

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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THE WILD ROSES / JAPAIY ROZALAR (2014)

Zuura Sooronbaeva (1924-2012)

Reference:

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OVERVIEW

Author

Early Life and Journalism Zuura Sooronbaeva was born on August 15, 1924, in the village of Jolgot in the Ak-Suu district of Kyrgyzstan. After graduating from secondary school in 1940, she began working as a secretary-typist at the newspaper *Ysyk-Kol Pravdasy* (*Issyk-Kul Truth*). Between 1959 and 1974, she worked as a correspondent for the regional newspaper *Kommunistik Emgek* (*Communist Labor*), later returning to *Ysyk-Kol Pravdasy*, where she continued her journalism career until 1979.



Poetry and Literary Beginnings Sooronbaeva entered literature as a poet. Her first poetry collection, *My Village* (*Menin Aiylym*), was published in 1960. Her 1966 collection *Friendship* (*Dostuk*) included both poems and the narrative poems *Friendship* (*Dostuk*) and *Adopted Son* (*Asyrandy uul*). Although critics initially doubted her transition from poetry to prose, she soon proved herself as a talented fiction writer.

Success as a Prose Writer Her first major prose work, the novella *The Aster Flowers* (*Astra Gülü*), was published in 1971 and brought her widespread fame. During the 1970s, she produced several important works, including *Orphans* (*Jetimder*), *Andrey* (*Andrei*), and *The Gray-Haired Woman* (*Ak Chach Ayal*). The 1980s were also highly productive years for her. During this period, she published the collection *The Mountains Know* (*Toolor Bilet*), the children's book *Rest, Mother* (*Es Alchy, Apa*), and the novella *Letter from Leningrad* (*Leningraddan Kelgen Kat*). Her writings attracted readers through their realistic and emotionally rich portrayal of ordinary people and everyday life. One of her best-known works, the novel *The Stranger* (*Choochun Kishi*), was published in 1988. Focusing on the painful emotional relationship between a husband and wife, the novel became highly popular and earned Sooronbaeva renewed literary acclaim. At readers' request, a sequel was published in 2002, and the novel remains relevant today.

Drama and Theatre Sooronbaeva also wrote several plays, including *The Groom* (*Erkek Kolukmu*), *Broken Shrine* (*Sinğan Mazar*), *Wealth and Love* (*Baylyk jana Mahabat*), and *Fiery Dawn* (*Örttüü Tang*). Her play *Broken Shrine* (*Sinğan Mazar*) was translated into Kazakh under the title *Illness* (*Ildet*) and staged at the Abai Zhambul Theatre. It was later performed in both Kazakhstan and Russia.

Honors and Legacy Sooronbaeva became a member of the Soviet Journalists' Union in 1953 and the Soviet Writers' Union in 1954. She received several state honors, including certificates of merit from the Supreme Soviet of the Kyrgyzstan, the medal For Valiant Labor during World War II, and the commemora-

tive medal dedicated to Lenin's centenary. In 1995, she was awarded the title of People's Writer of Kyrgyzstan. Her name was later given to the school she attended in her native village and to a street in the city of Karakol.

Personal Life and Unfulfilled Love Many of the emotional and tragic themes in Sooronbaeva's works were inspired by real-life experiences. Like many of her characters, she also experienced unfulfilled love. Throughout her life, she loved one man, a young man named Sharip. The two shared deep feelings, but their hopes of building a life together were shattered when World War II began and Sharip left for the front. As a result, their dream of being together never came true. Although Sooronbaeva later married twice, she never found the happiness she longed for. She met Sharip again only in the final years of her life. Much of her later years were devoted to her only son, as well as her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Novella The novella *The Wild Roses* was written during the Soviet Union period in the 1970s. It reflects a Soviet context in which state policies promoted education, gender equality, and social mobility, particularly encouraging women to study and participate in public life. However, these modern ideals existed alongside strong traditional rural customs that continued to shape family authority, marriage practices, and community reputation. During this period, Kyrgyz society was undergoing significant social and cultural transformation. At a broader level, the novella highlights themes common in Soviet-era literature, including family injustice, women's empowerment through education, and the transformation of rural society.

Background The story shows how young women like Mahabat move between two different social worlds. One is the Soviet system, where education, scholarships, and career opportunities allow girls to study and build independent futures. The other is village life, where family authority, reputation, and early marriage expectations strongly shape a girl's choices. Mahabat's experiences show that even when education offers new possibilities, traditional pressures from family and society still remain powerful.

These issues are presented through the perspective of the woman writer Zuura Sooronbaeva, who focuses closely on everyday emotional life. The narrative highlights real situations such as family conflict, control within the household, fear of gossip, and pressure to marry. Through Mahabat's story, the text shows how a girl's inner world is shaped both by affection and violence at home, as well as by judgment from the wider community.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Mahabat – Protagonist; grows up in hardship; focuses on education; later marries Mayrambek
Jainak – Mahabat's father; strict and traditional; loves Mahabat but influenced by customs
Anipa (stepmother) – Harsh; favors her own daughter; mistreats Mahabat
Tursunay – Stepsister; focused on marriage and social expectations; linked to family conflict
Batma – Neighbor; supportive figure; helps and guides Mahabat
Elaman – Batma's husband; university rector; supports Mahabat's education
Mayrambek – Shepherd; Mahabat's husband; respects her education
Aydar – Suitor; forceful and threatening; represents pressure on Mahabat
Almaday – Batma's mother; kind village woman; helps Mahabat in childhood and village life

SYNOPSIS

This story follows Mahabat, a girl who grows up in a harsh home with her stepmother and father. After her mother's death, she experiences loneliness, neglect, and heavy household labor. Her stepmother often mistreats her, while her father, though he loves her deeply, cannot fully protect her because of family pressures and customs. Mahabat finds support from neighbors like Batma and her mother Almaday, and she slowly grows into a strong, intelligent, and hardworking student.

At school, Mahabat excels and wins a gold medal, while her stepsister Tursunay follows a different path and becomes focused on marriage and social life. Mahabat continues her education and moves to the city for university, where she lives with Batma and Batma's husband Elaman, who guide her to value education over early marriage.

In university, Mahabat faces emotional pressure from Aydar, a man who tries to force her into marriage and even threatens kidnapping. At the same time, she develops a sincere and respectful relationship with Mayrambek, a shepherd who supports her education and shares her feelings.

A misunderstanding arises from Tursunay's earlier conversation with Mayrambek, where she mistakenly believed he would marry her. Later, it becomes clear that Mayrambek never promised marriage and that the confusion came from misinterpretation rather than intention.

