

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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The Shepherd of Khan Tengri / Khan Tengirlik chaban (1963)

Kasymaly Jantoshev (1904–1968)

OVERVIEW

Author

Kasymaly Jantoshev (1904–1968) was a Kyrgyz writer, prose author, and playwright. He was born in the village of Tepke, now in Ak-Suu District, Ysyk-Kol region of Kyrgyzstan. He learned to read at age sixteen with the teacher Orozakun Ilepes uulu and saw a book for the first time in 1920, as he describes in his memoir *The New School in Tepke* (*Tepkedegi jangy mektep*). In 1921, he joined the Komsomol, the Soviet youth organization for young communists, and studied at a village school until 1924.

In 1926, Jantoshev enrolled in the Pedagogical Technical School (College) in Frunze (Bishkek), where he began writing plays. His early works included one-act plays such as *Shepherds* (*Koychular*), *In a Dream* (*Tushto*), and *We Komsomol Members* (*Biz komsomoletster*), as well as multi-act dramas including *Karachach* (*Karachach*, 1928) and *Alym and Maria* (*Alym menen Mariya*), staged in 1929–1930.

He published textbooks and guides for teachers, including *Reading Book* (*Okuu kitebi*), *Program and Teaching Methods for Kyrgyz Language for the Illiterate* (*Sabatsyzdar uchun kyrgyz tilinin programmasy jana okutuu metody*), *Textbook for Collective Farmers* (*Kolkhozchular uchun okuu kitebi*), and guides on language and arithmetic.

In the early 1930s, he worked as a teacher, district education head, and methodologist in southern regions of Kyrgyzstan. His experiences influenced his prose. The novella *The Young Ones* (*Eki jash*, 1938), depicted social changes and class conflicts during collectivization.

Jantoshev worked in both prose and drama. His historical novel *Kanybek* (*Kanybek*) was first published in three volumes (1939, 1941, 1948) and later revised into a two-volume edition. His plays included *Kurmanbek* (*Kurmanbek*, 1942), *Revenge* (*Och*, 1942), and *The Folk Singer* (*Eldik yrchy*), based on the life of poet Toktogul Satylganov. Later prose works include *Dream* (*Tilek*, 1949), *Fiery Youth* (*Jalynduu jashtar*, 1952), *The Shepherd of Khan Tengri* (*Khan Tengirlik chaban*, 1963), and *My Fate* (*Menin tagdyrym*).

He also translated works by Russian authors Mikhail Lermontov and Alexander Ostrovsky, and by Hans Christian Andersen (from Russian translations), into Kyrgyz. He received honors including Distinguished Figure of the Literature of the Kyrgyz SSR (1946), People's Writer of the Kyrgyz SSR (1968), Medal for Service in World War II (1941–1945) and state medals. Jantoshev died in 1968. Institutions named after him include the Ysyk-Kol Regional Drama Theater, schools, and libraries.

Novel

The novel *The Shepherd of Khan Tengri* (*Khan Tengirlik chaban*, 1963) was written in 1963 and published in Kyrgyzstan by *Kyrgyzmambas* publishing house. It was translated into Russian by V. Mikhailova and published in 1964. The essay is based on this Russian translation.

Background

The novel *The Shepherd of Khan Tengri* was written in the context of post-World War II Kyrgyzstan, during a period of reconstruction and social change. It reflects life on border collective farms (*kolkhozes*) and the daily experiences of rural Kyrgyz communities, including their work, traditions, and social structure. The historical background includes the effects of the war, the loss of soldiers, and the return of exiled or displaced individuals. The setting also highlights Soviet border security and the challenges faced by communities living near sensitive frontier areas.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Temirbolot – son of a soldier who died in World War II, a shepherd in his kolkhoz

Aykan – mother of Temirbolot

Kalyikan – a woman who spreads rumors about Temirbolot and his family

Janargul – teacher in the village

Momun – former villager and spy, a son of a wealthy man, returns as a foreign agent

