

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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ON THE SHORES OF YSYK-KOL LAKE / KOL BOYUNDA (1947)

Kasymaly Bayalinov (1902-1979)

Reference: Bayalinov, K. (2016). *Kol boyunda*. Bishkek: Kutaalam. 328 p.

OVERVIEW

Author Kasymaly Bayalinov was born on September 25, 1902, in Kok-Moynok village, Issyk-Kul region, into a well-off family. He lost his parents early and was raised by relatives. During the Urkun in 1916, at age 14, he fled to China with his people.

After the October Revolution, he returned to his homeland and worked various jobs, including as a servant, cook's assistant, and pharmacy helper. In 1919, he joined the Komsomol and studied in Tashkent.

He later became an important literary figure, joining the USSR Writers' Union in 1939 and leading the Kyrgyz Writers' Union during several periods. He also worked as a researcher in language and literature.

His famous story *Ajar* (*Ajar*, 1926) depicts the hardships of Kyrgyz people during difficult historical times and is considered a foundation of Kyrgyz prose.

His last autobiographical work, *I Join the Bolsheviks* (*Bolshevikterge jazylam*), reflects his life, beliefs, and dedication to his country and ideals.

Between 1929–1940, he wrote stories about new Soviet Kyrgyz life, including *Murat* (*Murat*) and *The Happy Herdsman* (*Baktyлуу jylkychy*). His war-themed cycle *In the Fire* (*Ot ichinde*) focuses on wartime experiences.

In 1948, his article *Some Suggestions to Mr. Poynton* (*Poynton myrzaga ayrim sunushtar*) defended the development of national cultures in the USSR.

The Kurman Valley (*Kurman oroonu*, 1958) portrays an episode of the 1916 uprising.

Major works such as *Brotherhood* (*Boordoshtor*, 1962), *On the Shores of Ysyk-Kol Lake* (*Kol boyunda*, 1947), and *Murat* (*Murat*, 1929) hold an important place in Kyrgyz cultural and spiritual life.

At the end of his career, Bayalinov was one of the first professional translators in Kyrgyz literature. He translated works by Maxim Gorky and Alexander Pushkin, including *Makar Chudra* (*Makar Chudra*), *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* (*Kavkaz tutkunu*), *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (*Ruslan menen Lyudmila*), and *Eugene Onegin* (*Yevgeniy Onegin*). His own works were translated into many languages.

He received several state awards and the title People's Writer of Kyrgyzstan in 1968. One of the main libraries in Bishkek is named after him, reflecting his lasting contribution to Kyrgyz culture and literature.

Kasymaly Bayalinov died on October 3, 1979, at the age of 77.

Novel The novel *On the Shores of Ysyk-Kol Lake* is an important early Kyrgyz war-era work. Written soon after World War II, it was warmly received and widely discussed as a timely patriotic story.

Bayalinov, who worked in the Ysyk-Kol region during the war, drew on real life experiences. The story focuses on the hard work of kolkhoz farmers, the role of the Party, and themes of love and friendship.

Background Set in the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic along the shores of Lake Ysyk-Kol, the story takes place during World War II and the early postwar years. It portrays life in remote villages and kolkhozes, where traditional Kyrgyz customs coexist with Soviet ideals.

Key locations such as Przhevalsk (Karakol), Frunze (Bishkek), and Rybachye (Balykchy) connect these communities. While young men leave for the front, women and families maintain daily life under difficult wartime conditions.

Soviet influence is seen in collective farms, Communist Party activities, and Komsomol initiatives, as villagers work toward building a new socialist society. At the same time, memories of the past and cultural traditions remain strong.

Despite the hardships of war, including loss, injury, and separation, the resilience of the Kyrgyz people stands out, with communities rebuilding and moving toward a hopeful, modern future.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Japar – Kyrgyz Communist Party worker and war scout, loses a leg, returns to lead Ornok's school

Jamila - Pedagogical student, Japar's fiancée, resists deception, becomes a teacher and his wife

Mikola - Ukrainian scout, Japar's comrade, reunites with his children after the war

Aisha - Jamila's friend, Talyp's fiancée, warns Jamila, later studies in Frunze

Talyp - Soldier, dies in hospital, asks Japar to write his last letter

Toichubek - Japar's father, head of Kenesh kolkhoz, respected and wise

Burulcha - Japar's mother, nurturing, keeps Kyrgyz rituals

Chongmurun - City schemer, tries to trick Jamila into marriage

Aisuluu - Asan's fiancée, truck driver, defies gender expectations

Chukobay - Ornok kolkhoz chairman, respected elder, supports Japar

Zeynep - Red House worker, husband at the front, serves the village with propaganda work

Osmonbek - Village singer and poet, tells legends and war stories

SYNOPSIS

The story takes place on the shores of the lake in the Ysyk-Kol region of Kyrgyzstan during World War II. As Ysyk-Kol is the largest lake in Central Asia, local people simply refer to it as "the lake"; therefore, the novella is titled "On the Shores of the Lake" in Kyrgyz.

Many men leave for the front, including Japar, the only son of his parents. He graduates from a college in Przhevalsk (now Karakol) and works as a government official. He is engaged to Jamila, a student at a pedagogical college, and visits her before leaving for the war.

At the front, Japar is seriously wounded and loses a leg. He returns home and begins working in a remote, underdeveloped kolkhoz, where he also becomes the head of the local school. Despite difficulties, he improves the kolkhoz with the help of villagers—elderly people, women, and children—and leads it to success, even competing with his father's well-developed kolkhoz.

During the war, Japar fears that Jamila will reject him because of his disability. After returning, he hears rumors that she has married someone else. In reality, Jamila is pressured into marriage but refuses and leaves. She later reconnects with Japar with the help of her friend Aisha. They meet again and marry.

Together with the villagers, they continue developing the kolkhoz. The villagers build shelters for livestock in the pasture lands and introduce radio and telephone communication. Through the radio, they learn that the war has ended and celebrate with the community.

Japar also supports his friend Mikola, whose children were sent to an orphanage during the war. Japar and Jamila adopt them. After the war, Mikola returns, reunites with his children, and later marries Aisha, who has lost her fiancé in the war.

The novel ends with the return of soldiers and the rebuilding of village life, as people work together to bring progress, including electricity and better living conditions to the kolkhoz.