Eventually, Mahabat and Mayrambek's relationship becomes official. After earlier tensions, rumors, and family resistance are resolved, both families accept their marriage and give their blessing, bringing Mahabat's long emotional journey to a peaceful conclusion.

SCENES

Mother's Death, Early Childhood, and Loss Mahabat remembers how her mother died. She remembers how she was bathed for the last time, prepared for the funeral according to religious ritual. Her father did not remarry for three years. Mahabat was seven years old; a neighbor girl, Batma, who was older than Mahabat, loved her and supported her. Mahabat lost her doll while other girls had theirs. They said Mahabat was an orphan, and that made her sad. Mahabat loved her father deeply. She missed her mother and would often smell her mother's coat. One day her father gave that coat to a neighbor woman, and Mahabat was upset. Her father drove trucks, and she wanted to be a truck driver too, but he told her to choose another occupation. She also remembered the first anniversary of her mother's death, when they built a monument.

The Day Her new Mother Arrived One day someone told her, "Your mother has arrived." Mahabat thought her mother was buried. In the corner of the room sat a dark-complexioned woman in a blue dress, a black velvet jacket, and a white scarf. Her daughter wore a nicely embroidered hat. They were well dressed. The woman seemed cold. Mahabat wanted to cry, missing her mom. Batma said, "This is your mother—go and kiss her." Mahabat answered that she was not her mother. The woman said, "Oh, that is the daughter of Jainak, Mahabat's father. It takes time to get used to it. Do not bother her." She did not kiss Mahabat either. Both felt loneliness. From that moment, Mahabat felt loneliness in her own home.

A Home That Changed When her father saw Mahabat crying, he was startled and said, "You have a mother now." Mahabat kept crying. The neighbor woman added, "Be a good girl, now you have a mother." Her father asked about Mahabat's bed. The stepmother pointed to a lonely bed, but Mahabat had always slept beside her father—now she saw a bed made for two. She asked him where he would sleep. He answered, "With your mom." Mahabat said she was not her mom and that she would not let him sleep with that woman. Her father said, "This is your sister now; you can sleep together." The stepmother said, "Jainak, you can sleep next to your daughter. I will sleep alone. Your daughter is selfish, though she is very little."

Mahabat's Father's Broken Promises and Growing Loneliness Her father said, "I am both her father and her mother. She is used to me; she feels lonely now." He decided to sleep in the same room with Mahabat, but when she woke up, she saw him sleeping in the next room beside her stepmother instead. This deeply hurt her, and she caused trouble the next day as well. On the third day, her father beat her, and after that Mahabat felt even more lonely and cold than before. She became increasingly isolated and remembered earlier mistreatment, including being beaten by her stepmother for wetting the bed.

Daily Hardship and Conflicts at Home Her stepmother continued to force Mahabat into heavy chores, making her drive the cow to the herd early in the morning. She also ordered her to tie the calf away from the garden so it could not drink its mother's milk. Mahabat struggled with the task, and the calf stepped on her toes. When her father asked why she was awake so early, the stepmother said she had ordered Mahabat to tie the calf. Her father replied, "You should get up when Tursunay gets up," referring to the stepmother's daughter. Mahabat explained that it was actually her stepmother who had woken her.

Mahabat Complains about Her Injured Toes Mahabat fled to the neighbors' house, where Batma and her mother Almaday welcomed her kindly. Batma's mother comforted the frightened girl and gently brushed her tangled hair. While sitting beside them, Mahabat complained that her stepmother forced her to wake

up before dawn every morning. She showed them her injured toes and explained that a calf had stepped on her feet while she was working outside with the animals. Soon Tursunay arrived and said that her stepmother was calling her home.

Mahabat Beaten for Wetting Her Clothes The moment Mahabat returned home, her stepmother beat her for wetting her clothes. The girl remained sad for the rest of the day. After supper, her stepmother forced her to wash all the dishes alone. Later that night, the woman gave Mahabat's warm atlas blanket to her own daughter, Tursunay, while Mahabat was expected to sleep wrapped in her father's old coat. Mahabat demanded that Tursunay return the blanket, but Tursunay kicked her, and the two girls began fighting. Their stepmother beat Mahabat once again.

Mahabat's Father Quarrels with His Wife over the Blanket Crying, Mahabat complained to her father that her blanket had been taken away and given to Tursunay. For the first time, her father became angry and ordered his wife to bring new blankets for Mahabat from the other room. That night, the husband and wife quarreled bitterly. In anger, Mahabat's father even told his wife that she could leave the next morning. Yet the woman did not leave the house. She remained just as cold and harsh as before. Early the next morning, she again forced Mahabat to drive the cow to the herd in the freezing dawn air.

Mahabat Carries Heavy Buckets of Water Two years passed, and Mahabat was now eight years old. During that time her stepmother gave birth to twin boys, Asan and Uson, and Mahabat's father gradually became accustomed to his new family life. Yet nothing changed for Mahabat herself. Her stepmother continued to burden the girl with endless housework and difficult chores. Mahabat struggled to carry two heavy buckets of water, often stumbling from exhaustion along the road. Sometimes her neighbor Batma pitied her and came to help her carry the water home.

Batma Sees the Bruises on Mahabat's Body in the Russian Bathhouse One day Batma invited Mahabat to the Russian bathhouse. While the girls were bathing together, Batma suddenly noticed dark bruises and black marks covering Mahabat's thin body. Shocked, she asked where the injuries had come from. Mahabat quietly explained that her stepmother had beaten her, accusing her of swimming in the river with boys. In reality, Mahabat had never gone swimming at all. The women in the neighborhood felt deep sorrow for the child when they saw the marks on her body and understood the cruelty she suffered inside her own home.

Mahabat's Father Sees the Bruises on Her Body School started the next day in September, and Mahabat and Tursunay went to school together. When they returned home, they saw their father and stepmother quarreling. Mahabat saw her stepmother with messed up hair and her father holding a whip. Her father asked Mahabat to show the black bruises on her body. When he saw the marks, he began crying. "Why do you hate this girl? Why don't you love her? Even if you now have twin babies, my daughter is my red line," he told his wife. That day Mahabat's father was slightly drunk and deeply saddened. Her stepmother threatened to take away the babies and said she would complain to the police. Mahabat felt happy when she heard that her stepmother might leave soon.

Mahabat Tells the Truth about Tursunay's Night Meeting Mahabat grew up as a smart, capable, and skillful girl, while Tursunay was not successful like her, and her mother often scolded her for it. Mahabat became one of the best students at school. She was honest, kind, sharp, and direct, but her stepmother disliked these traits. By the ninth grade, Tursunay liked spending time with boys. One night she entered the house through the window and proudly told Mahabat that a boy liked her and had taken her for a ride in a car. The next morning, their father saw footprints near the window and asked who had gone outside. Mahabat's stepmother immediately blamed Mahabat, but Mahabat told the truth and said that Tursunay had gone out with a boy named Turat.

