

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

Feruza Shermatova-Omerani, Ph.D.

Kurman's Valley / Kurman Jylga (1958)

Kasymaly Bayalinov (1902-1979)

Reference:

Kasymaly Bayalinov. *Collection of Works*. Volume IV. Edited by N. Yysaeva. – Bishkek: Imak-Offset, 2015. – 496 pages. – (Reader's Bookshelf Series).

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 Soviet 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* (*Baktyluu 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.

Novella Written in 1958 and published in 1960, the novella *Kurman's Valley* follows the principles of socialist realism from the Soviet period. The story does not directly praise Soviet rule. Instead, it criticizes the old feudal system and portrays injustice and class oppression. The wealthy leaders are depicted as corrupt, while Kurman and Aisuluu represent justice, education, and resistance. In this way, the novella indirectly supports Soviet ideology by rejecting feudalism and emphasizing social progress.

Background In Kyrgyz culture, there is a well-known saying: "Suluu kyz, kuluk at jana algyr kush eldin bailygy." This means "A beautiful girl, a fast horse, and a skilled hunting bird are the wealth of the nation." The proverb shows that in traditional nomadic life, people valued honor, beauty, strength, and skill more than money or material things.

In this idea is seen in the characters. Aisuluu represents the “suluu kyz” (beautiful girl). She is not only beautiful, but also intelligent, educated, brave, and dignified. She is not a passive character; she stands for honor and resistance. At the same time, her story shows that beauty and virtue can be both valued and put in danger in a society ruled by power and greed.

Kurman’s horse, Toru Kashka, represents the “kuluk at” (fast horse). In Kyrgyz culture, a horse is more than an animal, it is a friend, a symbol of freedom, and a source of pride. The horse also represents Kurman himself: strong, loyal, and noble. When Myrzabek tries to take the horse, it is not only about property, but about power and control.

The hunting dog Jolbors, and the hunting bird in the proverb, represent the “algyr kush” (skilled hunter). In Kyrgyz tradition, hunting with birds like eagles is an important and respected practice. It represents independence, survival, and a close connection to nature. Kurman’s relationship with his dog and his hunting skills show his link to this way of life.

Through these examples, the story turns the proverb into a sad story. The true “wealth” of the nation: good people, strong animals, and noble values, is destroyed or threatened by greed and injustice. Kurman is killed, Aisuluu suffers and is forced to leave, and even the horse becomes a symbol of loss. The story shows that when a society cannot protect its true values, it loses not only people, but also its moral strength.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Kurman – Protagonist; son of hunter Chortek

Aisuluu – Kurman’s beloved wife; educated woman

Jumagul – Postman and narrator; protector of Kurman

Chortek – Kurman’s father; hunter

Altynay – Kurman’s mother

Myrzabek – Landowner; symbol of injustice and feudal power

Alangkoz – Supporter of Myrzabek

Borbuk Moldo – Mullah

Kerimbek – Aisuluu’s father

Otunchu (Muradyl) – Servant of Myrzabek

Toru Kashka – Kurman’s horse

Jolbors – Kurman’s dog

SYNOPSIS

Kurman’s Valley is a tragic and powerful novella set in the Kyrgyz mountains, told through the memories of the old postman Jumagul during a winter journey with the author.

The story begins with a contrast between the harsh, frozen winter landscape and the lively, beautiful summer pastures. As they travel, Jumagul shares the tragic history of a brave young man named Kurman.

Kurman, the son of a poor hunter named Chortek, grows up strong, intelligent, and fearless. Unlike many villagers, he questions ignorance and injustice. He challenges a dishonest mullah, learns from a progressive teacher, and becomes known for his bravery, fairness, and skill, especially with his loyal horse Toru Kashka and his hunting dog Jolbors.

Kurman falls in love with Aisuluu, an educated and strong-willed young woman. However, the greedy and powerful rich man Myrzabek desires both Kurman’s horse and Aisuluu. When Kurman refuses to submit, conflict grows between justice and oppression.

Despite village support, Myrzabek and his allies plot against Kurman. Eventually, Kurman is ambushed and murdered. The village mourns deeply. Jumagul is falsely accused but later cleared when the truth comes out.

Aisuluu, devastated but courageous, takes revenge. Disguised at night, she frightens and injures her enemies. Myrzabek is wounded, Alangkoz dies confessing his guilt, and justice slowly emerges. Afterward, Aisuluu leaves the village with Kurman’s horse and dog. Later it is said she died fighting in World War II.

SCENES

A Winter Day in the Mountain Pastures In a cold winter day, the narrator travels toward mountain shepherds with an old postman. The weather is harsh, with freezing wind and snow. The postman rides a strong horse and carries newspapers in a leather bag. The journey recalls summer days in the same highlands. In summer, the pastures are green, filled with flowers, streams, birds, and insects. Animals grow fat, and shepherds are happy, welcoming guests with hospitality like *kymyz*, fermented mare's milk and lamb meat.

The Postman's Journey and the Return of a Lost Son While riding on horseback, the narrator reflects on the progress of his country: modern cities, villages, roads, vehicles, and airplanes. He feels joy not only from these developments but also from newspapers carried by an old postman reaching ordinary herders, who now discuss world and local news. The postman, named Jumagul, shares a tragic past. During the 1916 Kyrgyz uprising, he lost his only son and wife while fleeing to China. After years of hardship and labor, he eventually returns home and finds his lost son, feeling as if he has come back to life. Now he works as a village postman, contributing to the collective farm and society.

Reflections on the High Pastures The narrator recalls meeting Aziz and his father Jumagul, a postman, during a summer stay in the high mountain pastures. They visited herders, drank kumis, and spent time in traditional settings. One memory stands out: two stallions fighting and nearly breaking the fence until a herder separated them with a lasso. Lost in thought, the narrator falls behind on the road. Jumagul calls him to hurry, reminding him they are close to Kurman Valley, where the collective farm's sheep spend the winter. The journey continues through familiar mountain paths, filled with memories and the quiet rhythm of rural life.

Jumagul Tells the Story of Kurman's Valley The narrator remembers hearing the full story of "Kurman's Valley" from Jumagul last year. He regrets not visiting the valley earlier. When the old man mentions Kurman's Valley, the memory of that story returns. Such stories are not only found in Kyrgyz literature but also in the literature of other Central Asian peoples. The narrator decides to share the old man's story with readers, hoping to preserve a memory of the difficult past. He wants to show an image of earlier times and pass it to future generations as a lesson and reminder.

The Tragic Life of Kurman Jumagul begins a painful story he once avoided sharing. Remembering it makes him feel like a heavy dark cloud covers his life, but today's happy world gives him some relief and hope. He speaks about Kurman, a strong and handsome young man from the past. Kurman was brave and free, growing up alone in the mountains. He never feared hardship or death. Jumagul wonders if this freedom shaped his fearless nature. Kurman represented the tragic fate of young people in earlier times, who could not live freely or choose their loved ones.

