

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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IN THE LATE AUTUMN / KECH KUZDO (1969)

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

Asanbek Stamov's novella *In the Late Autumn* (*Kech Kuzdo*) was first published in 1969 in Frunze by the *Kyrgyzstan* publishing house in the collection *Kech Kuzdo: Povestter jana Angemeler*. It was later translated into Russian by Larisa Lebedeva and published in 1986 under the title *Pozdney osenyu* (*In the Late Autumn*).

The title *In the Late Autumn* can be understood as a metaphor for transition. Autumn suggests the ending of one period in Akylbek's life, marked by lost love, loneliness, and unrealized hopes.

Yet "late autumn" does not signify finality. By the end of the novella, Akylbek begins to hope for a new life, making the image of autumn a symbol of both closure and renewal.

Background

The novella can be situated within Soviet Kyrgyz prose shaped by modernization, education, and urbanization. Akylbek's life reflects these changes: orphaned at a young age, he grows up in Frunze, becomes a scholar, and remains connected to his rural roots.

His career, involvement in the Communist Party, family expectations, and memories of village life place his story firmly within the Soviet context. Against this social background, the novella explores grief, unfulfilled love, friendship, and solitude.

Although Akylbek has achieved professional success, he remains dissatisfied with his personal life. This contrast between public responsibility and private longing lies at the heart of his search for meaning and human connection.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Akylbek — the protagonist, a scholar, journalist, and teacher.

Makish — Akylbek's former fiancée and first love.

Jarkyn — Akylbek's later fiancée, whose sudden death deeply affects him.

Sapar — Akylbek's friend.

Esen — Jarkyn's former husband and a poet.

Sadyrbay — a powerful collective-farm chairman exposed by Akylbek.

SYNOPSIS

The story follows Akylbek Bektemirov, a Kyrgyz scholar, journalist, and teacher whose life is shaped by love, ambition, regret, and loneliness.

The story moves between Akylbek's past and present. In his twenties, he was engaged to Makish, a medical student in Frunze. They planned to marry and start a family, but Akylbek chose a journalism job in Jalal-Abad, in southern Kyrgyzstan, rather than staying in Frunze and continuing his education. Makish disagreed with his decision, and they broke up. She eventually married another man, though that marriage later ended in divorce. Akylbek continued to regret losing her.

In Jalal-Abad, Akylbek worked as a journalist and investigated Sadyrbay, the powerful chairman of a collective farm. He discovered that Sadyrbay had falsified reports and intimidated the farmers. Despite warnings about the consequences, Akylbek published a critical article exposing the corruption. The article eventually helped lead to Sadyrbay's dismissal, but Akylbek lost his job at the newspaper. He later moved to Osh, where he worked as a teacher for eight years and discovered that teaching was his true calling.

Years later, Akylbek is in his forties and living in Frunze, where he works as a scholar and completes his dissertation. He is engaged to Jarkyn, a young woman with a serious heart condition. After learning that his monograph has been published, Akylbek is briefly happy. Soon afterward, however, Jarkyn

suffers a fatal heart attack while he is away. Her death leaves him devastated, consumed by grief, guilt, and loneliness.

After Jarkyn's death, Akylbek struggles to keep up with his work. He is criticized for his behavior and eventually loses his position at the research institute. He decides to leave Frunze and become the principal of a boarding school in Dyikan-Kyshtak village near Kara-Balta.

On his way there, Akylbek unexpectedly learns that Makish is the doctor in charge of the local hospital. After many years, the woman he once loved is suddenly back in his life, giving him a chance to face his past and reconsider his future.

SCENES

Jarkyn

The Morning After Akylbek had spent the previous evening as a guest at someone's home. Kyrgyz people are known for their hospitality, and his hosts had welcomed him warmly and served a lavish dinner. He had also had a little to drink. The next morning, Akylbek was feeling very sick and did not want to get out of bed. He remembered that he had been driven home late at night in a *Moskvich* car. That morning, his friend Mukash came to see him. Mukash and Akylbek had studied together at college. Mukash now works at a school, while Akylbek is pursuing a career in academia and working on his dissertation. Akylbek is unmarried, whereas Mukash has a wife and five children.

A Man's Happiness Mukash invited Akylbek to his home. He wanted to slaughter a lamb and prepare a special meal for his friend. Mukash was proud of his family and his five children. He told Akylbek that a man's greatest happiness is having a family. He also asked Akylbek why he was still unmarried. While they were talking, the phone rang. The editor called to tell Akylbek that his monograph had been published. Akylbek was very happy to hear the news. It was exactly the kind of call he had been waiting for. After some time, Mukash left. Akylbek was alone again. He looked at himself in the mirror. He thought he looked tired and older than he used to. He was unhappy with his body and appearance. He remembered the days when he had been young, handsome, and full of energy.

The Black Dragon and the White Snake Akylbek dreamed of a field covered with wildflowers. Birds were singing, and the beautiful plain seemed peaceful until he suddenly saw a huge black dragon. It attacked him, and he noticed a black stone before he fell. He had often dreamed about dragons, and whenever he saw one, he told himself it was a sign of good luck. The dream reminded him of his childhood in Kara-Suu pasture during Soviet times. Shepherds spent winters in specially built houses and sheds. Local people believed the pasture had a protector—a white snake. Many legends about snake-dragons existed. Once, a fire broke out, and Akylbek saw several burned snakes, including a white one struggling to survive before it died.

The Neighbors As Akylbek was leaving home, he saw his neighbor Nadya with her son. Nadya said that her son was sick and that she was taking him to the doctor. Nadya and her husband, Marat, were a happy couple, and Akylbek felt a little envious of them. An older woman named Matrena Vlasovna, a mother of Nadya, noticed that Akylbek looked unwell and asked him what was wrong. He told her that he did not feel like going to work. His neighbors also told him that a young man had been looking for him. The older woman explained that the young man was the brother of a young woman Jarkyn Akylbek had introduced. Akylbek said that she was an actress who worked at the theater, but she was divorced and had a child. Matrena Vlasovna replied that there was nothing wrong with being divorced. "You can't find a perfect woman," she said.

Jarkyn and the Late Autumn Akylbek said that Jarkyn was the only woman he wanted to marry. However, she had heart problems and was currently in the hospital. She would remain there until Monday. "Don't worry," Matrena Vlasovna said. "She will get better. When is the wedding?" "In a month," Akylbek replied. It was late autumn, and the birds were already flying south. The older neighbor looked at the changing season and said, "This winter will be a hard one."

Jarkyn's Heart Akylbek arrived at his office and was pleased to find that his colleague Eshimov was absent. For some reason, Akylbek did not like him. Eshimov had never done anything particularly bad to him, but his manner irritated Akylbek. He was not very involved in their research, either. Akylbek wanted to work, but he could not concentrate. Something was worrying him. Then he remembered that Jarkyn was supposed to return to work that day. He called the theater and asked for her. "Who are you?" a man asked. "I'm Akylbek," he replied. "Jarkyn didn't come to work today. Her heart is bothering her again. You'd better go and see her," the theater director said.

