

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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A LOVE STORY FROM THE CHUY VALLEY / CHUY BAYANY (1978)

Asanbek Stamov (1938-2010)

Reference: Stamov, A. (1978). *Chuy bayany*. Kyrgyzstan.

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 *Chuy Bayany* (*A Love Story from the Chuy Valley*) was written in 1975 and published as a separate book in 1978. It was translated into Russian by L. Lebedeva under the title *Skazanie o Chu* (*The Tale of Chuy Valley*). The second part of the work was published under the Kyrgyz title *Noshordon Kiyin* (*After the Downpour*).

Background

Rooted in the traditions of lyrical realism and classic village prose, this novella is a melancholic story of heartbreak, memory, and artistic devotion. Set in mid-twentieth-century Kyrgyzstan, the narrative moves gracefully from the vibrant art world of Frunze to the windy orchards and quiet melon fields of Tokmok, extending to the solitary shores of Lake Issyk-Kul.

At its heart is the journey of Dyikanbek, a talented painter who loses his true love and abandons his rising career to seek refuge as a rural schoolteacher. Written with poetic simplicity, the narrative treats the natural world as a quiet witness to human emotion. Whispering birch trees, late autumn breezes, and moonlit hills mirror the delicate inner life of a wounded artist.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Dyikanbek — A gifted orphan painter and a humble schoolteacher in Tokmok.

Aruuke — Dyikanbek's tragic first love, forced to marry Kadyr.

Ayna — A gentle biology teacher in Tokmok who falls in love with Dyikanbek.

Shooruk — Aruuke's father; a kind old melon farmer and close friend of Dyikanbek's late father.

Kadyr — An arrogant, wealthy young man who tricks Aruuke into marriage.

Sono — Dyikanbek's overbearing, possessive older sister from Issyk-Kul.

Baltabay — A quiet, widowed schoolteacher who eventually marries Ayna.

Aisha — Aruuke's deceitful friend who helps Kadyr trap Aruuke.

SYNOPSIS

Dyikanbek is a talented young painter who has already made a name for himself. After studying art in Moscow, he returns to Frunze, where he is accepted into the Union of Artists and given his own studio. One day, an old man named Shooruk arrives at his studio with his daughter, Aruuke. Shooruk tells Dyikanbek that he knew his father, Abdy, and that they had once been close friends. Dyikanbek is delighted to hear stories about his father. As he shows Shooruk and Aruuke around Frunze, he is drawn to Aruuke, and before long, the two fall in love.

Dyikanbek and Aruuke spend many happy days together. They eventually go to Aruuke's village and stay at Shooruk's melon field in the Chüy Valley. Dyikanbek paints while Aruuke helps her father and spends time with him. One night, when they are alone, their relationship becomes more intimate. Their days at the melon field become some of the happiest of their lives.

Their happiness begins to change when Dyikanbek leaves for the mountains to paint. Aruuke feels lonely and hurt by his absence. During this time, Kadyr, a wealthy and arrogant young man she knows from the village, begins to pursue her. He first gets close to Aruuke's friends, then takes her on various outings and gradually earns her trust. With the help of Aisha, Aruuke's deceitful friend, Kadyr sets a trap for her. He eventually tricks Aruuke into going to his house and forces her to marry him.

When Dyikanbek returns, he learns that Aruuke has married Kadyr and is devastated. When he sees Aruuke for the last time, she tells him that she married Kadyr of her own free will.

After losing Aruuke, Dyikanbek loses much of his interest in both life and art. He is unable to finish a painting commissioned by the state because he does not want to create the superficial work expected of him in accordance with Soviet ideology. When officials from the Ministry of Culture come to see him, he openly explains his decision. His contract is cancelled, he returns the money he was paid, and he is banned from taking on state-commissioned art projects.

Dyikanbek moves to Tokmok, where he begins working as an art and technical drawing teacher at a rural boarding school. During the summer holidays, he takes his orphaned students to a camp in a nearby nature reserve. Ayna, a gentle biology teacher, goes with them. Over time, Ayna falls in love with Dyikanbek.

He is kind and attentive toward her, but he cannot love her in the same way because he still carries his feelings for Aruuke.

Meanwhile, Dyikanbek's older sister, Sono, wants him to return to his home region and get married. One day, she sends him a telegram, but he initially ignores it because she had previously sent him a false telegram saying that she was ill. By the time he finally reads the new telegram, he learns that Sono is truly dying. He travels to Issyk-Kul, but by the time he arrives, her funeral has already taken place.

When Dyikanbek returns to Tokmok, he wants to see Ayna, only to learn that she has married Baltabay, a quiet, widowed schoolteacher. Dyikanbek realizes that he has lost Ayna as well.

He goes into the forest and thinks about Aruuke, Sono, and Ayna. As he faces the pain of losing them, he gradually feels his grief begin to ease. The next day, Dyikanbek decides to leave Tokmok and return to painting. He knows he will never forget Aruuke, but after two difficult years, he finally feels free again. He is ready to return to his art and begin again.

SCENES

Dyikanbek Meets Shooruk and Aruuke

The Young Painter Dyikanbek was a successful young painter. After receiving his degree, he started working at the Union of Painters. His artworks were a great success at the city exhibition, and even the most skilled masters called his paintings some of the best in modern art. The museum bought several of his canvases, and he became a member, receiving his own workshop. He worked hard every day, deeply inspired by Levitan and other Russian painters. Though his life was full of art and success, Dyikanbek was an orphan who knew almost nothing about his family or his native village.

Unexpected Visitors That year, Dyikanbek felt very fortunate. One summer day, he was sitting in his workshop. Frunze was green and beautiful outside, and he felt too lazy to work indoors. He gathered his painting tools, planning to spend the day sketching the suburbs, mountains, hills, and rivers. But just as he was about to leave, his door opened. An old man and a beautiful young lady entered the workshop. Dyikanbek stood still in surprise, at first thinking these two strangers had made a mistake and missed the right room.

The Beautiful Lady The old man, short but strong, asked if Dyikanbek was the son of Abdy. Dyikanbek answered yes, and the man sat on the sofa. Feeling embarrassed, Dyikanbek realized he had forgotten the young lady standing near the door and quickly asked her to sit. She was extraordinarily beautiful, wearing white high-heeled stylish shoes. Her black diamond haircut looked like a charming movie star, gently touching her chest. She had fair skin, black eyes, and long eyelashes. When Dyikanbek stared at her, she blushed, making his heart beat fast with excitement.

Memories of Abdy The man introduced himself as Shooruk. He said he was close with Dyikanbek's father, Abdy, because his wife came from the same clan. Together, they had cultivated virgin lands, growing rich potato harvests and making good money at the bazaar. Abdy was a kind farmer who shared his food with the whole village. But when World War II started, he was sent to the labor army and never returned. Dyikanbek, who had been raised by his aunt, listened quietly. Hearing his father's story filled his lonely heart with a deep feeling of warmth.

Lunch in the Workshop Shooruk asked his daughter to take out food from their traditional bag and set the table. They sat together for lunch in the workshop. Dyikanbek looked at the young lady with excitement, though she tried not to notice. Shooruk praised his paintings, saying Abdy loved the moon and nature, too. He explained that although Abdy wanted his son to be a farmer, he would be proud of these beautiful hills on canvas. Dyikanbek felt happy hosting this simple farmer, feeling as if he had finally found a part of his lost childhood.

The Call of Home Shooruk said he had read about Dyikanbek in the newspaper and guessed he was Abdy's son. He had urged Aruuke to visit the studio, but she had been too shy. Shooruk smiled and said,

"A man should never lose his homeland. Aruuke, now you must bring Dyikanbek to our village." They enjoyed hot black tea together in the quiet room. Later that day, Dyikanbek happily took Shooruk and Aruuke to see the sights of Frunze, his heart filled with sweet joy as he walked beside the beautiful girl.