Kurman's Childhood Kurman was the only surviving son of a poor hunter named Chortek and his wife Altynay. They lived in the mountains, where Chortek trapped animals and survived a hard life. Although uneducated, Chortek was a wise man. Because he wanted a better future for his son, he sent Kurman to study with a teacher in the village. Kurman was about ten years old then—calm, smart, and kind. Jumagul knew Kurman as a cheerful child who loved horses and often rode with joy. People in the village believed he would grow into a brave and strong man.

Kurman's Difficult School Days In winter, Kurman studied with other children at Borbuk Mullah's school. His father, Chortek, regularly brought game meat as payment, thinking it would help his son's education. However, the teacher was more interested in the food than truly teaching Kurman.

Kurman returned home each day sad and quiet, and he grew thinner and weaker. The narrator suspected he was being mistreated but did not understand the full truth at the time. One day, Kurman came home injured, with a bandaged finger and rough, damaged hands. When asked, he stayed silent, showing how difficult and unfair his life at school had become.

Kurman's Education and Growth Kurman silently obeyed the unfair mullah Borbuk, who believed poor children did not need education and made them work instead. His father Chortek, a brave man, learned the truth and angrily took Kurman away from the madrasa.

Later, a kind young teacher from Almaty named Abdyrahman arrived in the village and began teaching children properly. At first, Kurman's parents doubted him, but Jumagul convinced them to give education another chance. Kurman studied while staying with Jumagul. He proved to be intelligent and quick to learn, soon reading and writing fluently, far surpassing what he had learned in the old madrasa.

Kurman Challenges the Mullah The mullah was a strict and dishonest man who misled people and lived off their charity and funeral rituals. He explained an earthquake by saying the world rests on a mythical ox, and when it moves its horns, the earth shakes. People listened in confusion, unsure whether to believe him. During a powerful earthquake that caused great destruction in 1911, Kurman unexpectedly challenged the mullah in front of the gathered crowd. He asked how such a huge earth could be held by an ox and what kind of creature it could be. His question shocked everyone and exposed the mullah's false teachings.

The Earthquake Debate After an earthquake, a mullah told villagers that the earth is carried by a great ox, supported by a turtle, and even smaller creatures like a black beetle and a mosquito-like insect help hold it up. People listened in confusion. Kurman calmly questioned this idea. He asked who supports the ox, what holds the turtle, and how such tiny insects could carry the heavy world. His logical questions made the crowd laugh and revealed the weakness of the story. The mullah became angry and ordered Kurman to leave, but Kurman defended truth and rejected false explanations in front of everyone.

Kurman, the New Teacher, and the Conflict Kurman was a sharp and brave boy who, if he had lived longer, could have become a great hero. Sadly, his life was cut short, and he disappeared like a fire that suddenly goes out. One of those responsible was Borbuk Mullah, who disliked Kurman and saw him as an enemy. He also opposed the new teacher Abdyrahman, who taught children properly and helped them learn to read and write in a short time. Because of Abdyrahman's success, villagers began to respect him instead of the mullah. Feeling threatened, Borbuk accused him falsely, and officials removed Abdyrahman from the village, leaving the children without proper education again.

The Rich Man and His Servants Myrzabek was a wealthy but greedy and selfish man who owned many sheep and horses. Despite his wealth, he was never satisfied and always wanted more. He had two servants, Kerimbek and Muradyl (called "Otunchu"). Kerimbek looked after the horses but lived poorly and lacked good food and clothing. Muradyl worked endlessly carrying firewood, water, and cleaning ash, so people called him "Otunchu." Muradyl was humble and accepted his hard life, while Kerimbek dreamed of a better future. Eventually, Kerimbek left the village with his family and moved to Tokmok town seeking a better life.

Chortek's Life Myrzabek had cruel and dangerous men, especially Alangkoz, who betrayed anyone for money. He once sent false reports about Abdyrahman teacher to the city and brought soldiers to the village and the teacher was taken.

The poorest man in the village was Chortek, Kurman's father. He owned only an old horse and lived a very simple life. Once, he exchanged his horse for a young colt, hoping it would grow strong in the future. Chortek also had a loyal dog named Kumaiyk, believed to be part wolf. From it, a pup named "Jol-bors" was born. He loved them deeply and lived as a humble mountain hunter.

Kurman's Clever Lesson When Kurman left school and returned home, he helped his parents Chortek and Altynay, whose only wealth was their animals. He also cared for them and often joined his father in hunting.

Jumagul and his wife treated Kurman like their own child and later moved near Chortek's home. Kurman spent his time training a young horse and a puppy with patience and care.

One day, he demonstrated an unusual way of calling his colt with a whistle instead of the usual call. When asked, Kurman explained that he was teaching the animal in a new way, proving his intelligence and creativity.

Kurman's Young Horse Chortek encouraged Kurman to continue training his animals, saying that what a child learns early becomes a habit for life. Kurman carefully raised both his colt and puppy, teaching them commands with patience. The animals grew up together and became inseparable.

After two years, the colt turned into a beautiful young horse, strong, fast, and graceful. Everyone admired its rare beauty. One day, at a village wedding with horse races, Kurman entered his horse in the competition. To everyone's surprise, the young horse outran all others and took first place, bringing excitement and pride to the crowd.

Kurman's Victory and Chortek's Worry During the horse race, Kurman's young horse showed great strength and speed. It ran confidently, breathing deeply and moving its legs powerfully as if ready to race again. The crowd admired the horse, saying such a fast and beautiful animal was rare. Kurman won first place, and they returned home with money and happiness. He ran inside excitedly to tell his father Chortek about the victory. However, Chortek did not feel only joy. He worried about jealousy, enemies, and possible harm, especially because poor people's success often attracts trouble from the powerful.

Chortek's Final Days Winter was coming, and Chortek moved to his mountain pasture. Jumagul stayed by the river but visited sometimes. Kurman also came to get food for his young horse. When spring arrived, Chortek became seriously ill after hunting in the cold. Strong and healthy before, he was now weak, coughing and lying in bed. He asked about Kurman and spoke sadly, feeling his end was near. He worried most about his wife Altynay and son Kurman. Jumagul tried to comfort him, saying he would recover, but Chortek believed he would not survive much longer.

Chortek's Last Wishes Chortek told Jumagul that only he could be trusted to care for his wife Altynay and son Kurman. Jumagul promised to protect them and raise Kurman as his own son. Before dying, Chortek called Kurman and gave him his last words. He said he had no wealth, only a horse named "Jolbors" and an old rifle from his father. He asked Kurman to keep them and continue his life as a brave man like his ancestors. A month later, Chortek died. He was buried on a hillside according to his last wish.

Kurman the Hunter Years passed and Kurman became a strong young man. His horse and hunting dog, Jolbors, grew powerful and well trained. The dog obeyed every command and acted almost like a human. Kurman now looked like a brave hunter. One autumn, he took Jumagul with him to hunt. They rode through mountains but saw no animals at first. At sunset, they finally found a group of deer. Kurman quietly prepared to attack, moving carefully behind rocks. His dog copied his movements perfectly. Jumagul was impressed by Kurman's skill, strength, and the close bond between him and his loyal hunting dog.