Jarkyn's Death Akylbek called Jarkyn, but no one answered. Then her brother, Samat, picked up the phone. The boy said nothing; he seemed to be crying. After a moment, someone spoke and asked, "Akylbek, could you come here?" When he arrived at Jarkyn's house, he saw a crowd gathered outside. Someone touched his elbow. It was the wife of a distant relative, who quietly told him that Jarkyn had passed away. Akylbek stood motionless, overcome with shock. Two young men helped him into the house. Jarkyn was lying on the bed. She looked beautiful and peaceful. Someone whispered, "She is so beautiful. No one can believe that she is dead."

Jarkyn's Last Evening Samat explained that Jarkyn's heart attack had begun on Saturday evening. They had been walking in the park together, but Samat left for a while to play sports. When he returned, he found Jarkyn lying down. She told him that she was feeling unwell. Samat gave her some medicine, and she seemed to feel better. She asked him not to tell their mother because she was ill herself. Samat wanted to call Akylbek, but Jarkyn said that Akylbek was visiting some guests and asked him not to disturb him. When Samat finally called the doctors, Jarkyn began vomiting. By the time the doctor arrived, it was too late. Samat broke down in tears. Jarkyn had seemed strangely peaceful, as though she had accepted leaving this world after suffering from her illness for so long. Akylbek was devastated by her death and could not bear the thought of losing her.

The Funeral Akylbek went outside, where people were still gathered around the house. According to Kyrgyz tradition, a funeral meal was being prepared outdoors in large ovens. Akylbek was indifferent to everything around him. He barely noticed what people were doing or saying. Some people said that Jarkyn had inherited her heart condition from her mother. Others whispered that her illness had been caused by her former abusive husband. There were even rumors that he had not come to the funeral. Jarkyn's body was carried outside and placed in a large truck. Her mother touched her body and began to weep. The relatives from the village joined her in mourning. Akylbek walked ahead of everyone, carrying a funeral wreath covered with flowers.

After the Funeral Returning from the funeral, Akylbek sat in an armchair on the porch. He was afraid to enter the house. It seemed strange that life was continuing as usual. Finally, he went inside. The house felt cold and empty. Suddenly, he saw Jarkyn's photograph. "Jarkyn, you should have been at work today," he said to himself. "But death took you away. You will never come to me again. I have lost you." Akylbek began to cry. "I'm sorry, Jarkyn. I wasn't there beside you that evening." He cried for a long time, overcome with grief and regret. Eventually, exhausted from crying, he fell asleep.

Meeting Sapar

Alone in the World Akylbek woke up with the realization that life was short and that there was nothing he could do to change what had happened. He felt completely alone in the world. None of his friends called or came to see him.

The phone rang, but it was only a teenager who had dialed the wrong number. Akylbek longed for support from his friends, but no one was there for him. Feeling lost and lonely, he left the house and began walking along Dzerzhinsky Boulevard toward the central bus station.

A Toast to Life Akylbek walked around the train station. There, he unexpectedly met Sapar, a man who had studied with him at college. "You look sad. Are you all right? Are you married?" Sapar asked. Akylbek did not particularly like him and wanted to leave, but Sapar invited him to dinner. Akylbek suddenly realized that he had not eaten anything since the previous day. At dinner, Sapar offered him some cognac, but Akylbek did not want to drink. Sapar sensed that something was wrong and asked why he was so sad.

"I lost the woman I loved," Akylbek said. "I'm sorry," Sapar replied. "She was only twenty-five," Akylbek added. Sapar told him that his wife had just given birth to twin girls. Then he raised his glass and proposed a toast to life. Akylbek drank to life, and Sapar tried to cheer him up.

Akylbek Looks Back on His Years in Jalal-Abad

Young and Full of Hope Sapar and Akylbek remembered their college years. They had been young, naïve, and happy, full of energy and hope for the future. Sapar asked Akylbek where he had worked after graduating from college. "I worked for a newspaper in the Jalal-Abad region," Akylbek replied. "I was dating a young woman named Makish in Frunze before going to the southern region. He continued his story. One day, when he went to visit Makish, she asked, "Are you going to stay in the city and continue your education for your doctorate?" "No," Akylbek said. "They are sending me to southern Kyrgyzstan. I will work there as the head of a department at a local newspaper." He spoke enthusiastically about the south. The region was famous for its mild climate, fertile land, and abundant fruit. "After you graduate next year," he told Makish, "you can come there too. You will work as a doctor at the local hospital. We will live there and be happy together forever."

A Choice That Changed Everything Makish listened to Akylbek, but she did not agree with his plans. "I want to stay in the city," she said. "I will become a doctor, and you will become a scholar. I want us to have many children and live a happy life together." But Akylbek had already made his decision. "I have already agreed to go to the south," he said. "You are selfish," Makish replied. "And you are selfish," Akylbek answered. That was the last time they spoke. From that day on, Akylbek could not find her. He wrote her letters from Jalal Abad city in the southern region, but she never replied. He was staying in the room of a house of an old woman. The editor offered Akylbek a new apartment from the government, but when he was asked about getting married, he said, "I have no woman to marry." Soon afterward, he was sent on a work trip to a rural collective farm, or kolkhoz for the essay.

The Kolkhoz Chairman Akylbek met the chairman of the kolkhoz, a powerful and authoritarian man whom everyone obeyed without protest. The chairman was arguing angrily with a district representative about the cattle farm, especially the cows and calves. "The roads are in terrible condition," the representative said. "It will be difficult to build the new sheds." "That is none of your business," the chairman snapped. "We will take care of everything. Don't try to be clever with us." Two kolkhoz members approached him with a request. Before they could explain, he interrupted them rudely. "Am I here to play around?" The two men fell silent and disappeared.

A Dinner with the Chairman Finally, the chairman noticed Akylbek, who had been ignored for several hours. "Are you all right? Is the hotel comfortable?" he asked. "Yes," Akylbek replied. "The hotel is nice." The chairman invited him to dinner, but Akylbek did not really want to go. However, he needed to understand the chairman better for his article. "Kyrgyz hospitality never leaves a guest hungry," the chairman said. "Come to my house." They went together. On the way, the chairman's driver complained about the poor condition of the roads. The chairman rudely interrupted him. "They will be fixed soon," he said. The chairman then asked, "Are you from Frunze?" "No. I'm from the regional newspaper in Jalal-Abad," Akylbek answered.

The chairman criticized journalists who arrived only after seasonal work was finished. "Come during hay-making and harvest," he said. "Recently, three reporters visited me. Some wrote well, others badly."