SCENES

Going to War

Before Departure: Japar and Jamila Japar works at the district branch of the Communist Party and is called to the war. He has a fiancée, Jamila (there is no concept of “girlfriend” in Kyrgyz culture), who is a student at a pedagogical college. Before leaving, he visits Jamila in Przhevalsk. They first meet at the cinema, where Jamila comes with her friend Aisha, who introduces them. Aisha is also the fiancée of Talyp, who is already at the front. Jamila promises Japar that she will wait for him until he returns from the war. She also plans to continue her education and enter a pedagogical institute after finishing college.

Departure from Pokrovka Pier Japar arrives at the Pokrovka pier, where several young men are gathering before leaving for the front. Among them is Nurbay, the son of Turgun, a former hunter; Nurbay now follows in his father’s footsteps. Asan and Baltabay, the sons of Ilikbay, are also present. Baltabay has participated in the Finnish War and completed junior officer training; he now serves as a senior sergeant at the district military recruitment office. Asan is a truck driver who has completed specialized training, and his fiancée Aisuluu is also a truck driver. Japar’s mother, Burulcha, comes to see him off, while his father, Toichubek, remains in the pasturelands overseeing the herders. Soon, the young men depart together on a ship, heading toward the front.

In the Occupied Village Japar and Mikola Ivashenko, a Ukrainian soldier, serve as Soviet scouts and move through the forest on a reconnaissance mission. Both are experienced and rely on each other in dangerous situations. They enter a village occupied by German forces, where a local man approaches them carrying something wrapped in cloth. When he reveals it, they see the body of a child. Deeply affected, Japar orders the combat engineers to dig a grave, and they bury the child. Mikola, who fought in the Khal-khin Gol and Finnish wars, worries about his family in another occupied village, unsure if they are alive.

Courage and Letters from Home Japar and Mikola capture a German soldier and bring him to their captain. For this, Japar is awarded the Order of the Red Star, while Mikola receives the Order of Glory (3rd class). Japar later receives a letter from his father, urging him to be a brave soldier and protect the Soviet homeland, recalling his own hardships before the October Revolution and during the Civil War. Jamila also writes that she is waiting for him, which brings Japar great joy. Soon after, Japar goes alone on a reconnaissance mission, gathers information about German forces, and is seriously wounded in battle.

Between Life and Loss Japar is taken to the hospital with a severe wound. A nurse named Glasha comforts him, encouraging him to think about his family and asking if he has a wife. He replies that he has a fiancée, Jamila, and thinks of her as he drifts in and out of consciousness. When he wakes, the doctor tells him they have tried for two weeks to save his leg, but it is impossible; it must be amputated. Japar resists, wanting to return to the front, but the doctor insists others will continue the fight. After the surgery, encouraged by Glasha, Japar writes letters to Jamila, Mikola, and his parents.

Japar Meets Talyp in the Hospital In the hospital, Japar writes to Jamila and tells her that his leg has been amputated. He fears that if she does not reply, it means she will not marry him because of his disability. His parents answer with warmth, saying they are waiting for him and will be happy to see their son no matter what. However, Jamila does not reply, and Japar grows anxious and sad. During his recovery, Japar meets Talyp, Aisha’s fiancé. Talyp is badly wounded and knows he will not survive. He asks Japar to write a final letter to Aisha on his behalf. Accepting his fate, Talyp says that he is going to die, and that it is his destiny.

Returning Home

Return through Frunze Japar arrives in Frunze (now Bishkek) and calls the pedagogical college in Przhevalsk, where Jamila studies, but is told she is not there. He then travels by car with other passengers to Rybachye (now Balykchy). On the way, he meets his fellow villager Osmonbek, who tells him there is much work to be done in the kolkhoz. Japar also notices the construction of a railway along the route. In Rybachye, he meets his old friend Sultan, who is happy to see him. When Japar asks about Jamila, Sultan recalls seeing her at a bus station with a man named Chongmurun. Jamila seemed to want to say

something, but the man hurried her away. Hearing this, Japar feels deeply hurt, yet resolves to live for his parents, his homeland, and the future of his people.

Homecoming Japar reaches Przhivalsk by ship and visits Aisha, Jamila's former friend. Aisha's mother warmly welcomes him and offers food. When Aisha asks about Jamila, Japar sadly shares what Sultan told him about seeing her with another man. Aisha tries to comfort him, saying he will find another good woman. Japar then tells her about Talyp's death, and Aisha breaks into tears. When Japar returns to his village, his parents greet him with great joy, and the villagers gather around him. The Red Star order on his chest shines proudly. His mother weeps and performs a traditional ritual with water, circling it above his head, asking him to spit into it, then throwing it away and turning the bowl upside down.

Ornok Kolkhoz

Assignment to Ornok Kolkhoz Japar visits the district center (rayon), which includes several kolkhozes and villages. He meets the head of the district education department, who informs him that he has been appointed principal of the school in Kenesh kolkhoz, where his parents live. The decision has already been approved by Kurmanov, the head of the district Communist Party. However, Japar refuses this comfortable position. Instead, he asks to be sent to the remote and underdeveloped Ornok kolkhoz, where the school has no principal. Respecting his determination, Kurmanov agrees and also appoints him as the district's interim representative to oversee agricultural work, including harvest collection and haymaking.

Japar Arrives at Ornok Kolkhoz Japar arrives at the remote Ornok kolkhoz, walking with crutches. He meets Jutabay, the head of the local village council, who calls for a meeting that evening. Japar then visits the school and finds it in poor condition: desks are broken, and the windows and doors are damaged. Determined to repair it, he looks for help, but no one is available. The carpenters and blacksmith are busy with haymaking, harvesting, and collecting medicinal herbs. Later, Japar approaches two elderly men and speaks to them about the importance of rebuilding the school if they want a better future for their children. They agree to help with the repairs.

The Red House and Zeynep Japar visits the Red House, a local propaganda center where books, newspapers, and journals are kept. At first, no one is there, and he notices that the materials are locked away in cupboards. Soon, a woman appears and introduces herself as Zeynep, who works there. She explains that her husband is at the front and has asked her to serve the people in the rear. Japar questions why the books are not accessible and suggests a new approach. He proposes setting up a yurt near the fields, where people gather for agricultural work. There, Zeynep can display newspapers and journals openly, and photos of war heroes can be hung to inform and inspire the workers.