Dyikanbek and Aruuke Fall in Love

The Beginning of Love Dyikanbek paid for Shooruk's taxi that day, leaving the old man full of joy. Soon after, Dyikanbek and Aruuke began dating. She was a university student in the bloom of her beauty and charm. Gifted with a sweet singing voice, she enjoyed the courtly attention of many admirers, confident she would eventually choose the finest man. Yet she never refused Dyikanbek's invitations. Other young men quickly learned that Aruuke's heart belonged to a famous, promising painter. Dyikanbek cherished her deeply, loving her with a pure, spiritual devotion that did not even dare ask for a simple kiss.

Tears of Happiness On Aruuke's birthday, they celebrated in a restaurant, filled with laughter. After walking her to her dormitory, Dyikanbek turned back halfway. He asked the woman at the front desk, the front desk attendant, to call Aruuke down. When she appeared, Dyikanbek leaned his head against her chest and began to cry tears of pure, sweet joy. They held each other in the quiet foyer as the kind woman watched, recognizing the innocence of their love. Hand in hand, they walked through the dormitory garden beneath the quiet sky, talking gently until the morning sun arose.

Journey to the Chuy Valley Promising to guard their love forever, Dyikanbek visited Aruuke's home village. Curious locals watched as he arrived beside her. Shooruk was away in the Chuy valley, tending his melon fields. The young lovers walked out to meet him, crossing pastures bright with blooming wild spring flowers. Dyikanbek secretly wished he had brought his canvas and brushes to capture such radiant beauty. When they reached the small tent beside the field where Shooruk stayed, the old farmer welcomed Dyikanbek with open arms, eager to slaughter a lamb to honor his cherished guest according to custom.

Morning in the Orchard Dyikanbek woke early the next morning to the gentle sounds of dawn. Outside, Shooruk was already preparing black tea in a traditional samovar. The orchard air was sweet, filled with branches hanging heavy with ripe, red apples. Walking together through the cool morning light, the old farmer proudly showed Dyikanbek his home village and the wide fields stretching into the horizon. Seeing Shooruk standing amidst the soil and trees, Dyikanbek felt deep admiration for this true farmer, whose heart belonged entirely to the earth, his crops, and the simple, honorable life he cultivated.

The Moonlit Night One day, Shooruk and his wife left for the funeral of a relative, leaving Dyikanbek and Aruuke alone at home. Outside, the night was washed in silver moonlight. Aruuke gently made a bed for Dyikanbek, kissed him tenderly, and retired to her room. But Dyikanbek could not sleep. The air was hot and stuffy inside, while outside a soft breeze blew through the apple trees. He tossed away the light cover sheet, his heart beating fast with excitement beneath the glowing moon, listening to the quiet rustle of leaves as night deepened around the silent house.

The Night of Surrender Suddenly, the bedroom door opened slightly. Aruuke's soft voice whispered into the warm quiet: "Are you sleeping?" She stepped inside, and they wrapped their arms around each other. Dyikanbek lifted her gently, while she whispered, "Be a good boy." Yet Dyikanbek kept kissing her passionately, unable to pull away. On that moonlit night, Aruuke devoted herself fully to Dyikanbek. The boundary between them dissolved in the heat of the dark room, as two longing hearts surrendered to love, binding their fates together beneath the silent, watchful sky.

Tears at Dawn In the middle of the night, when the first rooster began to crow, Aruuke raised her head and wept softly. A sudden sorrow filled her heart, feeling as though something precious had slipped away forever. Dyikanbek held her tenderly, whispering sweet words to soothe her tears until peace returned. When dawn broke, Dyikanbek quietly rose and drove the family cows to the village herder, letting the morning chill cool his thoughts. Behind him in the quiet house, Aruuke remained wrapped in her blankets, sleeping deeply until late noon.

In the Melon Fields

The Harvest Season Harvest time arrived in the Chuy valley, bringing a rich yield of sweet melons. Dyikanbek spent his days painting the vibrant fields while Aruuke cooked warm meals for him and her father. Together, they helped gather the harvest, enjoying a sweet life filled with simple joy. On warm nights, they slept inside a hay tent near the fields, guarding the crop beneath the starlit sky. Everything felt peaceful and complete. Holding Aruuke close in the golden autumn light, Dyikanbek truly believed that nothing could ever disturb the deep, quiet happiness they had built together.

The Arrival of the Volga One morning, a prestigious gray Volga car pulled up beside the field. A driver under thirty stepped out, lighting a cigarette with arrogant confidence. Handsome, slightly overweight, and impudent, he greeted Shooruk rudely, ignoring traditional Kyrgyz customs of respect like *Ata (father) or Aga (brother)*. "Old man," he called out disrespectfully, complaining about missed visits. Then his voice softened as his eyes settled on Aruuke. "Hello, beautiful lady," he praised, completely ignoring Dyikanbek, who stood holding his paintbrushes. Dyikanbek's hands shivered with sudden anger as he watched the stranger's bold, lingering gaze.

Shadows of Jealousy Aruuke blushed deeply at the stranger's stare before turning quickly to run into the safety of the hay hut. Realizing they clearly knew each other, Dyikanbek felt a wave of fierce jealousy surge through his chest. Furious and disturbed, he walked away to the far edge of the melon field to regain control of his emotions. Standing alone in the open air, he tried not to blame Aruuke. He knew she was innocent, yet seeing her reaction to the confident driver left an aching tightness in his heart that he could not easily push away.

Bound by Love Gradually, Dyikanbek calmed down, remembering the sacred night they had shared. She was his now, bound to him by an unbreakable promise of love. Comforted by this thought, he walked back toward the hay hut just as the gray Volga drove away. Yet anger flickered inside him again when he saw Shooruk speaking peacefully to the man. Dyikanbek could not understand why the old farmer tolerated such disrespect from someone who refused to address him honorably as an elder.

Secrets by the Field When Dyikanbek returned to the hut, Aruuke asked softly where he had been. She explained that her father wanted him to meet the visitor. "He might be your distant relative too," she said smoothly. "He comes from our village and serves as the chairman of the trade union. Though young, he is a very influential man whom everyone respects." Listening to her, Dyikanbek asked with sharp sarcasm if the chairman was married. Aruuke blushed to her ears, replying, "Why should we care about his wife? They say he is single, perhaps looking for someone to marry."

Return to the City Her sudden blush cut deep into Dyikanbek's heart, reigniting his quiet suspicion. He wondered why the mention of this arrogant man made her react so strongly. Yet, he held his tongue, not wanting to spoil their final days in the countryside. Summer was coming to an end, with only three days remaining before September arrived. Packing his painted canvases and gathering their belongings, they said goodbye to Shooruk and the sweet melon fields. Together, they returned to Frunze, carrying silent thoughts beneath the surface as the city welcomed them back for the autumn.

Kadyr Starts Courting Aruuke

The Joy of Life Aruuke was a woman who loved life deeply. She was full of energy, bright, and active every day. Everyone loved her—her parents, nature, and the many men who admired her beauty. She always enjoyed being the center of attention. Aruuke could not really understand Dyikanbek when he sat alone, lost in quiet thoughts while painting. She preferred running around and playing together instead. Still, her strong love gave Dyikanbek new life and energy. Filled with this fresh passion, his heart opened up, and he painted the best and most beautiful pictures of his life.

The Call of Nature It was the finest autumn of Dyikanbek's life. Whenever the sun set over the earth, the beauty of nature filled him with intense energy, begging him to paint. He longed for quiet solitude to capture the world on canvas. While walking along the main boulevard of Frunze, Dyikanbek told Aruuke he planned

to travel to the Ala-Archa gorge for a week. Nature was calling him—the rushing rivers, evening cattle returning from pastures, vivid sunsets, and gentle mountain breezes. But Aruuke quietly told him not to go. Dyikanbek felt upset that she could not understand his creative soul.

