987, Stamov became director of the Bureau for the Promotion of Fiction under the Writers' Union of Kyrgyzstan. In 1989, he was appointed editor-in-chief of *Chalkan* magazine. From 1990 until his retirement in 1992, he served as chairman of the *Uchkun* State Concern.

Stamov died on August 7, 2010. On September 17, 2013, the National Library of Kyrgyzstan opened a book and visual exhibition commemorating the 75th anniversary of his birth.

Writing and Literary Work

Asanbek Stamov began his literary career in 1959, when his novella *Ata (Father)* was published in the literary magazine *Ala-Too*. His first book, *Taanyshuu (Introduction)*, was published by Kyrgyzstan Publishing House in 1966.

In 1975, he received the Lenin Komsomol Prize of Kyrgyzstan for his novella *Jany tuugan (A New Relative)*.

His collections of short stories and novellas, including *Taanyshuu (Introduction)*, *Kech kuzdo (Late Autumn)*, *Jany tuugan (A New Relative)*, *Noshordon kiyin (After the Downpour)*, *Ak kar (White Snow)*, *Jol boyunda jalgyz tam (The Lone House by the Road)*, *Egiz tal (The Twin Trees)*, and *Chuy Bayany (Tales of Chuy)*, were published in Moscow and included in the *Anthology of Kyrgyz Writers*.

He also translated works by Turkish writer Aziz Nesin and Tatar poet Musa Jalil. His own works were translated into several other languages.

After Kyrgyzstan gained independence, Stamov devoted nearly two decades to researching the history of the Kyrgyz people, focusing particularly on the period from the 16th century onward.

Drawing on this research, he wrote the historical novel *Khan Teyish*. After his death, his family published his complete works in a 12-volume edition.

Novella

The novella *The New Kin* (*Jangy Tuugan*) was published in 1973 and occupies a significant place in the author's literary oeuvre. In 1975, the author was awarded the Kyrgyzstan Lenin Komsomol Prize for this work.

The present essay draws on the Russian translation, *Novyi Rodstvennik* (*The New Kin*), translated by L. Lebedeva and published in Moscow in 1980 by the publishing house *Molodaya Gvardiya*.

Background

Asanbek Stamov's *The New Kin* (*Jangy tuugan*) was first published in Kyrgyz in 1973 and belongs to the tradition of Soviet Kyrgyz rural prose. The novella can be considered in relation to the broader Soviet phenomenon of "village prose," which developed prominently from the 1950s through the 1970s and focused on rural communities, agricultural labor, family relationships, traditions, and the moral consequences of social change.

Scholars have also identified affinities between this tradition and the prose of Kyrgyz writers such as Chyngyz Aitmatov, particularly in their representation of village life, cultural memory, and changing social values.

Stamov's novella is set within a Kyrgyz collective-farm community and reflects the experiences of the postwar generation. Through the lives of returning soldiers, agricultural workers, and village families, the work explores the interaction between communal responsibilities and individual desires, particularly in matters of love, marriage, duty, and moral choice.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Juma — The young narrator and Beyshe's close friend.

Beyshe — Choro and Uulkan's only son and a returning soldier.

Zurake — Jamshik's daughter and a strong-willed young village girl who loves Beyshe.

Choro — Beyshe's father and the village miller.

Uulkan — Beyshe's mother.

Toko — Zurake's arranged fiancé.

Sheraly — The village council secretary and one of Zurake's admirers.

Kumash — The collective farm chairman.

Derbishaly — Zurake's paternal uncle and a hardworking farmer.

Belek — Zurake's son, who resembles Beyshe.

SYNOPSIS

The story follows Juma, a young Kyrgyz boy whose life is shaped by friendship, love, war, and loss. During the Second World War, Juma becomes close to Beyshe, the only son of Choro and Uulkan. Because Juma can read and write well, he helps Beyshe's parents exchange letters with their son at the front. Beyshe eventually calls Juma his "younger brother," creating a strong bond between them.

When Beyshe returns from the war, the whole village celebrates his homecoming. He reunites with his parents and warmly greets Juma. Soon, Beyshe meets Zurake, a beautiful and strong-willed seventeen-year-old girl. Zurake is engaged to Toko through an arranged marriage, but she does not love him and openly rejects his advances. Sheraly, the village council secretary, is also one of Zurake's admirers. He sends her a love letter through Juma, but Zurake tears it up and firmly rejects Sheraly as well.

Beyshe falls deeply in love with Zurake, and she returns his feelings. Juma initially becomes jealous because he fears losing his special friendship with Beyshe, but he eventually supports the two lovers. Beyshe also takes an important position in the district and works hard to rebuild the collective farms after the war. He organizes the harvest and inspires the villagers to work together.

Beyshe and Zurake secretly meet and plan to marry after the mourning period for Zurake's father ends. However, tragedy interrupts their plans. During the harvest, grain is stolen from the collective farm. Beyshe and Kumash investigate and discover that Sheraly is involved in the theft. While escaping, Sheraly

kicks Beyshe's wounded leg, causing a serious injury. Beyshe is taken to the hospital, but his condition worsens, and he eventually dies.

Beyshe's death devastates his family, Zurake, and Juma. Zurake is taken away, and her family later arranges another marriage for her. Many years later, Juma returns to his homeland and meets Belek, Zurake's son, who strongly resembles Beyshe. Together, they visit Beyshe's grave, connecting the past with a new generation.

SCENES

A Friendship That Grows Through Letters

Waiting for Beyshe When Juma was thirteen, the villagers celebrated their first Victory Day and became hopeful. Soon they heard that Beyshe, Choro's only son and a soldier, was returning from the army. Choro and Uulkan prepared for his arrival like a holiday. Juma regularly read Beyshe's letters to them and wrote their replies. At night, they brought out a special kerosene lamp and carefully composed each letter together. Choro dictated and corrected the words, while Uulkan silently followed the writing. After the letter was finished, Choro sealed and hid it. Although Uulkan tried to hide her tears, both parents quietly carried their deep worry and love.

Remembering Beyshe After dinner, Juma did not go to bed as Choro suggested. They stayed together, almost as if waiting for a destined moment of happiness. They reread Beyshe's letters and talked about his childhood. Whenever Juma read about Beyshe's battles against the enemy, Choro became tense and proud, remembering his own youthful fights with horse thieves. Before joining the army, Beyshe had visited home only once, after working as a teacher in the south. He stayed for just one day before leaving for the front. He devoted his short visit to comforting his parents, so he barely noticed Juma, who therefore remembered him as serious and reserved.

The Beginning of Their Friendship Juma's friendship with Beyshe began through letters and made him think early about life, death, love, and separation. On a May Day celebration at Byrjybay Hill, Choro suddenly took Juma aside and asked him to read Beyshe's newly arrived letter. Impressed by his reading, Choro praised him and invited him to his home that evening. Juma arrived as Choro prepared a special meal and welcomed him warmly. Choro was usually a strict, reserved miller, but he deeply respected educated people. His unusual respect for Juma influenced the boy, who began acting more maturely and spending less time playing with other children.

A New Brother During the war, the villagers followed a special style when writing to soldiers. Juma wrote his first letter to Beyshe, saying that Choro and Uulkan were healthy, well-fed, and working for victory. He did not mention deaths, hunger, illness, or other hardships in the village because such news was kept from soldiers at the front. Choro liked the letter, asked Juma to read it aloud, carefully folded it, and thanked him warmly. In his reply, Beyshe asked who had written the letter and praised Juma's handwriting because it had no mistakes. Juma later wrote about himself, and Beyshe began calling him his "younger brother Juma."

Waiting for Beyshe

Beyshe's Return When they learned that Beyshe's train would stop at Ak-Suu, Choro stayed awake all night. At dawn, he saddled a gray collective-farm horse and rode to the station with several men. Meanwhile, villagers gathered at his home to celebrate Beyshe's return. Uulkan was so excited that she could hardly prepare for the feast. She happily gave people her household keys and told them to take flour and butter to make boorsoks. However, Juma noticed that her joy was mixed with disbelief, as if she feared losing her son again. Their families were not related by blood, but their long friendship had made their happiness and sorrow shared like those of close relatives.

Choro and His Mill Many years earlier, Juma's grandfather Moldokan settled in the untouched land near the upper Ak-Suu River and began farming. At that time, Choro worked for wealthy Russian peasants in the lower valley but could barely earn enough to live. He moved to Bagyshan pasture and settled beside

Moldokan. The fertile land rewarded his hard work, and within two years he became prosperous, gaining livestock and building the first water mill in the area. People came to his mill with both small and large amounts of grain. Choro eventually stopped farming and became known as “the miller.” Years later, when collectivization began and a new settlement grew near Murake, his relatives expected him to move there, but Choro refused to abandon his familiar work.