The Lost Dog's Return Jumagul watches Kurman hunt deer with his trained dog Jolbors. When Kurman shoots, a wounded deer runs away, and Jolbors chases it into the mountains. Night falls, and the dog disappears. Worried, Jumagul blames Kurman for releasing him too late. Kurman calmly keeps calling his dog, trusting he will return. After a long, silent night under the moon, Jolbors finally returns exhausted, injured, and bleeding from his paws. Both men are overjoyed. Kurman gently lifts his loyal dog, showing deep care and the strong bond between hunter and animal.

Jolbors's Hunt Jumagul and Kurman followed Jolbors after the injured deer. The dog slowly led them through mountains, valleys, and rocky paths. At last, they reached the place where the struggle had happened. A large deer lay dead near a cliff, its body covered with bite marks and blood. The ground was disturbed, showing a fierce fight. It was clear that Jolbors had caught and killed the deer alone after a long chase. The dog rested quietly, exhausted but proud. They gave him meat to eat and returned home carrying the hunted animal as their reward.

Kurman Wins the Race During a village festival, Kurman joined a horse race with his horse Toru Kashka. The narrator worried but watched closely. When the race began, dust rose and horses rushed forward. At first, people thought rich men's horses would win. But Kurman's horse suddenly appeared from the dust, running faster than all others. The crowd began shouting his name. Kurman surprised everyone by winning the race. He won the top prize of fifty sheep and money. Jumagul felt great joy and pride, but decided to share the reward fairly with Kurman.

Kurman's Honor and the Tamed Horse Kurman told Jumagul to share all the race prizes with the people so that everyone would be happy. He said reputation and respect were more valuable than wealth. Jumagul distributed everything fairly. After the festival, a young man tried to ride Kurman's horse, Toru Kashka, but the horse bit him and escaped, causing panic. Later, Kurman calmly stopped the horse by whistling. The horse, trained since foal hood, obeyed him instantly. The crowd was amazed and praised Kurman, calling the horse a legendary animal that understood its master's call and returned like magic.

The Demand for Kurman's Horse The next day, Myrzabek the rich man and his followers caught up with Jumagul and Kurman. He had lost in the race and now wanted Kurman's horse, Toru Kashka. Proudly, he told Jumagul to sell the horse, offering any price. Jumagul hesitated because the horse was Kurman's only inheritance from his father. Borbuk Mullah and others supported Myrzabek, pressuring Jumagul to agree. They insulted the horse and insisted it caused their shame. Jumagul refused, saying he could not sell the boy's only horse, as it was a sacred trust from his father.

Kurman Refuses to Sell His Horse Kurman was riding ahead with the boys when Alangkoz told him that Myrzabek wanted his horse. They tried to convince him to sell it, but Kurman refused firmly. He said the horse was his only companion and could not be sold. Borbuk Mullah also pressured him, but Kurman answered bravely and defended his father's memory. Myrzabek became angry and insulted Kurman, even threatening him with a knife. The situation turned violent, but Kurman stayed calm and strong on his horse. Jumagul quickly intervened and pulled Kurman away to prevent a serious fight from breaking out.

Kurman and Aisuluu Spring came brightly, and the mountains and valley turned green and lively. Jumagul brought Kurman and his mother Altynay down from the mountains to the valley to live more comfortably. The village was full of milk, butter, and new life from animals. Altynay had become weak and sick, and she often thought about her husband's last wish to see Kurman married. One day she asked Jumagul to help find a good girl for Kurman before she died. Jumagul suggested many girls from the village, but Kurman rejected them all. He remained quiet and thoughtful. Later, Kurman smiled and finally said the girl he liked was Aisuluu, surprising everyone around him.

Kerimbek's Hard Life and Aisuluu's Arrival Kerimbek had moved to Tokmok seeking a better life, but for a long time no one heard from him. Later, it turned out he had gone to Kara-Konguz and worked for a Chinese farmer in swampy fields called Shor-Dobo and Kroit-Kamysh. Life there was very hard, and his wife Ayjan became ill. They struggled for years, barely surviving on low wages. A Russian worker named Yegor later helped them move to Tokmok. Ayjan died there, and Kerimbek also became sick. Following a doctor's advice, he returned to his homeland. His daughter Aisuluu grew into a very beautiful and respectful girl, admired by everyone in the village.

Kurman and Aisuluu's Growing Bond Altynay and Aisuluu's late mother Ayjan were close relatives, almost like sisters. One day Altynay came with Kurman, carrying meat for a prayer at Ayjan's grave. She embraced Aisuluu and cried, remembering her sister. Kurman had not seen Aisuluu for many years. She was now a beautiful sixteen-year-old girl, and Kurman was about twenty-two. They looked at each other shyly, recalling childhood memories. Aisuluu played with Kurman's horse, admiring it and asking to ride it. Kurman gently helped her. An invisible affection began between them, though Jumagul only noticed it later. Rumors later said Aisuluu might marry Myrzabek.

Myrzabek's Desire for Aisuluu Myrzabek, blinded by wealth, wants to take another wife (*tokol*) in addition to his current ones. Aisuluu's beauty and good manners quickly reach Myrzabek, and he decides he wants her as a wife. His helper Alangkoz supports the idea. They plan to take advantage of Kerimbek's illness and poverty by first gaining his trust with food and kindness. They also think of sending him to the pastures so he can drink milk and eat good meat to treat his tuberculosis. After this, they plan to ask for Aisuluu. Myrzabek agrees and begins preparing his plan to get her.

Love, Knowledge, and Defiance Kurman's victory in the horse race made him famous and deepened Aisuluu's love. She could never accept becoming Myrzabek's *tokol* (second, third or fourth wife). Educated in Tokmok, Aisuluu had studied in a Tatar school and lived with a Russian teacher, learning to

read and write in both languages. She brought many books, opening Kurman's mind to new ideas about justice and inequality. Together they questioned why the rich ruled over the poor. Aisuluu spoke of revolutionaries who fought injustice. Meanwhile, Myrzabek secretly planned to take her, but Jumagul warned the young lovers to stay cautious and protect their future.

Deception and Self-interest It was late June, and people were moving to the summer pastures. Myrzabek held a large feast and invited everyone. Kerimbek did not want to go, but Jumagul persuaded him. People drank *kymyz*, and the host acted unusually cheerful. He seated Kurman beside him and pretended to forget past conflicts. Then the talk turned to Kerimbek. Alangkoz spoke of a sick man who recovered in the pastures. Myrzabek used this to invite Kerimbek, saying meat and *kymyz* would heal him. Encouraged by others, Kerimbek agreed, unaware that this kindness hid a calculated plan.

The Truth Revealed A few days later, Kerimbek moved to the summer pasture with Myrzabek. According to people who came and went, Kerimbek's condition seemed better; he was recovering with meat and *kymyz*. However, Jumagul still felt uneasy because he knew Myrzabek was greedy and cunning. He suspected that Myrzabek had his eyes on Kurman's horse and on Aisuluu. Soon, rumors spread that Myrzabek planned to marry Aisuluu, which caused suspicion and sadness. Later, Kerimbek came to Jumagul looking tired and upset, revealing that everything had actually been part of a hidden scheme.