The Unseen Wedge The next morning, Dyikanbek gathered his painting tools and left for the mountain gorge. Aruuke was deeply hurt that he had ignored her plea. She felt a sting of jealousy, suspecting his art was just an excuse to meet someone else. She wanted him to stay in the city, though she could not explain why. After returning to the city, Kadyr, the wealthy young man from her village, began visiting her dormitory frequently. Although Aruuke remained cold and indifferent, Kadyr refused to give up. Aruuke felt upset, alone, and resentful toward Dyikanbek for leaving her.

A New Strategy Realizing Aruuke remained cold, Kadyr wisely changed his tactics. He began befriending the other girls living in her dormitory, earning their praise for his generosity, politeness, and attentive nature. Soon, Aruuke noticed how popular Kadyr had become among her friends. Since Dyikanbek was still away in the mountains, she agreed to go to the cinema with Kadyr and the girls. She reasoned that Kadyr was not a bad man, and if Dyikanbek found out, it might make him pay more attention to her. After the movie ended, Kadyr generously treated all the girls to a local café.

The Trip to Kara-Balta The next morning, Kadyr arrived at the dormitory in his gray Volga. He took Aruuke and her friends on a drive toward the town of Kara-Balta, with Aruuke sitting beside him in the front seat. Upon arrival, he treated the girls to a lavish dinner at a local café. The students were amazed by his wealth and generosity as he paid the bill and left big tips. Aruuke felt proud and respected in front of her peers. Seeing how honorably Kadyr treated her, she thought he was truly a good man, feeling ashamed of her past indifference.

The House with the Blue Gates When they returned to the city, Kadyr drove Aruuke and her friends to a large house behind tall blue gates. Inside the courtyard, the girls watched fresh lamb meat being prepared for a feast. Kadyr introduced them to a surprisingly young-looking woman—his mother. She greeted Aruuke warmly, exclaiming, “Oh Aruuke, you have grown into such a beautiful lady!” The mother explained that their families were distant relatives through Aruuke’s mother, though they had lost touch over the years. She smiled, adding that Kadyr had asked her to prepare a feast to welcome his special guests.

Aruuke Marries Kadyr

The Quiet Bedroom Before leaving, Kadyr’s mother told the girls to feel at home, saying that his sister-in-law would host them. Once his mother was gone, Kadyr became more relaxed and casual. He offered sweet champagne, turned on music, and a lively dance started. Under the influence of the drink, Aruuke felt dizzy and weak, her steps mixing up on the floor. Noticing her condition, the sister-in-law suggested to Kadyr that Aruuke needed some rest. She gently guided the dizzy girl away from the party and led her into a lavishly decorated bedroom to lie down.

The Trap Closes When Aruuke woke the next morning, a heavy headache throbbed in her head. Her hair was tangled, and she struggled to understand where she was. Feeling the warm space beside her, she realized someone had slept by her side. Devastation crushed her heart as she understood that a terrible thing had happened. Walking out into the yard, she saw Kadyr standing with his sister-in-law. “You liars!” Aruuke screamed in tears. Kadyr quietly walked away. The woman approached her softly, saying, “Do not cry, my girl. Kadyr is a good man and a good match. A woman must marry, and now you are married to him.”

Bound by Tradition The sister-in-law held her firmly, saying, “You are Kadyr’s wife now, and nothing can change it.” Aruuke wept bitterly, pushing her away. “I hate Kadyr!” she cried. “My heart already belongs to another. I gave myself to my true love.” The woman shook her head calmly. “Forget him. Kadyr took you despite everything, and this is your fate. Everyone already knows you stayed here, so you cannot go back. Go inside; you will find no better husband than Kadyr.” Left alone in the cold hallway, Aruuke collapsed, weeping helplessly for Dyikanbek and their lost world.

The Friend's Deception When Dyikanbek returned from the mountains, he discovered that Aruuke was married. Her friend Aisha, trembling with fear, claimed Aruuke had chosen Kadyr freely. Terrified that her own dark secret would be revealed, Aisha lied. It was Aisha who had accepted Kadyr's bribes, praised him to Aruuke, and spiked her champagne with sleeping pills. "They were dating quietly," Aisha lied, avoiding his gaze. "When his mother placed the white scarf on her head—our traditional ritual welcoming a new bride into the family—Aruuke accepted it willingly. No one forced her." Refusing to believe the betrayal, Dyikanbek demanded Kadyr's address and rushed toward the blue gates.

The Final Words Reaching the house, Dyikanbek waited until Aruuke stepped out through the blue gate. Showing no tears or regret, she looked at him coldly. "We have started a family now," she said firmly. "Please forget everything between us. It is fine if you think poorly of me, but I married Kadyr of my own free will. He did not kidnap me. I am grateful for my fate, so leave me and do not disturb my life." Without waiting for his response, she turned and disappeared inside. Stunned by her cruel words, Dyikanbek stood frozen before turning away, walking into the cold streets.

Dyikanbek Loses His Job as a Painter

The Broken Spirit Dyikanbek lost all taste for life, crushed by the weight of his heartbreak. His energy and inspiration vanished completely. He tried attending parties with colleagues and drinking alcohol to ease the pain, but such a lifestyle did not suit him. Long ago, he had accepted a government task to paint an industrial plant reflecting Soviet ideology. Though he could have painted a simple, superficial canvas, he remained faithful to his art, refusing to cheat the state. Neglecting the project entirely, he made no excuses as the day arrived for the Ministry of Culture to inspect his work.

The Unforgiving Commission The next day, officials from the Ministry of Culture arrived at the studios. When asked about his assigned painting, Dyikanbek stood silent before confessing he had not painted it. Angered by his apparent impudence, the members demanded an explanation. One official offered to give him more time, but Dyikanbek refused. "I visited the plant twice," he said honestly, "but the industrial theme did not inspire me." Outraged by his rejection of Soviet ideology, the commission cancelled his contract, ordering him to refund the government money immediately and banning him from all future state artistic projects.

The Final Goodbye Dyikanbek sank deeper into loneliness and despair, often spending cold, empty nights resting on the floor of his studio. One evening, as he lay staring at the ceiling, the door softly opened. To his astonishment, Aruuke stepped inside. Tears glistened in her eyes. "I am leaving for Issyk-Kul," she whispered softly. "I have dropped my full-time studies at the university. I lost you because of my own stupidity, Dyikanbek. I regret everything deeply, but it is too late now." She looked at him with tender sorrow, pleading with him not to abandon his painting.

A Distant Star Aruuke stepped closer to him in the quiet studio. "You are a truly gifted artist," she said gently, her voice trembling. "To me, you will always remain a shining star in the sky—a star that I can never reach again." She leaned down, kissing his forehead tenderly for the very last time, before turning toward the open doorway. Dyikanbek watched in silence as the door closed behind her, her soft footsteps fading into the night. Left alone in the quiet room, he closed his eyes, holding the memory of her final farewell tightly within his wounded heart.

Dyikanbek Moves to Tokmok and Becomes a Teacher

The Departure from Frunze After Aruuke's final farewell, Dyikanbek realized he could no longer bear staying in Frunze. Surrounded by painful memories, he left the city and moved to Tokmok. However, his decision led to a harsh argument with his sister. She had raised him as her own son after losing her husband in the war and her daughter to illness. Living in the Issyk-Kul region, she felt deeply disappointed by his choices. She could not understand why he had taken a simple teaching job at a village boarding school after earning an elite art degree in Moscow.

The Sister's Disapproval His sister felt deeply ashamed before the villagers, believing his potential had been completely wasted. "If you only wanted to become a basic teacher, you could have studied at a local college," she scolded bitterly. She harbored little respect for his paintings, viewing art as an impractical pursuit that brought no real security. Displeased with his isolated life in Tokmok, she threatened to bring him back to her own village in Issyk-Kul, determined to manage his career herself. Dyikanbek listened in silence, caught between gratitude for the woman who raised him and his heart's need for quiet solitude.