Choro's Life and Family Choro was a stubborn and hardworking man who chose to build his mill near the upper Murake River, away from his relatives. He later built a house and planted a garden near the mill. When he reached his forties, he married Uulkan because he wanted to have children. Sadly, several of their newborn children died. When Beyshe was born, Choro asked Juma's grandparents for help. Following a Kyrgyz folk tradition, Juma's grandmother “stole” the baby for three days to protect him from the evil eye, a practice believed to safeguard a long-awaited child. Beyshe survived, strengthening the friendship between Choro and Juma's grandfather. Later, Choro helped establish a new settlement, but the war disrupted their peaceful life.

Everybody Waited for Beyshe By noon, the villagers anxiously waited for Beyshe's return. When someone finally shouted that the riders were coming, everyone turned toward the bridge over the Murake River. Juma slipped away from the crowd and ran along a familiar path beside the river. The beautiful spring landscape, filled with flowers, birds, and butterflies, made the children forget their hunger and even the war. Nature brought them peace and kindness. Soon, Beyshe and the other riders appeared, returning from the station with Choro. Beyshe rode proudly at the front on a gray horse, carrying a bright red flag and a black kid.

Beyshe is At Home Choro shouted for everyone to clear the road and stopped Beyshe's excited horse at the gate. Beyshe threw the black kid through the doorway, then Uulkan rushed to embrace her son. Choro angrily demanded water; Uulkan circled the cup around Beyshe's head before Choro smashed it against a stone. He took the red flag from Beyshe and gave it to Uulkan. Beyshe dismounted, greeted the villagers, and was surrounded by tearful people. Uulkan kissed him repeatedly, thanking God. Beyshe warmly greeted everyone but looked for Juma and asked where he was. Juma ran forward, embraced Beyshe, and burst into tears, overwhelmed by war's suffering.

A Peaceful Morning after the War After Beyshe's return, villagers gathered in Choro's garden, eating boorsoks and meat, drinking tea, laughing, and celebrating his victory. Beyshe's red flag symbolized victory, while the black kid represented the defeated enemy. The villagers later adopted Choro's tradition of welcoming returning soldiers. After midnight, everyone left, but Juma and Beyshe slept in the garden. At sunrise, they walked toward the river through the peaceful countryside. Juma happily predicted a good harvest because the red mallows were blooming everywhere and hoped life would improve after the war. Beyshe agreed, picked a red flower, placed it in his uniform pocket, and jumped into the river.

Juma Learns to Swim Beyshe swam energetically, diving, jumping from the water, and fighting the current with powerful strokes. Juma stood shyly on the bank, afraid to undress in front of him, while cold splashes covered him. He admired Beyshe's strong body and noticed only a few small scars below his left ankle. Beyshe looked cheerful, friendly, handsome, and very different from his serious father. Seeing Juma hesitate, Beyshe smiled and encouraged him to swim. Juma quickly lost his fear, undressed, and jumped into the river. They swam and chased each other for a long time. Afterwards, they sat warming themselves in the morning sun while swallows flew low over the water.

Zurake

Beyshe Notices Zurake Beyshe suddenly asked Juma about a girl standing near the river. It was Zurake, Jamshik's daughter. She carried two buckets of water and watched Beyshe closely before quietly walking away. Beyshe watched her until she disappeared. Juma explained that Jamshik's family had moved to the village only a year earlier and were considered new relatives. Jamshik was Derbishaly's older brother, and his family lived in Derbishaly's house while Derbishaly worked as a shepherd on the Bulteke pasture. Juma walked away, while Beyshe remained behind, thoughtfully watching the narrow path through the green wheat field.

Zurake's Story Jamshik was actually named Tynaly, Derbishaly's older brother. From a young age, he worked for Russian peasants in Ak-Suu as a driver of a horse cart, called a "yamshchik" in Russian. He later lived in a Russian village, refusing to move among his relatives. Because of this, people called him Jamshik the "renegade." After his death, his family moved to Derbishaly's house and became the village's "new relatives." Zurake, his youngest daughter, was seventeen, lively, and admired by many young men. She boldly rejected their teasing and love letters. However, she was promised to Toko, and around him, her cheerful personality disappeared; she seemed sad and trapped, like a bird in a cage.

Toko and Zurake's Arranged Marriage After the war, villagers discussed the arranged marriage between twenty-five-year-old Toko and the beautiful, strong-willed Zurake. Although their families had already agreed to the marriage, there were no visible signs of romance between them. Toko deliberately acted cold and indifferent, believing that the marriage was already decided and that showing passion would damage his dignity. In reality, he secretly loved Zurake and frequently visited her home. However, his behavior irritated her because she interpreted his constant presence as unwanted interference. Toko quietly helped with household work and even repaired the cattle post near her home. He also secretly carried grain to Choro's mill, avoiding attention from villagers.

Juma's Friendship with Zurake Thirteen-year-old Juma and Zurake became friends shortly before Beyshe returned from the army, although they had never spoken before. Juma and the village boys often sneaked into Derbishaly's garden through thick sea-buckthorn bushes to steal apples, apricots, and cherries. Derbishaly pretended to be angry, threatening to set traps, but he always laughed as they escaped. He was a gentle, hardworking farmer who never complained, whether plowing, watering crops, cutting hay, or working in the freezing stable during winter. The villagers deeply respected him, saying his fields always produced abundant harvests and comparing him to Kyrgyz totem Baba-Dyikan, spirit of farming and harvests.

The Legend of Baba-Dyikan To the children, Derbishaly's garden seemed almost magical. Many of the village elders firmly believed that Baba-Dyikan helped make Derbishaly's fields so fertile. One morning during the fast, the elderly wife of their neighbor Koko went to Derbishaly's house to borrow some fire for making tea. As she passed the garden, she heard someone working inside, even though Derbishaly had been away watering the fields for a week. Thinking that some children might be stealing apples, she looked into the garden and saw an old man with a long white beard, dressed in white and digging irrigation channels. She believed he was Baba-Dyikan, the divine spiritual protector of the land and its harvest. He gave her two red apples and then disappeared among the corn. Less than two months later, Koko's wounded son returned from the front.

Derbishaly's Kindness During the hungry spring of 1943, all able-bodied men from the collective farm went to war. The village leader ordered Derbishaly to take care of the starving sheep, although he knew little about herding. Derbishaly accepted the flock and drove the weak sheep to the mountain pastures. Once a week, he returned to the village, leaving the flock with his deaf younger brother, Iyas. He also worked tirelessly on the fields and spent nights watering the crops. When his apples ripened, he never sold them. Instead, he invited the hungry village boys to eat as much as they wanted and filled their shirts and hats with apples. He warned them not to steal because stolen food brought bad luck. The boys solemnly promised to obey—but secretly thought, "Surely apples don't count as stealing!" They kept sneaking into his garden and hiding whenever they heard his voice.

Zurake Defends the Garden After Derbishaly moved to the mountains with his sheep, the boys began treating his garden as their own. They disliked Zurake when she arrived because she was not shy like other village girls. She cleaned the garden, cleared irrigation channels, cared for the apple trees, repaired the fence, and kept a dog named Sharik to guard it. She chased the boys away and even tore the ears of those she caught. One evening, the boys sneaked into the garden, but Zurake caught Keneshbek, the strongest and most fearless leader of their boys' group. The boys hid nearby. When Keneshbek returned, he was crying. Shocked, they stopped raiding the garden and hated Zurake even more.

Juma's First Encounter with Zurake Juma often crossed the wheat field near Derbishaly's house and teased the gray dog by throwing stones at it. One evening, as darkness fell, he stopped near the irrigation ditch and threw another stone. Suddenly, Zurake's voice came from nearby. Juma was frightened and tried to run, but slipped and fell into the ditch. Instead of scolding him, Zurake pulled him out, hugged him, and comforted him. She took him home, wrapped him in Derbishaly's warm coat, washed and dried his wet clothes, and stayed beside him until he fell asleep. When Juma woke, his clothes were ready. From then on, Juma and Zurake became close friends, and even their dog Sharik welcomed him.

Sheraly Loves Zurake

The Messenger Juma recalls a young man named Sheraly, a strong-looking man over twenty who worked as the village council secretary. Although he claimed to have an ear problem that kept him out of the army, villagers spread various stories about how he had avoided military service. Sheraly usually rode a horse instead of walking and raced through the village while dogs chased him. He began showing Juma unusual attention. In the evenings, the boys gathered on Byrjybay Hill, playing and listening to the adult horsemen talk. They were especially curious when the men discussed love and relationships. The boys became useful because only they could secretly deliver love letters without arousing suspicion.