A Shared Region Then the chairman asked Akylbek where he was from, how old he was, and whether he was married. Akylbek explained that he had grown up in Frunze from the age of fourteen. His parents, however, were originally from a village near Tokmok. The chairman told him that he was from Bystrovka, a settlement near Tokmok. Realizing that they came from the same region, he seemed pleased by the connection. He called his wife and asked her to prepare beshbarmak for Akylbek. In the northern regions, beshbarmak was traditionally prepared with noodles and meat, while in the southern regions, meat was more commonly served with rice. The chairman then showed Akylbek around his spacious, richly decorated house, filled with beautiful rugs.

Friends and Enemies When they sat down for dinner, Akylbek was offered a glass of cognac. The chairman spoke about the importance of understanding the people around you. “A man should know who is his enemy and who is his friend,” he said. Akylbek listened carefully. He had come to dinner because he wanted to understand the chairman better for his article, and the chairman’s words offered him another glimpse into the man’s character and way of thinking. They continued talking late into the night, and eventually, they went to sleep well after midnight.

The Blue Notebook The next morning, the chairman was already awake when Akylbek got up. “You are from our region, so you should praise our kolkhoz,” Sadyrbay said. He handed Akylbek a blue notebook. “All the information is here. If you have questions, ask our accountant.” Then he added, “When you get married, I will pay for the bride’s price and wedding. You can go to the city in this car. There are some fruits in the garage; my wife prepared them for you.”

“Sadyrbay aga, I’m still here. I need to talk to the farmers and see everything myself.” “All the work is done. Why waste your time? The notebook has everything.”

The Critical Article Akylbek returned to Jalal-Abad city. He was cold and sick, but after taking a Russian-style bath, he began to feel better. He sat down and wrote a critical satirical article—a *feuilleton*—about Sadyrbay, the chairman of the kolkhoz. When the editor and his colleagues read it, they were shocked. “Why did you write such a sarcastic article about Sadyrbay?” they asked. “We don’t want any problems with him. He is very powerful.”

“Sadyrbay is a leading chairman,” his colleagues warned. “He is praised throughout the country.” Akylbek disagreed. “It’s all false,” he said. “The harvest figures are false, the cattle farm is struggling, and the farmers are afraid of him. They are terrorized by him.” The regional authorities did not know the real situation in the kolkhoz. They saw only the reports and figures presented to them, all of which portrayed Sadyrbay as a successful chairman.

The Article Is Sent Back One of the newspaper’s colleagues, the executive editor, was a cunning man himself. He was always careful to praise the chief editor and stay on his good side. After reading Akylbek’s *feuilleton*, he decided that the article was too dangerous to publish without verification. The article was sent back to the district so that the figures and the actual situation in the kolkhoz could be checked. The editors did not want trouble with Sadyrbay. “If we publish your article, Sadyrbay will make our newspaper look like a piece of trash,” the executive editor warned. “We could all lose our jobs. He has been nominated for a national award. You are young. Don’t make enemies with powerful people.” Akylbek refused to back down. “I will publish it,” he said. “And if you won’t publish it here, I will send it to the newspapers in Frunze—even to Moscow.” The room fell silent. Everyone understood that Akylbek was not going to withdraw his article.

The Article Is Questioned Akylbek spoke with the assistant chief editor and explained that he had personally talked to the kolkhoz members and farmers. He had not written the article based on rumors or secondhand reports. He believed that, as a journalist, he had a responsibility to be fair and objective. He then asked his colleagues what they thought about the article. “We should not insult a respected man,” some of them said. “Sadyrbay is an important and respected chairman.” The assistant chief editor was from the same district where Sadyrbay worked. He admitted that much of what Akylbek had written was already known there. “Yes, we have heard these things before,” he said. “But nobody has been able to do anything about Sadyrbay.” He paused and looked at the others. “So we need to think carefully about our next steps.” The colleagues remained hesitant.

A Risky Decision To Akylbek’s surprise, the assistant chief editor approved the publication of the article. The chief editor was away on a trip, so the decision was left to his deputy. Akylbek went home feeling uneasy. The old woman, his landlady, noticed that something was troubling him. She offered him some advice. “Trust in God,” she told him. “Say a prayer. Akylbek said that he did not care about God, but despite his words, he was deeply worried.

He remembered a conversation he had had in the village with the chairman of the kolkhoz’s Communist Party committee. The man had warned him not to write about what he had discovered. “There is no need to put all this in your article,” he had told Akylbek. “The chairman has mixed up all the figures, numbers, and facts. Even the accountant is involved.” The man had looked at Akylbek seriously. “You are young,” he warned. “This work could harm your life.” Now, as Akylbek waited for the article to be published, those

words came back to him. He realized that he was taking a risk, but he still believed that the truth had to be written.

The Governor's Office The next morning, the registry girl told Akylbek that his article had caused a sensation. People were calling the newspaper constantly. Still worried, Akylbek waited anxiously. When the chief editor returned, Akylbek was summoned to the regional governor's office. Shivering with excitement, he entered the office and faced the governor's third secretary and the chief editor. "Is everything in your article true?" they asked. "Yes," Akylbek replied. "Everything is true." The governor turned to the editor. "Why did you publish this? Why didn't you inform us first?" "We will create a commission to check all the facts," he announced. "Akylbek Bektemirov, you can leave."

The End of His Newspaper Career Akylbek was summoned before the editor-in-chief and sharply criticized. The editor accused him of writing a false article based on information from local opponents and former kolkhoz officials. He declared that Akylbek could no longer work at the newspaper and should be dismissed. Some colleagues supported the editor, while others hesitated. "Those who support his dismissal, raise your hands," the editor-in-chief said. After the meeting, Akylbek left the office. He went to say goodbye to his elderly landlady, then headed to Osh, where he would catch a flight to Frunze.

Meeting Esen

An Unexpected Encounter Akylbek told Sapar that he had worked in Osh for eight years. After telling him his story, they left the café. Akylbek walked along the boulevard, reluctant to go home because everything there reminded him of Jarkyn. Eventually, he entered another café. A waiter brought him a glass of cognac and said, "Someone has paid for this." Beside the glass was a note: "*Akylbek, you are suffering. I understand your grief.*" Then Esen came up to Akylbek and spoke to him briefly. Esen was Jarkyn's former husband. Akylbek hated him because Esen had not even attended Jarkyn's funeral. Esen then turned to Akylbek and suggested that they have a drink together.

Esen Pretends To Be a Good Person Akylbek did not like Esen. He said angrily, "You did not even attend Jarkyn's funeral. You are not a good person." Esen replied, "And you? Don't pretend to be a good person. I live a better life. You are alone. I pay child support, and I will take care of my son. Everyone dies—both you and me." The young woman beside Esen was surprised. She asked, "Why are you treating Akylbek so badly?" Akylbek said, "He is my enemy. I can't talk to him. Esen, you are a bad influence on this young woman." The woman said, "Esen is a good man. We have lived together for three months. We are not married, but I am pregnant." Esen said, "You are not pregnant. Let's go home."