Mahabat Receives a Gold Medal at School The girls finished school and took their final exams. Mahabat received a gold medal for the best results, while Tursunay received low grades. Mahabat's stepmother became jealous and removed the photograph of Mahabat's mother from the wall because Mahabat often talked to it. Mahabat asked why the photo had been removed, and her stepmother became aggressive. Out

of sadness, Mahabat broke the frame. Her father became furious, and during the argument her stepmother shouted: "When I married you, you only had five old blankets. I made this house into a home."

Mahabat Prepares for University While Tursunay Chooses "Kazan University" Mahabat finished school with a gold medal and took the entrance exam for a university in the nearest city. Tursunay, however, joked that she would enter the "kazan university." The word kazan, meaning "cooking pot," referred to marriage and family life, where a woman would spend her days cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the household. Tursunay said she was going to marry a boy she had recently met. Mahabat asked how she could marry someone she barely knew. When Mahabat returned home that day, she saw the family preparing for the wedding. As soon as she entered the house, her stepmother ordered her to make dough.

The Neighbor Women Sew Tursunay's Dowry The neighbor woman Almaday asked Mahabat whether she had entered the university, and Mahabat happily answered yes. Meanwhile, the neighbor women were sewing Tursunay's dowry, including blankets and household items. Anipa, Mahabat's stepmother, proudly boasted that the future groom had fallen deeply in love with Tursunay and wanted a quick marriage. However, the next week Tursunay returned home looking sad. The wedding had been cancelled for unknown reasons. Soon afterward, she left for Frunze. Anipa explained that the groom had gone to Frunze to study, and Tursunay had gone there as well. According to her, the wedding would take place the following year.

Batma Advises Mahabat to Choose Education Instead of Marriage News about Tursunay's cancelled wedding spread throughout the village, but Mahabat still could not understand why the marriage had failed. During her final year of high school, Mahabat herself had sometimes thought about marriage because a young man named Aydar wanted to marry her. However, she did not truly like him. One day Aydar invited Mahabat to the cinema, but she refused. He then tried to kiss her. Batma happened to see them together and later asked Mahabat whether she liked Aydar. Mahabat honestly admitted that she did not. Batma advised her to think carefully about her future and continue her education instead of marrying too early.

Almaday Gives Money to Mahabat Batma and her husband Elaman were working at the university, and Almaday, Batma's mother, told them that Mahabat would soon leave for the city and needed their support. The old woman gave Mahabat twenty rubles, following the village custom of giving money to students who leave for the city to study. Mahabat felt shy about accepting the money, but Almaday's son Abakir also encouraged her to take it. At that moment Mahabat's father returned home from work and asked Batma and Elaman to look after his daughter in the city. The couple warmly agreed to help Mahabat.

Batma and Elaman Take Mahabat to the Cinema in the City After arriving in the city, Batma and her husband Elaman helped Mahabat buy new clothes. Later they took her to the cinema to watch a foreign film. The film told the story of a young girl who married a man after giving up her studies, only to be rejected by his parents afterward. Batma and Elaman had invited Mahabat to watch the film on purpose. They wanted her to think seriously about her future and choose education and a career carefully.

Mahabat Begins University Life Mahabat's life at university began. Students often spoke highly of Batma Imanalieva as one of the best teachers. She was strict and demanded a lot from her students, but she was respected for her professionalism. Her husband, Elaman, was the rector of the university. However, Batma carried a personal sorrow. She could not have children, something that was not fully accepted by society. In her second year at university, Mahabat overheard Batma and Elaman talking about this issue. Batma was crying, and Elaman gently suggested adopting a child.

Mayrambek's Arrival and Mutual Feelings One day, guests arrived at Elaman's house: the chairman Akylbek of the kolkhoz in Jeti-Oguz district, Ysyk-Kol region and a young man named Mayrambek, a shepherd from that place too. Mahabat met him, and both felt a quiet attraction toward each other. In early March, Mahabat received a letter at the university post office. She had previously sent an anonymous congratulatory message to Mayrambek on February 23, the Soviet Army Day, when men were traditionally congratulated. On March 8, International Women's Day, Mahabat received a postcard from Mayrambek. Elaman later reminded her that Mayrambek was the brother of Gulay, who was Elaman's sister-in-law.

Aydar's Night Visit and Batma's Concern One night, while Batma was asleep, someone knocked on the window calling Mahabat's name. It was Aydar. Frightened, Mahabat threatened to call the police. Aydar replied that she could do so, but said he was suffering because of her. Batma woke up from the noise and came to Mahabat's room, asking who had been there. Mahabat told her it was Aydar. Later at the campus, Mahabat saw Sandarbek, who had delivered a letter from Aydar. Mahabat tore up the letter and became worried that Aydar might try to kidnap her.

Mahabat's Thoughts on Love, Family, and Mayrambek Mahabat still worried that Aydar might attempt to kidnap her and began thinking more about the young men around her. She could not find anyone she truly considered a suitable match except Mayrambek. When she returned home, she saw her father visiting her in the city. He gave her money, but Elaman said that Mahabat already received a Lenin scholarship grant and should not let her father spend money on her. Mahabat insisted that it was her father's wish. She admired that Batma and Elaman as a perfect couple. She wished that one day she would respect her own husband the same way Batma respected Elaman. That night, she dreamed of Mayrambek: they were standing on a hill covered with wild roses, and he was picking beautiful white roses for her.

Elections, and Burul's Invitation During the elections, Mahabat worked day and night. After the elections, a classmate named Burul invited her to her village, where Mayrambek also lived. Mahabat asked whether the famous shepherd had become a member of parliament. Burul replied that Mayrambek had become a member of the Kyrgyz Supreme Soviet (parliament). At Burul's house, there were many guests, and a song game was taking place. A young man gave Mahabat the turn of the song. Suddenly, the conversation turned to Mayrambek. Burul said he was in the next room with local officials and showed him through the window. Mahabat saw him and felt that he was the most handsome man she had ever seen.

Burul's Friendship, Thoughts of Tursunay, and First Trip to Frunze Burul asked Mahabat if she liked Mayrambek and suggested they look at him once more from the window. Just then, Mayrambek came out of the room, and the girls quickly hid in the garden. After that day, Mahabat returned to the city with Burul and considered her a close friend. Meanwhile, Mahabat sometimes thought about her stepsister Tursunay. During the summer vacation, she was invited to an all-country youth conference as her university's representative in Frunze (modern Bishkek city). Her tickets had already been prepared. Batma asked Mahabat to bring a new coat from Frunze, saying that Gulay would buy it for Batma. Mahabat also thought she might meet Gulay, the doctor and sister of Mayrambek. It was her first visit to Frunze, and she stayed at the Hotel Kyrgyzstan.