Forced Marriage In the morning, Myrzabek's house was full of people drinking *kymyz*. Myrzabek pretended Kerimbek was an honored guest while secretly pursuing his plan. He announced that he wanted to marry Kerimbek's daughter Aisuluu. His followers supported him loudly. Kerimbek remained silent but strongly opposed it inside, knowing Myrzabek had harmed them in the past. It was clear Aisuluu would not agree either. Pressure increased from the crowd, but Kerimbek finally said he would only accept if his daughter agreed, showing that the decision belonged to her.

A Father and Daughter's Pain Myrzabek pretended to calm the situation after his failed plan, while Kerimbek was deeply distressed, unable to give his daughter away by force. Sitting alone by the river, Aisuluu came to him and hugged him, revealing she already knew the truth. She told her father not to suffer and promised to resist if needed. Kerimbek could not tell her everything, fearing to hurt her. Aisuluu's compassion moved him to tears. Father and daughter embraced, finding comfort in each other against their painful fate.

Kerimbek's Decision to Support Love Kerimbek came seeking advice from Jumagul. Jumagul told him that Kurman was an honest, brave young man deeply loved by Aisuluu. He explained that Myrzabek did not want to marry her out of love, but from selfish desire and control over wealth and status. Aisuluu's heart truly belonged to Kurman, and both young people wished to build a life together based on mutual respect and love. Hearing this, Kerimbek felt relieved and understood the truth of the situation. He accepted their love and realized forcing his daughter would bring suffering. In the end, Kerimbek and Jumagul agreed to support the young couple and stand against injustice together.

Night Games at the Wedding in the Highlands In the highlands, Jumagul, Kurman, and Koichuman attended a wedding where a girl was being married off. Kurman stayed because Aisuluu was expected to come to the evening games. After the daytime festivities ended, Jumagul decided to leave but returned when he became worried about Kurman being left alone. At night, the youth gathered and played a singing game. A boy who could not sing was mocked and given funny punishments, while everyone laughed loudly. The atmosphere was filled with joy, teasing, and traditional entertainment, reflecting village social life and customs.

Kurman and Aisuluu at the Wedding Game At the wedding games, Jumagul watched Aisuluu and Kurman carefully. They smiled, talked, and exchanged subtle signs, clearly sharing a deep connection and thinking about their future together. When Kurman's turn came, a girl handed him the ritual stick. He confidently stood up and sang a heartfelt song about love and finding his beloved. The crowd admired his courage and talent, and Aisuluu felt happy but shy. Kurman then placed the stick in front of her, symbolically choosing her. The gathering reacted with excitement. However, Jumagul worried that Aisuluu's reputation might be endangered and feared Myrzabek's possible reaction.

Aisuluu Is Taken Home Kurman entered the house calmly, while Jumagul waited outside anxiously, watching the evening pass. Inside, a young man was singing in the wedding game while holding the ritual stick, and the girls watched him closely, wondering to whom he would pass it. Kurman and Aisuluu secretly exchanged looks and understood each other. Suddenly, Myrzabek's men appeared from the hill. Aisuluu was taken home under the excuse of shame and tradition. Later, people said she was being prepared to marry Myrzabek. The news shocked everyone, as Myrzabek seemed determined to take her quickly for himself.

Kurman Marries Aisuluu Kurman married Aisuluu, and Jumagul felt both relief and concern. Myrzabek's reaction was expected to be dangerous. Aisuluu struggled emotionally because she did not want to leave her sick father Kerimbek behind. Jumagul suggested that the young couple should go to Tokmok to build a safer life. Aisuluu dreamed of freedom, education, and working together with Kurman. However, Kurman refused to abandon his family and his people, believing he had to stay with his community. Their situation reflected the conflict between love and responsibility, and their future remained uncertain but emotionally strong.

Village Unity and Kerimbek's Death Jumagul quickly mobilized the villagers and brought several families to protect Kurman and Aisuluu. The people united against Myrzabek and refused to accept his oppression anymore. Kurman, Aisuluu, and the elderly Koichuman moved to a safer place in the mountains. Myrzabek eventually disappeared, and peace slowly returned to the village. Meanwhile, Kerimbek was seriously ill and could only think about his daughter's happiness. After receiving news of Aisuluu and Kurman, he found some peace and soon passed away. Aisuluu cried deeply as she said goodbye to her father, and the village buried him with respect.

New Life in Kara-Jylga Valley and Growing Suspicion Kurman and Aisuluu had married and built a peaceful life together. Aisuluu also cared for Altynay with kindness, sharing daily duties. As winter approached, the family moved to Kara-Jylga, a suitable place for grazing and hunting. Jumagul helped by transporting their goods from the village. One day, Alangkoz appeared unexpectedly and acted suspiciously, raising concern. Aisuluu had learned to hunt with Kurman and lived a strong, independent life. However, Jumagul began to doubt Alangkoz's intentions and felt growing suspicion.

Kurman's Final Ride As Jumagul saw Kurman off, he warned him to be careful. Kurman replied that there was no need for fear and that one should live bravely. Later that night, Otunchu ran to Jumagul and informed him that Kurman was in danger. Alangkoz had informed Myrzabek, who sent his men to set an ambush. Jumagul quickly set off with Koichuman and Otunchu on horseback. They rode fast toward Kara-Jylga to rescue Kurman. Under the moonlight, they saw distant silhouettes, realizing danger was approaching.

Kurman's Injury and Tragic End Jumagul moved through the mountain path, sensing danger ahead. He called out for Kurman's dog, Jolbors, and followed its signs. Struggling over steep rocks, he descended quickly with fear growing in his heart. Soon he found Kurman badly injured, lying in blood. Aisuluu was crying beside him, while an old woman wailed in despair. Jumagul was struck with shock and fell to his knees, calling Kurman's name. At that moment, the village seemed frozen in silence. It was the most tragic moment of love, loss, and fate.

Kurman's Death and Deep Mourning When Jumagul arrived, Kurman was already dead. There was complete silence, only heavy grief in the air. Kurman had knife wounds and blood was still flowing. With deep sorrow, Jumagul covered the wounds and closed his face. Aisuluu cried bitterly, holding Kurman's head and screaming in pain. The old woman wailed, calling him "my child, my only one." Even the dog Jolbors stayed quietly beside him, as if mourning. The tragedy shocked the entire village. Jumagul understood who was responsible, but he had no strength to speak.

Kurman Is Buried Jumagul and Koichuman arrived after hearing of Kurman's death. The whole village had gathered in deep mourning. Aisuluu and Altynay were devastated. Even the dog Jolbors had stayed silently beside him. Jumagul saw chaos and grief spreading through the village. People cursed the

killers and cried without end. Aisuluu, broken with sorrow, spoke her final words for Kurman, and the villagers bid him farewell with heavy hearts.