A Dangerous Argument Akylbek said, "Sit down. We will continue our argument. You married Jarkyn even though she was ill. She gave birth to a child, but you spread rumors that the child was not yours. You said terrible things about her everywhere. You destroyed her morally. Now you may destroy this young woman too. She could lose her baby because you force her to drink vodka." Turning to the young woman, Akylbek said, "I will take care of you. Don't trust Esen. Where do you live?" "I'm from Kalinin District," she replied. "I have a mother and siblings. Where do you live in Frunze?" "That is not your business," she answered. "I live with my aunt." Esen became furious.

The Police Arrive Esen became furious and shouted, "Why are you interfering in our lives? You had an affair with Jarkyn and destroyed my family. Now you are interfering in my life again!" Akylbek suddenly punched Esen hard in the face. Esen's nose began to bleed, and people in the café became noisy. Someone called the police. When the police arrived, the young woman complained that Akylbek had started the conflict. A middle-aged woman told the officers, "Akylbek always drinks in cafés and gets into fights. He was even in prison. The government should not release people like him. Be careful. He might have a gun." The crowd became increasingly noisy. Two witnesses accompanied the police. After questioning everyone, the officers took Akylbek to the police station.

Akylbek at the Police Station Akylbek was at the police station when an officer told him, "You are a scholar. You should not have been involved in such a fight." Akylbek felt shy and disappointed because he believed his books were good, but it seemed that nobody appreciated his work. He also thought his latest

book was not very good. The police officer questioned him about the incident and asked whether he had ever been in prison. Akylbek said he had never been to prison. When asked about the conflict, he explained that he was not guilty but had lost control of his emotions and called Esen a bad man. After hearing his story, the officer dismissed the case. Akylbek returned home at three.

After Leaving the Police Station

Akylbek Remembers Jarkyn Akylbek remembered how he first met Jarkyn. He had gone to the hospital to visit his sister, and Jarkyn was there. She was beautiful and kind, and this was how she entered his life. Later, he hid her photograph in the closet. Akylbek also remembered his childhood. His father had been a shepherd, and he thought about the people in his village. That night, he could not sleep well. He felt sick and troubled and had frightening nightmares. In his dream, he saw a young woman who said she was Jarkyn and asked him to marry her. Suddenly, she turned into his old neighbor, Matrena Vlasovna. Akylbek became afraid that he might die alone.

Guluypa Visits Her Brother In the morning, Akylbek's sister, Guluypa, came to visit him. When she saw her brother looking sad and weak, she began to cry. Akylbek also cried, and they comforted each other. Guluypa cooked a meal, and the house soon felt warm and peaceful again. She told Akylbek that one of their relatives was organizing a family celebration. She encouraged Akylbek to attend and spend time talking with their relatives. Guluypa was a teacher and had a good husband. Their relatives in the village often complained that Akylbek rarely talked to them or communicated with them. Guluypa wanted her brother to reconnect with his family.

Akylbek Visits His Sick Neighbor In the morning, Akylbek's neighbor, Matrena Vlasovna, came to see him. Akylbek told her that he was very unhappy. She thought that perhaps Jarkyn had rejected him, but Akylbek sadly explained that Jarkyn had died. Matrena was shocked and felt sorry for him. She invited Akylbek to speak with her husband, Stepan, who was seriously ill with cancer and did not have much time left. Akylbek visited the old man and talked with him. He wanted to shave Stepan's beard as a way of showing his gratitude for his kindness and care. During their conversation, Stepan told Akylbek about his life and complained about his daughter's husband, a Kyrgyz man whom he did not like.

The New Home Akylbek remembered how he had bought his house seven years earlier. When he entered a doctoral program, he did not like the idea of living in a dormitory, so he bought a small house near the city center. His Russian neighbors, Matrena and Stepan, congratulated him on his new home. At that time, Akylbek also wanted to get married and settle down. Since then, he had respected his hardworking neighbors. However, Stepan was unhappy because his daughter had married a Kyrgyz man. This time Akylbek tried to comfort him. He said that if the man was a good person, there was no reason to prevent her from having a future with him. He encouraged Stepan not to worry about his daughter's future.

Akylbek Remembers Osh

Sapar Visits In the evening, Akylbek's sister and her family came to visit him. Later, his friend Sapar arrived, and Akylbek was very happy to see him. Sapar had gotten Akylbek's address from his office. He wanted to support and cheer up his friend after the loss of Jarkyn, Akylbek's fiancée. Akylbek began telling Sapar about his life in Osh.

Akylbek's New Life in Osh When Akylbek left Jalal-Abad for Osh to catch his flight to Frunze, he met his former college mate, Japarbek, at the airport. They had been good friends during their college years. Japarbek told him that he was working at the city department of school management. Akylbek said that he had just left his job at the newspaper in Jalal-Abad. Japarbek asked what he planned to do in Frunze. Akylbek began to think that staying in Osh might be a good idea. The next day, with Japarbek's help, he found a job at a local school. His hopes of meeting his girlfriend Makish in Frunze turned out to be unfounded. In the end, Akylbek stayed in Osh for eight years, working at a boarding school.

Akylbek's Longing for Makish Akylbek came to realize that teaching was his calling. Still, he was depressed whenever he thought about his girlfriend, Makish, and he had not yet adapted to school life. One

day, the school principal called him in and asked whether everything was all right. Seeing that Akylbek was struggling, the principal supported him and gave him four days off so that he could go to Frunze. Akylbek wanted to see Makish at her dormitory. He took a room at a hotel and went to the medical university, where he waited for her. Her classmates began coming out, but Makish was not among them. Akylbek grew worried that she might have gotten married. He kept assuring himself that Makish was only his and that she could not marry anyone but him. He even imagined taking Makish with him and leaving together.

Akylbek Learns the Truth about Makish Suddenly, Akylbek saw Makish. She was wearing a headscarf, traditionally worn by married women. Makish told him, "I'm sorry. I couldn't keep my promise. Don't disturb me," and ran toward the bus. That evening, Akylbek drank vodka to comfort himself. Later, he went to Makish's family home in Frunze. A little girl opened the gate and then the door. When Akylbek entered, he found Makish reading a book. "Come with me. Listen to me," he said. Makish only looked at him. Then a man came out of the room and began threatening Akylbek, saying that Makish was already his wife. Akylbek was devastated. He finally understood that Makish had married another man.

Akylbek Regrets Akylbek thought that Makish was a young woman who wanted to enjoy life. She loved fashionable clothes and dreamed of living a comfortable life. Akylbek felt that he would not be able to give her the lifestyle she wanted, and he believed they would eventually divorce. Makish was also somewhat capricious, so Akylbek worried that he would feel guilty if he could not make her happy.

Two years later Two years later, Akylbek unexpectedly met Makish on the street. She told him that she was unhappy. She had married another man, and they had a son, but she said that her husband did not understand her spiritually. Later, Akylbek heard that Makish had eventually divorced him. By then, Akylbek had become a well-known scholar, but he was still not truly happy.