Aydar Follows Mahabat to Frunze Mahabat admired the city, its green parks, and wide boulevards. While she was walking, someone called her name. She turned and saw Aydar. She asked if he had come for the conference. He first said no, then admitted yes. Aydar explained that in Karakol he had heard Elaman and Batma seeing Mahabat off at the airport. After that, he quickly bought a ticket and came to Frunze, searching for her in all the hotels until he finally found her at Hotel Kyrgyzstan. He said he had wanted to stay there too, but there was no available room. Later, Aydar invited her to the cinema, but Mahabat refused. Aydar said he was suffering because of her and even threatened that if she did not accept his proposal, he might kidnap her. Mahabat told him he could not do that, and he replied, "Let's bet."

Conference Speech, Mayrambek's Note, and Meeting Tursunay During the conference, Mahabat was selected to speak on the panel. While she was sitting there, she received a note from Mayrambek. He wrote that he was also attending the conference and was staying at Hotel Kyrgyzstan, though he planned to visit his sister's house. After the conference, Mahabat visited her stepsister Tursunay. She learned that Tursunay was working at a plant and had become successful as a department head. The next day, Mahabat delivered her speech, which was well received. During a break, she met Mayrambek and congratulated him on receiving the Order of Lenin. The conference ended, but Mahabat continued to think about Aydar.

Avoiding Aydar, and City Walks with Mayrambek In the crowd, Mahabat saw Aydar again and tried to avoid him. She panicked and attempted to leave. Mayrambek asked if they could have dinner at the hotel restaurant, but she refused. Aydar approached them, asked who Mayrambek was, and invited Mahabat to lunch, but she left without responding. She then went with Mayrambek to see the city instead. Mayrambek

thanked her for her earlier letter, and they spoke more openly about their feelings. He hinted whether Mahabat considered him a suitable match, since he was a shepherd. Mahabat replied that modern shepherds were no longer ignorant and could also study. Together, they walked through the city.

Aydar Appears at the Hotel At the fountain next to the hotel, Mayrambek saw his sister Gulay and his brother-in-law, and he stopped to talk with them. Mahabat returned to her hotel room. Suddenly, someone knocked on the door—it was Aydar. She became frightened and sat in silence, not opening the door. Meanwhile, Mayrambek waited for her outside, but Mahabat could not go out. In the morning, Mahabat called Gulay's apartment, since Batma had asked her to bring the coat that Gulay had bought for her. Outside the hotel, she finally saw Mayrambek, and they greeted each other. Mayrambek told her that he had seen Aydar as well. Mahabat said that Aydar was stalking her.

Meeting Gulay and Dinner Discussions Mahabat later met Gulay, Mayrambek's sister, at the hotel. However, she again saw Aydar, which made her uneasy. Gulay invited Mahabat and Mayrambek to dinner. During the meeting, Mayrambek's brother-in-law spoke about agricultural programs and external education. Mahabat and Mayrambek talked late into the night. At one point, they discussed marriage and agreed to get married, but Mahabat said she still wanted to finish her studies. Mayrambek supported her decision.

Tursunay's Visit, and Return to the Village On the last day of Mahabat's visit to Frunze, Tursunay came to the hotel. Mayrambek saw her and was surprised as they knew each other, but he quietly left. Tursunay asked about her mother, father, and twin brothers, and said she missed home deeply before returning to the village. After returning, Mahabat told her stepmother about Tursunay. Her mother asked when Tursunay would marry. Mahabat replied that Tursunay's wedding had been cancelled for some unclear reasons. Her mother said it was not Tursunay's fault and felt sorry for her daughter, adding that people would talk, but Tursunay had done nothing wrong.

Rumors, Family Conflict, and Aydar's Kidnapping Threat Mahabat's stepmother told Mahabat that people were spreading a rumor that she had a close relationship with Elaman, Batma's husband, and even blamed her for the couple's lack of children. Even Mahabat's father became angry after hearing this, but Mahabat defended herself and told the truth. The next day, Mahabat prepared to return to the city. Suddenly, the wife of Uncle Berdaly came and warned her that Aydar was planning to kidnap her. Mahabat and the neighbor woman Almaday hid in the garden. Aydar arrived in a car, pretending that the women were simply going to the city with Mahabat, but in reality he was determined to carry out his plan. Later, when Mahabat returned safely to the city, she met Mayrambek. He told her that he had also heard about Aydar's kidnapping plan and had come to protect her.

Mayrambek Takes Mahabat to His Home and She Accepts Marriage Soon after, Mayrambek and Mahabat got married. Mayrambek told her they would go to Ysyk-Kol to swim and asked her to buy a swimsuit. However, instead of the lake, the car turned toward Jeti-Oguz village. Mahabat realized that he was taking her to his home. Mayrambek explained that Aydar might still try to kidnap her, and he wanted to keep her safe. Mahabat asked if she would be able to continue her studies after marriage. Feeling tired of rumors and pressure, she finally agreed to marry him. On the way, Mayrambek took her to the pasture. Mahabat saw beautiful landscapes and fields full of wild roses.

Marriage Rituals and Family Welcoming Ceremony Mayrambek's mother met them with surprise. The neighbors whispered and wondered why Mahabat had arrived without a scarf and wearing pants. As a sign of welcome, Mayrambek's mother placed a white scarf on her head, symbolizing her acceptance as a bride. Later, Mayrambek's relatives and the chairman of the kolkhoz, Akylbek—who had once visited Elaman's house—went to the city to inform Elaman and Batma. They brought Elaman back to the village, and together they visited Mahabat's father. They also met Jainak, Mahabat's father at Berdaly uncle's house and shared the news of Mahabat's marriage.

Father's Opposition and Family Conflict over the Marriage Mahabat's father was frustrated because, according to custom, the elder step-sister Tursunay should have married first. At first, he did not believe that Mahabat had truly married Mayrambek, a shepherd. He said they could hold a wedding celebration, but insisted that Mahabat should not quit her university studies. Still, he remained very angry. The relatives

of Mayrambek defended him, saying he was a good man, but Mahabat's father did not change his attitude. Mahabat felt deeply sad that her father did not approve of her choice. She worried that he might look down on Mayrambek and cut ties with her completely. Mayrambek and his mother were also saddened by the situation, though Mahabat and Mayrambek themselves remained happy together.