Sheraly's Secret Letter Sheraly publicly praised Juma, calling him a true horseman and offering him rides on his horse. Proud of this friendship, Juma became eager to spend more time with him. One day, Sheraly invited him home and entrusted him with a secret task: delivering a letter to Zurake and bringing back her answer. Juma promised never to reveal the secret, so he reluctantly hid the letter under his shirt. Only then did he understand why Sheraly had befriended him. Sheraly often sent love letters to young women, but nobody answered him. Villagers mocked him as a womanizer. Juma spent the day near Derbishaly's house, troubled by the letter.

The Rejected Letter Juma finally visited Derbishaly's house and found Zurake alone. She happily welcomed him and suggested playing a game and eating a ripe apple together. Juma then nervously gave her Sheraly's letter. When she learned who had sent it, her friendly mood disappeared. Angry and mocking, Zurake tore the letter into pieces and threw them into the irrigation ditch. Embarrassed, Juma left and avoided her for about a week. One evening, Zurake saw him passing and jokingly called him "the postman." Encouraged, Juma began visiting her every day again. His friends disliked this and teased or excluded him, but Juma ignored them and became increasingly attached to Zurake. Neither mentioned Sheraly's letter again.

Sheraly's Anger One day, while Juma and Zurake were preparing fallen apples for drying, Sheraly appeared at the fence. He teased Zurake and asked whether she had received his letter. She mocked his "sweet words" and said she would answer when a camel's tail reached the ground. When Sheraly demanded a direct answer, Zurake sarcastically told him to get his answer from Uychuman's wife, with whom he was known to have an affair. Furious, Sheraly threatened to take Zurake by force and make her his wife for three days before returning her to her mother. Zurake fearlessly said she would rather die than marry him. She untied her dog Sharik, and Sheraly ran away.

Beyshe and Zurake

A Peaceful Summer Evening After meeting Zurake by the river, Juma and Beyshe walked home through the wheat field. Earlier, Beyshe had told his father that he needed to visit families who had lost loved ones in the war. During the day, he visited those families, spoke with village elders, and stopped at the collective farm office and school. By evening, he was tired and limped more heavily than usual. As they walked, Juma admired the peaceful summer night. The moon shone above Choro's mill, while smoke drifted from houses. Dogs barked lazily, frogs and grasshoppers filled the darkness with sound, and nature made Juma forget every sorrow.

Beyshe Teases Zurake As Juma and Beyshe walked home, Beyshe kept looking toward Derbishaly's dark house, clearly hoping to see Zurake. Soon they met her on the field path carrying two full buckets of water. Beyshe playfully blocked her way and asked for a drink. When Zurake jokingly pointed to the river, he

pretended to be offended. She finally offered him a bucket, but Beyshe poured the water onto the road, claiming there were frogs inside. He emptied the second bucket onto the wheat and offered to fetch more water. Zurake joined them, embarrassed. Beyshe then asked her name, although he already knew it. She teasingly told him to ask Juma.

Juma's Jealousy Juma and the others had often heard young men flirt with girls, sometimes even chasing and kissing them. Remembering these customs, Juma disliked seeing Beyshe court Zurake. Beyshe was highly respected in the village: he had been a school director before the war, a commander in the army, and was expected to receive an important position. Juma thought Zurake was just an ordinary village girl and could not understand why Beyshe was interested in her. He also felt jealous because he considered Beyshe his own special friend. Earlier, Zurake had asked whether Beyshe had a fiancée, and Juma had lied, saying he had a beautiful one living in Frunze.

Juma Feels Forgotten At the river, Beyshe took Zurake's bucket and told Juma to go home. Juma refused and hid nearby, listening to their conversation from a distance. Zurake laughed at Beyshe's words, which made Juma jealous and upset. He threw stones into the dark water while they continued talking. As darkness fell, the two became silent, simply looking at each other. Juma could not understand what they found interesting and grew cold, tired, and lonely. Feeling frightened and forgotten, he finally called out to Beyshe. Both were startled, and their private moment ended. Beyshe then filled both buckets with water and placed them on the road.

Juma's Warning Zurake silently picked up her buckets and went home. Beyshe put his arm around Juma's shoulder, and they walked together. Hearing Zurake singing from the bridge, Juma felt calm again and realized that he cared deeply about both of them. Near home, Beyshe finally said that Zurake was a good girl, clearly wanting to share his happiness with Juma. Instead, Juma accidentally spoiled his mood by blurting out that Zurake had a husband. Beyshe was shocked and asked when she had married. Juma quickly corrected himself, explaining that she was promised to Toko for the autumn but did not love him. Beyshe remained silent.

Beyshe's New Job

Beyshe's New Assignment At Choro's house, Juma and Beyshe found the collective farm chief, Kumash, sitting in the place of honor. Uulkan brought in steaming meat while Choro cut and served it. Kumash produced a bottle of vodka and suggested a toast to Beyshe's safe return. Beyshe refused to drink, not wanting to upset his father. Kumash then revealed important news. He had received a telegram from the regional committee saying that Beyshe was being summoned there the next morning. Governor Sotnikov had also called and said that Beyshe would be offered a job in the district. Kumash told him to saddle the gray horse and leave early.

Beyshe Faces a Difficult Choice Kumash urged Beyshe to become the collective farm's chairman, explaining that Beyshe was the only person with higher education. He admitted that, after more than ten years as chairman and now being over sixty, he was struggling to manage everything. Kumash also criticized Choro's old watermill, arguing that an electric mill would work year-round and benefit the villagers. He wanted the village reorganized and better facilities built for grain and livestock. Beyshe listened seriously and seemed convinced, but he remained silent to avoid upsetting his father. Finally, he explained that his wounded leg still hurt and that he needed medical treatment.

Kumash and Beyshe's New Position Kumash was a strong, energetic, and respected collective farm chairman. Although he was illiterate and over sixty, he knew the farm's work in remarkable detail, even remembering the number of individual animals. He worked hard, demanded the same from others, and was considered fair and kind-hearted. Even Choro, who often argued with him, respected him. Beyshe left early the next morning and returned to the village in the evening. At the regional Komsomol committee, he was appointed first secretary of the district Komsomol committee. He was expected to rest until the harvest began, then go to Ak-Suu to lead the grain collection work.

Zurake's Sorrow After meeting Beyshe, Zurake stopped fetching water from the Murake River and avoided him whenever she saw him. She became quiet and unhappy, often singing a sad song. One day, Juma found her crying alone in the garden. She angrily told him to leave, but then followed him, hugged him, apologized, and began crying again. Juma felt deeply sorry for her and sensed that she was struggling with painful feelings. He once mentioned Beyshe's name, but Zurake pretended not to hear and quickly changed the subject. Juma stopped mentioning him. Only her older sister Akmaral knew the secret and warned Zurake not to meet Beyshe again.

Zurake's Sufferings

Zurake Hides Her Feelings Everyone in the village talked about Beyshe, and people at Zurake's home often praised him. Whenever she heard his name, Zurake became gloomy and tried to hide her feelings. One day, Koko's daughter-in-law enthusiastically praised Beyshe, but Zurake angrily interrupted her, sarcastically suggesting that she should leave her husband and marry him or take him as a lover. She insisted that Beyshe had done nothing remarkable and that people praised him too much. Later, Zurake's mother noticed that something was wrong and gently asked whether she was ill. Zurake tried to hold back her tears but began crying. Her mother comforted her beneath an apple tree.

Zurake and Toko That evening, Zurake asked Juma to bring Toko to the garden. Juma hid nearby and watched their meeting. Zurake came in a new velvet vest, but Toko was cold and distant toward her. He barely responded to her questions and seemed uninterested in her feelings. When Zurake asked whether he ever thought about her, he casually said no. Frustrated, she cried out, "At least kiss me!" but Toko stepped back and asked why. Finally, she tearfully asked when they would marry. Toko said their wedding was planned for autumn, after the harvest. Zurake could not wait and demanded that they marry the following Sunday. When Toko mentioned his mother's approval, Zurake angrily left.

Preparing for the Harvest Beyshe returned from the district and immediately became deeply involved in the collective farm's work. One evening, he and Kumash discussed the excellent wheat harvest. Beyshe estimated that they could collect at least thirty centners per hectare and promised the district that they would deliver three hundred tons of grain, finish harvesting by August 15, and complete their plan by September. Kumash doubted they had enough workers, horses, or equipment. Beyshe insisted that the work could succeed with careful organization and planning.