Sapar Talks About Happiness Sapar told Akylbek that he was happy with his wife and their four children. Although he was not rich, he felt satisfied with his family life. Sapar also mentioned that there was a job opening at a newspaper and suggested that Akylbek consider applying for it. Akylbek said he would think about the opportunity.

Akylbek then told Sapar another story. When he was working at a school in Osh, he once met Medetov, a regional official from Jalal-Abad, at a restaurant. Akylbek tried to avoid talking to him, but Medetov recognized him and said that the newspaper had been looking for him after he left. Akylbek explained that he was now working at a school. Medetov told him that the newspaper's editor had received a reprimand for dismissing Akylbek. Akylbek remembered Medetov as a good and fair government official.

Akylbek Remembers Medetov Medetov invited Akylbek to work with the Komsomol Committee of the Communist Party. He also told him that Sadyrbay, the corrupt head of the collective farm, had been dismissed after Akylbek wrote a critical article about him. Akylbek was happy that his article had contributed to removing a corrupt leader and believed that he had done something useful for his community. He remembered Medetov as a man who represented the best ideals of the Communist system. After Sapar left, Akylbek decided to distance himself from some of his other friends. Unlike Sapar, who was a sincere and supportive friend, these people often invited Akylbek to drink and gossip. Akylbek felt that they were not true friends, so he chose to spend more time alone and reflect on his life.

Akylbek Returns to His Village The previous year, Akylbek had gone to Lake Issyk-Kul to rest. On his way back, he passed through his hometown, and the familiar places brought back strong emotions and memories of his childhood. He decided to visit his childhood friend, Kerimaaly, in the village. Kerimaaly was very happy to see him, while his wife was astonished by the unexpected visit. Another childhood friend, Abdybek, who had come back from the pasture, also joined them. That night, Akylbek spent time with his old friends. They never criticized or judged him. To them, he was still the same innocent boy they had known in childhood. Being with them made Akylbek feel accepted and connected to his past.

Akylbek Returns to Work after Jarkyn's Death

Akylbek Faces Criticism at Work After being away for many days, Akylbek finally returned to his office. Since Jarkyn's death, he had felt unmotivated and had little enthusiasm for work. The administration told

him that he could apply to join the Communist Party, so he wrote several petitions requesting membership. That afternoon, there was a meeting at the institute. The director said that it was one of the country's most prestigious research institutes, where many respected scholars worked. However, he said that some employees were bringing disgrace to the research community. He mentioned Akylbek Bektemirov, who had been drinking, gotten into fights, beaten people, and been arrested. He also criticized Akylbek for sometimes arriving late or missing work. The meeting was a serious warning to Akylbek about his behavior.

Akylbek Loses His Position Eshimov, Akylbek's colleague in the same department, complained that Akylbek often missed work and arrived late. He also mentioned that Akylbek was still single. Akylbek protested, saying that his marital status was a personal matter and had nothing to do with his work. The director then asked what punishment should be given to Akylbek. A decision had already been made to appoint Eshimov as the new head of the department, while Akylbek would be removed from his position as department head. Akylbek became angry with Asanov, who supported Eshimov and the decision against him.

Akylbek Leaves Frunze Akylbek was preparing to leave Frunze. He took Jarkyn's photograph with him and decided to leave the city and take a position as the principal of a boarding school in Kara-Balta. Before leaving, he said goodbye to his neighbor. The old man led him to his shed and showed him 10,000 rubles he had saved. He asked Akylbek to spend the money on the needs of the school.

Akylbek, however, asked the old man to give the money to his daughter so that she could hand it over to the city department of schools.

Akylbek Arrives in Kara-Balta Akylbek reached the town of Kara-Balta. The town was full of activity. New houses were being built, and farmers were working in the fields. From there, he continued toward the village. On the way, he met a young man, about twenty to twenty-five years old, whose vehicle had run out of fuel. Akylbek helped him refuel the car from an extra tank. Akylbek told him that he was going to become the new principal of the boarding school in the village of Dyikan-Kyshtak. The young man introduced himself as Zarlyk and said that he was a driver for the boarding school. However, the vehicle he was driving belonged to the hospital. He had taken it without permission and was worried that the chief doctor, Makish, might scold him.

Akylbek Hears Makish's Name Akylbek was shocked and immediately asked, "What is Makish's surname?" "Toktobekova," Zarlyk replied. Akylbek understood that he would see Makish again. After all those years, he was suddenly close to meeting her. The weather changed, and snow began to fall. Zarlyk offered to take him to the village, but Akylbek continued walking. He was happy at the thought of seeing Makish again.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Akylbek

Akylbek Bektemirov is the central character of the story, and the narrative follows his personal, professional, and emotional development across many years. He is a scholar, journalist, teacher, and intellectual whose life is shaped by difficult choices and lost relationships. As a young man, he chooses journalism over his relationship with Makish, beginning a career that brings both success and conflict. Later, he discovers his calling as a teacher and becomes a respected scholar. The death of Jarkyn, however, leaves him emotionally devastated and increasingly isolated. Through Akylbek's memories, regrets, relationships, and struggles, the story explores his search for happiness, purpose, love, and belonging.

Idealistic Akylbek is deeply guided by his ideals, particularly his belief in truth and professional responsibility. As a young journalist, he refuses to accept the false reports produced by Sadyrbay's collective farm. Although his colleagues warn him that publishing the article could damage his career, Akylbek insists that a journalist must report the truth. His idealism also appears in his early vision of his future with Makish. He imagines that they will marry, have children, and live happily together in southern Kyrgyzstan. However, his idealism can become inflexible. He often believes strongly in his own decisions and does not fully consider how they affect the people around him.

Passionate Akylbek experiences both love and professional ambition intensely. His feelings for Makish remain powerful even after many years and after she has married another man. When he learns that she has married, he struggles to accept the loss and later continues to remember her. His relationship with Jarkyn is similarly important to him, and her death leaves him devastated. His passion is also visible in his journalism. He becomes emotionally involved in exposing Sadyrbay's corruption and refuses to withdraw his article despite the risks. His strong emotions give him determination and courage, but they can also make him impulsive, especially when he confronts Esen after Jarkyn's death.

Principled Akylbek believes that people should act according to moral principles even when doing so is difficult. His decision to publish the article about Sadyrbay demonstrates his commitment to professional honesty. He knows that Sadyrbay is powerful and that his colleagues fear the consequences, yet he refuses to falsify or hide what he has discovered. Akylbek also tries to defend Jarkyn's reputation when Esen speaks negatively about her. At the same time, his principles are sometimes complicated by his emotions. His violent confrontation with Esen shows that his sense of justice can become personal and uncontrolled. Nevertheless, honesty remains one of his strongest guiding values.

Regretful Regret is one of the most important characteristics of Akylbek. He repeatedly looks back at decisions from his past and wonders whether his life might have been different. His choice to leave Frunze and pursue journalism cost him his relationship with Makish, and he continues to think about her long after their separation. After Jarkyn's death, his regret becomes even more painful. He blames himself for not being beside her when she suffered her fatal heart attack. He also regrets aspects of his professional and personal life. His constant reflection suggests that Akylbek has difficulty accepting the past and moving forward without questioning his earlier choices.