A New Beginning in Tokmok Dyikanbek was remarkably talented, yet he remained humble and modest. In Tokmok, he began teaching art and technical drawing at the village boarding school. When the Russian literature teacher went on maternity leave, he willingly substituted for her classes, sharing his love for classical stories. Soon, his dedication earned him a wonderful reputation, making him a beloved figure among the students and staff. He truly enjoyed this simple, quiet lifestyle. His colleagues, including the headmaster, frequently invited him to dinner. Immersed in his fulfilling teaching responsibilities, Dyikanbek slowly began to heal, forgetting the pain of Aruuke.

The Windy Valley of Tokmok In the Chuy valley, two hours by bus from Frunze (known today as Bishkek), lied Tokmok. It was a simple, peaceful town where spring brings sweet apricot blossoms and buzzing wild bees. Hospitable locals generously offer bread to travelers according to ancient Kyrgyz custom. The land is rich with fresh fruits and vegetables. In a nearby village school, September had just arrived, yet the neighboring forest remained lush and green. Inside a quiet classroom, Dyikanbek, sat thoughtfully while his students wrote essays.

Summer at the Reserve When summer arrived, the school arranged for the orphaned students to stay at a camp in the local nature reserve. However, many teachers complained bitterly, wanting to rest with their own families after a long academic year. Sensing their frustration, the assistant principal asked, "Where else can these poor orphans go?" Understanding the children's need, Dyikanbek warmly volunteered to spend his summer supervising the camp. Seeing his generosity, his colleagues suggested he should not handle the responsibility alone. They arranged for Ayna, to join him and share the summer duties at the camp.

The Unique Methods That summer, Dyikanbek raised the orphans using his own unique methods. He led the children on long hikes, swam with them across the Chuy River, and taught the non-swimmers how to float. Together, they caught hedgehogs, frogs, and grass snakes, keeping them in the camp's nature corner. He praised the bravest boys who climbed the tallest poplar trees, and on moonlit nights, they slept on freshly cut hay instead of indoors. The children grew deeply attached to Dyikanbek. Resting under the starlit sky, they stayed awake late, taking turns telling terrifying fairy tales to one another.

The Awakening of Ayna At first, Dyikanbek paid little attention to Ayna, offering only brief morning and evening greetings. Though Ayna pretended to be indifferent, she often sighed, watching him from afar. She found him uniquely captivating and gradually began thinking about him constantly. Ayna was now divorced, having escaped a brief, forced marriage to a local horseman named Almambet who had once abducted her. Having never experienced true love before, Ayna realized she could no longer suppress her feelings. For the first time in her life, she felt entirely helpless against the rising tide of love.

The Hidden Storm Though Dyikanbek was not the ideal man Ayna once dreamed of, her heart surrendered to him completely. Yet Dyikanbek remained oblivious to her silent devotion. One evening, after finishing his meal, he announced a trip to Shamshy Gorge for the orphans without consulting her. Overwhelmed by suppressed hurt, Ayna suddenly erupted, accusing him of pushing her aside and violating school rules, before bursting into tears and running to her room. Stunned, Dyikanbek stood frozen, feeling strangely guilty. He did not realize her outburst was not about rules, but the unrequited love of a lonely soul longing to be seen.

The Hope Rushing after her, Dyikanbek found Ayna weeping in her room. Tears only enhanced her hidden beauty, making him suddenly perceive her as a remarkably attractive woman. Gently touching her soft, silky hair, Dyikanbek quietly asked for forgiveness, promising never to act without her again. His tender voice stirred forgotten emotions within his own chest. Meanwhile, Ayna wept with joy, finally experiencing

the sacred power of true love. Believing her destiny had changed, she glowed with newfound happiness. Dyikanbek offered her warm respect and care to keep her happy, though his quiet heart lacked the deep flame of real passion.

Troubles with His Sister Sono

The Sister's Ultimatum One peaceful day, Dyikanbek received three letters from his sister, Sono. The first two restated her relentless demands for him to move to her district and get married. Annoyed, he opened the third letter, only to burn with sudden outrage. Missing him over the summer, the lonely fifty-year-old woman fiercely accused him of heartlessness. Desperate to control his life, Sono threatened to report him to regional leaders and shame him publicly in newspapers if he refused to return. Deeply offended by her harsh threats and boundary-crossing demands, Dyikanbek crumpled the letter and silently marched his students into the Shamsky Gorge.

The Unexpected Visitor Without warning, Sono arrived in camp, exhausted from the scorching heat. Both sibling maintained a cautious, silent truce regarding past grievances. While Sono rested beneath a shady tree, Dyikanbek and Ayna happily prepared a welcoming feast, cooling red wine in the running stream. Ayna buzzed around the older woman with eager warmth, while Sono watched her with sharp, suspicious eyes. Once Ayna stepped away to the kitchen, Sono demanded sharply, "Who is she? Your wife?" Learning Ayna was merely a divorced colleague, Sono softened instantly. With suspicion cleared, she raised her wine glass, warmly inviting Ayna to sit beside them.

Shadows of the Abandoned Field After seeing his frail sister off to Tokmok, Dyikanbek felt overwhelmed by heavy guilt and longing. Leaving Ayna behind, he impetuously rode his bicycle toward Shooruk's melon field, desperate to revisit the sanctuary of his lost happiness with Aruuke. Reaching the site at twilight, he discovered the beloved hay hut completely gone. The once-vibrant melon field lay completely unplowed, choked with dry weeds and discarded rind fragments. A heavy, hollow silence hung over the land. Fearing the old farmer had fallen ill, Dyikanbek stood alone in the gathering dusk, surrounded by the haunting remnants of his forgotten past.

The Last Meeting Entering the quiet house, Dyikanbek found Shooruk seriously ill, frail, and bedridden. Welcomed warmly by weeping Shooruk's wife, Marka-apa, Dyikanbek sat beside the weakened farmer. Shooruk softly asked to see the portrait Dyikanbek had once painted of him, pleading, "My son, do not abandon your sacred artistic talent." Dyikanbek confessed he had quit painting forever, leaving the old man deeply saddened. Neither mentioned Aruuke, honoring the unspoken grief between them. As Dyikanbek bade farewell, a single tear rolled down Shooruk's withered cheek. Just a few weeks later in autumn, the beloved old farmer passed away into history.

In the Autumn

A Moment in the Staff Room Dyikanbek arrived at school the next day with unusual optimism, free from yesterday's heavy sorrow. He sat quietly on the sofa in the general teachers' room while a history teacher recounted a story about a student. When Ayna walked in, a deep blush rose to her ears, though no one else noticed. Dyikanbek felt too embarrassed to listen to the conversation around him. Desperate to hide his secret affection for her, he kept silent and looked away. Moments later, Ayna quietly left the room, leaving his heart fluttering in the morning light.

Whispers in the Corridor Unaware of the rumors spreading about them, Dyikanbek stepped into the bright hallway. He saw Ayna beside Baltabay, a widowed teacher whose wife had recently passed away. A subtle jealousy flared within Dyikanbek as Ayna comforted Baltabay, helping him with housework and encouraging him to stay strong for his young son. The teaching staff praised her kindness. As Ayna approached Dyikanbek, she smiled beautifully and teased, "Do not look at me with those eyes, full of affection." She softly added that her mother had left to visit the city, just before the bell rang for class.

The Letter and the Kara-Too Hills Dyikanbek wondered if Ayna's words about her mother meant she wanted him to visit. After classes ended, he headed toward the town suburbs. A young girl ran after him,

shouting, "Agay (Mister), you forgot this letter on your table!" Dyikanbek took it and walked to his favorite sanctuary—the peaceful hills beneath Mount Kara-Too. Having recently taken this job at the village boarding school, he cherished these slopes in every season. Surrounded by natural beauty, he returned to his home feeling deeply happy and serene.