Beyshe's Plan Beyshe proposed gathering the villagers early the next morning and sending about thirty people to finish haymaking in the mountains. He planned to use students, older boys, strong men, and livestock workers, while also sending the hunter Mamake to protect the animals from wolves. He arranged for food supplies, borrowed about 2,205 pounds of wheat from the Iskra collective farm, and asked Choro to grind it. Beyshe also planned to move workers and equipment from the mountains to the wheat fields once haymaking was finished. He wanted everyone to work day and night to prevent the ripe grain from falling and being lost.

Solving the Farm's Problems Beyshe continued planning improvements for the harvest. He ordered new boxes for carts and trailers to prevent grain from spilling during transport. He also wanted the barns expanded and the bridge across the Murake repaired so the combine could cross it. Kumash complained that there was no timber, but Beyshe had already obtained two long pine logs from the district. He also suggested buying poplar trees from villagers with grain and using an elm near Osmon's house to make strong, flexible wheel rims. After eating, Beyshe and Kumash left together and continued visiting households to organize the work.

Beyshe's Growing Love Beyshe was extremely busy, but he still searched for chances to see Zurake. She continued avoiding him, which only made his love grow stronger. At home, he seemed distracted and restless, barely speaking to his parents. In the evenings, he invited Juma to walk with him toward Derbishaly's house. Beyshe carefully polished his boots, tightened his uniform belt, used cologne, and combed his hair before leaving. Near the house, he slowed down and repeatedly looked toward the garden, unable to pass without hesitation. When they went too far, he asked Juma to turn back. Seeing no Zurake, he stood watching the garden silently, while Juma became angry with her.

Harvest Season

A Hot Day in the Fields Women and teenagers worked in the lower field, about five kilometers from the village, repairing irrigation channels. The wheat was drying, and its grains were beginning to harden. The summer heat was intense, the air was dusty, and even the birds and the village dog searched for shade. The women worked tirelessly with their hoes while Aykumush loudly pushed anyone who stopped to rest. She joked openly and embarrassed the younger girls with her bold talk about husbands and love. The children pretended to leave but secretly listened. Her jokes made everyone laugh, and the whole field seemed livelier despite the exhausting heat.

Praise for Derbishaly Bibia admired the excellent wheat harvest, praising its large, healthy grains and perfectly maintained irrigation channels. Koko's daughter-in-law proudly explained that her uncle, the shepherd, had watered the field. Bibia deliberately asked who the shepherd was, hoping to make her mention a forbidden name. Zurake answered that her father, Derbishaly, had done the work. The women praised him as an honest and hardworking man who had watered the land thoroughly without wasting water. They compared his careful work favorably with another field where the irrigation channels had been poorly managed and the soil remained dry.

Working for Everyone Aykumush quickly returned everyone's attention to work, warning them not to leave the irrigation channels unfinished because the combine might break down there. She was especially strict because Beyshe had recently rejected their work at Chetki-Alysh village, forcing the women to spend another day correcting it. Beyshe had reminded them that they were working not for him personally, but for the people and the state, so the harvest would feed everyone's children. His words motivated them, and the women worked efficiently together. Akkyz, whose husband had returned from the front without a leg, then teased Aykumush about her interest in Beyshe and suggested she help the village girls attract his attention.

Women Tease Aykumush The women burst into laughter while Aykumush and Akkyz continued teasing each other about Beyshe. Aykumush claimed that Akkyz was only trying to hide her own interest in him. The women then remembered how mischievous Beyshe had been as a sixteen-year-old boy, chasing girls and joking with them. They were surprised by how serious and reserved he had become after studying, working away from the village, and serving in the army. Aykumush boldly declared that she was not afraid of him, and the women joked that they would throw him into the river together. They laughed and worked until evening, when Beyshe finally appeared on horseback.

Beyshe's Playful Escape Beyshe arrived on horseback and warmly greeted the women, thanking them for their hard work. They offered him several cups of *maksym*, a traditional fermented grain drink, joking that he had to drink them all. After finishing a large cup, he smiled, but Aykumush and Akkyz decided that drinking was not enough. They grabbed his arms and pulled him toward the river, wanting to throw him into the water. Beyshe pretended to resist, then suddenly grabbed both women and threw them into the river. Soon, several others surrounded him and tried to drag him into the water. Suddenly, someone shouted that Kumash, the collective farm chief, was coming. The women ran away, while Beyshe invited Juma to ride with him. Juma noticed Zurake watching Beyshe with jealousy and concern.

Beyshe's Letter to Zurake Kumash and Beyshe rode side by side toward the village. Kumash warned Beyshe not to joke with the women, or they might stop respecting him, but Beyshe remained silent and seemed happy. He admired the beautiful sunset, while the returning women sang along the dark road. The peaceful evening landscape, mountains, moonlight, and singing deeply moved him. When they reached the village, Beyshe said goodbye to Kumash and asked Juma to hold tightly to his belt while they rode home. After settling his horse, Beyshe gave Juma a letter for Zurake. Juma secretly read it by moonlight, admitting that curiosity had overcome his conscience.

Beyshe asked Zurake to Meet Him Beyshe wrote to Zurake, apologizing for disturbing her and explaining that he would respect her choice if she did not love him. He asked her to meet him under the plane tree behind her garden that evening if she felt the same way. After reading the letter, Zurake blushed, kissed

Juma on the forehead, and invited him to eat before he left. Juma realized she would probably meet Beyshe and worried that the boys might discover them while raiding Derbishaly's garden. He decided to warn Keneshbek, but Keneshbek's angry mother had punished him for letting a calf drink all the cow's milk. Juma left, relieved that the boys would not raid the garden without their leader.

The Girl in the Red Scarf Juma secretly went to the plane tree near Derbishaly's house to guard Beyshe and Zurake from the boys who might steal apples. Hiding nearby, he listened to their conversation and felt disappointed because Beyshe spoke about the war instead of love. But then Beyshe revealed that for four years he had dreamed of a girl in a red scarf. Before every battle, seeing her in his dreams gave him hope that the bullet would miss him. He told Zurake that she had saved his life. Moved to tears, Juma quietly went home. From then on, Beyshe and Zurake met every evening.

Working with Joy That summer, Juma saw how hard work could bring people happiness and dignity. After the war, the villagers were full of energy and confidence, ready to overcome any difficulty. The women's brigade finished its work a week early, so Beyshe took about twenty women to the mountains to help the haymakers. Juma joined them and learned to control a horse pulling a hay sled. At first, the work was difficult, but by evening he had mastered it and earned praise from the old men. The women worked with jokes and laughter, while the old men skillfully stacked the hay into beautiful, carefully shaped stacks.

Beyshe's Plan for Kara-Suu After helping with the haymaking, Beyshe gathered everyone and spoke about the collective farm's problems after the war. There were fewer men, less livestock, and not enough feed for the animals. He proposed mowing the rich grasslands of Kara-Suu at night, using the moonlight, and called on the young people to help. Sheraly complained that they were already exhausted, but Beyshe told him to rest because of his weakness. The old men then discussed whether Kara-Suu could be mowed safely. Esengeldi advised waiting until autumn, but Otombay confidently disagreed and explained how to mow there properly. Soon everyone prepared their tools and set off.

The Magical Night While the men worked at Kara-Suu, the women bathed and laughed beside the lake under the moonlight. Juma stayed awake beside the fire because he believed it was the mysterious night when wishes could come true. Aiymkan-apa sent him to warn the women not to stay in the water, but when he arrived, he hid among the reeds. One woman saw him and thought he was the legendary spirit of the spring, an old man with a white beard and prayer beads. Aykumush jokingly defended the "spirit" and urged everyone to return to work. Juma later told Aiymkan-apa, who was delighted by the story.

Pasture Festivals and Weddings.

The Wrestling Challenge After six days of exhausting work, the villagers finished haymaking at Kara-Suu. They washed, ate, and celebrated with kymyz, tea, and boorsoks while the young people organized games and wrestling. Sheraly challenged all the Komsomol members to fight him one after another, betting that if he won, he would take their share of the meat. Beyshe added a condition: if Sheraly won, the young men would repair the road to Kara-Suu; if he lost, Sheraly would repair it alone. Sheraly defeated several opponents, including a strong student. His arrogance angered Beyshe, who finally decided to wrestle him himself.

Beyshe Defeats Sheraly The villagers tried to stop Beyshe from wrestling Sheraly because Sheraly was much larger and stronger. Beyshe refused, reminding the elders that people had defeated the enemy through courage and determination, not physical size. During the fight, Sheraly tried to overpower him, but Beyshe remained calm and skillful. When Sheraly pulled him closer, Beyshe quickly slipped his head under Sheraly's arm, twisted his arm behind his back, threw him over himself, and pinned him to the ground. Everyone cheered, especially Zurake, who watched Beyshe with happiness and admiration. Beyshe helped Sheraly stand, then quietly washed his hands in the stream. After dinner, the workers returned to the village, leaving Sheraly behind.