Keneshbek – chairman of the collective farm

SYNOPSIS

Temirbolot, the son of a soldier who died during World War II, grows up in a Kyrgyz border village. He is bullied by villagers, including Kalyikan, who spreads false rumors about his parentage and insults his mother, Aykan. Temirbolot feels humiliated and isolated but responds to insults by defending his family's honor. After finishing secondary school, he becomes a shepherd in his home kolkhoz and gains recognition for his diligence and skill. A former villager, the son of a wealthy man who fled abroad, returns as an agent of a foreign intelligence service, creating new challenges for Temirbolot. Using his courage and intelligence, Temirbolot eventually captures the spy, protecting his family and community.

SCENES

TEMIRBOLOT'S CHILDHOOD AND UPBRINGING

Meder's Letter and Temirbolot's Birth At the front, Meder wrote to Aykan, dreaming of the child she carried, wondering if it would be a boy or a girl, asking for the names Temirbolot or Temirkan. He wished the child brave, honest, and strong, a protector of home and family, longing for her letters and their photograph, imagining peace after war. Aykan replied with hope, sharing village news, sending letters and a photo. Fate struck cruelly, on the day she went into labor, a postman brought news of Meder's death. Amid grief and sorrow, Temirbolot was born, unaware of the traitor who had taken his father's life.

The Wild and Caring Temirbolot Temirbolot was a spirited child, full of mischief and energy. No scolding or illness could stop him, and he often returned home scratched or bruised from fights and pranks. Yet he was also helpful, assisting his mother Aykan, caring for the elderly Saykal, and tending to animals. Teachers and neighbors were amazed by his cleverness but could not control his wild ways. Strong and tall like his late father Meder, he inspired admiration despite his antics. Aykan devoted herself to raising him, hoping his courage, intelligence, and kindness would grow alongside his playful, untamed spirit.

Temirbolot on the Street Aykan watched her son Temirbolot walk home, the cold mountain wind tugging at his bag and scarf. A group of children whispered and pointed, but he ignored them at first. Suddenly, he dropped his bag and ran at Belek, striking him on the head. Blood stained the snow. Aykan hurried over, demanding why he had hit him, but Temirbolot stayed silent. Others defended Belek, and Kalyikan cursed him. Aykan covered her ears and hurried home, tears streaming. Temirbolot had only heard insults from Belek, but his pride and loyalty to his late father and devoted mother drove him to strike. He was ready to fight anyone who dishonored them.

Temirbolot at Home Temirbolot ran home ahead of his mother, dropped his bag on the table, removed his coat and hat, and sat in the corner, ignoring his food. His teacher, Janargul, who lived with Aykan to understand Temirbolot's unusual behavior, entered the room. Aykan rushed in, crying, and Janargul comforted her, promising to talk to Temirbolot. Sitting beside him, she stroked his hand and invited Aykan to join. "We live as one family," she said. Temirbolot stood, insisting, "I'm not guilty."

Temirbolot's Upbringing Janargul Bakirova had taught for ten years and knew how to read every student's mood, yet Temirbolot puzzled her. Sixteen and fatherless, he lived with his mother Aykan, who worked alone in the house and fields, leaving him sometimes with the elderly Saykal. The boy fell, scraped himself, and explored freely, often causing trouble. Despite discipline, he remained wild and stubborn. By

ten, he managed household chores and tended the garden, understanding he was his mother's only support and hope, balancing mischief with responsibility.

Janargul's Story Janargul watched Temirbolot and saw the strength in his shoulders, arms, and hands, born from years of work and responsibility. She shared her own story: her parents died when she was a baby, and a neighbor raised her until she and her foster brother Kenesh went to an orphanage. School, hard work, and loss taught resilience. She told how Kenesh once defended his honor, learning about justice, loyalty, and trust. Temirbolot listened, understanding that true strength comes from endurance, care, and experience, not just mischief. Life's challenges shape character, and honesty and loyalty matter above all.