Lonely Despite having friends, relatives, colleagues, and former lovers, Akylbek experiences profound loneliness. After Jarkyn's death, he feels that he is completely alone in the world and is disappointed when his friends do not immediately come to support him. His loneliness is connected not only to grief but also to his lifelong difficulty establishing a stable family life. He envies Mukash's family and reflects on his own unmarried state. His memories of Makish and Jarkyn reveal his desire for companionship and emotional security. By the end of the story, his decision to leave Frunze reflects both a desire for a new beginning and an attempt to escape his loneliness.

Jarkyn

Jarkyn is an important figure in Akylbek's later life and represents the love and family life he hopes to build in his forties. She is a young actress who has been married before and has a child. Akylbek describes her as the woman he wants to marry, and despite her serious heart condition, they plan to marry within a month. Her sudden death from a heart attack becomes the central tragedy of Akylbek's later life. Although Jarkyn appears directly for a relatively short period, her presence continues throughout the story through Akylbek's memories, grief, and guilt. Her death profoundly changes his emotional state and contributes to his withdrawal from work and society.

Loving Jarkyn is presented primarily through her relationship with Akylbek and the affection he feels for her. Akylbek describes her as the only woman he wants to marry, showing that she represents a serious emotional commitment for him. Despite her previous marriage and her health problems, he wants to build a future with her. Her relationship with her brother Samat also demonstrates her concern for others. During her final evening, she asks Samat not to worry their mother because their mother is already ill. She also tells him not to disturb Akylbek because she knows he is visiting guests. Even while suffering, she thinks about the people around her.

Vulnerable Jarkyn's serious heart condition makes her physically vulnerable and constantly places her health at risk. She is in the hospital before her death and is expected to remain there until Monday, but her condition worsens unexpectedly. Her vulnerability is also connected to her difficult personal history. Her former husband, Esen, is accused by Akylbek of spreading damaging rumors about her and questioning the legitimacy of their child. These experiences suggest that Jarkyn has faced emotional as well as physical

hardship. Nevertheless, the story does not portray her only as a victim. She continues working, maintains relationships with her family, and plans a future with Akylbek despite her illness.

Considerate Jarkyn repeatedly demonstrates consideration for other people, especially during her final hours. When her heart attack begins, she asks her brother Samat not to tell their mother because she knows her mother is ill. She also prevents Samat from immediately contacting Akylbek because she believes he is visiting guests and does not want to disturb him. These details are important because they show that Jarkyn remains concerned about others even when she herself is seriously ill. Her consideration also makes her death more tragic. Akylbek later feels guilty because he was not beside her, although Jarkyn herself had chosen not to interrupt his evening.

Resilient Jarkyn's life contains several difficulties, yet she continues to build a life for herself. She has experienced marriage, divorce, motherhood, serious illness, and social judgment. Despite these challenges, she works as an actress and begins a new relationship with Akylbek. Her decision to plan another marriage suggests that she has not allowed her difficult past to prevent her from hoping for happiness. Her resilience is especially significant because she lives with a serious heart condition. She continues with her ordinary life even though her health is uncertain. Her sudden death therefore emphasizes how fragile the future she hoped to build actually was.

Tragic Jarkyn is a tragic figure because her potential future is cut short suddenly. She is young, engaged to Akylbek, and preparing to marry him when her heart condition becomes fatal. Her death affects not only herself but also Akylbek, Samat, her mother, and the wider community gathered at her funeral. The tragedy is intensified by the fact that Akylbek was not with her during her final moments. He later blames himself and repeatedly thinks that he should have been beside her. Jarkyn's death becomes a turning point in the story, transforming Akylbek's life and intensifying his feelings of guilt, loneliness, and loss.

Makish

Makish is Akylbek's first great love and former fiancée. When they are young, she is a medical student in Frunze, while Akylbek is deciding what direction to take in life. Makish wants them to remain in the city, continue their education, build careers, and eventually have a family. Akylbek instead chooses a journalism position in southern Kyrgyzstan, and their disagreement ends their relationship. Makish later marries another man and has a son, but the marriage eventually ends in divorce. Years later, she becomes the doctor in charge of a local hospital near Akylbek's new workplace. Her unexpected reappearance re-connects Akylbek with his unresolved past.

Independent Makish has a clear vision of the life she wants and is unwilling to abandon it simply to follow Akylbek. She wants to remain in the city, complete her medical education, and build a family there. When Akylbek tells her that he has already agreed to move south, she openly disagrees with him. Her independence is significant because she does not simply accept Akylbek's plans. She makes her own choices, including eventually marrying another man. Even though her decisions contribute to the end of their relationship, they show that she has her own ambitions and expectations for her future.

Ambitious Makish is committed to becoming a doctor and developing her own professional life. Her plans differ from Akylbek's, but she shares his desire for education and achievement. She imagines a future in which both of them have successful careers while also raising a family. Her ambition is therefore not limited to professional advancement; she wants to combine meaningful work with personal happiness. Her later career as a doctor confirms that she follows through with her professional goals. By the time Akylbek encounters her again, she has become the doctor in charge of a local hospital, demonstrating that her youthful ambitions developed into an established career.

Strong-willed Makish does not easily surrender her beliefs or accept decisions she disagrees with. When Akylbek announces that he will leave for southern Kyrgyzstan, she clearly tells him that she wants to remain in Frunze. Their disagreement becomes so serious that both accuse the other of selfishness, ending their relationship. Later, when Akylbek finds her after she has married, she refuses his attempt to

persuade her to leave with him. Her statement that he should not disturb her shows that she has established a different life. Makish's strong will allows her to move forward even though her relationship with Akylbek has ended.

Practical Makish approaches life in a more practical way than Akylbek often does. While Akylbek speaks enthusiastically about moving south and imagines that they will simply be happy together, Makish thinks about education, careers, family, and where they will actually build their lives. She does not allow romantic feelings alone to determine her future. After their separation, she marries and has a child, creating a new family life. Even when Akylbek later returns to her, she does not abandon the life she has built. Her practicality contrasts with Akylbek's tendency to idealize both their past relationship and the possibilities of what their lives could have been.

THEMES

Family: Being Single and Social Expectations

Being single is an important social theme in the *novella*. It portrays family and marriage as central values in Kyrgyz society, where personal fulfillment and social belonging are closely associated with having a spouse and children. Within this cultural framework, remaining unmarried or living without a family may be viewed as a sign that something is missing from a person's life. Single people may also receive sympathy or pity from relatives, friends, and members of the wider community, reflecting the expectation that adulthood should lead to marriage and family life.