A Wedding After the War The day after returning from haymaking, Juma learned that their neighbor, old Kydygaly, was marrying off his only daughter, seventeen-year-old Sedep. Her groom, Chargyn, was the only son of Kuttubay and had recently returned from the front. The wedding had been arranged quickly

because Kuttubay was seriously ill and wanted to see his son married before he died. Kydygaly had agreed because the two fathers had been lifelong friends. Although villagers wondered why they were celebrating before the harvest, the wedding became a joyful event.

The Wedding Games Soon everyone gathered in a yurt set up in the garden for the wedding. Beyshe had gone to the district after returning from the mountains and had not yet come back, although everyone was waiting for him. The boys were not allowed inside, so Juma and the others secretly watched through gaps in the yurt's felt covering. The bride and groom sat in places of honor while the young people gathered around them. Sedep looked beautiful in her red silk dress, while Zurake, sitting beside her, attracted many admiring looks. Toko proudly watched Zurake, but she avoided his gaze. The boys were finally chased away and told to return when the moon rose for the wedding games.

Waiting for Beyshe Juma ran to Choro's house and found Uulkan sewing a new quilt by lamplight. Since Beyshe's return, she had prepared carefully for his marriage, making new bedding and even turning cloth saved for a burial shroud into sheets. When Juma asked when Beyshe would return from the district, Uulkan told him to ask Choro. At the mill, Choro was repairing an irrigation ditch and asked Juma to help. He explained that Beyshe was now a government worker who had to follow official orders and might soon move to the district. Later, hearing wedding songs from afar, Choro laughed and sent Juma to join the celebration.

The Songs When Juma returned to Kydygaly's house, the wedding games were already in full swing. The young people had gathered deep in the garden around the bride and groom, while Aykumush led the lively singing game. Tolbashy, Kydygaly's nephew, sang beautifully and then kissed Aykumush on the cheek after her husband finally agreed to leave. The game became even more cheerful. Then Toko stepped forward and sang, but after drinking too much, he chose an inappropriate song. He found Zurake and tried to make her kiss him in front of everyone. She refused and escaped into the crowd, making it clear that she would not be pressured.

Zurake Refuses Toko Toko became offended when Zurake refused to kiss him. Sheraly mocked her, asking whom she would kiss if she would not kiss her own fiancé. Zurake boldly told him that it was none of his business. Aykumush immediately stopped Sheraly from ruining the celebration and criticized Toko for singing inappropriate songs. The wedding game soon continued, with young men taking turns singing and women watching them with interest. The summer night remained peaceful, filled with moonlight, a cool breeze, and the smell of fading clover. Then the sound of horse hooves approached. The rider turned out to be Beyshe, who finally arrived at the celebration.

Beyshe Arrives at the Wedding Beyshe greeted everyone cheerfully and noticed that the celebration was going well. Aykumush teased him for keeping everyone waiting since morning and refused to let anyone take his horse until he apologized. Beyshe politely asked what he had done wrong. Aykumush explained that making people wait was enough of a crime and joked that someone was already suffering from longing. To make up for his absence, she ordered him to sing while still sitting on his horse. Then, according to the wedding game, he had to choose a beautiful girl and kiss her. The crowd eagerly waited to see whom Beyshe would choose.

Beyshe and Zurake by the River Beyshe accepted Aykumush's challenge and sang from his horse with a deep, emotional voice that made everyone listen in silence. After finishing, he dismounted and approached the girls. Zurake had watched him as if enchanted, but when he came near, she shyly lowered her head. Beyshe kissed her on the head, which excited the young people. Sheraly angrily accused Beyshe of kissing another man's fiancée, while Toko stood silently, looking miserable. Later, Juma saw Beyshe and Zurake walking secretly toward the river. Sheraly wanted to follow them and dragged Toko along, but Juma lied that they had gone toward Eski-Alysh river, sending Sheraly and Toko away from the river.

One Month until Their Wedding Juma hurried to the river, where he later fell asleep on the sand. When Beyshe and Zurake found him, Beyshe picked him up, and Zurake affectionately called him the messenger of her happiness. Beyshe then suggested that Zurake come with him immediately to his home. He wanted to tell his mother, "Here is the bride I brought you," and make the older people happy. Zurake asked him to

wait a little longer. She explained that the mourning period for her father would end in one month, and according to tradition, she could not come before then. She reassured Beyshe that nothing could prevent their happiness and told him that she belonged only to him. Beyshe listened to her and did not argue. After their conversation, he carefully put Juma down and helped him stand. He asked whether Juma could walk by himself. Juma nodded and walked between Beyshe and Zurake.

Autumn Harvest and Village Rumors Autumn arrived, and the whole village worked on the harvest. Juma and the other schoolchildren collected grain in the fields while adults reaped, threshed, and transported wheat. Beyshe had organized one large threshing floor near the main road, where people worked day and night. He, now responsible for two collective farms, stayed among the workers and sometimes slept there. Zurake had become cheerful and lively, and women whispered that she had rejected Toko because she loved Beyshe. They claimed they had seen the two together in the garden. Aykumush angrily stopped the gossip, insisting that Beyshe had a fiancée in Frunze and warning the women not to spread rumors.

Beyshe Dies

The Stolen Grain After noon, Beyshe returned from the station worried because about 1,100 pounds of grain were missing, despite his supervision at the scales. Juma and Akkojo listened outside the straw-covered shed. Akkojo led Juma to a ditch where they found four sacks hidden under straw. He said he had seen people carrying sacks there at night. They told Beyshe, who ordered them to keep quiet, watch from a distance, and let the thieves return for their “catch.” Beyshe and Kumash pretended to leave for the district, then secretly returned and hid near the stolen grain, waiting for the thieves.

Sheraly Is Caught After midnight, a wagon quietly approached the hidden grain. Two men began loading the stolen sacks when Beyshe and Kumash suddenly rushed out. One thief escaped with the horses, but Beyshe grabbed the other by his belt. The man kicked Beyshe’s injured leg, forcing him to let go. A flash of lightning revealed the thief’s face—it was Sheraly. Kumash shouted, but Sheraly escaped with the wagon. Beyshe’s injured leg became badly swollen and turned blue, and he collapsed. That same night, he was taken to the hospital in Ak-Suu. The discovery revealed that Sheraly was responsible for stealing grain from the collective farm.

Worrying News about Beyshe Deep autumn arrived, and the villagers continued working in the fields, digging up beets. Zurake worked with everyone but no longer sang or looked up. Since Beyshe had been taken to the hospital, she had barely spoken to anyone and seemed deeply depressed. Beyshe was transferred from the hospital in Ak-Suu to a hospital in Frunze. Kumash and Choro visited him, but Choro told people only that his son was getting better. Meanwhile, rumors spread that Beyshe’s condition was serious. Kumash said doctors wanted to amputate his leg because the swelling had reached his knee, but Beyshe refused. Frightened by the rumors and bad dreams, Zurake asked Juma to find out the truth. As days passed without good news, Juma became deeply worried and stopped playing with the other boys.

Beyshe’s Death One day, Juma was walking to school when a neighbor rushed toward Choro’s house with terrible news: Beyshe had died, and his body was being brought home. A crowd gathered around Choro, who collapsed in grief. His mother Uulkan refused to believe the news, insisting that her son had returned alive from the war and could not die in peacetime. When Beyshe’s body arrived, she uncovered his face and screamed in horror. Overcome by grief, she wandered around the yard, calling for her son and no longer recognizing anyone. Juma was devastated too, but after some time, he found himself continuing ordinary tasks almost automatically.

Zurake’s Farewell to Beyshe The day before Beyshe’s funeral, Juma visited Zurake. Wearing a black scarf, she asked whether Beyshe would be buried the next day and whether Juma had seen his face. At the funeral, the whole village gathered, but Zurake was not allowed to enter the house or say goodbye because of tradition. That evening, Juma found her crying beside Beyshe’s grave. She told Juma that Beyshe was her beloved and asked what she would do without him. Akmaral found them and angrily forced Zurake to leave, warning that her behavior would shame the family. Zurake was then taken away in a horse-drawn carriage, while Juma felt sadness but also unexpected hope.