Village Meeting at Ornok Japar opens the village meeting. Jutabay, head of the village council, reports that some people avoid kolkhoz duties: Kojobek, a teacher, often leaves for the district center, and Zeynep, head of the Red House, does not contribute enough. Both feel ashamed and promise to work harder. Zuura, the chief shepherd, arrives from the pasture and asks for hay to feed her sheep. Aisuluu, whose fiancé Asan is at the front, wants to attend truck-driving courses, but her parents refuse. Chukobay, an elderly and respected man, is the chairman of the kolkhoz. Together with Jutabay, he offers his position to Japar, but Japar insists they continue their work.

Night planning at the Kolkhoz At night, Japar, Chukobay, and the accountant gather to review the kolkhoz's situation. The accountant reports: 50 hectares of winter wheat, 145 hectares of spring wheat, 40 hectares of barley, 30 hectares of oats, and 20 hectares of millet—270 hectares in total. The kolkhoz must deliver 80 tons of grain to the state, 30 tons to the army, and 10 tons to the Machine and Tractor Station (MTS), as well as repay a 20-ton debt. In total, they must provide 140 tons. Japar calculates that they can harvest about 1 ton per hectare, and up to 1.5 tons on better fields, reaching around 270 tons if the harvest is done carefully without losses. They also discuss organizing hot meals, carts, threshing tools, and a threshing machine.

Resolving Labor Issues in the Kolkhoz Chukobay, the head of the kolkhoz, reports that 87 households and 60 individuals, along with 23 elderly men and women, are refusing to work. Japar then visits his father

Toichubek, the head of Kenesh kolkhoz, and asks for 3 centners of wheat to provide food for workers involved in the harvest. His father expresses concern about his son working in such a remote kolkhoz. Japar speaks with the people who have refused to work and convinces them to join the harvest, and they agree to help.

Good News and a New Visitor Japar receives a letter from his war friend Mikola Ivashenko informing him that his home village in Ukraine has been liberated from German occupation, and he hopes to reunite with his wife and two children. Japar is very happy to hear this news. Meanwhile, his father Toichubek is in his office at Kenesh kolkhoz when a city girl Aisha arrives. She is the same lady, whom Japar knows as the friend of Jamila. She has been sent to help with agricultural work in the kolkhoz. Toichubek takes her home, where Burulcha, Japar's mother, also welcomes her warmly. Burulcha thinks Aisha is a good and hardworking girl and begins to consider her as a possible match for her son Japar.

Socialist Competition and New Encounters Japar mobilizes all villagers in Ornok kolkhoz, and they even work at night under the moonlight to complete the harvest. Ornok kolkhoz is competing with the more developed Kenesh kolkhoz in agricultural production. Some villagers are skeptical about winning this socialist competition, but Japar encourages them and convinces them that success is possible through collective effort. Local editors create a wall newspaper that criticizes and mocks those who refuse to work, including a woman named Kalipa. After returning from the neighboring Ornok kolkhoz, Japar sees Aisha at his home. Burulcha is pleased that they already know each other and warmly supports their acquaintance.

Meeting of Kolkhoz Leaders and News from Przhevalsk The heads of Kenesh and Ornok kolkhozes, along with active members from both sides, meet to discuss the future of their socialist competition. They plan ways to improve productivity and strengthen cooperation, though the rivalry between the two kolkhozes remains strong. Meanwhile, Burulcha feels confused and emotionally torn, since her husband Toichubek leads Kenesh kolkhoz while her son Japar works in Ornok. Still, she hopes that Japar and Aisha will become a couple and wishes Aisha to become her daughter-in-law. When Japar visits home, Aisha informs him that Jamila has returned to Przhevalsk. She shows him a letter from Jamila in which she asks about Japar. Hearing this news, Japar immediately hurries to Przhevalsk.

Chongmurun's Deception in Przhevalsk Chongmurun is a stylish man in Przhevalsk who becomes interested in Jamila, although she is engaged to Japar, who is at the front. He pretends to be Japar's friend in order to gain her trust and marry her. Jamila refuses him and insists on her engagement. Aisha senses his dishonest intentions and warns Jamila to stay away from him. In the city, Urkuya, a seamstress whose husband is at war, supports herself by sewing and washing clothes. Chongmurun tries to use Urkuya's connection with Jamila to approach her. Urkuya asks Jamila why she has stopped meeting Chongmurun, and Jamila replies that Aisha warned her about his intentions.

Jamila and Chongmurun in Frunze Urkuya tells Jamila that Aisha is jealous of her and secretly likes Chongmurun. She insists that Chongmurun is a good match and claims he can help Jamila enter the institute through his connections. Although Jamila says she wants to study, she begins to doubt Aisha's advice. Jamila later meets Chongmurun at the cinema, where she has gone with Aisha. Despite Aisha's warning, Jamila grows upset, influenced by Urkuya's words. Chongmurun promises to help her with admission, saying the rector is his friend, and takes her to Frunze. In Frunze, Chongmurun brings Jamila to a friend's house and introduces her as his wife. The hosts, an old woman and a young woman, believe they are a married couple and prepare a shared bed for them. Jamila immediately rejects this misunderstanding and firmly states that she is not Chongmurun's wife.

Jamila Breaks Away from Chongmurun The hosts recall a past incident involving Chongmurun, when he brought another young woman from southern Kyrgyzstan and introduced her as his wife. That girl also denied the claim, and Chongmurun was publicly shamed when she left. On that same day, Jamila receives a letter from Japar. Deeply moved, she cries and firmly rejects Chongmurun's intentions. She goes to the institute, where the rector accepts her application for admission. After that, she returns to Przhevalsk. She visits Aisha, whose mother tells her that Urkuya had spread rumors that Jamila got married. Jamila explains that she was pressured but escaped. She then learns that Aisha is staying at Japar's parents' house, and Aisha later comes to the city.

Victory in the Socialist Competition The district newspaper publishes news about the socialist competition between Ornok and Kenesh kolkhozes, and both begin working with renewed effort. Japar mobilizes all villagers, including schoolchildren, encouraging them to work hard and love their homeland. He criticizes those who are lazy and praises those who show dedication. District officials visit and see a field where wheat is still unharvested, warning that the kolkhoz may lose the competition if the work is not completed in time. In response, the entire village is mobilized, and they work through the night to finish the harvest. As a result, the remote Ornok kolkhoz wins the competition. Even those who were once lazy are later rewarded with gifts from the district leaders for their participation.

Family Talk and a Letter from Aisha Japar returns to his home and thanks his father, Toichubek, who is the head of Kenesh kolkhoz, for being a strong competitor in the socialist competition. However, his father responds that Japar is thanking him for losing the competition. Japar replies that, although Kenesh kolkhoz was slightly weaker this time, it has still improved compared to its results from the previous year. Meanwhile, Japar receives a letter from Aisha. She writes that she has good news for him and asks him to come to Przhevalsk.