This theme is particularly evident in the life of Akylbek Bektairov. His separation from Makish becomes one of his lasting regrets. Although he develops a successful professional life as a scholar, journalist, and teacher, his lack of a stable family remains an important source of loneliness. His later relationship with Jarkyn gives him companionship and the possibility of building a family. Her sudden death, however, leaves him alone again and intensifies his emotional isolation.

The novella contrasts Akylbek's situation with the family life of his friend Sapar. Sapar has a wife and children and regards family as one of the greatest sources of happiness. His attitude reflects the broader social values presented in the story, in which marriage and parenthood provide emotional support, social belonging, and a sense of completeness.

At the same time, *In the Late Autumn* presents a complex view of singlehood. Akylbek's professional achievements, friendships, and sense of responsibility demonstrate that a person's identity and value extend beyond marital status. Nevertheless, his experiences reveal the emotional and social pressure created by strong expectations surrounding marriage and family. Through Akylbek's life, the novella examines the tension between individual circumstances and a society in which family remains a central measure of adult life and social belonging.

Illustrative moment: At a meeting at the research institute, Akylbek's colleagues discuss his conduct following Jarkyn's death. He has missed work because of grief and was taken to the police after fighting with Jarkyn's former husband. The discussion focuses on his lateness, absences, and perceived neglect of his duties. One colleague also points out that Akylbek is still single despite being around forty. Akylbek challenges this criticism, asking why his marital status should have anything to do with his work. The exchange shows how his private life becomes part of the institution's judgment of his professional and moral character.

Psychology

Love: Loss and Regret

The novella presents love as an experience that can shape a person's entire life. Akylbek's relationships with Makish and Jarkyn reveal how love can remain deeply connected to memory, missed opportunities, and grief long after a relationship has ended.

In his youth, Akylbek is engaged to Makish, a medical student in Frunze. They share plans for marriage and a family, but their different ambitions eventually separate them. Akylbek chooses a journalism position in Jalal-Abad, while Makish wants to remain in Frunze and continue her medical education. Their

relationship ends, and Makish later marries another man. Although Akylbek continues with his career, he never completely overcomes his regret about losing her. His memories of Makish become a reminder of a different life he might have had.

Years later, Akylbek falls in love with Jarkyn, a young actress. Their relationship gives him another opportunity for companionship and family life. However, Jarkyn suffers from a serious heart condition and dies suddenly while Akylbek is away. Her death becomes a turning point in his life. He is overwhelmed by grief and feels guilty that he was not with her during her final moments. The loss affects not only his emotional state but also his work and relationships with other people.

The novella therefore presents regret as something closely connected to love. Akylbek regrets decisions from his youth, but he also struggles with the feeling that he failed Jarkyn when she needed him. His past and present losses become intertwined, leaving him with the sense that happiness can be fragile and difficult to recover.

Through Akylbek's experiences, *In the Late Autumn* novella explores the lasting emotional consequences of love.

Illustrative moment: Akylbek and Sapar remember their college years, when they were young, hopeful, and full of plans for the future. Akylbek recalls his relationship with Makish, whom he dated while living in Frunze. After graduation, he decided to accept a newspaper position in southern Kyrgyzstan instead of remaining in the city to continue his education. He hoped Makish would eventually join him there as a doctor and that they would build a family together. Makish, however, wanted to stay in Frunze, continue her medical career, and have a family there. Their conflicting plans led to an argument and ended their relationship.

Life: The Search for Happiness and Human Connection

Akylbek's life shows that happiness is closely tied to the people around him. When he is young, he imagines that happiness will come from building a family with Makish. He wants her to move to southern Kyrgyzstan after finishing medical school so they can live and raise children together. Makish has a different plan. She wants to remain in Frunze, become a doctor, and build their family there. Their disagreement separates them, and Akylbek later looks back on this decision with regret.

Akylbek also finds satisfaction in his work. After losing his newspaper position, he moves to Osh and spends eight years working at a boarding school. Teaching becomes important to him because he feels that he has found work he genuinely enjoys. Later, he moves to Frunze and develops a career as a scholar. His monograph is published, giving him a sense of achievement. However, professional success does not remove his need for close personal relationships.

His relationship with Jarkyn becomes another important source of happiness. She gives him companionship and the possibility of creating a family. Her sudden death changes his life completely. After the funeral, Akylbek becomes withdrawn, drinks, misses work, and gets into a fight with Jarkyn's former husband. His behavior shows how strongly her absence affects his everyday life.

During this period, his friends and relatives try to keep him connected to other people. Sapar invites him to his home, where Akylbek sees a family life very different from his own. His sister Guluypa, his neighbors, and his old friends also remain concerned about him. These encounters do not remove his grief, but they prevent him from being completely isolated.

The novella therefore connects happiness with ordinary human relationships: having someone to love, sharing a home and family, having friends to turn to, and doing work that gives daily life meaning. Akylbek's experiences show what happens when these sources of connection are lost.

Illustrative moment: In the morning, Akylbek's sister, Guluypa, came to visit him. When she saw her brother looking sad and weak, she began to cry. Akylbek also cried, and they comforted each other. Guluypa cooked a meal, and the house soon felt warm and peaceful again. She told Akylbek that one of their relatives was organizing a family celebration. She encouraged Akylbek to attend and spend time talking with their relatives. Guluypa was a teacher and had a good husband. Their relatives in the village often complained that Akylbek rarely talked to them or communicated with them. Guluypa wanted her brother to reconnect with his family.

Death: Grief, and Mortality

Death and grief become especially important after Jarkyn's sudden death. Until this point, Akylbek has already experienced disappointment and loneliness, but he still believes that he can build a meaningful life with her. Jarkyn's death destroys that expectation. She is young and seriously ill, but her death still comes suddenly, making Akylbek realize how quickly a person can disappear from someone's life.

Jarkyn's final hours make her death even more painful. She knows that her condition is serious, but she does not want her mother to know how ill she is. She also asks her brother Samat not to disturb Akylbek while he is visiting guests. Her concern for other people continues even when she is facing death herself. Akylbek, meanwhile, is unaware that he is losing her. When he learns that she has died, he is left with the painful thought that he was not beside her during her final moments.

After the funeral, grief changes Akylbek's behavior. He becomes withdrawn and begins drinking. He misses work and has difficulty returning to his normal routine. His anger also becomes harder to control. His fight with Esen, Jarkyn's former husband, shows how closely his grief is connected to his anger. Akylbek cannot accept what he believes was Esen's mistreatment of Jarkyn, and their confrontation eventually brings him to the police.

The death also changes Akylbek's relationship with the people around him. Friends such as Sapar try to support him, while relatives and acquaintances encourage him not to isolate himself. Yet their efforts cannot immediately remove his grief. He has lost not only the woman he loved but also the future he imagined with her.