What Happened After Beyshe's Death Soon after Zurake left, her mother also returned to her homeland. Akmaral, as the villagers heard, arranged Zurake's marriage to an older man from the village of Tolok. After that, Juma heard nothing more about Zurake. A week after Beyshe's funeral, Sheraly and his accomplices were put on trial for the grain theft. A year later, Uulkan-apa, Beyshe's mother drowned in the Murake River during a flood. The villagers believed her death was a release because she had never recovered her reason after losing Beyshe. Choro lived for another seven years. He and Uulkan-apa were buried beside their son.

Many years later

A Return to His Homeland Juma dreamed of his homeland, his mother, and their old house beneath a thatched roof in his home village. At sunrise, he felt unexpectedly energetic and decided to return to his native village with his twelve-year-old son. After a two-hour drive, they stopped at his relative Toko's house. Toko warmly welcomed them and proudly showed them his garden and home. He spoke about how much the village had changed and how people had rebuilt their houses and improved their lives. However, Juma's family home stood neglected, its walls and roof slowly falling apart.

A Familiar Name Juma was surprised to learn that someone was building a new house on Choro's old property. Since Choro had no children left, his only son Beyshe died before marriage, he wondered who the new owner could be. Toko revealed that the young man was the son of Tynaly's daughter, Zurake. Hearing her name, Juma was deeply shaken, and memories of the distant past suddenly returned. He urgently asked whether Zurake was still alive and living nearby. Toko said she worked at a sugar factory in Ak-Suu, but she had become ill and planned to retire and move in with her son.

The Young Man Who Resembled Beyshe Toko's wife invited Juma and his son to drink tea in the garden. Although Juma was too troubled to eat or drink, he politely drank a few bowls before leaving with his son to see their old home. As they approached, Juma saw new brick walls where Choro's old wooden house had once stood. Later, as Juma prepared to visit Beyshe's grave, the young man approached him and asked, "Aren't you Juma?" Juma confirmed his name. The young man introduced himself as Belek and apologized for not recognizing Juma. He explained that his mother, Zurake, had often told him about Juma. Juma was deeply moved by Belek's resemblance to Beyshe, and they went together to Beyshe's grave.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Juma

Juma is the narrator and one of the central figures through whom the events of *The New Kin* are presented. His character is closely connected with Beyshe, and this friendship allows him to observe the emotional and social conflicts of village life. Although Juma is not always directly involved in major events, he frequently becomes a participant as a messenger, listener, and witness.

His role in reading and writing letters places him between the characters and their private feelings. His involvement in Beyshe's relationship with Zurake and Sheraly's attempt to court her reveals his sensitivity to the feelings of others. In the later scenes, his memories of Beyshe and his meeting with Belek transform him into a reflective witness to the past.

Observant. Juma's observant nature is revealed through the way he notices the behavior and relationships of those around him. His friendship with Beyshe gives him access to feelings that Beyshe does not openly express, particularly his love for Zurake. When Juma helps Beyshe with his letters, he becomes aware of the emotional significance behind their correspondence. He also notices Zurake's reactions to the men who approach her. Juma does not simply report these events; he registers their emotional consequences. His later encounter with Belek is especially significant because he immediately notices the young man's resemblance to Beyshe. Through these moments, observation becomes the foundation of Juma's narrative perspective.

Loyal. Juma's loyalty is most clearly demonstrated through his friendship with Beyshe. He willingly helps his friend read and write letters, supporting him in expressing feelings that are difficult to communicate directly. This role requires discretion because Juma becomes familiar with Beyshe's private emotions. He does not use this knowledge against his friend or interfere with his relationship with Zurake. Instead, he

remains supportive throughout the difficult circumstances surrounding their love. His loyalty also survives Beyshe's death. When Juma meets Belek years later, memories of his old friend immediately return. His decision to accompany Belek to Beyshe's grave shows that his attachment to Beyshe remains meaningful despite the passage of time.

Trustworthy. Juma's involvement with the letters demonstrates that others regard him as a reliable person. Beyshe entrusts him with personal correspondence concerning Zurake, while Sheraly also uses him to deliver his letter to her. Although Juma becomes an intermediary in both situations, he does not manipulate the messages or attempt to determine Zurake's response. He performs the task entrusted to him and allows the recipient to make her own decision. This quality is important because the letters expose Juma to the private emotions of several characters. His ability to remain dependable within these delicate situations establishes him as a trustworthy member of the village community.

Compassionate. Juma's compassion becomes especially visible in the scenes surrounding Beyshe's injury, illness, and death. Because Beyshe is not merely an acquaintance but his close friend, Juma experiences the consequences of the accident on a deeply personal level. His later memories indicate that Beyshe's death remains emotionally significant long afterward. The encounter with Belek intensifies this sense of loss: the young man's resemblance to his father revives Juma's memories. His decision to visit Beyshe's grave with Belek becomes an act of remembrance and emotional solidarity. Through these scenes, Juma's compassion extends beyond immediate sympathy and becomes a lasting commitment to preserving the memory of his friend.

Reflective. Juma's reflective quality becomes increasingly apparent as he looks back on the events of his youth. His later encounter with Belek provides a narrative bridge between the past and present, forcing him to reconsider the significance of Beyshe's life and death. The visit to Beyshe's grave is particularly important because it transforms memory into a physical act of remembrance. Juma is no longer simply the young observer who helped with letters; he is an older narrator contemplating the consequences of events that shaped his generation. Through his retrospective perspective, personal experiences acquire broader meaning, allowing friendship, love, loss, and the passage of time to become interconnected themes.

Beyshe

Beyshe is the central male character of the novella and an important representative of the postwar generation. As Choro and Uulkan's only son and a returning soldier, he occupies an important position within both his family and the village community.

His character develops through his agricultural work, friendship with Juma, love for Zurake, and increasing public responsibilities. His cooperation with Kumash and later position as a Komsomol leader demonstrate the community's confidence in him.

At the same time, his relationship with Zurake reveals a more intimate and emotional dimension of his personality. His final encounter with Sheraly brings together his personal courage and sense of communal duty, ultimately leading to his death. Through Beyshe, Stamov connects individual character with social responsibility.

Diligent. Beyshe's diligence is established through his commitment to collective-farm work after returning from military service. Rather than separating himself from village life, he actively participates in agricultural labor and accepts the responsibilities expected of him. His cooperation with Kumash demonstrates his willingness to work alongside others rather than seek special treatment because of his wartime experience. His later advancement into a Komsomol leadership position suggests that this diligence is recognized by the community. Stamov therefore uses scenes of work to construct Beyshe as a productive and dependable young man. His relationship to labor becomes an essential part of his identity and connects his personal development with the rebuilding of postwar village life.

Conscientious. Beyshe's conscientiousness becomes apparent in the seriousness with which he approaches both public and personal responsibilities. His work within the collective farm and his later Komsomol duties show that he understands responsibility as something that extends beyond the individual. This

quality becomes particularly important during the incident involving Sheraly's theft of collective-farm grain. Beyshe does not ignore the wrongdoing or treat it as someone else's problem. Instead, he intervenes when Sheraly attempts to escape. The scene demonstrates that Beyshe feels personally responsible for protecting the interests of the community. His conscientiousness thus moves beyond ordinary diligence and becomes a moral principle that guides his actions.

Affectionate. Beyshe's affectionate nature emerges most clearly through his relationship with Zurake. His feelings are communicated through the letters that Juma helps him read and write, revealing a private emotional world beneath his public image as a hardworking and responsible young man. His love for Zurake is significant because it contrasts with the arranged relationship expected of her with Toko. Beyshe's attachment is based on genuine emotional connection rather than social convenience. The scenes involving the letters allow Stamov to present Beyshe not simply as a community leader but as a young man capable of vulnerability and tenderness. His love for Zurake therefore adds emotional depth to his otherwise strongly public characterization.

Fearless. Beyshe's fearlessness is demonstrated most dramatically in his confrontation with Sheraly. Although Sheraly is attempting to escape after stealing collective-farm grain, Beyshe chooses to intervene rather than remain safely uninvolved. During the escape, Sheraly kicks Beyshe's already injured leg, worsening the injury and contributing to the later deterioration of his health. The significance of the scene lies in Beyshe's willingness to act despite the possible danger. His earlier military experience may establish a background of courage, but the grain-theft episode demonstrates that this quality continues into civilian life. He responds to wrongdoing actively, showing that courage for him is also a matter of ethical action.

Self-sacrificing. Beyshe's self-sacrificing nature reaches its fullest expression in the final sequence of his life. His intervention in Sheraly's theft places the interests of the collective farm above his own physical safety. The kick to his wounded leg aggravates his condition, and his health subsequently deteriorates until the injury contributes to his death. The tragedy is therefore closely connected with the qualities that define him throughout the novella. His willingness to serve the community, protect collective interests, and accept responsibility ultimately comes at a personal cost. His death gives these earlier actions a tragic significance and establishes Beyshe as a figure whose commitment to others exceeds concern for his own well-being.