Temirbolot Learns to Share Temirbolot clapped excitedly, shouting "Well done!" Janargul smiled and corrected him, telling the story of Kenesh. Once, a classmate insulted Kenesh about his father. He stayed silent, hiding his anger, and the misunderstanding grew into a small scandal. Teachers scolded him, and even Janargul was warned. She explained that sharing feelings calmly with someone trusted can prevent trouble. Temirbolot listened carefully, realizing he sometimes held anger the same way. Blushing, he promised, "I will tell, but only to you." Aykan's eyes filled with tears of joy at his understanding.

A Quiet Morning Temirbolot spent the night chopping wood and reviewing lessons, while Janargul stayed late, speaking softly with him. Aykan watched, wondering if he had revealed the cause of his wild behavior. In the morning, Janargul hurried to school, sharing nothing, and Temirbolot felt grateful for his mother's gentle words. As she left, Aykan hugged and kissed him tightly. Alone, he whispered, "Mother, you are pure and honest, like milk. When I grow up, I will never let anyone hurt you." Smoke rose from stoves, mingling with straw and pine, as the quiet village slowly woke.

SCHOOL, EDUCATION, AND MORAL GUIDANCE

Morning at the Director's House Sadyr Kalmurzaev, the short, bearded school director, grumbled about his son's tears and misbehavior, blaming the grandmother. As he prepared to leave, Janargul arrived unexpectedly. Nervous, Sadyr asked why she came. Calmly, she explained she had come about Temirbolot and to gather school officials for a meeting, saying nothing serious had happened. His wife scolded him for ignoring her warnings and demanded he handle the boy if needed. Temirbolot, calmly dressing, was suddenly hit on the back and screamed. Flustered, Sadyr hurried out, worrying about school, mistakes, and what others might think.

Janargul Confronts the School Sadyr hurried to the school, anxious about Temirbolot. Snow crunched under his feet as he entered his office, apologizing for being late. Akylbek greeted him politely, while Akmat's joke made him uneasy. Janargul, calm and confident, explained that Temirbolot's misbehavior was not mere mischief. Boys, led by Kalyikan, had teased him and spread lies about his mother, making him ashamed and angry. She challenged the staff to understand their students' struggles. Sadyr felt embarrassed but listened. The staff agreed to warn teasing boys and gossipers. Janargul insisted that seeing the boy's life could prevent future harm, and all nodded in agreement.

Sadyr's Reflection after the Meeting After the bell, teachers returned to their classrooms. Sadyr turned to Akylbek, worried the Temirbolot issue might spark another scandal at the party meeting. Akylbek criticized them both for failing to understand Temirbolot's sensitivity, comparing their negligence to mishandling delicate spacecraft instruments. He argued they had treated a vulnerable boy with suspicion and distrust, equating their behavior with that of gossipers. When Akylbek left angrily, Sadyr felt paralyzed, overwhelmed by silence.

KALYIKAN'S GOSSIP AND SOCIAL CONFLICT

Morning at the Kolkhoz Club The wide kolkhoz street, lined with tall poplars, led to a one-story club with a bright "Welcome" sign. Inside, the hall buzzed with chatter, laughter, and playful teasing. Aiymbiyke joked with Esim, while villagers bowed, laughed, and joined in. Asankojo set a water carafe on the table, and Chairman Keneshbek Amanov began the meeting, praising punctuality and diligent work. Amid smiles at Kalyikan's playful mischief, he reminded everyone of the agenda: the field brigade report and Temirbolot Mederov.

Kolkhoz Meeting and Temirbolot Kalyikan, spitting seed husks, shouted at Aiymbiyke, calling her a chatterbox. Chairman Keneshbek calmed the hall and reviewed the kolkhoz plan: finish seed cleaning, build barns, raise pigs and boars, and help the old widow Saykal. Then Janargul spoke about Temirbolot, praising the villagers' hard work and saying children are their greatest treasure. Kalyikan shouted that Temirbolot and his mother should be punished, but the hall quieted. Janargul explained that rumors about Temirbolot's mother had upset him, causing his misbehavior. The chairman called for order, letting Janargul continue, and the hall gradually settled, ready to listen.