False Accusation Jumagul witnessed the village mourning Kurman according to tradition. Aisuluu cried bitterly, expressing her grief in poetic words. The villagers cursed the killers. Soon after, rumors spread that Myrzabek was responsible for Kurman's death. When Jumagul voiced this accusation, Myrzabek demanded proof. The witness Otunchu had disappeared. Alangkoz then produced a knife as "evidence," shocking everyone. Jumagul recognized it as his own knife. Myrzabek accused him harshly and threatened exile to Siberia, and tension in the village grew.

Jumagul's Resistance, and Aisuluu's Support Jumagul was called outside by Borbuk Mullah and Alangkoz, who pressured him to stop accusing Myrzabek. They insisted that he himself was at fault and urged him to reconcile with Myrzabek instead of escalating the conflict. Jumagul became angry, realizing he had been trapped by false accusations. He thought carefully about his family and Aisuluu and chose patience over confrontation. He decided to find Otunchu to uncover the truth. Meanwhile, Myrzabek increased pressure by threatening Aisuluu. Jumagul expelled Alangkoz from his home and struggled with worry. Aisuluu comforted him, and together they resolved to stand against injustice.

Kurman's horse, Toru Kashka Jumagul woke up one night when a rider arrived at Kurman's house. To his surprise, it was Aisuluu. When she saw Kurman's horse, Toru Kashka, she burst into tears, and the horse itself seemed restless, as if searching for its owner. Altynay and others also came outside, and the scene turned into shared grief. Kurman's absence had deeply changed everyone. Aisuluu had become quiet and withdrawn, often riding out alone into the hills at night. Jumagul noticed a growing sense of revenge inside her. One day, she used a staged trap involving a scarecrow to revenge. Peace had slowly disappeared from the village.

Aisuluu's Plan After Kurman's death, Aisuluu is deeply worried. One day she comes to Jumagul and asks about Alangkoz's visit and Myrzabek's demand for a "bride price." Jumagul tries to hide the truth, but Aisuluu understands that Myrzabek intends to take her by force. Aisuluu is not afraid; instead, she begins to plan calmly and firmly. When Alangkoz arrives, Jumagul greets him politely, though tension is clear. Alangkoz tries to persuade Aisuluu, but she refuses. Still, she adds that if they truly force her into marriage, she feels she has no choice. Hearing this, Alangkoz quickly leaves. Afterwards, Jumagul becomes upset with Aisuluu, believing that she may eventually agree to Myrzabek out of her own will.

Fear and Anxiety That night, Jumagul is filled with fear and anxiety. Outside, a figure is first mistaken for Kurman's spirit, but it is later understood to be Aisuluu. She is wearing Kurman's clothes as part of a plan to protect herself and prepare for possible danger during the night. Without fearing Myrzabek and Alangkoz's pressure, she chooses to resist. Jumagul cannot believe what he sees at first, but then realizes the truth. The night passes with both fear and strong determination, as Aisuluu tries to protect her fate and face whatever may come.

Night Raid and Aisuluu's Resistance That night, Jumagul and his family were filled with fear and anxiety. After Aisuluu disappeared, everyone began searching for her. Suddenly, Myrzabek's men appeared. At that moment, Aisuluu came out dressed like Kurman's "spirit" and carried out her plan. With her dog beside her and great courage, she attacked and frightened the group, scattering them in panic. In the chaos and struggle, some people were injured. Jumagul, shocked by what was happening, saw Borbuk Mullah and Alangkoz lying wounded on the ground. That night was filled with fear, revenge, and a strong sense of justice.

Aisuluu's Revenge That night, chaos unfolds as Aisuluu appears like Kurman's "spirit" and takes revenge against Myrzabek and his men. Alangkoz and Borbuk Mullah are filled with fear and regret. Aisuluu acts with determination, scattering and punishing those who wronged her. After the conflict, Jumagul watches everything in shock. Aisuluu says she can no longer stay and prepares to leave. She takes Kurman's horse, dog, and weapons with her. During the farewell, deep sorrow surrounds everyone. Her mother and Jumagul say goodbye with tears. The night ends with both revenge and a painful farewell.

The Truth Revealed and the End of Revenge The next day, Myrzabek's men begin searching for Aisuluu. In the conflict, Myrzabek is badly injured, suffering wounds from bullets and dog attacks, while Aisuluu manages to escape. A bounty is declared across the region to capture her. Alangkoz's wounds become infected, and he dies in great suffering. Before his death, he confesses that he was deceived and involved in Kurman's murder, regretting his actions and saying that no one who sheds innocent blood escapes punishment. After the truth is revealed, Jumagul is also cleared of suspicion, avoiding possible punishment. Thus, the conflict finally comes to an end.

Kurman's Valley and the End of the Story Thus Jumagul finished telling the story. They arrived at Kurman's Valley, and the author asked him to show the place where Kurman was killed. Jumagul and the author gave newspapers and journals to the shepherds. The next day, a herders' festival was held at the village cultural center with people from different ethnic groups. A lecture on international relations and peace took place. The lecturer came from Frunze and his surname was Kurmanov. After the lecture, Jumagul asked if he was Kurman's son. He said no, but he had heard the story of Aisuluu and Kurman. He also mentioned that he had heard a woman named Aisuluu went to World War II and died there.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Kurman

Kurman is the central character of Kurman's Valley, representing the spirit of justice and resistance in a feudal society. As the son of the hunter Chortek, he grows up in the mountains, closely connected to nature and traditional nomadic life. His racing horse, Toru Kashka, symbolizes his freedom and pride, while his loyal hunting dog, Jolbors, reflects his deep bond with the natural world. These animals are not only companions but also extensions of his identity. Through his love for Aisuluu and his refusal to submit to Myrzabek's authority, Kurman embodies youthful courage and moral strength.

Brave Kurman shows bravery when he openly confronts Myrzabek and his supporters despite their power and influence in the village. During the conflict over his horse, he does not remain silent or submissive. Even when Myrzabek insults and threatens him with violence, Kurman stays calm and unafraid. He also demonstrates courage in public situations, such as the horse race and the wedding gathering, where social pressure is strong. His bravery is not reckless but moral; he is willing to risk his safety and life to protect his dignity, his love, and his rights against injustice.

Intelligent Kurman's intelligence becomes clear during the earthquake debate, when he questions the mullah's mythical explanation about the world resting on an ox and other creatures. Instead of accepting superstition blindly, he uses logic and reasoning. His openness to learning from the new teacher, Abdyrahman, also shows his intellectual curiosity. He quickly learns to read and write and begins to think critically about inequality and injustice. His relationship with Aisuluu, who brings books and new ideas, further develops his thinking. Kurman represents a new generation that values knowledge, education, and rational thought over ignorance.

Independent Kurman's independence is evident in his refusal to sell his horse, Toru Kashka, even under intense pressure from Myrzabek and the village elite. The horse is his inheritance and symbol of freedom, and he will not surrender it for money or fear. He also refuses to bow to feudal authority or accept unfair demands. When others try to control his future, especially regarding Aisuluu, he makes his own decisions. His independent spirit comes from his mountain upbringing and his father's example. He chooses self-respect over submission, even when resistance brings danger.