Zurake

Zurake is one of the novella's most complex characters and an important figure in its exploration of individual desire and social expectation. She is the youngest daughter of Jamshik and later lives in the household of her paternal uncle Derbishaly. From her earliest appearances, she is presented as a young woman who does not easily submit to decisions made by others.

Her engagement to Toko conflicts with her feelings for Beyshe, while Sheraly's attempt to court her is also rejected. Her responses to these situations reveal her emotional independence and determination to make her own choices.

Yet the events following Beyshe's death expose the limitations placed upon her freedom by family circumstances. Her character therefore combines personal strength with the tragedy of constrained choice.

Headstrong. Zurake's headstrong personality is most evident in her refusal to accept the marriage arrangement with Toko simply because it has been decided for her. Although Toko is presented as her intended fiancé, she does not allow the arrangement to determine her emotional response. She rejects him because she does not love him, placing her own feelings above the expectations surrounding the engagement. Her response to Sheraly's letter reinforces this quality. She refuses to be persuaded by his interest or social position. These scenes establish Zurake as someone unwilling to surrender her personal judgment. Her resistance is therefore not accidental but a consistent feature of her character.

Self-reliant. Zurake demonstrates self-reliance by making emotional decisions according to her own judgment rather than depending on the approval of others. Her rejection of Toko shows that she is prepared to face the consequences of opposing an established arrangement. When Sheraly sends his love letter through Juma, she similarly decides for herself whether his proposal has any value. Her feelings toward Beyshe further demonstrate that she understands her own desires independently of external expectations.

These scenes make her different from a passive heroine whose future is determined entirely by the people around her. Stamov instead presents her as a young woman attempting to retain control over her emotional life.

Resolute. Zurake's resolute nature becomes visible through the consistency of her decisions. She does not change her feelings simply because the circumstances surrounding her are difficult. Her rejection of Toko is firm, and her response to Sheraly's letter is equally decisive. These scenes reveal that her emotional choices are not momentary impulses but carefully maintained positions. Her relationship with Beyshe further demonstrates her determination to remain faithful to her genuine feelings. After Beyshe's death, however, the circumstances surrounding her become increasingly restrictive. The contrast between her earlier determination and her later situation makes her fate particularly poignant: the woman who once resisted imposed choices gradually loses control over her future.

Passionate. Zurake's passion is expressed through her relationship with Beyshe, which provides an emotional contrast to her arranged engagement with Toko. While Toko represents a relationship determined largely by social and familial expectations, Beyshe represents the possibility of mutual affection. Her feelings for him are therefore central to her characterization. The scenes involving their relationship demonstrate that Zurake does not view love as merely a social obligation. Her emotional attachment gives personal meaning to the choices she makes throughout the narrative. At the same time, the tragic outcome of their relationship shows the vulnerability of such passion within a social environment where family arrangements and communal expectations can strongly influence an individual's future.

Vulnerable. Despite her outward strength, Zurake becomes vulnerable when the circumstances of her life move beyond her control. Before Beyshe's death, she is capable of rejecting Toko and Sheraly and asserting her own feelings. After Beyshe dies, however, her position changes dramatically. Akmaral intervenes in her future, and Zurake is eventually separated from the possibility of freely determining her own life. This development does not erase her earlier strength; rather, it reveals the limits within which that strength operates. Her vulnerability is therefore most visible in the contrast between her earlier acts of resistance and the later loss of personal choice. Stamov uses this contrast to deepen the tragedy of her character.

THEMES

Society:

Tradition:

Courtship, Modesty, and Social Boundaries in Kyrgyz Culture

Courtship in *The New Kin* is shaped by modesty, discretion, and the social boundaries of village life. Romantic feelings are rarely expressed through direct declarations. Instead, young people communicate through letters, messengers, private meetings, and carefully chosen words. Such indirect communication allows personal feelings to be expressed without making the relationship completely public in a community where relatives, friends, and neighbors closely observe one another.

Juma frequently becomes an intermediary in these relationships. Beyshe gives him a letter for Zurake, and Sheraly also uses him to deliver his letter to her. The fact that both men rely on the same young messenger shows that indirect communication is part of the social environment surrounding courtship. Juma is trusted to carry a message that the young man does not deliver himself. The message can therefore reach the girl while maintaining a degree of distance and modesty.

Importantly, Zurake also follows this pattern. When Beyshe is absent, she asks Juma to bring Toko to the garden. She does not go to Toko herself or openly announce that she wants to speak with him. Instead, she uses Juma to arrange the meeting. When Toko arrives, Zurake tries to understand his feelings and asks when they will marry. Their conversation reveals the tension between her desire for a clear personal response and Toko's restrained behavior. He tells her that the marriage will take place after the harvest and refers to his mother's approval. Zurake becomes frustrated because she wants a more immediate and personal answer.

This scene is significant because it shows that indirect courtship does not mean that young women are completely passive. Zurake takes the initiative, but she does so through a culturally familiar form of communication. She can seek a private conversation and express her concerns while still observing the expected boundaries of social interaction.

Stamov therefore presents courtship as a practice in which both men and women communicate indirectly, using trusted people and private encounters to negotiate feelings and relationships.

Illustrative moment: After becoming friendly with Juma, Sheraly gives him a secret letter for Zurake. Juma delivers it, but Zurake tears it up. Later, Sheraly confronts her directly at the garden fence, demanding an answer. When she refuses and mocks him, he becomes aggressive, threatening to take her by force and marry her temporarily. Zurake firmly rejects him, saying she would rather die than marry him. The contrast between Juma delivering the letter and Sheraly's later confrontation shows the shift from respecting social distance to violating Zurake's refusal through pressure and force.

Wedding games as controlled courtship

Wedding games in *The New Kin* can be understood as a form of controlled courtship, where young men and women are given a socially accepted space to express attraction without completely stepping outside traditional rules. The Kyrgyz *kız oyunu* was traditionally associated with wedding celebrations and gatherings of young people. Historical descriptions show that the game could involve singing, teasing, choosing partners, and playful kissing, while older people were often absent and the activity was organized by members of the younger generation.

This is important for understanding the relationship between Zurake and Beyshe. The wedding games create a space where feelings between young people can be expressed indirectly through songs, jokes, and playful interaction. Such customs do not give young people complete freedom to choose their partners, but they allow emotions and attraction to appear within an accepted social framework. In this sense, the games stand between tradition and personal choice.

The contrast becomes clearer in Zurake's relationship with Toko. Her engagement to Toko is connected to family expectations, while her feelings for Beyshe develop from personal affection. The wedding customs surrounding young people therefore reveal two different sides of marriage. On one side, marriage is a family and community matter governed by established expectations. On the other, the songs and games allow young people to show feelings that may not fit those expectations.

Illustrative moment: When Juma returned to Kydygaly's house, the wedding games were already lively. Toko, who had been drinking, sang an inappropriate song and tried to make Zurake kiss him in front of everyone. She refused and disappeared into the crowd. Toko was offended, while Sheraly mocked her. Zurake boldly told him it was none of his business, but Aykumush stopped the argument and criticized Toko's choice of song.

Gender: Masculinity / Male Honor and pride / Namys

Masculinity and male honor. In *The New Kin*, masculinity is closely connected with the idea of *namys*, or male dignity and honor. The wedding-game episode reveals how a man's masculine status can become dependent on his relationship with women and on how that relationship is perceived by other men. Toko sings during the celebration and wants to kiss Zurake, his fiancée, but she refuses him. Her refusal becomes more than a personal rejection: within the male-centered social environment of the wedding, it is understood as a humiliation of Toko and therefore as an injury to his masculine pride. His position as Zurake's fiancé creates an expectation that she should accept his affection, so her refusal challenges the authority and dignity associated with his role as a man and future husband.

The situation becomes more complicated when Beyshe later sings and kisses Zurake. Sheraly deliberately interprets this as another humiliation for Toko and provokes him to follow when he leaves with Zurake. His behavior turns romantic rivalry into a contest between men, in which masculinity is expressed through the ability to defend one's dignity and respond to humiliation. Sheraly's reaction is also shaped by his own experience with Zurake. She has already rejected his love letter and later rejects him directly, so seeing her accept Beyshe intensifies his jealousy and wounded pride. He therefore uses Toko's humiliation as an opportunity to provoke conflict with Beyshe.