Reconciliation and Acceptance of Mahabat's Marriage Mahabat and Mayrambek spent peaceful days together herding sheep and enjoying the beauty of nature. Batma visited Mahabat and told her that Anipa, Mahabat's stepmother, was unhappy because Mahabat had married before her daughter Tursunay. Later, Ajarkan, Mahabat's aunt, came to visit with Asan and Uson. She explained that Mahabat's father had traveled to Frunze to meet Tursunay. There, he told Tursunay that Mahabat had already married Mayrambek, which shocked her. After returning from Frunze, Mahabat's father finally accepted the marriage. He gave his blessing to Mahabat and Mayrambek and invited them to celebrate their wedding properly with the family. At the same time, Tursunay's mother read Tursunay's letter and also stopped feeling angry toward Mahabat, accepting the situation peacefully.

Tursunay's Earlier Connection Tursunay wrote that the man she once wanted to marry was Mayrambek, some years ago. She had met him in Bishkek, liked him, and even joked about marriage. Later, when he visited again, Tursunay said she had failed her entrance exams. Mayrambek then asked whether she would marry a shepherd, and Tursunay replied yes, but insisted that marriage should follow proper traditions. She returned to the village the next day and told her mother that she had a groom. She said the groom was Mayrambek, and her mother began preparing for the wedding.

Confusion between Mayrambek, Urmat, and Broken Expectations When Mayrambek came again, he brought another shepherd named Urmat with him. Tursunay asked why he had brought him. Mayrambek explained that Urmat was the man who actually intended to marry her, since she had agreed to it earlier. Tursunay was shocked and said she thought Mayrambek himself would marry her. Mayrambek replied that he had never promised such a thing and only brought Urmat because he was a suitable match. Tursunay became angry and told them to leave. When she returned to the village, she was afraid of her mother and said that her groom had been sent to study in Frunze.

Tursunay's Letter and Acceptance of Mahabat and Mayrambek's Marriage Later, Tursunay wrote a letter to her mother explaining the situation. She said that she had once assumed she would marry Mayrambek, but there had never been any real relationship between them. She asked her mother not to be angry with either Tursunay or Mahabat and to accept Mahabat's marriage. Tursunay also explained that she was now focused on her career and planned to join the Communist Party. She said she had no plans for marriage in the near future, as her professional goals came first. After reading the letter, Mahabat understood why her father and stepmother had been frustrated earlier. Her father and stepmother also finally understood the situation after Tursunay's explanation.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Mahabat

Mahabat is the central character of the novella and represents a young Kyrgyz woman growing up between traditional village expectations and new educational opportunities of the Soviet period. After losing her mother in childhood, she experiences emotional loneliness, hard labor, and mistreatment from her stepmother. Despite these difficulties, Mahabat develops into an intelligent, morally strong, and determined young woman. Education becomes her path toward independence and self-respect. Throughout the story, she struggles against social pressure, gossip, forced marriage expectations, and emotional hardship. At the same time, she remains emotionally sensitive and capable of love, kindness, and loyalty. Her character reflects both vulnerability and inner strength.

Resilient Mahabat is resilient because she survives constant emotional and physical hardship from childhood. After her mother's death, she grows up in a difficult household where her stepmother mistreats her and forces her to perform heavy chores from an early age. Even when she feels lonely, insulted, or beaten, Mahabat does not lose her will to continue living and studying. Instead of becoming bitter, she

endures suffering quietly and keeps moving forward. Her resilience is especially visible in her dedication to school and later university life. Despite pressure from family traditions and gossip, she continues building her future and eventually creates a stable life for herself.

Intelligent Mahabat is portrayed as highly intelligent and academically successful. From childhood she stands out as one of the best students at school. Her discipline and hard work allow her to graduate with a gold medal and enter university in the city. Unlike some people around her who see marriage as the main goal for a young woman, Mahabat values education and personal development. She listens carefully to Batma and Elaman, who encourage her studies and intellectual growth. Her intelligence is not shown only through academic success, but also through her ability to judge people carefully, understand social situations, and think seriously about her future.

Honest Honesty is one of Mahabat's strongest moral qualities. She speaks directly even when telling the truth creates conflict. For example, when her father asks who secretly met boys at night, Mahabat refuses to accept blame and truthfully says it was Tursunay. She also openly tells Batma that she does not love Aydar, despite pressure to accept him. Mahabat does not manipulate others or hide behind lies for personal advantage. This honesty sometimes creates tension with her stepmother and stepsister, who dislike her directness. However, the novella presents honesty as part of Mahabat's moral strength and personal dignity.

Compassionate Although Mahabat suffers greatly herself, she remains compassionate toward others. She continues caring about her father even when he fails to protect her fully from her stepmother's cruelty. She also feels sympathy for Tursunay despite their conflicts and misunderstandings. When Tursunay's wedding is cancelled and people gossip about her, Mahabat does not mock or judge her. Instead, she tries to understand her situation. Mahabat's emotional sensitivity appears throughout the novella in her relationships with Batma, Almaday, and Mayrambek. Her compassion prevents her from becoming emotionally cold despite the harsh treatment she experiences during childhood and youth.

Independent Mahabat gradually becomes an independent young woman who tries to make decisions about her own future. Instead of accepting early marriage immediately, she chooses university education and life in the city. She resists Aydar's pressure and threats, refusing to marry someone she does not love. Even after marrying Mayrambek, she asks whether she will be allowed to continue her studies, showing that education and self-development remain important to her. Mahabat's independence is also emotional: she learns to rely on her own judgment rather than blindly obeying social expectations. Through her character, the novella presents the image of a woman seeking dignity, education, and personal choice.

Jainak

Jainak, Mahabat's father, is one of the most complex characters in the novella. He deeply loves his daughter and often feels sympathy for her suffering, yet he fails to protect her fully from the cruelty inside the household. His character reflects the emotional conflict of a traditional father trying to balance paternal love, remarriage, family authority, and social expectations. Jainak is neither completely weak nor cruel; instead, he is portrayed as a man trapped between affection for his daughter and the tensions of his new family life. Through Jainak, the novella explores the limits of paternal authority and the emotional difficulties of family life in a changing society.

Loving Jainak sincerely loves Mahabat and remains emotionally attached to her after the death of her mother. He worries about her loneliness and says that he is both her father and mother now. Even when he remarries, he still tries to comfort Mahabat and sometimes defends her during conflicts with her stepmother. When he sees the bruises on her body, he becomes deeply emotional and cries, asking why his wife hates his daughter. His love also appears when he visits Mahabat in the city, gives her money, and later accepts her marriage after initial anger. Although imperfect, his affection for Mahabat remains genuine throughout the novella.