Illustrative Moment: When Akylbek comes home, his elderly neighbor Matrena tells him that Jarkyn's brother, Samat, had come looking for him but could not find him. The next day, Akylbek goes to work and calls the theater, expecting Jarkyn to be there. He is told that she has not come to work, even though she was supposed to. Worried, he calls her home. Samat answers, sounding as if he is crying, and tells Akylbek to come over. When Akylbek arrives, he sees a crowd gathered around the house. One of his distant relatives' wives says, "She was so young and beautiful." Akylbek still does not understand what has happened. Everything feels unreal, as if he is dreaming. Then he sees Jarkyn lying in bed for the last time—still beautiful and young, but dead.

Ethics:

Professional integrity and the pursuit of truth

Akylbek's life is marked by a strong sense of justice. He cannot easily ignore wrongdoing, even when speaking up puts his own future at risk. This becomes clear when he works as a journalist in southern Kyrgyzstan and begins investigating Sadyrbay, a powerful collective-farm chairman. Akylbek discovers that the reports about the farm's success are false and that the farmers are living under pressure. Sadyrbay expects Akylbek to write a positive article and even gives him a notebook containing the information he wants published. Akylbek understands what is expected of him, but he refuses to simply repeat the official story. Instead, he writes a critical feuilleton exposing Sadyrbay's actions. An investigation follows, and Sadyrbay is eventually removed from his position. Akylbek pays for his decision by losing his own job. Still, he does not regret telling the truth.

His sense of justice appears again years later in his conflict with Esen, Jarkyn's former husband. Akylbek is deeply angry with Esen because of the way he treated Jarkyn, his attitude toward her son, and the fact that he did not attend her funeral. When Akylbek meets Esen in a café, Esen is sitting with a young woman who says that they have been living together for three months and that she is pregnant. Esen tries to silence her. Akylbek immediately becomes concerned about what will happen to her. He asks where she lives and about her relatives because he believes Esen may simply abandon her when he loses interest in her.

Esen tells Akylbek to stay out of his life and accuses him of ruining his marriage to Jarkyn. Akylbek becomes angry and hits him. He is taken to the police, and the incident adds to the problems that later cost him his position at the research institute.

Akylbek is not presented as a perfect person. He can be impulsive, angry, and sometimes acts without thinking about the consequences. Yet these episodes show something consistent about him: he cannot easily stand by when he believes someone is being treated unfairly. Even when his choices cost

him his job or bring him trouble, he remains true to what he believes is right. For Akylbek, keeping his conscience matters more than protecting his career or avoiding conflict.

Illustrative Moment: After Akylbek's critical article about Sadyrbay is published, he and the editor-in-chief are summoned to the regional governor's office. A senior official reprimands them for allowing the article to appear and questions their judgment. Later, the editor-in-chief gathers the newspaper staff and criticizes Akylbek's article, insisting that Sadyrbay is one of the district's best kolkhoz leaders. He then asks the staff to vote for Akylbek's dismissal. Akylbek does not try to defend himself or take back what he has written. He does not apologize or change his position simply to keep his job. Instead, he collects his belongings and leaves for Osh, intending to fly to Frunze. His quiet departure shows that he is willing to accept the consequences rather than abandon his principles.

Ideology: Soviet Ideology and Corruption

The novella also examines corruption through personal connections and favoritism. Akylbek and Sadyrbay come from the same region, and Sadyrbay seems to expect this shared background to make Akylbek more receptive to his influence. In the society depicted in the novella, personal connections could be an important way of gaining support and achieving one's goals. Sadyrbay uses this approach when Akylbek comes to investigate his collective farm.

Sadyrbay is the head of the kolkhoz, and officially his farm has an excellent reputation. It is often praised for producing some of the best harvest and farming results in the district. Sadyrbay himself has received different awards and has even been nominated for the highest state award. From the outside, this makes him look like a successful and respected agricultural leader. However, Akylbek begins to see that the official picture does not match what is actually happening on the farm.

The condition of the roads is one of the clearest examples. The roads are in poor shape, and even Sadyrbay's own driver complains about them. Instead of treating the problem as something that needs immediate attention, Sadyrbay simply says that they will fix it later. His response shows how easily real problems can be pushed aside while the kolkhoz continues to receive praise for its supposed success. The poor roads are something ordinary workers and drivers have to deal with, while Sadyrbay can continue presenting the farm as successful.

Sadyrbay also reacts defensively when his work is questioned. When a district representative criticizes the conditions at the cow farms, Sadyrbay responds, "Do not teach me, we know." Instead of listening to the criticism or explaining how he plans to solve the problems, he dismisses the person speaking to him. His position gives him enough authority to shut down criticism rather than deal with the problems themselves.

Another scene shows how he treats ordinary kolkhoz farmers. Two farmers come to him with an issue, apparently expecting him to listen to their concerns. Instead, Sadyrbay rudely drives them away, saying, in effect, "Am I playing around?" After that, they disappear from the scene. The moment is important because it shows the distance between Sadyrbay and the people whose work makes the kolkhoz successful. He is concerned with maintaining his authority and reputation, while the farmers' problems receive little attention.

Instead of allowing Akylbek to see the farm on his own terms, Sadyrbay invites him to a lavish dinner at his beautiful house and treats him generously. He gives Akylbek a blue notebook containing information about the collective farm. His wife loads fruits into the official car, and the driver is supposed to take Akylbek to the city. Sadyrbay even promises to help him with the bride price and wedding expenses if he marries in the future. These gestures create an atmosphere in which Akylbek could easily feel that he owes the chairman something in return.

Akylbek, however, refuses to be influenced by these favors. He stays in the villages, talks to different people, and collects information himself. He does not use the material from Sadyrbay's blue notebook because he discovers that the information is false. The reality he finds among the farmers is very different from the picture presented by the chairman. The contrast between the awards, praise, and official reports on one side and the poor roads, problems at the cow farms, and ignored farmers on the other makes Sadyrbay's reputation look very different from the reality Akylbek witnesses.

Akylbek's article eventually causes trouble for both him and the newspaper. He and the editor-in-chief are summoned to the regional office and reprimanded. Later, the editor gathers the staff and defends Sadyrbay as one of the district's best kolkhoz leaders before asking the colleagues to vote for Akylbek's

dismissal. The reaction to Akylbek's article shows how difficult it is to challenge someone who has already been presented as a successful leader and has strong support from people above him. The official reputation surrounding Sadyrbay becomes more important to the authorities than the problems Akylbek has documented.

Akylbek does not withdraw his article or use his connection to the region to protect himself. He takes his belongings and leaves.

Illustrative moment: Akylbek spoke with the assistant chief editor and explained that he had personally talked to the kolkhoz members and farmers. He had not written the article based on rumors or secondhand reports. He believed that, as a journalist, he had a responsibility to be fair and objective. He then asked his colleagues what they thought about the article. "We should not insult a respected man," some of them said. "Sadyrbay is an important and respected chairman." The assistant chief editor was from the same district where Sadyrbay worked. He admitted that much of what Akylbek had written was already known there.

"Yes, we have heard these things before," he said. "But nobody has been able to do anything about Sadyrbay."

He paused and looked at the others. "So we need to think carefully about our next steps." The colleagues remained hesitant.