The School Dormitories and Solitude Dyikanbek lived alone in a simple, one-bedroom house beside the school. His home was kept remarkably neat, filled mostly with rows of books. Though accustomed to living alone, an aching loneliness had crept into his life over the past year. In the boarding school, certain teachers worked as social workers, caring for the children in the dormitories after daily classes ended. When their own children fell ill or personal troubles arose, they often asked Dyikanbek to substitute for them. He willingly spent most of his time at the school, finding comfort in keeping busy among the students.

The Saturday Realization On a quiet Saturday, no one came to request a substitution in the dormitories. Bored and restless, Dyikanbek tried reading his books, but his mind refused the words. Looking out at the glittering stars, he suddenly realized that Ayna was waiting for him, alone at home while her mother was away in the city. Overjoyed, he stepped outside and walked down the dark forest path toward her house, his heart pounding with hope. Yet halfway through the trees, hesitation seized him. Unable to go any further, Dyikanbek stopped, turned back, and returned home without reaching her house.

In the Issyk-Kul Region

A Sister's Crafty Deception Receiving an urgent letter from his sister stating she was seriously ill, Dyikanbek rushed by taxi to Issyk-Kul, filled with anxious remorse. Yet upon arriving, he found Sono alive and well, carrying a milking bucket. Caught in her deception, Sono awkwardly blamed her lingering head pain and loneliness, confessing she missed him deeply. Moved by compassion rather than anger, Dyikanbek forgave her. Radiant with joy, Sono slaughtered a lamb and hosted a lavish feast. She had secretly arranged for a young girl named Zakesh to meet him as a bride. Dyikanbek saw her, but he had no interest in her at all. Proudly seating him at the head of the table, Sono repeated to her guests that her beloved brother was her only reason for living.

Toxic Letters Following his sudden departure, relentless letters from Sono flooded Dyikanbek's mailbox, filling his heart with dread whenever he recognized her handwriting. With tedious persistence, she repeatedly condemned him as heartless, fiercely declaring her hatred for Ayna. Sono threatened that if he ever married Ayna, she would disown him forever. Dyikanbek could not bring himself to explain that neither he nor Ayna were at fault for her absurd suspicions. Overwhelmed by anxiety, he stopped reading her toxic notes altogether, yet whenever he crossed paths with gentle Ayna at school, a heavy wave of unearned guilt washed over him.

The Kiss by the Birches One day after school, Dyikanbek walked Ayna down the forest road toward her house. As early autumn leaves rustled beneath their feet, Ayna asked timidly why he had not visited her that night when she asked. Dyikanbek smiled, joking that he was afraid of the dark. Blushing, she told him to come under the moonlight, hinting her mother was away this time too. They stopped by the white birch trees. Ayna looked at him with longing eyes. Dyikanbek embraced her and kissed her gently. She trembled in his arms, whispered, "Come tonight, I will wait," and quickly ran home.

The Hesitant Visit Late that starry night, Dyikanbek walked through the forest to Ayna's house. Reaching her yard, his heart pounded, so he hid in the tall cornfield beside her door. He waited until midnight beneath the bright moon. Finally, he stepped up to her bedroom window and knocked softly on the glass. Nobody opened. Suddenly feeling ashamed for sneaking around like a thief, he turned and walked away. Inside, Ayna had seen him from the darkness and wept with deep hurt. Yet the next morning, Dyikanbek awoke happy, deciding he would fix everything by marrying her.

The Death of Sono and Losing Ayna

A Painful Regret The postman brought Dyikanbek a telegram. He had already been tricked once before by Sono. Earlier, she had sent him a fake telegram saying she was ill. He had rushed to the station, but her

relative met him there and laughed, saying Sono was perfectly healthy and just missed him. Remembering this, Dyikanbek tossed this second telegram unopened onto the table and continued shaving. Only before going to school did he read it. Signed by a stranger, it said, "Come immediately, your sister is dying." Horrified, he rushed to Issyk-Kul, but arrived too late for her funeral. Crushed with guilt, after four sorrowful days he donated her house and apple orchard to the village for a kindergarten.

At Ayna's Door and Through the Window Dyikanbek returned from Issyk-Kul after his sister's funeral, choosing Ayna as his only close person left. That evening in Tokmok he wore a white shirt and walked to Ayna's house. Her mother sat alone on the floor drinking tea. She did not welcome him. When he asked about Ayna, the mother quietly said: "God give Ayna happiness. It is bad when a daughter stays too long in her parents' home." Her meaning was clear: Ayna was now married to Baltabay and lived with him. Dyikanbek felt crushed. Then he went to Baltabay's house and stopped at a clean window. Inside he saw Ayna holding little Bakyt, a son of Baltabay on her lap, bright and happy, pouring tea for Baltabay with pure joy.

Weeping at the Birch Tree Overcome with grief, Dyikanbek walked into the forest, pressed his face to a birch trunk, and wept openly for lost Ayna, his dead sister, and Aruuke. He knew she was married now, building her life with Baltabay. But returning home under a starry sky, he saw lightning near the steppe and felt his pain finally lift. He decided to leave Tokmok tomorrow to return to painting. In his heart he spoke to Aruuke: "Be happy... I will never forget you." After two hard years, he felt free again, ready to catch up with his art.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Dyikanbek

Dyikanbek is a quiet, sensitive man whose life is guided by deep love, beauty, and emotional honesty. As a talented young painter in Frunze, he falls deeply in love with Aruuke, giving her his entire heart with pure, spiritual devotion. Their romance brings him overwhelming joy and inspires his finest artwork. When a cruel trick tears Aruuke away from him, Dyikanbek's world shatters, leading him to leave the city and seek peace as a village schoolteacher in Tokmok. Throughout his journey, Dyikanbek remains a gentle soul, torn between the memory of his first great love, his overbearing sister, and new hope.

Loving Dyikanbek possesses a rare capacity for pure and overwhelming love. When he meets Aruuke, he falls completely in love with her, treasuring her beauty, charming voice, and lively spirit. His feelings for her are spiritual and deeply respectful, expecting nothing in return. On her birthday, he cries tears of sweet happiness simply holding her in his arms. He cherishes every moment they spend together, from sharing lunches in his studio to sleeping under the stars near her father's melon fields. Dyikanbek's love for Aruuke is unconditional, and this profound devotion becomes the true foundation of his soul.

Artistic Dyikanbek views the world with the eyes of a true painter. He sees beauty in quiet mountains, rivers, sunsets, and leafy forests. His deep love for Aruuke sparks a powerful creative energy inside him, allowing him to paint the most radiant canvases of his life. For Dyikanbek, art is not about fame or money, but a sacred expression of his inner feelings. He refuses to paint insincere government propaganda because he respects his artistic truth. Even when heartbreak forces him to stop painting and become a schoolteacher, his love for nature and color remains alive, eventually guiding him back to art.

Reserved Dyikanbek is a quiet and shy man who keeps his deepest emotions inside. Even when his heart overflows with affection, he often stays silent and looks away to hide his feelings. Before his romance with Aruuke grew close, he was so respectful and reserved that he did not even dare to ask for a kiss. Later, in Tokmok, his quiet nature turns into fear and hesitation when he tries to express his feelings for Ayna. He often withdraws into his books or solitary walks in nature. Dyikanbek's silent restraint sometimes causes painful misunderstandings, but it stems from his gentle, guarded heart.

Compassionate Dyikanbek has a kind and generous heart that genuinely cares for the well-being of others. At the boarding school in Tokmok, he shows immense love to the orphaned children, taking them

on long summer hikes, teaching them to swim, and telling stories under the stars. When Ayna cries in her room, he speaks to her with soft tenderness and promises to respect her feelings. Even when his sister, Sono, tricks him with fake illness letters and tries to control his life, Dyikanbek forgives her with quiet grace. In the end, he selflessly donates his sister's house and orchard to the village.