Loyal Loyalty defines Kurman's relationships. He is devoted to Aisuluu and remains faithful to her despite threats and social obstacles. He respects his parents, especially honoring his father's last wishes and protecting his family's legacy. His bond with his horse Toru Kashka and his dog Jolbors also shows emotional depth and responsibility. He trains and cares for them patiently, and they respond with trust and obedience. His loyalty is not only personal but also moral; he remains loyal to his values and to the idea of justice, never betraying those he loves or believes in.

Principled Kurman consistently acts according to strong moral principles. He believes in fairness, dignity, and truth, and he does not compromise these values even when facing powerful enemies. When he challenges the mullah's false teachings, he does so because he believes in honesty. When he refuses Myrzabek's demands, it is not out of pride alone but from a sense of justice. He understands the risks of opposing feudal authority, yet he chooses integrity over safety. His principled nature ultimately leads to his tragic fate, but it also makes him a moral hero within the story.

Aisuluu

Aisuluu is one of the central figures in Kurman's Valley, representing dignity, education, and resistance within a patriarchal and feudal society. Unlike many village girls, she receives education in Tokmok and learns to read and write, which shapes her critical thinking. She loves Kurman not only emotionally but intellectually, sharing ideas about justice and inequality. When Myrzabek attempts to force her into marriage, she refuses submission. After Kurman's death, she transforms her grief into action. Her courage, independence, and moral strength make her not only a tragic heroine but also a symbol of female agency and social awakening.

Courageous Aisuluu is courageous because she refuses to accept the role forced upon her by Myrzabek and his followers. In a society where a powerful man can pressure a poor family, she does not remain silent. She understands that the proposed marriage would destroy her freedom and dignity, so she resists it openly. Her courage becomes stronger after Kurman's death. During the night raid, she appears in Kurman's clothes like his "spirit" and frightens Myrzabek's men. Instead of hiding from violence, she faces danger directly and turns fear into self-defense and justice.

Educated Aisuluu is educated, and this makes her different from many women in her social environment. She studies in Tokmok, learns to read and write, and becomes familiar with new ideas through books. Her education helps her understand injustice, inequality, and the unfair power of the rich over the poor. She also influences Kurman by sharing knowledge with him and encouraging him to think more deeply about society. Because of her education, she does not blindly accept tradition or authority. She can judge events for herself and make conscious decisions about her life and future.

Determined Aisuluu is determined because she does not give up even when her situation becomes dangerous. When Myrzabek tries to force her into marriage, she does not accept defeat. Instead, she thinks carefully, observes the actions of her enemies, and prepares her own plan. After Kurman is killed, her determination becomes even stronger. She refuses to remain only a victim of grief. By disguising herself and confronting Myrzabek's men, she shows that she is ready to act. Her decision to leave with Kurman's horse, dog, and weapons also shows her refusal to surrender.

Loyal Aisuluu is loyal to Kurman both in life and after his death. Her love for him is not based only on emotion, but also on shared values, respect, and hope for a better future. She chooses Kurman despite the danger created by Myrzabek's power. After Kurman is murdered, she remains devoted to his memory and cannot accept the injustice done to him. Her grief turns into a desire to defend his honor. By taking Kurman's horse, dog, and weapons with her, she carries his memory forward and keeps her bond with him alive.

Jumagul

Jumagul is the narrator of *Kurman's Valley*, serving as the bridge between past and present. Through his memories, the tragic story of Kurman and Aisuluu is revealed. Having experienced hardship during the 1916 uprising and personal loss, Jumagul represents endurance and historical memory. He is closely connected to Kurman's family and acts as a protector and guide. As a postman, he symbolizes communication and social change, bringing newspapers and new ideas to remote villages. His perspective adds emotional depth to the story, and his reflections highlight the transformation of society over time.

Loyal Jumagul demonstrates loyalty throughout the story by standing firmly beside Kurman and Aisuluu despite the dangers involved. He supports their marriage even when Myrzabek tries to take Aisuluu

by force. When Chortek, Kurman's father, is dying, he asks Jumagul to care for his family, and Jumagul honors this promise completely. He treats Kurman like his own son, providing guidance and protection. He also helps unite the village to resist Myrzabek's oppression. His loyalty is not only personal but also moral; he remains faithful to justice and to those he cares about, regardless of the consequences or social pressure.

Wise Jumagul's wisdom comes from age, experience, and suffering. Having survived the 1916 uprising and personal tragedy, he understands how societies change and how power operates. As the narrator, he reflects thoughtfully on events, seeing connections between individual suffering and larger social forces. He recognizes Myrzabek's greed and Alangkoz's deception early on. He advises Kurman and Aisuluu carefully, understanding both the dangers they face and the limits of resistance. His role as postman also symbolizes his awareness of progress; he sees how education and communication can transform communities. His wisdom gives the story depth and historical perspective.

Protective Jumagul is deeply protective of those under his care, especially Kurman and Aisuluu. After Chortek's death, he takes responsibility for raising Kurman and ensuring his education. He warns the young couple about Myrzabek's schemes and tries to organize village support to defend them. When danger approaches, he rides quickly to rescue Kurman, though he arrives too late. After Kurman's murder, he continues protecting Aisuluu and comforting Altynay. His protective nature is not controlling but caring; he respects their choices while trying to shield them from harm. This quality reflects both personal love and moral responsibility.

Patient Jumagul shows remarkable patience throughout the story, especially when he is falsely accused of Kurman's murder. Instead of reacting violently or emotionally, he restrains himself and waits for the truth to emerge. When Myrzabek and Borbuk Moldo pressure him, he chooses careful words over confrontation. He understands that acting rashly could endanger Aisuluu and others. His patience is not weakness but strategic wisdom; he knows when to resist and when to endure. This patience also appears in his storytelling; he bears the painful memories and shares them thoughtfully to preserve truth for future generations.

Myrzabek

Myrzabek is the primary antagonist of *Kurman's Valley*, representing feudal oppression and greed. As a wealthy landowner, he holds significant power over the village and uses it to exploit others. Despite owning many sheep, horses, and servants, he is never satisfied and constantly desires more. His obsession with Kurman's horse, Toru Kashka, and his determination to take Aisuluu as a wife reveal his belief that wealth entitles him to control people and property. Myrzabek symbolizes the corrupt feudal elite who maintain power through manipulation, violence, and exploitation. His character embodies the injustice and moral decay of the old social order.

Greedy Myrzabek is clearly greedy. Even though he already has wealth and power, he is never satisfied. He wants Kurman's horse and also desires Aisuluu, not because he needs them, but because he cannot stand others having something valuable. This shows that his greed is not only about material things, but also about control and pride. He constantly tries to take what belongs to others, which creates conflict in the story. His behavior reflects how powerful people in such societies often exploit others. In the end, his greed becomes one of the main reasons behind the tragedy.

Manipulative Myrzabek is very manipulative and knows how to control people. He pretends to be kind and welcoming, using hospitality as a way to gain trust. However, this kindness is not genuine—it is a tool to achieve his goals. He tries to influence Kerimbek and later Aisuluu by speaking carefully and creating situations that benefit him. Instead of always using force, he often uses words and deception. This makes him more dangerous, because people may not realize his true intentions at first. His manipulation shows how power can be used quietly, through influence and trickery, rather than open violence.