Traditional Jainak strongly values traditional family customs and social expectations. He believes in proper marriage order within the family and becomes upset when Mahabat marries before her older

stepsister Tursunay. He also worries about community opinion and family reputation. Even though he loves Mahabat, he sometimes reacts according to social norms rather than personal emotion. His traditional mindset is also visible in his role as head of the household, where authority and obedience are important. Through Jainak, the novella shows how older generations often remained closely tied to village customs despite the social changes of the Soviet period.

Emotional Jainak is an emotional character who reacts strongly during family conflicts. He cries after seeing Mahabat's bruises and becomes angry when he realizes how badly she has been treated. Sometimes he expresses affection openly, while at other moments he loses control and becomes harsh. His emotions often shift quickly between tenderness, frustration, guilt, and anger. This emotional instability reflects the pressure he experiences inside the family. He is deeply affected by conflict between his daughter and wife, and his emotional reactions reveal how painful these tensions are for him personally.

Conflicted Jainak constantly struggles between different responsibilities and loyalties. He loves Mahabat, but he is also tied to his new wife and the stability of his second family. Because of this, he cannot fully defend Mahabat even when he understands that she suffers unfairly. At times he supports his daughter, but at other times he remains silent or even punishes her. This inner conflict makes him one of the most realistic characters in the novella. He is not presented as a father caught between love, guilt, social expectations, and domestic pressure.

Responsible Despite his mistakes, Jainak remains a responsible father who continues caring about Mahabat's future. He supports her education, asks Batma and Elaman to look after her in the city, and worries that marriage should not stop her university studies. He works hard to provide for the family and remains involved in Mahabat's life even after she leaves for university. In the end, he accepts her marriage to Mayrambek and gives the couple his blessing. His sense of responsibility appears not through perfection, but through his continuing effort to remain connected to his daughter's life and future.

Anipa

Anipa, Mahabat's stepmother, is one of the central sources of conflict in the novella. After marrying Jainak, she enters a household still marked by the memory of Mahabat's dead mother and struggles to build authority within the family. She often treats Mahabat harshly, giving more affection and protection to her own daughter Tursunay. Through Anipa, the novella explores domestic tension, jealousy, social pressure, and the unequal treatment of children inside the household. Although Anipa frequently appears cruel and controlling, her behavior is also connected to insecurity, family competition, and fear of social judgment in village life.

Harsh Anipa is harsh in her treatment of Mahabat from childhood onward. She forces the girl to perform exhausting chores, wakes her before dawn, beats her for small mistakes, and often humiliates her emotionally. Even when Mahabat is injured or exhausted, Anipa shows little sympathy. Her harshness creates a cold atmosphere inside the home and becomes one of the main causes of Mahabat's loneliness. The novella repeatedly shows Mahabat living in fear of punishment and criticism from her stepmother.

Jealous Anipa often appears jealous of Mahabat's success and emotional connection to the past. When Mahabat becomes an excellent student and receives a gold medal, Anipa reacts with irritation rather than pride. She also removes the photograph of Mahabat's dead mother from the wall, possibly feeling threatened by the continued presence of the first wife's memory inside the household. Her jealousy reflects emotional insecurity and competition within the family structure.

Controlling Anipa tries to control the household and the behavior of those around her. She expects obedience from Mahabat and frequently decides how work, discipline, and family relations should function inside the home. She also attempts to control social reputation, especially regarding Tursunay's marriage and public image. Her concern with gossip and appearances shows how strongly village opinion influences her behavior. Through Anipa, the novella portrays the pressure women themselves can reproduce inside patriarchal family systems.

Proud Anipa is proud and sensitive about social status and family reputation. She proudly boasts about Tursunay's future marriage and wants others in the village to respect her family. When conflicts arise, she often defends herself strongly and refuses to admit fault easily. Her pride becomes especially visible during arguments with Jainak, when she insists on her contribution to the household and reminds him how she improved the home after marriage. This pride sometimes intensifies family conflicts rather than resolving them.

Complex Although Anipa is mostly presented negatively, the novella still portrays her as a complex character rather than a simple villain. She lives under social expectations, worries about her own daughter's future, and tries to maintain authority inside a difficult family environment. At times she feels frustration, insecurity, and disappointment, especially concerning Tursunay's failed marriage situation. The story suggests that Anipa's cruelty grows not only from personal character, but also from emotional pressure, traditional family structures, and fear of public judgment.

Mayrambek

Mayrambek is an important character in the later part of the novella and becomes Mahabat's husband. He is a shepherd from Jeti-Oguz who later becomes a member of the Kyrgyz Supreme Soviet. Unlike Aydar, who pressures and frightens Mahabat, Mayrambek develops a relationship with her through respect, conversation, and emotional understanding. His character combines traditional rural masculinity with education, political activity, and emotional sensitivity. Through Mayrambek, the novella presents a more positive model of manhood, showing that a village shepherd can also be intelligent, respectful, and supportive of a woman's personal goals.

Respectful Mayrambek treats Mahabat with respect from the beginning of their relationship. During their conversations in Frunze, he speaks carefully and does not pressure her emotionally. When they discuss marriage, Mahabat says that she wants to finish her studies first, and Mayrambek immediately agrees and supports her decision. Unlike Aydar, he does not try to control her through fear or force. His respectful behavior allows Mahabat to feel emotionally safe around him and trust him gradually.

Protective Mayrambek shows a protective side when he learns that Aydar may kidnap Mahabat. After hearing the rumors, he comes to the city specifically to check on her safety. Later, he quickly arranges marriage partly because he fears Aydar's threats are real. Although his decision is sudden, it comes from concern rather than selfishness. Throughout the story, Mayrambek tries to create stability and security for Mahabat during moments when she feels socially vulnerable and emotionally pressured.

Modest Despite becoming famous as a skilled shepherd and later a parliament member, Mayrambek remains modest in his behavior. When Mahabat first sees him at Burul's house, he is sitting quietly with local officials rather than trying to attract attention. He speaks calmly and naturally during conversations and never boasts about his achievements. Even when discussing himself, he questions whether Mahabat would truly accept a shepherd as a husband, showing humility about his social position and rural background.

Romantic Mayrambek's romantic feelings are expressed quietly through gestures and emotional moments rather than dramatic speeches. He sends Mahabat a postcard for March 8 and remembers her earlier anonymous greeting letter. Their relationship develops through walks in Frunze, shared conversations, and mutual attention. Mahabat later dreams about him picking white wild roses for her in the mountains, connecting him symbolically with beauty, tenderness, and emotional hope. The natural landscapes surrounding Mayrambek also strengthen his romantic image in the novella.

Supportive Mayrambek supports Mahabat's education and personal growth even after marriage. When she asks whether she can continue university studies, he agrees immediately. He does not expect her to abandon education completely for domestic life. His family also eventually accepts her as part of their household. Through this support, Mayrambek represents a balance between traditional rural life and modern ideas about women's education and independence. His encouragement allows Mahabat to imagine a future where marriage and personal development can exist together.