Reunion in Przhevalsk Japar visits Aisha's home, where her mother Uuljan warmly welcomes him with food. Aisha arranges a walk in the park, where Japar meets Jamila, who has been working at a kindergarten and staying with Aisha. Overcome with emotion, Jamila bursts into tears. Meanwhile, Burulcha, Japar's mother, buys a scarf and cloth for her future daughter-in-law, as life in the kolkhoz improves after a good harvest. At the store, she receives a letter from the village council. A schoolboy reads it aloud: Japar writes that he has married and will soon return with his wife, asking his parents to accept her as their daughter-in-law.

Night Arrival and Wedding Celebration Japar and Jamila arrive at his parents' home at night. Jamila's face is not clearly seen, and Burulcha first thinks she is Aisha and feels very happy. Aisha's mother also arrives, and Burulcha praises her daughter. Soon, the truth is revealed: Japar has married Jamila, whom he loved before the war, while Aisha has gone to Frunze to study. Toichubek invites the villagers to celebrate the wedding. Following Kyrgyz tradition, Burulcha places a white scarf on Jamila's head and scatters candies on the floor, symbolizing joy and a happy new beginning for the young couple.

Wedding Feast and Traditions The family slaughters a sheep and brings kymyz, fermented mare's milk, from the pastures. People from both Kenesh and Ornok kolkhozes gather, and the wedding celebration begins. According to tradition, women are the first to see the bride, but Chukobay, the head of the village council, also wants to see her, which makes everyone laugh, as men usually wait until after the formal rituals. Osmonbek, a local singer and poet, entertains the guests by singing songs and telling folk stories, filling the celebration with joy and tradition.

The Story of Barpan Baatyr

The Legend of Barpan Baatyr During the wedding, Osmonbek tells a heroic story. In a valley lived the people of Barpan Baatyr, a brave leader. One day, Iskender Khan from the Afghan side attacks their land. Barpan orders the warriors to fight, while the elderly, women, and children escape to safety. His loyal friend Aban joins the battle. At first, Barpan's warriors are victorious, but gradually they fall one by one. Watching from a hill, Iskender notices Barpan's special shield, believed to be bulletproof. As a skilled marksman, he aims carefully and kills Barpan. Dying, Barpan declares that he sacrifices his life for his people.

The Five Stones of Barpan After the battle, Aban, Barpan's loyal friend, remains alive and alone. He finds Barpan's shield and five burning stones. A mysterious voice tells him that the five shining stones are the hero's last drops of life and will protect the people five times. Aban returns to his people, who settle again in a peaceful valley. For a time, the stones protect them, but later another cruel khan conquers the land and imposes heavy taxes. When spring arrives, the people hear that the khan's warriors are coming again, and fear spreads among them once more.

The Fifth Stone and Lenin Men wearing caps with red stars arrive in the valley. They are kind and bring good news, but a local man distrusts them and tells them to take the tax and leave. The newcomers explain that times have changed: khans and wealthy rulers no longer dominate. When asked who leads this struggle, they answer: Lenin, who fights against oppression. The people feel hope and joy. Later, in winter, they hear that Lenin is dying. Believing in the power of Barpan's legacy, the people decide that the fifth stone from his shield may save Lenin's life.

Journey to Moscow with the Shield Three men—Baiyr, Daiyr, and Seyit—set out for Moscow carrying the sacred shield. Their journey is harsh, across rocky and icy mountains. During a snowstorm, the shield is buried under the snow, and Daiyr dies. Baiyr and Seyit continue, but a narrow bridge collapses, and Seyit also dies. Alone, Baiyr searches for the shield, finds it, and continues his journey. He meets an old man who shows him the road to Moscow and tells him that Lenin has died. Saddened, Baiyr takes the man's horse and rides on. He finally brings the shield to Moscow and visits Lenin's mausoleum. There, a man in the mausoleum tells him that although Lenin has died, his ideas and system will live forever among ordinary people.

A New Life in Ornok

A New Beginning in Ornok Osmonbek concludes his story by saying that Lenin's system of equality is now working. The wedding ceremony comes to an end, and the villagers warmly congratulate Japar and Jamila. Soon after, the couple moves to Ornok kolkhoz and settles in Japar's house. Japar's students prepare the house by cleaning and painting it, and they also help load the cart with the couple's belongings. Villagers come to visit and meet Jamila. Children assist by serving tea and food, and the elders praise them, noting that children are fortunate now, unlike in the past when they were often mistreated by strict mullah teachers.

The First Lesson The school year approaches, yet the desks are worn and the boards are old. Kojobek asks Japar, now the principal, to go to the district center for new books. Meanwhile, Jamila walks from house to house, registering children for school. One boy resists—he dreams not of books, but of factory work. With patience, Jamila convinces him that learning must come first. At last, the first school day arrives. Jamila stands before her students and unfolds a vast map. She speaks of the Soviet Union as their homeland—wide, strong, and full of promise—awakening in young hearts a sense of belonging and hope.

Storm in the Pastures and Rescue Toichubek and Chukobay travel to the pasture lands to visit the herders. They are caught in a severe snowstorm. The weather turns harsh, and many sheep die from the cold because there are no proper warm shelters. A shepherd named Jakyp also dies in the storm. Despite the tragedy, Toichubek and Chukobay survive until Japar and other villagers arrive to rescue them. The herders and remaining livestock are brought back to the village, where doctors treat the sick and exhausted shepherds, helping them recover from the freezing conditions.

Building Facilities in the Pasturelands After the loss of sheep and the death of a shepherd, the villagers gather and decide to improve life in the pasturelands. They plan to build warm sheds, living houses, a medical center, a small kitchen, a workshop, a radio center, and a Red House with books and newspapers. Two groups of young Komsomol members take the lead and build these facilities together. Now the herders can live and work without fear. In the spring of 1945, Jutabay, the village council secretary, brings a radio to Ornok. The villagers are amazed as it speaks, and they begin listening to news from Moscow about the war and political life.

Reunion and Victory One day in the school garden, a student named Satar notices a strange man—it is Mikola, who has come searching for his children. Unaware that Japar and Jamila have adopted them, he suddenly meets his daughter Lena, and they both burst into tears. Soon he sees Taras, who does not recognize him at first, but Lena gently tells him, "This is our father." Meanwhile, Jutabay arrives early at the kolkhoz office, and Japar joins him. When they turn on the radio, they hear the long-awaited news: the war has ended, and the Soviet Union has won. The villagers are filled with joy.