Oppressive Myrzabek treats people below him in a harsh and unfair way. As a powerful figure, he uses his position to control and exploit others, especially servants and poorer people. He expects obedience

and does not consider their feelings or rights. His authority is based on fear rather than respect. This reflects the unequal system in which he lives, where the rich and powerful dominate the weak. People around him have little choice but to submit. His oppressive behavior shows how such systems can harm individuals and create suffering, especially for those who have no power to resist.

Ruthless Myrzabek is ruthless and does not hesitate to use violence. When someone stands in his way, he chooses to remove them rather than solve the problem peacefully. His decision to have Kurman killed shows that he has no respect for human life. For him, power and control are more important than morality. He rules through fear and intimidation, making others afraid to oppose him. This cruelty helps him maintain control for a time, but it also leads to serious consequences. In the end, his ruthless actions reveal the dangers of power used without compassion or limits.

THEMES

Marriage: Polygamy In Kurman's Valley, polygamy appears not as a common social practice among ordinary Kyrgyz people, but as a privilege of wealthy and powerful men. In traditional Kyrgyz society, most families lived modestly and practiced monogamy. However, rich lords such as Myrzabek could afford to take several wives. In the novella, Myrzabek already has several wives, yet he still decides to take Aisuluu. His decision is not based on love or family need, but on his sense of entitlement as a rich and influential man.

Myrzabek uses his wealth, reputation, and social pressure to pursue this marriage. He attempts to influence Kerimbek, knowing that poverty and illness make him vulnerable. The proposal is treated less as a personal relationship and more as an arrangement controlled by economic power. Aisuluu's wishes are initially secondary in the eyes of Myrzabek and his supporters, which shows how polygamy, in this context, is tied to hierarchy rather than mutual agreement.

By presenting polygamy through the actions of a wealthy landowner, the novella suggests that this practice is connected to social inequality. It is not shown as a respected or widespread tradition among common people, but as an expression of feudal privilege. In contrast, Kurman and Aisuluu's relationship is built on personal choice and emotional commitment. Through this contrast, the narrative questions the legitimacy of polygamy when it is rooted in power and domination rather than consent and equality.

Illustrative moment: Myrzabek, blinded by wealth, wants to take another wife (tokol) in addition to his current ones. Aisuluu's beauty and good manners quickly reach Myrzabek, and he decides he wants her as a wife. His helper Alangkoz supports the idea. They plan to take advantage of Kerimbek's illness and poverty by first gaining his trust with food and kindness. They also think of sending him to the pastures so he can drink milk and eat good meat to treat his tuberculosis. After this, they plan to ask for Aisuluu. Myrzabek agrees and begins preparing his plan to get her.

Classes: Status of Beauty and Power in Kyrgyz Culture In Kyrgyz cultural memory and oral tradition, the proverb "Suluu kyz, kuluk at jana algyr kush eldin bailygy" expresses admiration and symbolic value. A beautiful girl, a fast racing horse, and a sharp hunting bird symbolize honor and collective pride. Yet historical reality, especially during the feudal period, did not always reflect this ideal. In practice, wealthy and powerful men sometimes transformed these symbols of cultural value into objects of personal possession.

A Historical Parallel: Jantay Khan and Ak-Moor

Jantay Khan (19th century), a powerful Kyrgyz tribal leader, is often mentioned in connection with the story of Ak-Moor (Akmoor). According to oral narratives and historical accounts, Ak-Moor was known for her extraordinary beauty. Jantay Khan reportedly married her despite a significant age difference and despite the unequal power dynamics involved.

While sources vary in detail (because much of the story survives through oral tradition), the narrative often reflects the broader social reality of the time:

Powerful rulers could marry multiple wives;

Beautiful young women were sometimes chosen or taken due to status and political influence;

Marriage could function as a symbol of prestige and authority.

Such practices were not typical among ordinary Kyrgyz families, who generally lived modestly and practiced monogamy. Polygamy was largely limited to wealthy manaps, bays, and khans who possessed

the economic resources and social power to sustain multiple marriages. In this sense, beauty, celebrated in proverb as a shared cultural treasure, could become, in reality, a sign of male status.

A similar dynamic appears in Kurman's Valley. Myrzabek resembles historical feudal figures who equated wealth with entitlement. For him, Aisuluu's beauty is not a symbol of communal pride but something to acquire and control. What tradition praises as the nation's wealth becomes, in his hands, a marker of personal prestige. Through this contrast, the narrative exposes the gap between cultural ideals and feudal practice, showing how values rooted in honor and dignity can be distorted by power and domination.

Illustrative moment: Kurman's victory in the horse race made him famous and deepened Aisuluu's love. She could never accept becoming Myrzabek's tokol (second, third or fourth wife). Educated in Tokmok, Aisuluu had studied in a Tatar school and lived with a Russian teacher, learning to read and write in both languages. She brought many books, opening Kurman's mind to new ideas about justice and inequality. Together they questioned why the rich ruled over the poor. Aisuluu spoke of revolutionaries who fought injustice. Meanwhile, Myrzabek secretly planned to take her, but Jumagul warned the young lovers to stay cautious and protect their future.

Feudal Power and Resistance Resistance is one of the most prominent themes in Kurman's Valley and is embodied most powerfully through the character of Kurman. From an early age, Kurman demonstrates a refusal to accept injustice quietly. When he studies at Borbuk Mullah's school, he is made to work instead of being taught, while his father Chortek brings game meat as payment, believing his son is receiving a proper education. Although Kurman endures this silently for a time, his resistance begins when his father learns the truth and removes him from the madrasa. This early experience of institutional injustice shapes his understanding of power and deception.

His resistance becomes more visible and direct during the earthquake debate. When Borbuk Mullah explains to the gathered crowd that the earth rests on a great ox and other mythical creatures, Kurman publicly questions this explanation. He asks logical and uncomfortable questions in front of everyone, exposing the weakness of the mullah's teachings. This moment is significant because Kurman does not remain silent out of fear or social pressure. Instead, he chooses truth over conformity, challenging a figure of religious authority in a society where such authority is rarely questioned.

Another defining moment of resistance occurs when Myrzabek demands Kurman's horse, Toru Kashka. The horse is not simply an animal; it is Kurman's inheritance from his father and a symbol of his identity, freedom, and pride. Myrzabek, accustomed to getting what he wants through wealth and intimidation, expects Kurman to submit. However, Kurman refuses firmly and without hesitation. Even when Myrzabek threatens him with violence and the situation becomes dangerous, Kurman does not yield. This refusal is not simply about the horse; it is a declaration that he will not be controlled or humiliated by feudal power.

Kurman's decision to marry Aisuluu despite Myrzabek's plans is perhaps his most courageous act of resistance. He understands the danger involved, knowing that Myrzabek is a powerful and ruthless man who will not accept defeat easily. Yet he chooses love and personal freedom over safety and submission. By marrying Aisuluu, he directly challenges Myrzabek's authority and refuses to allow wealth and power to dictate the lives of ordinary people.