Humble Dyikanbek is a remarkably humble man who remains modest despite his great talent. Although he earned an elite art degree in Moscow and received high praise from master artists in Frunze, he never boasts or acts superior. He has no interest in status, wealth, or luxury. After leaving the city, he happily lives in a small, tidy one-room house beside the school, surrounded only by his beloved books. Dyikanbek finds real fulfillment in simple work, quietly teaching art and literature to village children. His humility allows him to live an honest, clean life, free from arrogance or greed.

Aruuke

Aruuke is a breathtakingly beautiful and vibrant young woman whose life bridges the simple world of the Chuy valley and the modern city of Frunze. As the cherished daughter of the farmer Shooruk, she captures Dyikanbek's heart with her charm, sweet singing voice, and radiant presence. Her romance with the gifted painter is full of pure joy, blooming under the moonlight and across the golden melon fields. Yet, despite her bright spirit, Aruuke's story takes a tragic turn when she is caught in a cruel trap, losing the man she truly loves and accepting a heartbreaking destiny.

Radiant Aruuke possesses an extraordinary, unforgettable beauty that naturally draws the eyes of everyone around her. With her fair complexion, long eyelashes, and deep black eyes, she looks like a charming movie star. She takes pride in her appearance, wearing stylish white high heels and keeping her dark diamond-cut hair neatly styled. Her presence in Dyikanbek's workshop immediately makes his heart race with sudden excitement. Even strangers and admirers in the city and her home village cannot help but stare in awe at her stunning, effortless grace.

Lively Aruuke is a woman who loves life deeply and is full of endless energy and happiness. She thrives at the center of attention and enjoys being admired by the many young men who court her. Unlike Dyikanbek, who often sits quietly lost in deep thought while painting, Aruuke prefers action, laughter, and playing together. She does not always understand his quiet artistic moods, but her bright, sunny spirit fills his life with vibrant color. Her love of life brings a playful, joyful rhythm to their relationship, making every moment together feel alive and exciting.

Devoted Beneath her playful and popular exterior, Aruuke holds a capacity for deep, sincere love. When she gives her heart to Dyikanbek, she loves him completely and faithfully, never refusing his invitations. On a magical moonlit night when her parents are away, she bravely steps into his room and devotes herself fully to him, binding their fates together. Later, when circumstances tear them apart and she is forced into a new life, her love for Dyikanbek remains her deepest regret. When she leaves for Issyk-Kul, she confesses her mistake with bitter tears, remembering him as her true love.

Vulnerable Despite her charm and confidence, Aruuke is ultimately a vulnerable young woman caught in forces beyond her control. When Dyikanbek leaves for the mountains, she feels lonely and resentful, making her an easy target for Kadyr's persistent and cunning courtship. Betrayed by her trusted friend Aisha—who accepts bribes and slips sleeping pills into her champagne—Aruuke falls into a dark trap at the house with the blue gates. Stripped of her agency overnight, she becomes a tragic victim of manipulation, social pressure, and harsh traditional expectations.

Dignified Even when her heart is shattered and her life is upended, Aruuke faces her painful reality with remarkable dignity and strength. Rather than collapsing in public despair, she accepts her forced marriage to Kadyr to protect her family's honor and reputation. When Dyikanbek comes to the blue gates seeking answers, she hides her broken heart behind a cold, composed mask. She tells him firmly that she married of her own free will, urging him to forget her and move on. Her final goodbye is brave, showing a proud woman taking ownership of her tragic fate.

Shooruk

Shooruk is a warm, hardworking farmer whose life is deeply rooted in the soil of the Chuy valley. As Aruuke's father and a former comrade of Dyikanbek's late father, Abdy, he plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between Dyikanbek's urban life and his forgotten rural heritage. Short, strong, and weathered by the sun, Shooruk embodies the simple dignity of the land. He welcomes Dyikanbek into his family with open arms, feeding him, sharing stories of the past, and encouraging him to honor his roots and his art, leaving a lasting mark on the young painter's soul.

Earthy Shooruk's entire life is connected to the earth, the changing seasons, and the honest labor of farming. He spends his days cultivating virgin lands, growing rich potato harvests, and tending endless rows of sweet melons in the Chuy valley. He finds true peace in physical work, soil, and open fields, knowing the secrets of gardening and nature better than anyone. Even when illness eventually overtakes him, his mind remains tied to the earth, eagerly looking forward to planting new seeds. Shooruk is a man who belongs to the land, drawing his strength directly from the soil.

Welcoming Shooruk possesses a deeply generous and hospitable spirit that treats guests with sacred respect. When Dyikanbek arrives at his tent by the melon fields, the old farmer welcomes him with open arms, instantly offering to slaughter a lamb in his honor according to ancient custom. He makes sure Dyikanbek is well-fed, pouring hot black tea from a traditional samovar and inviting him to share their simple meals. Even when he is old and bedridden, his warmth does not fade; he greets Dyikanbek with quiet joy, asking him to sit by his side and promising a grand feast when the melons ripen again.

Observant Shooruk is a sharp and observant man who notices the details of the world around him. Reading the newspaper regularly, he recognizes Dyikanbek's name, connects him to his late father, Abdy, and correctly guesses his identity. He also perceives the silent romance between Dyikanbek and Aruuke, gently encouraging their connection by sending his daughter to visit the city. Later, when heartbreak darkens their lives, Shooruk understands the deep sorrow in silence, protecting his daughter's feelings and honoring Dyikanbek's pain without ever needing to ask awkward questions or force uncomfortable conversations.

Traditional Shooruk deeply respects ancestral customs, family heritage, and the bond one shares with their homeland. He firmly believes that a man should never lose his connection to his native village and his people. He values the hardworking life of farmers, wishing at first that Dyikanbek would follow in his father's footsteps. Yet, despite his traditional worldview, he also recognizes true artistic talent, urging Dyikanbek never to abandon his paintings because he sees art as a sacred gift. Shooruk bridges old customs and deep appreciation, holding fast to honor, family loyalty, and respect for elders.

Respected Shooruk commands natural authority and respect from everyone who knows him. As a hard worker who survived the hardships of the war generation and cultivated the valley, he is viewed by his community as an anchor of strength and wisdom. Dyikanbek feels an immediate sense of deep admiration for him, seeing him as a true father figure and a symbol of everything he lost when he was orphaned. Even when illness weakens his once-strong body, Shooruk maintains a quiet, dignified presence, leaving behind a legacy of honor, hard work, and a profound love for the earth that stays with Dyikanbek forever.

Ayna

Ayna is a gentle yet complex biology teacher at the Tokmok boarding school whose quiet life transforms when she falls deeply in love with Dyikanbek. Having survived a brief, forced marriage in her youth, she is naturally cautious and hides her emotions behind a strict, cold exterior. Yet beneath her reserved surface lies a passionate heart longing to be seen. Though her romance with Dyikanbek ends in painful heartbreak and abandonment at her window, Ayna's story is one of quiet endurance, compassion, and finding eventual peace.

Guarded Ayna initially presents herself to the world as a strict and unapproachable woman. Having grown up serious and critical of girls who flirted with boys, she treats men with icy coldness and holds

herself to high moral standards. Even when she secretly falls in love with Dyikanbek, she tries to hide her affection behind a calm, indifferent mask. Her guarded nature is a defense mechanism, shaped by her past trauma and her desire to protect her dignity in a gossipy village school.

Passionate Despite her cold exterior, Ayna possesses a deeply passionate heart that feels love with overwhelming intensity. Having never experienced true love during her past forced marriage, her feelings for Dyikanbek sweep over her like an uncontrollable tide. Her frustration bursts out in tears when he plans a trip without consulting her. When she finally opens her heart to Dyikanbek, she loves him completely, waiting for him by her window with trembling, hopeful anticipation.

Caring Ayna is a deeply compassionate person who naturally looks after the people around her. As a teacher, she cares for the boarding school students with tenderness. She also shows immense kindness to Baltabay, a grieving widower, helping him with housework and encouraging him to stay strong for his young son. Her nurturing nature makes her a respected and beloved figure among the school staff, proving that her heart is naturally wired to comfort and support those in pain.