THEMES

Education: Social Advancement through Education In the novella, education is presented as a key path of social mobility within Soviet society. During this period, the best students were awarded gold medals for academic distinction, which allowed them to enter university by taking only one entrance exam, while other applicants were required to take four exams. Mahabat achieves this academic excellence by receiving a gold medal and successfully enters university, where she also earns a Lenin scholarship that provides sufficient financial support for her living and studies. Education thus becomes a foundation of independence and personal development for her.

In contrast, Tursunay is unable to enter university and instead begins working at a factory. However, her path also reflects upward mobility within the Soviet system, as she later becomes a successful worker, rises to the position of department head, and plans to join the Communist Party while pursuing evening university studies. Her trajectory shows that education and professional advancement were possible even outside the traditional academic route.

At the same time, Mahabat's marriage to Mayrambek, a shepherd, creates tension within traditional expectations. Her father does not consider him an ideal match but insists only that Mahabat continue her studies. Mahabat, in turn, challenges assumptions by suggesting that even shepherds can access education through external agricultural programs. Through these parallel lives, the novella emphasizes the growing importance of education in Kyrgyz society as a means of transformation and opportunity.

Illustrative moment: An illustrative moment of education appears when Mahabat returns home after receiving her university admission results and sees that her family is preparing Tursunay's wedding instead of supporting her academic future. While Mahabat is accepted into university through her gold medal achievement, Tursunay chooses marriage after failing to continue higher education. Mahabat questions how someone can marry without knowing her partner well, showing her belief in education and personal development.

At the same time, her stepmother is more focused on organizing the wedding than celebrating Mahabat's academic success, which highlights the contrast between two life paths.

Politics: Soviet Ideology The novella depicts Soviet social life through public events and ideological traditions that shape everyday experiences. One important example is youth conferences, where selected students and young activists, including Mahabat and Mayrambek, participate and present their achievements. These gatherings also function as a form of Soviet encouragement for youth involvement and public service.

Elections are another key element of Soviet life in the story. During election periods, students and active young people are expected to work and take responsibilities, showing their participation in the socialist system. Mahabat herself takes part in election work, reflecting her role as an engaged and responsible student.

The novella also shows how political participation was structured through official selection. Mayrambek becomes a member of the Kyrgyz Supreme Council (parliament), reflecting the Soviet practice of promoting politically active individuals from different social backgrounds, including rural workers such as shepherds. In this way, even people from village professions could be represented in state institutions if they were seen as active and ideologically reliable.

The novella also shows how holidays were politically meaningful. March 8 (International Women's Day) and February 23 (Red Army Day) are widely celebrated. Men are congratulated on February 23 even if they are not soldiers, and women are honored on March 8. In the novella, Mahabat sends an anonymous postcard to Mayrambek on February 23 and later receives a postcard from him on March 8, showing how even personal feelings are expressed through official Soviet traditions. These holidays continue to be observed in modern Kyrgyzstan, though February 23 is now more broadly celebrated as Defender of the Homeland Day.

Illustrative moment: Mahabat sits on the conference panel in Frunze and receives an official note from Mayrambek. The note informs her that he is also attending the same conference and is staying at the Hotel Kyrgyzstan. While she is preparing for her speech, she reads the message quietly, realizing that their personal communication is happening within a formal state event. The conference continues with official discussions and presentations, and Mahabat later delivers her speech in front of delegates. During the

break, she meets Mayrambek briefly, and they exchange congratulations about his receiving the Order of Lenin.

Gender: *Forced Marriage* The theme of forced marriage threat is clearly illustrated through Aydar's repeated pursuit of Mahabat during her time in Frunze for the youth conference. After Mahabat refuses his invitation to go to the cinema and shows no interest in him, Aydar does not accept her decision. Instead, he continues to follow her movements and appears unexpectedly in different places across the city. He explains that he traveled to Frunze after hearing about her departure and searched for her in various hotels until he finally found her at the Hotel Kyrgyzstan. This shows that his interest turns into persistent and unwanted tracking of her life.

The situation becomes more serious when Aydar approaches Mahabat in public spaces and tries to force interaction despite her refusal. Mahabat feels uncomfortable and avoids him, but he continues to reappear, showing that her personal boundaries are not respected even in a formal and public environment like a conference setting. His behavior creates constant tension, as she cannot feel safe even in spaces meant for study and official participation.

Aydar comes to her hotel room and knocks on the door while she is alone. Mahabat refuses to open the door and stays inside in fear. This scene highlights her vulnerability and the pressure she experiences from his continuous presence.

The threat becomes explicit when Aydar tells her that if she does not accept his proposal, he might kidnap her. Through these scenes, the novella presents forced marriage as a serious threat shaped by stalking, intimidation, and the denial of a woman's right to refuse.

In the context of modern Kyrgyzstan, such an act would be considered a serious criminal offense, as kidnapping and forced marriage practices are punishable under the law. The legal system formally protects individual consent and personal freedom in marriage, and any attempt to abduct someone for marriage is treated as a violation of human rights and criminal law.

Illustrative moment: Mahabat is preparing to return to the city and Aydar arrives in the village with a car. Earlier, she has already been warned by Uncle Berdaly's wife that Aydar is planning to kidnap her, so she and the neighbor woman Almaday decide to hide in the garden. They stay quiet, trying not to be seen, while Aydar comes into the area looking for her.

Aydar does not directly use force at first. Instead, he tries to create a false impression that nothing unusual is happening. He arrives with a car and acts as if the women are simply going together to the city with Mahabat, attempting to normalize the situation and remove suspicion. However, his real intention is to take Mahabat away against her will, showing that the act is planned and deliberate rather than accidental.

Mahabat does not come out from hiding, and the plan is interrupted because she refuses to appear and others are aware of the danger.

Parenthood: *The Father's Role*

Mahabat's father Jainak is a central figure in shaping her childhood experience of parenthood, as he embodies both care and authority. He clearly loves Mahabat and often expresses concern for her well-being, sometimes defending her when conflicts arise in the household. However, his parenting is also limited by social customs and his dependence on his new family structure, which reduces his ability to consistently protect her.

At key moments, he attempts to show closeness and responsibility, such as when he says he is both father and mother to her and tries to share the same space with her. Yet these efforts are unstable, and his attention is often divided between Mahabat and his stepfamily. This creates emotional uncertainty for Mahabat, who cannot rely fully on him as a constant source of protection.

When conflicts intensify, the father's role shifts toward discipline rather than emotional support. Instead of addressing the deeper causes of Mahabat's distress, he sometimes reacts with anger or punishment, which increases her sense of isolation. Even when he recognizes injustice in the household, his response is inconsistent and often influenced by pressure from his wife and family responsibilities.