Ultimately, Kurman's resistance costs him his life. He is ambushed and killed by Myrzabek's men, which shows how dangerous opposition to feudal authority can be. However, his resistance does not end with his death. Aisuluu continues his struggle by confronting Myrzabek's men and refusing to surrender. The village also unites against Myrzabek, inspired by Kurman's example. In this way, Kurman's resistance becomes a collective force that outlives him and ultimately brings justice, even if tragically late.

Illustrative moment: Kurman was riding ahead with the boys when Alangkoz told him that Myrzabek wanted his horse. They tried to convince him to sell it, but Kurman refused firmly. He said the horse was his only companion and could not be sold. Borbuk Mullah also pressured him, but Kurman answered bravely and defended his father's memory. Myrzabek became angry and insulted Kurman, even threatening him with a knife. The situation turned violent, but Kurman stayed calm and strong on his horse. Jumagul quickly intervened and pulled Kurman away to prevent a serious fight from breaking out.

Youth and Tragedy: From the very beginning of his story, Kurman is presented as a young man of extraordinary promise. He is intelligent, physically strong, skilled as a rider and hunter, and morally upright. Those around him, including Jumagul and the villagers, recognize his potential and believe he will grow into a great and respected man. His youth is not simply a biographical detail but a symbol of hope, possibility, and the future of his people.

Kurman's childhood already signals the tension between potential and circumstance. Despite his intelligence and eagerness to learn, his first educational experience under Borbuk Molla is deeply damaging. He is made to work rather than study, and he returns home each day thinner, quieter, and more withdrawn. His physical deterioration during this period reflects the way an unjust system can suppress and damage young talent before it fully develops. Even at this early stage, the forces of ignorance and power work against him.

When Abdyrahman, the progressive young teacher, arrives in the village, Kurman's potential begins to flourish. He learns quickly, reads and writes fluently, and begins to think critically about the world around him. His relationship with Aisuluu further develops his intellectual and emotional growth. Together they read books, discuss ideas about justice and inequality, and imagine a future built on freedom and mutual respect. This period represents the peak of Kurman's development as a young man full of life, love, and vision.

However, this flowering of youth is cut short by the forces of feudal power. Myrzabek, who sees Kurman's strength and independence as a direct threat to his authority, cannot tolerate his resistance. Every act of defiance by Kurman, whether refusing to sell his horse, challenging the mullah, or marrying Aisuluu, brings him closer to danger.

Jumagul's act of preserving and retelling Kurman's story many years later also reflects the tragic dimension of youth lost too soon. Jumagul feels the weight of that loss deeply, describing the memory of Kurman as a heavy dark cloud over his life. Through storytelling, he attempts to give Kurman's short life a lasting meaning, ensuring that his courage and resistance are not forgotten. In this way, the tragedy of youth becomes also a call to memory and justice, reminding future generations of what was lost and why it must never be allowed to happen again.

Illustrative moment: Jumagul moved through the mountain path, sensing danger ahead. He called out for Kurman's dog, Jolbors, and followed its signs. Struggling over steep rocks, he descended quickly with fear growing in his heart. When Jumagul arrived, Kurman was already dead. Aisuluu was crying beside him, while an old woman wailed in despair. Jumagul was struck with shock and fell to his knees, calling Kurman's name. There was complete silence, only heavy grief in the air. Kurman had knife wounds and blood was still flowing. With deep sorrow, Jumagul covered the wounds and closed his face. Aisuluu cried bitterly, holding Kurman's head and screaming in pain.

Revenge: Aisuluu's revenge does not happen suddenly. It grows slowly out of pain, humiliation, and injustice. After Kurman is killed, she is left alone in a world controlled by men like Myrzabek and Alangkoz, who use wealth, fear, and violence to get what they want. Kurman's death changes everything for her. She is no longer only a young woman in love; she becomes someone who must fight back.

At first, Aisuluu's reaction is pure grief. She mourns Kurman deeply, and her sorrow leaves her quiet, broken, and withdrawn. But this grief does not stay silent forever. As time passes, it turns into understanding. She begins to see that what happened to Kurman was not just one cruel event. It came from a wider world of injustice, where the powerful oppress the weak and often go unpunished.

Her revenge develops little by little. She does not rush forward in anger. Instead, she acts carefully, using intelligence and courage. One of the most powerful parts of her revenge is the way she uses Kurman's memory. By wearing his clothes and making it seem as though he has returned, she turns fear against those who once ruled through fear. In this way, her revenge becomes more than violence—it becomes a challenge to the power of her enemies.

Still, the story does not present revenge as a happy victory. It is painful and heavy. Aisuluu cannot simply return to the life she had before. After taking revenge, she leaves. This is important because it shows that her act is not about restoring her old world, but about escaping it.

Illustrative moment: That night, Jumagul and his family are gripped by fear after Aisuluu disappears. In the darkness, a figure first seems to be Kurman's spirit, but it is Aisuluu wearing his clothes as part of a bold plan. Refusing to submit to Myrzabek and Alangkoz, she prepares to defend herself. When Myrzabek's men arrive, Aisuluu appears with Kurman's dog beside her and attacks with courage, using

fear against those who once ruled by it. The men panic and scatter in confusion. In the struggle, several are injured, and Jumagul is shocked to see Borbuk Mullah and Alangkoz lying wounded on the ground.

Greed: Greed is one of the central themes in the novella, mainly represented through Myrzabek and the social system around him.

Myrzabek is already wealthy, with many animals and power in the village, but he is never satisfied. He always wants more: more property, more control, more status. His greed is not limited to material wealth. He also wants to possess what does not belong to him, especially Kurman's horse and Aisuluu. This shows that greed in the novella is not only about money; it is also about domination over people and their lives.

His desire to take Aisuluu by force is one of the clearest examples of this theme. He does not care about her feelings, her love for Kurman, or her right to choose. He treats marriage as something he can buy or arrange through power. In the same way, he tries to take Kurman's horse because he cannot accept that a poor young man owns something valuable and admirable. Greed here is linked with jealousy and pride.

The novella also shows how greed destroys morality. Myrzabek uses people like Alangkoz and even the mullah to support his interests. Lies, pressure, and violence grow out of his selfish desires. Because of greed, innocent people suffer, Kurman is killed, and Aisuluu's life is shattered.

In this sense, greed is not presented as a private weakness only. It becomes a social evil that allows the rich and powerful to exploit the weak. Through Myrzabek, the novella criticizes a world where wealth and authority are used without justice or humanity.

Illustrative moment: Kurman was riding ahead with the boys when Alangkoz told him that Myrzabek wanted his horse. They tried to convince him to sell it, but Kurman refused firmly. He said the horse was his only companion and could not be sold. Borbuk Mullah also pressured him, but Kurman answered bravely and defended his father's memory. Myrzabek became angry and insulted Kurman, even threatening him with a knife. The situation turned violent, but Kurman stayed calm and strong on his horse. Jumagul quickly intervened and pulled Kurman away to prevent a serious fight from breaking out.