Victory Celebration and New Beginnings Victory Day is celebrated in the village with great joy. Mikola, Nurbay, and Japar, as Soviet soldiers, are placed in the place of honor, and people warmly congratulate one another. Traditional games such as wrestling and horse competitions are held. At the same time, some women quietly weep, remembering those who did not return from the war. Aisha visits the village, and she and Mikola grow close. The elders encourage Mikola to stay in the village and not return to Ukraine, seeing him as part of their community. However, Aisha soon leaves for Frunze. Understanding their feelings, the villagers later send Mikola to Frunze as well, where he can study and reunite with Aisha.

Peaceful Life on the Shores of Ysyk-Kol Jamila gives birth to a baby boy, bringing great joy to the family. Japar continues his work at the school, while Toichubek and Burulcha are overjoyed to have a grandson. Meanwhile, soldiers begin to return from the war. Baltabay comes back and joins the kolkhoz, sharing ideas on developing agriculture and introducing mechanization in farming and cattle breeding. Soon after, Asan also returns and reunites with his fiancée Aisuluu, who has become a truck driver. Life in the kolkhoz gradually becomes peaceful and stable, and on the shores of Ysyk-Kol, the villagers continue building their future together.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Japar

Japar is constructed as a “front-and-rear” hero: first a disciplined Soviet scout, then a disabled veteran who proves his value through labor and leadership rather than physical strength. His amputation becomes the central test of identity and dignity, he fears losing Jamila, but redirects pain into service. Back home he rejects a comfortable appointment and chooses the most underdeveloped kolkhoz, Ornok, showing a moral code built on responsibility, not personal benefit. As a principal and organizer, he is pragmatic (calculates harvest yields, plans logistics) and persuasive (talks reluctant households into work), making him the novella’s model of postwar rebuilding.

Resilience Japar’s most striking trait is his extraordinary resilience in the face of physical and emotional suffering. After being seriously wounded in battle, he undergoes a painful leg amputation. This disability could have destroyed him, especially when Jamila’s silence makes him fear she will reject him. Instead of becoming bitter or withdrawing from society, Japar transforms his pain into determination. Returning home on crutches, he refuses an easy position in his parents’ kolkhoz and deliberately chooses the poorest and most remote Ornok kolkhoz. He works tirelessly to repair the broken school, mobilizes villagers, and leads agricultural work despite his physical limitation. Through Japar, K. Bayalinov shows that postwar heroism is rooted in the ability to overcome personal tragedy and continue contributing to society.

Selflessness Japar is defined by a deep sense of duty and selflessness. Even before the war, as a Communist Party worker, he demonstrates strong responsibility. After returning as a disabled veteran, this quality becomes even more pronounced. When offered the comfortable post of school principal in his home kolkhoz Kenesh, he rejects it and asks to be sent to underdeveloped Ornok instead. This choice reveals his willingness to sacrifice personal comfort for the greater good. He works without seeking recognition, focuses on collective success, and puts the needs of the community above his own. Whether calculating harvest targets at night or convincing reluctant villagers to work, Japar consistently places Soviet ideals and the welfare of his people before his individual happiness. Bayalinov uses Japar to present the ideal postwar Soviet man — one who serves without complaint even after giving part of his body for the Motherland.

Organized Japar is highly organized and demonstrates outstanding leadership and organizational ability. Upon arriving at Ornok kolkhoz, he immediately begins transforming the neglected farm and school. He assesses the agricultural situation with a practical eye, calculating exact harvest yields and creating realistic plans to meet state quotas. He successfully mobilizes lazy or reluctant villagers, inspiring them through both criticism and encouragement, and even organizes nighttime work during the socialist competition.

As school principal, he repairs classrooms, registers children, and guides teachers. Even respected elders like Chukobay eventually recognize his superior ability to organize and motivate people.

Through this character, the novella emphasizes that strong and practical leadership was essential for the difficult task of postwar reconstruction in the Soviet Kyrgyz countryside.

Parallels between Japar and Voropaev

Japar in Kasymaly Bayalinov's *On the Shores of Ysyk-Kol Lake* and Voropaev in *Happiness* by the Soviet Russian writer Pyotr Pavlenko are shaped by the same postwar socialist-realist logic: the war does not end the hero's biography, but redirects it. Both men return from the front as amputees, and the wound becomes a decisive moral threshold. Each must answer the same question: whether a soldier, once physically "broken," can remain socially "whole." In both narratives the answer is affirmative, and it is proven not through speeches but through labor: the former soldier reenters civilian life and reveals his true scale as an organizer. The battlefield courage is thus continued in another form, as the courage to rebuild, to plan, to discipline oneself, and to mobilize others.

At the same time, Bayalinov's version of the story gives the plot a more concrete everyday texture and sharper social conflicts. Japar's postwar life is closely tied to Kyrgyz rural reality: the Ysyk-Kol landscape, village customs, family rituals, wedding traditions, and even the folk story of Barpan Baatyr, which connects local heroic memory with Soviet ideas of continuity. His leadership is shown through practical tasks such as repairing a broken school, calculating harvest yields, persuading people who refuse to work, and choosing a remote, underdeveloped kolkhoz instead of an easier position.

The personal side is also more developed. Japar's emotional struggle is stronger because of Jamila's silence and Chongmurun's deception, so he has to rebuild not only the kolkhoz but also trust and family stability.

In contrast, Pavlenko's Voropaev is presented as a model Soviet hero. In this way, both characters represent similar Soviet-era ideals, but Bayalinov shows them in a more local, detailed, and emotionally personal setting.

Jamila

Jamila represents a "new-time" Kyrgyz woman whose personal life is shaped by education and social mobility. Her key trait is sincerity: she trusts people, which makes her vulnerable to manipulation and rumor. The conflict around Chongmurun tests her loyalty and independence: she is pressured by promises of admission and by social gossip, yet ultimately draws a firm boundary, refuses being "claimed," and returns to her own path. As a teacher she becomes a symbol of the future: registering children, convincing them to study, and using the map lesson to connect village children to a wider homeland.