Through this portrayal, the novella presents the father not as a purely absent or cruel figure, but as a conflicted parent caught between affection, authority, and social obligation, ultimately unable to fully protect his daughter from emotional and physical hardship.

Illustrative moment: Mahabat's father says that he is both father and mother to her and decides to sleep in the same room with her, showing an attempt to restore closeness and care. However, the next morning Mahabat wakes up and finds him sleeping in another room with her stepmother instead. This sudden shift creates confusion and emotional distance for Mahabat, as the father's promise of protection is not fully realized in practice.

The situation later worsens when Mahabat's distress turns into conflict within the household. Instead of consistently protecting her, her father responds with punishment, and after several days of tension he beats her. This moment marks a clear breakdown in emotional support, as discipline replaces care.

Relationship: Love Love between Mahabat and Mayrambek begins when they meet at Elaman's house. Elaman, who is Batma's husband, hosts a visit from Mayrambek and Akylbek, the chairman of the Jeti-Oguz kolkhoz. Mahabat meets Mayrambek there for the first time in a more personal setting. He is polite, calm, and listens carefully when she speaks. Unlike other men, he does not try to control her or rush her into decisions. This first meeting creates a quiet connection between them.

After this meeting, they see each other again during social and official events. Their communication grows slowly. Mayrambek supports Mahabat's education and does not discourage her from continuing university. This makes her trust him more over time.

Before marriage, Mahabat has a dream. She sees herself in a mountain valley. Mayrambek is standing in the open fields and walks toward her. He gives her wild roses that he has picked from the mountains. She takes the flowers and looks at him. This dream happens after they already know each other but before she agrees to marriage.

The wild roses come from the same mountains where Mayrambek works as a shepherd. They are simple flowers, not arranged or bought. They are part of the natural landscape, like his everyday life.

Soon after this period, the marriage happens quickly. Mayrambek takes Mahabat away under the excuse of going to buy a swimming suit, but the car changes direction toward his village. This is how the elopement takes place, and she realizes only later that she is already entering married life.

Illustrative moment: Burul invites Mahabat to her village, where Mayrambek also lives. Mahabat already knows Mayrambek and has met him before, so this visit is not their first encounter.

When they arrive at Burul's house, there are many guests, and the atmosphere is lively. People are singing and playing games. Mahabat joins the gathering and takes part in the activities.

During the visit, the conversation turns to Mayrambek. Burul tells Mahabat that he is in the next room with local officials. She shows him from the window, and Mahabat sees him briefly. Seeing him again in this setting makes a strong impression on her.

Burul notices Mahabat's reaction and asks about her feelings toward Mayrambek. She suggests they look at him once more from the window. At that moment, Mayrambek comes out of the room, and the girls quickly hide in the garden.

Psychology: Childhood Trauma In the novella, child abuse is one of the central themes. Mahabat's stepmother is often indifferent to the emotional and physical needs of a young child and treats her with constant harshness instead of care and compassion. The story repeatedly shows Mahabat experiencing fear, loneliness, overwork, and physical punishment within her own home. At the same time, the novella reflects a familiar pattern seen in many literary traditions known as the "stepmother syndrome," where a child in a stepfamily setting receives less affection, protection, and emotional care than the biological child, reinforcing her isolation and vulnerability.

The novella also reflects the reality of many rural areas during the Soviet period, where child protection services and social oversight rarely reached remote villages. As a result, violence and neglect within families often remained hidden and unaddressed. Anipa wakes Mahabat before dawn to drive the cows to the herd while her own daughter continues sleeping. She forces the young girl to tie the calf even though Mahabat is physically weak and unable to complete the task properly. Anipa also beats her for wetting the bed, showing a lack of understanding of basic childhood needs and vulnerability.

The novella further presents emotional tension within the household, where Mahabat's intelligence and success create inequality in perception. Anipa appears unsettled when Mahabat receives a gold medal for academic achievement, enters university while her own daughter cannot, and later builds an independent life through marriage and education.

Illustrative moment: Anipa fails to understand Mahabat's emotional adjustment to her new family situation. Instead of allowing time for the child to adapt, she reacts with hostility and begins treating Mahabat harshly. Mahabat feels discomfort and resistance toward the new household arrangement, especially when she does not want her father to sleep with her stepmother. Her protest is not understood, and instead of being guided or comforted, she is gradually pushed into conflict within the family.

As tensions increase, Mahabat becomes more isolated. Her emotional distress is not addressed, and the household becomes a space of misunderstanding and control rather than care. This situation eventually escalates, and after several days of conflict, her father beats her. Mahabat's emotional world becomes even more closed off, and she experiences deeper neglect, loneliness, and isolation within her own home.

Flaws: *Gossip* Mahabat becomes the target of village gossip when her stepmother tells her that people are spreading rumors about her relationship with Elaman, Batma's husband. The rumor suggests that Mahabat is too close to Elaman, which creates suspicion and tension within the household. Even her father becomes angry after hearing the gossip, but Mahabat defends herself and denies the accusations.

The gossip spreads quickly in the community and damages Mahabat's reputation, even though there is no truth to the claims. People talk about Batma's situation and Elaman in different ways, and Mahabat becomes unfairly included in these stories. This creates emotional pressure for her and increases her sense of isolation within the family and village.

Soon after these events, Mahabat and Mayrambek's relationship moves toward marriage. Mayrambek tells her that they are going to Ysyk-Kol to swim and asks her to buy a swimsuit. However, instead of going to the lake, the car turns toward Jeti-Oguz village. Mahabat realizes that he is taking her to his home.

Mayrambek explains that Aydar may still try to kidnap her, and he wants to protect her by bringing her to his village. Mahabat asks whether she will be able to continue her studies after marriage. Feeling tired of rumors, pressure, and emotional stress, she finally agrees to marry him.

Illustrative moment: Mahabat's stepmother tells her that people in the village are spreading a rumor about her and Elaman, Batma's husband. The rumor suggests a close or inappropriate relationship between them. Mahabat is shocked because Elaman and Batma were supportive figures during her university years, and she had stayed with them as a student. They helped her with guidance and practical support in her education, acting more like mentors than anything else.

Earlier, Mahabat had also heard a vague and indirect hint from Aydar, which later becomes part of the growing gossip. Over time, small suggestions and misunderstandings turn into a stronger rumor that spreads in the village.

When the gossip reaches Mahabat's father, he becomes angry and confronts her. Although the accusation is not based on facts, it creates serious tension within the family. Mahabat defends herself and clearly explains that her connection with Elaman and Batma is based on respect and support during her studies, not personal involvement.