Vulnerable Ayna's deep capacity for love leaves her terribly vulnerable to pain and rejection. She invests all her emotional hopes into Dyikanbek, hoping he will finally commit to her. However, his hesitation, his absence, and his disastrous midnight visit—where he sneaks around like a thief and runs away without speaking to her—break her heart. Watching him flee from the shadows, Ayna experiences crushing humiliation and grief, left alone with the bitter weight of abandonment.

Resilient Though heartbreak leaves a deep mark on Ayna, she possesses the inner strength to heal and rebuild her life. Rather than letting despair destroy her, she moves forward. When Dyikanbek finally returns too late, he discovers that Ayna has found genuine peace and happiness marrying Baltabay. Surrounded by family, holding Baltabay's young son, and pouring tea with a bright, joyful smile, Ayna proves her resilience, finally stepping into a stable, loving life where she is truly cherished.

THEMES

Love:

Lost Love and Heartbreak

The main theme of the novella is lost love and heartbreak. It shows how a deep and sincere love, once cruelly broken, can leave a wound that lasts for many years and changes a person's whole life. Dyikanbek, an orphan who had known little happiness, finally experiences true love when he meets Aruuke. Their love is pure, gentle and spiritual. For the first time in his life, he feels complete and joyful. Inspired by Aruuke, he paints his very finest pictures and begins to believe that his lonely life has finally found meaning.

However, this happiness is suddenly destroyed when Kadyr, with the help of Aisha, tricks the innocent Aruuke into a forced marriage. The most illustrative moment of this theme comes when Dyikanbek returns from the mountains and rushes to Kadyr's house behind the blue gates. There, Aruuke steps outside and speaks to him in cold and unexpected words. She tells Dyikanbek that she has married Kadyr of her own free will, asks him to forget everything they once shared and quietly goes back inside. Dyikanbek is deeply shocked and heartbroken. He does not know that Aruuke is only saying this because she has been trapped and is too ashamed and helpless to tell him the truth.

This painful moment completely crushes Dyikanbek. He loses all his inspiration for painting, gives up his promising career and leaves Frunze for Tokmok to live a quiet and lonely life as a schoolteacher. The memory of Aruuke never leaves his heart. Even when the kind and loving Ayna cares deeply for him, he cannot open his heart to her.

Only at the very end, when he sees Ayna happily married to Baltabay, does Dyikanbek finally weep beneath the birch trees. There, he quietly lets go of his old heartbreak and begins to heal. The novella beautifully shows how true love, once lost, can remain in the heart for a lifetime.

Illustrative moment: Dyikanbek returns from the mountains and goes to Kadyr's house behind the blue gates. Hoping to meet Aruuke, he waits until she comes outside. Hiding her true pain, she coldly tells

him that she has married Kadyr of her own free will and asks him to forget everything they once shared. Then she quietly goes back inside. Dyikanbek does not know that she was drugged, deceived and forced into this marriage. Her unexpected words completely shatter him and mark the cruel end of their pure and innocent love.

Love and Happiness

Love and happiness are closely connected in the novella, but they are not simple or permanent. The story shows that happiness often appears in small, ordinary moments: drinking tea together, walking through a forest, looking at mountains, sharing food, or hearing someone speak kindly. For Dyikanbek, love gives life meaning. When he is with Aruuke, he feels alive, inspired, and full of energy. He paints his best pictures because he sees the world more brightly through his love for her. Their happiness is not based on wealth or status. It lives in the melon fields, in Shooruk's home, under the moonlight, and in the quiet joy of being together.

Aruuke also brings happiness because she loves life. She is active, beautiful, social, and full of energy. She enjoys attention, music, friends, and movement. Dyikanbek is different from her: he is quiet, thoughtful, and often needs solitude. Their love is beautiful because they bring different things into each other's lives. She gives him warmth and energy; he gives her deep, respectful devotion. Yet their differences also make their relationship fragile. Dyikanbek does not understand how lonely Aruuke feels when he chooses painting and solitude over time with her.

The novella also shows that love can be silent. Ayna loves Dyikanbek deeply, but she cannot say everything she feels. She waits, hopes, becomes hurt, and finally cries because she wants him to see her as more than a colleague. Dyikanbek cares for her, but he cannot give her the same complete love he once gave Aruuke. His heart is still wounded. This teaches that kindness and friendship are not always enough to create happiness between two people.

At the end, happiness becomes quieter and more mature. Ayna finds peace with Baltabay and his son. Dyikanbek sees her smiling through the window and understands that her happiness is real, even if it is not with him. He finally begins to accept that love cannot be forced, possessed, or recovered through regret. Real happiness requires attention, courage, trust, and the ability to let another person be free.

The novella suggests that love is precious because it is fragile. Happiness does not stay forever, but its memory can guide a person back to life, beauty, and art.

Illustrative moment: Dyikanbek and Aruuke help Shooruk gather his sweet melons. Dyikanbek paints the golden fields, while Aruuke cooks warm meals for them. At night, they sleep peacefully in a hay tent under the starry sky. Holding Aruuke close, Dyikanbek feels completely happy and believes that nothing could ever destroy their quiet joy. This scene shows that true love brings the greatest happiness through the simplest things in life.

Psychology:

Loneliness

Loneliness is an important theme in the novella. Nearly every major character suffers from it, although each experiences it differently. Dyikanbek is lonely because he grew up without his parents and carries the pain of losing Aruuke. Even when he is surrounded by colleagues, students, or friends, he often feels alone. He lives in a small house beside the school, with books as his closest companions. He walks alone in the hills and forests because nature understands the feelings he cannot explain to people.

Sono is lonely in a different way. She has a house, animals, an orchard, and neighbors, but she has no husband, child, or close family except Dyikanbek. Her loneliness makes her controlling. She sends letters, false messages, and telegrams because she wants her brother to come home. Her actions hurt Dyikanbek, but they come from fear of being left alone.

Ayna also knows loneliness. She has been married before, but she never knew real love. She falls in love with Dyikanbek because he seems unusual, kind, and serious. When he hesitates outside her house and walks away, she feels humiliated and abandoned. Later, she finds warmth and family life with Baltabay and his son.

Baltabay's loneliness begins after his wife dies. Ayna helps him with grief and with his young son, Bakhyt. Through her care, he slowly rebuilds his home and later finds happiness.

The novella shows that loneliness can make people gentle, desperate, jealous, or afraid. It can also bring people closer to nature, work, and art. Dyikanbek finally learns that he cannot escape loneliness simply by running away. He must accept his losses and return to his painting.

Illustrative moment: After Sono's death, Dyikanbek sits alone in her apple orchard. The house is empty, ripe apples lie on the ground, and Lake Issyk-Kul shines nearby. In this quiet place, he understands how lonely his sister had been and how little he had truly noticed it.

Art: The Healing Power of Art and Moving On

Art is not only Dyikanbek's profession; it is the deepest part of his identity. As a young painter in Frunze, he is talented, hardworking, and respected. His paintings are praised at exhibitions, bought by museums, and admired by older artists. He loves landscapes, especially mountains, rivers, fields, and changing light. Inspired by Levitan and Russian painters, he sees beauty in quiet natural scenes. Painting gives him purpose and helps him understand the world.

Love makes his art even stronger. When Dyikanbek falls in love with Aruuke, he becomes more energetic and joyful. Her beauty, singing, and lively spirit awaken his imagination. During their happy days, he paints some of his best pictures. He wants to paint the Chuy valley, the wildflowers near Shooruk's fields, the evening cattle, sunsets, and the Ala-Archa gorge. For him, nature and love belong together. His paintings become a way to keep beautiful moments alive.