The novella extends this destructive form of masculinity beyond the wedding episode. Sheraly later steals collective-farm grain and encounters Beyshe while escaping. When he kicks Beyshe's already injured leg, the injury contributes to Beyshe's death. His violence can thus be connected to the same pattern of wounded pride and retaliation established earlier. Stamov presents a form of masculinity in which male dignity is closely tied to public reputation, control over romantic relationships, and the expectation that humiliation must be answered. Through Sheraly in particular, the novella shows how this conception of masculine honor can move from competition and provocation toward revenge and violence.

Illustrative moment: When Juma returned to Kydygaly's house, the wedding games were already in full swing. The young people had gathered deep in the garden around the bride and groom, while Aykumush led the lively singing game. Tolbashy, Kydygaly's nephew, sang beautifully and then kissed Aykumush on the cheek after her husband finally agreed to leave. The game became even more cheerful. Then Toko stepped forward and sang, but after drinking too much, he chose an inappropriate song. He found Zurake and tried to make her kiss him in front of everyone. She refused and escaped into the crowd, making it clear that she would not be pressured.

Family: Lineage / Belek as the Son Left Behind by Beyshe

Juma returns to his native village many years after Beyshe's death. At first, Juma expects to find the village he remembers, but he discovers that both the people and the houses have changed. The old house of Choro has disappeared, and a new house has been built in its place. Juma learns that the young man living there is Zurake's son, Belek. Hearing Zurake's name brings the past back to him and reminds him of the love between Zurake and Beyshe.

Belek's presence is especially meaningful because he strongly resembles Beyshe. The novella never directly states that Belek is Beyshe's son, but the connection is left for the reader to consider. Zurake's relationship with Beyshe, Beyshe's death before their marriage, and the later appearance of Belek create a connection between the past and the present. Juma's reaction to Belek's resemblance strengthens this possibility without turning it into an explicit fact.

Belek therefore represents what may have remained from Beyshe after his death. Although Beyshe's life ended young, his memory continues through the people who knew him and possibly through his son. Belek's name also carries symbolic meaning because *Belek* means "gift." In this sense, he can be understood as a gift left behind by a person who is no longer alive.

The theme shows how a person can continue to exist through memory, family, and the next generation. Beyshe is gone, but his presence remains connected to Zurake, Juma, and Belek.

Illustrative moment: Years later, Juma returned to his native village with his twelve-year-old son. He visited his relative Toko and learned that a new house had been built where Choro's old house once stood. Toko told him that the young man living there was Zurake's son. Hearing Zurake's name deeply affected Juma, and he immediately asked about her. Later, as Juma was preparing to visit Beyshe's grave, the young man approached him. "Are you Juma?"

Juma confirmed his name. The young man introduced himself as Belek and said that his mother often spoke about Juma. When Juma noticed how much Belek resembled Beyshe, he was deeply moved. They then went together to Beyshe's grave.

Marriage: Love versus Social Expectations

Love and social expectations are closely connected in the novella *The New Kin*. Zurake is expected to marry Toko because the match has already been arranged, but she does not love him. Toko appears to have feelings for her, yet he does little to make Zurake feel valued or understood.

He is often cold, reserved, and distant, and his behavior is shaped by a strong sense of male pride. His attitude is important because it shows that simply loving someone does not necessarily create a successful relationship. Toko may want Zurake, but he does not communicate his feelings in a way that gives her emotional security or freedom. His attachment can therefore be seen as genuine, but it is also mixed with the expectations of marriage and with the belief that Zurake should accept the role already chosen for her.

Zurake's feelings for Beyshe are different. She chooses him because she develops a personal and emotional attachment to him rather than because their relationship has been arranged by their families. Beyshe is attentive to her, and their relationship gives Zurake something that is missing in her relationship with Toko: mutual affection. Her decision to reject Toko is consequently not simply a choice between two men. It is also a rejection of the idea that a woman should marry according to an arrangement even when she has no feelings for the man involved.

Toko's character makes this conflict more complicated. It would be too simple to describe him as someone who does not love Zurake at all. His feelings seem to be real, but his way of expressing them is limited by pride, emotional restraint, and the social expectations surrounding marriage. Zurake, however, cannot accept love as something that exists only in Toko's feelings. For her, love has to be experienced through attention, closeness, and mutual understanding. Her relationship with Beyshe therefore represents personal choice, while her engagement to Toko represents the pressure of social expectations. The conflict between the two becomes one of the novella's clearest examples of the tension between individual desire and accepted social practice.

Illustrative moment: While Beyshe is away, she asks Juma to bring Toko to her and arrives wearing a new velvet vest. She seems to expect some sign of affection from him, but Toko remains distant. When she asks whether he has ever thought about her, he simply says no. She then cries, "At least kiss me!" but he steps back. Finally, she asks when they will marry, hoping for a definite answer. Toko tells her that the wedding is planned for autumn, after the harvest, and refers to his mother's approval. Zurake leaves angrily.

Ideology: Communal Responsibility and the Soviet Concept of Labor

Communal responsibility in *The New Kin* is closely connected with work. The collective farm depends on the labor of many people, and the novella gives attention to both men's and women's work. The men organize the harvest, transport, livestock, irrigation, and repairs, while women and teenagers work in the fields and irrigation channels. Their work is physically demanding, especially during the hot summer days, but it is treated as a necessary part of village life. The scene in which women repair the irrigation channels shows this clearly. They work in the heat with their hoes, while Aykumush keeps them moving when they stop to rest. Their labor is not secondary to the men's work; it is essential to preparing the fields for the harvest.

Beyshe's arrival gives this collective effort a more organized form. He thinks about the harvest as a large task that requires planning, people, animals, food, equipment, and transport. He brings together different groups of workers, including students, older boys, strong men, and livestock workers. He also arranges repairs to carts, barns, and the bridge and makes sure that grain will not be lost during transportation. His concern is not simply how much work one person can do, but how the work of the whole farm can be coordinated.

The same value is seen in the praise given to Derbishaly. The women admire his careful irrigation work because he has used the water properly and produced a good field. His contribution is important even though it is different from Beyshe's administrative work. Kumash represents another form of labor. Although he is over sixty and cannot read or write, he knows the farm in great detail and has spent years working for it.

The Soviet concept of labor is stated most directly when Beyshe reminds the women that they are not working for him personally but "for the people and the state." Work is therefore presented as a collective responsibility. Individual effort becomes meaningful through its contribution to the harvest and to the wider community. The novella consequently gives dignity to different kinds of rural labor and presents the successful harvest as the result of organized, shared effort.

Illustrative moment: Beyshe and Kumash discuss the coming wheat harvest. Although the wheat has grown well, the farm lacks enough workers, horses, and equipment. Beyshe plans to move workers from the mountain hayfields, arrange food supplies, improve cart boxes to prevent grain loss, repair the bridge for the combine, and prepare materials for farm equipment.

Relationship:

Friendship: Loyalty

The relationship between Juma and Beyshe begins through the letters Juma writes to the soldier at the front. When Juma writes his first letter, he carefully follows the village custom of protecting soldiers from distressing news. He tells Beyshe that Choro and Uulkan are well and working for victory, leaving out the hunger, illness, deaths, and other hardships in the village. His choice shows that even at a young age Juma understands the responsibility that comes with friendship. Beyshe notices his careful handwriting and later begins calling him his “younger brother Juma,” turning their friendship into something closer to family.

Their reunion after the war makes this relationship especially clear. When Beyshe returns to the village, he greets his family and the people around him, but he immediately asks where Juma is. Later, their friendship is also shown in a quieter way when they swim together. Juma is initially embarrassed and hesitant, while Beyshe encourages him until he becomes comfortable. They swim, chase one another, and sit together in the sun. The scene shows their friendship outside the pressures of work, war, and adult responsibilities.

Juma's friendship with Zurake adds another dimension to the theme. Their relationship begins around the time Beyshe returns from the army. When Beyshe gives Juma a letter for Zurake, Juma becomes a link between the two people who are developing feelings for each other. He carries messages and witnesses important moments without making their relationship about himself. His position requires discretion and trust.

Loyalty in the novella is therefore expressed through actions: writing letters, keeping painful news from a soldier, welcoming a returning friend, carrying messages, and remaining close to people during difficult moments. Juma's friendships connect different parts of village life and show how personal bonds are maintained through trust, care, and shared experience.

Illustrative moment: When Beyshe returns from the war, he is surrounded by villagers, but one of the first people he asks about is Juma. Juma runs toward him and embraces him, unable to hold back his tears. The moment has particular meaning because their friendship had continued during the war through Juma's letters. Juma had written to Beyshe without telling him about the suffering in the village, following the custom of protecting soldiers from painful news. Now the two friends meet again in person. Their emotional reunion shows that distance and war have not broken their connection. The friendship that began through letters has become a personal bond based on trust and affection.