Trusting Jamila displays a deeply trusting nature, making her vulnerable to manipulation. Despite loyal friend Aisha warning her about Chongmurun's dishonest intentions, Jamila hesitates to believe the truth behind the rumors. She allows herself to be swayed by the false promise of educational advancement in Frunze rather than listening to those who care. Her naivety is not stupidity but a genuine belief that people generally act with honest motives. When Chongmurun deceives her into thinking they are secretly married, she initially doubts her own safety instead of accusing him immediately. This trust becomes the central conflict of her journey, as she learns to protect herself while still keeping her heart open to love after escaping danger.

Loyal Despite separation for years, Jamila remains loyal to Japar and refuses to change her engagement. When Chongmurun tries to replace Japar through coercion and lies, Jamila refuses to betray her fiancé's promise. She values commitment more than convenience or a quick marriage. Her letters show she waits patiently for his return regardless of his injury or disability status. This loyalty is heavily tested when he stops replying after becoming disabled, yet she responds once realizing the misunderstanding. Her steadfastness proves her love is not based on his military glory but on their deep bond. She stays true even when friends suggest moving on.

Courageous Jamila shows courage when faced with Chongmurun's trickery in Frunze. Instead of accepting the role of a wife to save face, she rejects the lie. She stands up for her truth against a man who uses social influence to silence her voice. This moment highlights her inner strength after weeks of confusion. She chooses honesty over comfort when the hosts prepare a shared bed for them as if they are already married.

Her refusal saves her reputation. She understands that staying silent would mean losing her self-respect. By confronting him directly, she protects her relationship with Japar from destruction. Her bravery ensures she never surrenders her dignity to anyone trying to control her future.

Mikola Ivashenko

Mikola is Japar's wartime double and moral mirror: both are scouts, both face atrocity, but Mikola's personal wound is family separation under occupation. His arc moves from uncertainty and fear for his wife and children to liberation and reunion. When he later appears in the Kyrgyz village searching for his children, he expands the novella's idea of Soviet brotherhood: an outsider becomes "one of us." Mikola embodies the war's human cost and the possibility of restoration after loss.

Loyal Mikola displays unwavering loyalty to both his comrades and his own family. During the war, he serves alongside Japar as a scout, relying completely on his friend's survival skills while facing constant danger. Their bond is forged through shared hardship and mutual respect. Even after the front line ends, his loyalty shifts to his private life. When he learns his Ukrainian village is liberated, he prioritizes reuniting with his wife and children above all else. He writes letters to Japar to share this joy, maintaining the friendship built in battle. Later, when searching for his children in Kyrgyzstan, he acts out of devotion rather than obligation. This quality makes him a stable figure in the story, proving that true strength lies in keeping promises to friends and family despite the chaos of war.

Persistent His journey toward happiness is driven by unyielding persistence in finding his children. After years of separation caused by the conflict and occupation, Mikola refuses to accept that he may never see his son and daughter again. He asks every student and villager he meets if they know anything about a child named Lena or Taras. When a boy named Satar recognizes him, Mikola holds onto that hope until the reunion occurs. He remains calm and patient even when the children initially do not remember him. His determination ensures that the tragedy of lost families is resolved. This trait highlights that healing from war requires time, effort, and an active search for what was taken away.

Adaptable Mikola quickly adapts to life in the Kyrgyz village after leaving the battlefield. Instead of remaining a distant visitor from Ukraine, he integrates into the kolkhoz and becomes accepted as a local resident. The elders encourage him to stay rather than return home, and he willingly accepts this new community role. He forms a relationship with Aisha and participates in village activities like celebrations and work projects. Even when he eventually leaves for Frunze to study, it is done with the full support of his friends in Ornok. This flexibility shows that rebuilding peace involves making room for others in your life. By embracing the Kyrgyz way of living, he transforms from a foreign soldier into a beloved member of the household.

Chongmurun

Chongmurun is the main antagonist, but notably not political; he is an everyday villain: stylish, persuasive, and predatory. His method is social deception: he exploits Jamila's educational ambition, pretends to be connected, and tries to trap her through a forced "wife" narrative in Frunze. He represents urban opportunism and the dangers of rumor, status, and manipulation in wartime uncertainty.

Deceptive Chongmurun relies heavily on deception to achieve his goals. He tells lies about being Japar's friend and claims powerful friends can help Jamila enter an institute. When in Frunze, he introduces Jamila as his wife, creating a false reality where strangers believe they are married. This trickery corners her into submission by making resistance seem impossible. He hides his true intentions behind a smile and expensive clothes, ensuring people spread rumors instead of telling the truth. His entire existence is built on layers of falsehoods designed to control others without their consent.

Manipulative He understands human weakness and uses it against those who care about education. Jamila wants to study, so he promises connections to the rector that do not exist. He plants seeds of doubt in her mind by claiming her loyal friend Aisha is jealous of him. By mixing half-truths with outright lies, he isolates Jamila from her support system. He manipulates social situations, such as forcing them onto a trip where

she cannot easily escape. His ability to twist conversations allows him to appear helpful while actually working toward selfish ends.

Predatory Chongmurun views women not as partners but as possessions to be acquired through charm and force. He targets Jamila because she is vulnerable due to war separation and no parents. In the house in Frunze, the setup of the shared bed confirms his goal was conquest. Even when rejected publicly, he remains aggressive rather than respectful of boundaries. His style serves as camouflage for a hunter who enjoys the chase more than the relationship itself. Unlike Japar who builds a life through honest work, Chongmurun seeks short-term gain at the expense of another person's dignity.

Toichubek

Toichubek anchors the traditional and labor foundation of the story. As a kolkhoz head and pasture overseer, he represents continuity, discipline, and intergenerational duty. His letters and concerns reinforce the ethic of endurance: war service and rear labor are part of the same obligation. His presence in the snowstorm episode also shows the harsh reality of pastoral life and the need for modernization (warm shelters, medical points).

Steadfast Toichubek stands as an unshakable pillar of the community, embodying discipline and endurance. As a kolkhoz chairman and father to Japar, he maintains strict order despite the war's chaos, reinforcing the idea that protecting the homeland requires both battlefield bravery and rear labor. His steadfastness is evident in his letters to Japar, where he urges courage and duty, and in his survival during the snowstorm in the pastures without losing composure. Toichubek's life reflects a continuous ethic of duty, bridging the old generation's strength with the new Soviet society. His unwavering nature provides stability for his village and his son during uncertain times, making him a symbol of resilience and tradition.