After losing Aruuke, Dyikanbek loses his desire to paint. He cannot complete the government painting of the industrial plant because the subject gives him no feeling or inspiration. He refuses to create empty art simply because officials demand it. This choice costs him his place in the official art world. He becomes a schoolteacher in Tokmok and tries to live quietly, but the artist inside him does not disappear.

Shooruk understands this better than anyone. When Dyikanbek visits him during his illness, the old farmer asks him not to abandon painting. He calls Dyikanbek's talent a sacred gift. These words remain in Dyikanbek's heart. Later, after losing Sono and Ayna, Dyikanbek finally understands that he cannot escape pain by leaving art behind. Painting is not a way to forget his grief. It is the way he can carry grief without being destroyed by it.

At the end, he decides to leave Tokmok and return to his art. This decision shows healing, not because his pain is gone, but because he is ready to live again.

Illustrative moment: During the happiest time of his life, Dyikanbek paints the melon fields in the Chuy valley. Shooruk works among the crops, Aruuke prepares food, and the open land shines under the autumn sun. Dyikanbek stands with his brushes and canvas, looking at the fields, the distant mountains, and the clear sky. He feels full of energy because Aruuke is near him.

Aruuke's love gives him new strength. Before meeting her, he was already a talented painter, but now he paints with deeper feeling. The colors of the valley seem brighter, and every small detail becomes important: the smell of ripe melons, the hay tent, the wind moving through the grass, and the evening light on the hills.

Appearance: Deception and Betrayal

Deception and betrayal are major forces in the novella. They do not appear suddenly. They begin quietly, through loneliness, jealousy, money, social pressure, and words that are not true. The story shows how one lie can grow into a tragedy and destroy the lives of innocent people.

Kadyr is the main person who uses deception. He understands that Aruuke does not love him and that she is loyal to Dyikanbek. Instead of accepting her refusal, he changes his method. He becomes friendly with the girls in Aruuke's dormitory and lets them speak about his kindness, wealth, and good manners. He invites them to the cinema, café, and his family home. He makes Aruuke feel respected in front of her friends. His generosity is not simple kindness; it is part of a plan to make her trust him.

Aisha's betrayal is especially painful because she is Aruuke's friend. She praises Kadyr and helps him become close to Aruuke. Later, she accepts gifts from him and secretly puts sleeping pills into Aruuke's

champagne. Aisha betrays not only Aruuke's trust but also her future. She then lies to Dyikanbek, saying that Aruuke chose Kadyr willingly. Her lie makes Dyikanbek feel helpless and confused.

Kadyr's family also supports the deception. His mother welcomes Aruuke warmly and speaks about family connections. His sister-in-law helps lead Aruuke to a bedroom when she becomes weak. The next morning, instead of helping Aruuke, she tells her that she must accept Kadyr as her husband. The family turns a cruel act into something they call fate.

Sono also uses deception in a different way. She sends false messages about illness to make Dyikanbek visit her. Although her actions do not have Kadyr's cruelty, they damage trust between brother and sister. When Sono is truly dying, Dyikanbek hesitates because he remembers her earlier lies.

The novella shows that betrayal does not only hurt one moment. Its effects continue for years. Dyikanbek loses Aruuke, Aruuke loses freedom, and even later love with Ayna becomes difficult because Dyikanbek cannot trust happiness.

Illustrative Moment: When Dyikanbek returns from the mountains and learns that Aruuke has married Kadyr, he asks Aisha what happened. Afraid that Kadyr's bribes and her own betrayal will be discovered, Aisha lies. She says Aruuke and Kadyr had been dating and wanted to marry. She tells Dyikanbek that Kadyr's mother placed the white bridal scarf on Aruuke's head, and Aruuke accepted it willingly. This moment is tragic because Dyikanbek wants to believe Aruuke still loves him, but Aisha gives him a story that makes her marriage seem like her own choice. Her words hide the truth and help separate the lovers forever.

Identity: Roots, Belonging, and the Search for Home

The theme of roots and belonging appears through Shooruk's search for Dyikanbek. Dyikanbek grows up as an orphan and knows little about his father, Abdy, or his native village. Although he becomes a successful painter in Frunze, he carries an unnamed loneliness. He has talent, work, and recognition, but he does not have a strong feeling of family or home.

Shooruk changes this. After reading about Dyikanbek in a newspaper, he suspects that the young painter is Abdy's son. Shooruk knew Abdy as a kind farmer and a close man from the same village circle. He visits Dyikanbek's workshop to tell him about his father and reconnect him with the land where Abdy once lived and worked.

Through Shooruk, Dyikanbek learns that his father was generous, hardworking, and loved nature. He sees the hills, fields, orchards, and melon farms of the Chuy valley. These places become more than beautiful landscapes for his paintings. They give him a sense of inheritance. He understands that he comes from people who worked with the land and cared for others.

Shooruk tells him that a man should not lose his homeland. This idea stays with Dyikanbek throughout the novella. Even after losing Aruuke and leaving the city, he returns to Tokmok and rural life. He becomes a teacher, works with orphan children, and searches for a quieter place in the world. In the end, his desire to return to painting is also a return to his roots, because his art is closely connected to the Kyrgyz land, its mountains, fields, rivers, and people.

Illustrative Moment: One summer day, Dyikanbek is preparing to leave his workshop in Frunze to paint the mountains and rivers outside the city. An old farmer, Shooruk, arrives with his daughter, Aruuke. Shooruk asks whether Dyikanbek is Abdy's son. When Dyikanbek says yes, Shooruk tells him about his father.

He explains that Abdy was a kind, hardworking farmer who grew potatoes, knew gardening, and fed people in the village. He tells Dyikanbek that Abdy went to the labor army and never returned. For the first time, Dyikanbek hears warm, living memories of his father from someone who knew him.

The visit gives him a connection to his past. Shooruk then invites him to the village, telling him that a man should never lose his homeland.

Nature

Nature is one of the strongest themes in the novella. It is not only a setting for the events. Mountains, fields, rivers, forests, moonlight, and orchards reflect the feelings of the characters, especially Dyikanbek. As a painter, he sees the natural world with special attention. The hills near Tokmok, the Kara-

Too mountains, the Ala-Archa gorge, and the Chuy River call him to paint. Sunsets, sunrises, cattle returning from pasture, and gentle winds give him creative energy. Nature is where he feels most free and most himself.

The Chuy valley is connected with Dyikanbek's happiest time with Aruuke. Shooruk's melon fields are full of warm autumn light, ripe fruit, wildflowers, and open sky. Dyikanbek paints while Aruuke cooks and helps her father. At night, they sleep in a hay tent to guard the melons. The field becomes a place of young love, joy, and hope. Later, after losing Aruuke, Dyikanbek returns to the same place. The tent has disappeared, the field is dry and full of weeds, and old melon rinds lie on the ground. The empty land reflects his broken heart.

The forest near Tokmok has a different meaning. Dyikanbek walks through the birch forest with Ayna, and they kiss beneath the white trees. Later, he returns through the same darkness to visit her house. He hides in the cornfield, knocks at her window, then becomes ashamed and leaves. The forest, moonlight, and silent house show his fear and hesitation. The birch tree later becomes the place where he cries after learning Ayna has married Baltabay.

Other natural places also carry memory. The apple orchards at Shooruk's home and Sono's house represent family, harvest, and loss. Lake Issyk-Kul, with its cold waves and gulls, reflects Dyikanbek's inner unrest. The stars, moon, wind, and distant lightning appear when characters are alone, in love, or grieving. At the end, lightning over the Kazakh steppe helps Dyikanbek release his pain. Nature does not remove sorrow, but it helps him return to his art and life.

Illustrative Moment: After Sono visits the camp, Dyikanbek rides his bicycle to Shooruk's melon field. He wants to see the hay tent where he and Aruuke were once so happy. But the tent is gone. The field has not been planted, and dry weeds cover the ground. Old melon rinds lie where the harvest once shone. Dyikanbek understands that something has changed forever. The abandoned field becomes an image of his lost love and the empty space inside him.