Responsible Toichubek carries his leadership role with deep seriousness as head of Kenesh kolkhoz. Managing vast fields and overseeing herders demands constant attention and foresight. When Japar requests grain for the struggling Ornok kolkhoz, Toichubek carefully weighs the needs of his own community before making a decision. His sense of responsibility is further demonstrated during the snowstorm, where he faces pastoral dangers yet remains steadfast in ensuring safety. He recognizes that modernization, such as building better shelters, is essential for survival, supporting these changes without abandoning tradition. This responsible leadership keeps the kolkhoz functioning smoothly even as young men fight at the front, earning the respect and reliance of his workers.

Protective Toichubek acts as a guardian for his son and workers. When Japar chooses difficult work in Ornok, his father voices worry about the danger. In the snowstorm, he risks his health visiting herders, prioritizing their survival. He welcomes strangers like Aisha into his home safely, showing trust in his community. His instinct extends beyond family to anyone under his charge. This ensures that while the village moves toward modernization, no one is left behind. He cares deeply for everyone's well-being during these transitional years. His support helps Japar succeed despite physical challenges.

THEMES

Education: Liberation and Hope In the postwar Kyrgyz countryside, the schoolhouse stands not just as a building of wood and chalkboards, but as a symbol of liberation, a place where the shadows of the past are replaced by the light of knowledge. For generations, children had known only the strict discipline of mullahs and the harsh realities of rural life, where learning was a privilege, not a right. But now, under Soviet rule, education is reimagined as a path to progress, a tool to break the cycle of ignorance and poverty. And at the heart of this transformation is Japar, the war veteran turned school principal, who sees the ruined school in Ornok not as a burden, but as a sacred duty.

Ornok's school is a far cry from the grand institutions of Przhevalsk or Frunze. It is remote, its wooden walls weathered by wind and time, its desks splintered, its windows cracked, its floorboards worn smooth by generations of restless feet. The roof leaks when the rains come, and the blackboard is faded, its chalk lines barely visible. Yet this broken building is more than a structure, it is a promise. And Japar, walking on crutches, knows that promise must be kept.

He does not wait for permission. He does not issue orders from a distance. Instead, he approaches the village elders, two men whose hands are still strong from years of herding and labor. He speaks to them not as a superior, but as a son of the land, a man who has fought and bled for this place. He tells them of the future: of children who will no longer fear the rod of a mullah, of girls who will learn to read and write, of boys who will drive tractors instead of tending sheep.

The elders listen. They recall their own childhoods, times when knowledge was hoarded, when teachers were feared, when the only book in the village was the Quran. But now, they see, the world has changed. And so must they.

Repairs begin. Broken desks are mended. Windows are patched. The roof is reinforced. But there is one thing Japar cannot fix with his own hands: the books. The district center holds the keys to knowledge, and the books are not freely given. They must be requested, justified, accounted for. Each volume is registered, its condition noted, its return date stamped. To Kojobek, the hesitant teacher, Japar entrusts the task: go to the district center. Bring back the books. Not as favors, but as rights.

Illustrative moment: On crutches, Japar entered Ornok's school and saw broken desks, torn doors, and cracked windows. No one could help: the carpenter and blacksmith were in the fields. He went to two old men and spoke about the children's future, and they agreed to repair the room. When the school year neared, Kojobek asked Japar to go to the district center for new books, each to be issued and registered. Jamila walked from house to house enrolling pupils. One boy resisted, dreaming of factory work, until she persuaded him. On the first day she opened a map of the Soviet Union. She points to a red star on the map. "This is where we are. And this—" her finger moves to Moscow, then to Frunze, then to Przhevalsk—"is where we belong."

War: Human Cost and Moral Reckoning In K. Bayalinov's *novel*, war is depicted not merely as a backdrop for heroism but as a profound moral reckoning that tests the conscience of every soldier. While Japar and Mikola succeed as scouts through discipline and bravery, earning decorations like the Red Star and Order of Glory, their true burden lies in witnessing irreversible destruction.

The most harrowing moment occurs during a reconnaissance mission in a German-occupied village, where a trembling local civilian reveals the corpse of a young child wrapped in cloth. This encounter shifts the narrative focus from military tactics to human grief; Japar immediately orders combat engineers to dig a grave, transforming a routine operation into an act of restorative dignity amidst devastation. He recognizes that humanity must be preserved even in enemy territory, proving that morality survives conflict.

Beyond physical violence, the war inflicts deep psychological scars on those who survive. Mikola Ivashenko's heroism is permanently shadowed by the terror of separation; despite his bravery at Khalkhin Gol and Finland, he cannot silence his agonizing fear for his wife and children left behind in Ukraine.

Similarly, Talyp's tragic arc culminates not in battle but in a hospital bed, where he calmly accepts death as destiny and entrusts Japar with a final letter to his fiancée, Aisha, ensuring his love outlives him.

Even Japar's journey reflects this heavy cost; his severe wound and subsequent amputation force a painful redefinition of self-worth, as he initially fears disability will sever his ties to love and social duty. Letters from home become fragile lifelines, carrying both joy and the crushing weight of silence when replies are delayed. Ultimately, the novel refuses to sanitize the meaning of Victory. While the village celebrates the Soviet triumph, the narrative acknowledges silent mourning, noting how some women quietly weep for neighbors who never returned.

Illustrative moment: In the hospital ward Japar saw Talyp, pale and wasted from his wounds. Talyp asked him to sit closer and dictated a last letter to Aisha, choosing each word carefully. He did not complain or ask for pity. He only said that he would not return and that this was his fate, and he wanted Aisha to know he had thought of her until the end. Japar wrote, stopping when Talyp's breathing grew shallow. When the letter was finished, Talyp lay back, his eyes fixed on the ceiling. By morning his bed was empty, and Japar folded the paper and kept it.

Homefront: Rear Labor as a Second Front The novel argues that the war is fought in two places at once: on the battlefield and in the rear. While soldiers like Japar and Mikola risk their lives at the front, the villages around Issyk-Kul must still feed the country. The kolkhoz cannot pause because men have left; instead, it must sow, cut hay, harvest grain, and meet strict state deliveries. These tasks are framed as a "second front," where failure is also dangerous; grain shortages threaten the army, livestock losses weaken the economy, and disorder undermines morale.

When Japar returns from the hospital with one leg, the narrative shifts the meaning of heroism. He does not ask for pity and does not accept a comfortable appointment in his home kolkhoz. Instead, he chooses the poorest and most remote place, Ornok, where the school is broken, workers are exhausted, and many households avoid kolkhoz duties. His disability does not remove him from struggle; it relocates him into the rear's everyday battle for organization. He studies figures, calculates yields, and turns abstract plans into practical details: carts, hot meals, threshing tools, and a machine. The rear is shown as a space of shortages, where even books are locked away in cupboards and field work consumes every skilled hand, from carpenters to blacksmiths.

The novel also portrays how labor discipline is created socially. Meetings expose those who avoid work, wall newspapers shame idlers, and persuasion matters as much as orders. Japar speaks directly to reluctant villagers and convinces them to join the harvest, showing that leadership in the rear depends on trust and argument, not force alone. Socialist competition between Ornok and the stronger Kenesh kolkhoz provides a motivating framework: the desire to win pushes people to work at night under moonlight and to mobilize schoolchildren and elders. When the remote kolkhoz finally wins, the victory is moral proof that collective effort can overcome backwardness. In the end, the novel presents rear labor as the foundation of wartime endurance and postwar recovery, where ordinary hands become decisive weapons.

Illustrative moment: At night Japar sat with Chukobay and the accountant and wrote down the kolkhoz figures: 270 hectares of crops and 1,400 centners to deliver, plus an old debt. He calculated that careful harvesting could still bring about 2,700 centners, but only if there were no losses. The next day Chukobay reported that dozens of households refused to work. Japar went to them, argued, and persuaded them to join the harvest. He then visited his father Toichubek and asked for three centners of wheat to feed the workers. When district officials found uncut wheat, the whole village worked through the night.

Deception and the Exploitation of Vulnerability Chongmurun's actions highlight a theme that is not about politics or military conflict, but about moral danger on the home front. In wartime society, when people are separated, anxious, and hungry for good news, trust becomes fragile—and Chongmurun turns that fragility into a weapon. He exploits Jamila's most sincere desire, education, by pretending he has "connections" and presenting himself as Japar's friend. His deceit shows how easily ambition can be manipulated when official systems feel distant and difficult, and when young women lack protection and reliable information.

At the same time, Chongmurun represents the threat of reputation-based control. By introducing Jamila as his "wife" in Frunze, he tries to trap her through social pressure: if others accept the lie, her dignity and future choices become harder to defend. The novel thus exposes a daily form of violence; coercion through gossip, shame, and forced roles rather than open force.

Illustrative moment: Chongmurun met Jamila in Przhevalsk and pretended to be Japar's friend. He promised he could help her enter the institute and persuaded her to go with him to Frunze. There he brought her to a friend's house and introduced her as his wife. The old woman and the young woman believed him and prepared one bed for the "married" couple. Jamila immediately said she was not his wife and refused the arrangement. The hosts then recalled how Chongmurun had once brought another girl the same way and been publicly shamed when she left. That day Jamila received Japar's letter and broke away from Chongmurun.

Parenting: Adoption During World War II, the Soviet rear in Central Asia became not only a labor region but also a place of refuge. Many women and children were evacuated from western parts of the USSR to Kyrgyzstan and neighboring republics. They often arrived hungry, sick, or separated from their families. Many children became orphans or lost contact with their parents. A well-known example from Kyrgyz historical memory is Toktogon Altybasarova, a Kyrgyz woman who is remembered for sheltering and raising about 150 evacuated children from blockaded Leningrad. Her experience reflects a broader wartime reality, where ordinary people, especially women, took responsibility for protecting and raising displaced children.

Against this historical background, the novel's adoption episode gains a deeper meaning. When Japar and Jamila take in Mikola Ivashenko's children, this act is not only personal kindness. It also reflects wartime solidarity and the Soviet idea of the "friendship of peoples." The children are someone else's children, but they are fed, protected, and raised within a Kyrgyz household and treated as full members of

the family and community. In this way, adoption becomes a response to one of the most painful results of war, which is the breaking of family ties and the loss of parents.

The later reunion strengthens this theme. Adoption does not erase the children's real origin or identity. Instead, it preserves them and keeps them alive until their father returns. When Mikola meets Lena and Taras again, the scene shows both the success and the tragedy of wartime solidarity. Strangers were able to save and raise the children, but the emotional wound of separation still remains.

The novel suggests that rebuilding after the war is not measured only in agricultural output, state quotas, or repaired schools. It is also measured in restored human lives, reunited families, and renewed bonds between different peoples within the Soviet Union.

Illustrative moment: A student, Satar, notices a strange man near the garden and runs to the school. Mikola stands at the gate, looking around, tense and unsure. Lena comes closer, studies his face, and suddenly begins to cry. "Father," she says, and rushes to him. Mikola drops to his knees and holds her, shaking. Taras appears behind her and stares, not recognizing the man. Lena turns to her brother and whispers, "This is our father." Taras steps forward slowly. Japar and Jamila watch in silence as Mikola gathers both children into his arms.

Idealism In the story of Japar and Jamila, idealism is not a vague concept but a series of concrete, physical actions taken to rebuild a shattered world.

For Japar, idealism is not found in big speeches. It is found in the sound of his crutches on the floor of a broken school. He came home from the war with only one leg and could have taken an easy desk job in the city. Instead, he chooses to work in Ornok, a poor village where the school has no principal and many broken windows. He refuses to let his injury stop him from helping. He fixes broken desks and shows the village elders that the future of their children is worth the hard work.

Jamila has this same spirit. She does not just wait for the world to get better on its own. She walks from house to house to bring children back to their books and their studies. When she stands in the classroom and shows them a map of the world, she is giving them hope for a bigger and brighter life.

The whole village follows their example. The people of Ornok harvest wheat together at night under the moon. They believe that by working as one, they can overcome their poverty. They also build strong shelters in the mountains so that the shepherds stay safe from the cold snow. Japar and Jamila show their love by adopting the children of their friend Mikola. By taking in these orphans, they prove that people from different lands can truly be one family. Idealism here is about working hard through the storm and believing that the next generation will finally enjoy the peace.

Illustrative moment: Japar stands in the doorway of the Ornok school, his crutches sinking into mud. Desks are overturned, the roof leaks light. He does not turn away. Moving forward deliberately, he runs his hand along splintered wood, imagining children learning here. That evening, he approaches two elderly men. "If we want a better future for our children, we must rebuild this school." Something in his quiet certainty moves them. The next morning, hammers fill the air. Carpenters and blacksmiths work alongside the old men. By the time Jamila arrives to teach, the desks are straight, the windows whole. His crutches lean against the wall, a small gesture holding the entire meaning of idealism.