Rumors and Reckoning Rumors spread like fire. Kalyikan's reckless words about Temirbolot's mother stung the boy deeply. He hid his pain, struck back with fists, and withdrew into himself. In the hall, whispers turned to outrage. Janargul calmly explained the truth: malicious gossip had poisoned trust, driving Temirbolot to fear for his mother. Kalyikan, defiant and loud, accused the teacher, claiming secrets and deceit. The elders, ashamed, averted their eyes, while the youth hung silent, embarrassed. Kalyikan's audacity filled the room, unashamed, unrelenting.

Justice in the Kolkhoz Hall The hall fell silent as Kalyikan's lies crumbled. Villagers saw her gossip had marred Temirbolot's childhood. Aykan, trembling, revealed proof of her son's father, tears tracing her face, sharing her suffering and defiance. The crowd wept, anger and pity mingling. Seven girls and five youths presented a petition exposing Kalyikan's theft, laziness, extortion, and two years of torment, demanding her expulsion. Alone, Kalyikan stood powerless, seeds slipping like her lies. Later, Temirbolot reached his door, unable to enter, rage and sorrow burning.

Tears Behind Strength Temirbolot trembled with tears, feeling unwanted and misunderstood. "They call me a hooligan, yet I protected my mother," he thought, wishing his father were alive to defend him. When Aykan and teacher Janargul returned, he confronted his mother, asking why she hid the truth and stayed silent against cruel rumors. He spoke of growing up fatherless, working hard, and earning respect through labor, yet feeling blamed and alone. He longed for guidance from the father he never knew. His sorrow and honesty pierced Aykan's heart, while Janargul watched silently, moved by the boy's grief, courage, and need for understanding.

Morning of New Hope Early on a quiet morning, Temirbolot woke before sunrise. He finished his lessons and read *Young Guard* novel in Russian, writing down difficult words to ask Liza later. After feeding the cow and calf, he cleaned the barn, whistling cheerful Kyrgyz tunes. Sparrows gathered near him, listening as he worked. His heart felt light again. After asking his mother's forgiveness, peace had returned to their home. Temirbolot realized his mother's silence toward Kalyikan had not been cowardice but strength and dignity. At school, classmates treated him kindly once more. Joy slowly returned to his life, until suddenly Kalyikan's harsh voice shattered the calm morning.

FIRE AND TEMIRBOLOT'S HEROISM

Temirbolot's Courage Across from Temirbolot's home, Kalyikan's worn hut blazed, straw and smoke rising fast. She shrieked, helpless, waving a hat at the flames. Villagers, even Eshim, rushed to fight the fire, but Temirbolot saw a small cry, Oljobay, little boy trapped inside. Without thought, he dashed into choking smoke and darkness, smashing a window, pulling Belek free first. Sparks hissed, the fire roared, yet he pressed on, bending low, guided by the child's cries. At last, he lifted the trembling child from the burning bed, shouting for help, heart pounding, and courage blazing brighter than the fire consuming the crumbling hut.

Courage and Redemption After the fire, the village whispered of Kalyikan's anger, yet all honored Temirbolot. He ran into flames to save Belek and Oljobay, burning his clothes and injuring his hands and face. Doctors assured recovery, but his mother Aykan worried constantly. Temirbolot comforted her, saying even scars mattered little compared to saving lives. He admired Alyiman, who worked tirelessly despite her own scars, believing true worth lay in courage and kindness. Later, Kalyikan wept, admitting decades of cruelty and mistakes. Temirbolot watched silently, recognizing that human wisdom and compassion could shine even through fear and weakness, teaching lessons beyond strength alone.

Healing Lessons Quietly, Belek entered the room. Temirbolot, still sleepy, welcomed him warmly. They spoke gently about his healing burns, and Temirbolot reassured Belek that the scars would fade. Belek

worried for his friend, but Temirbolot calmed him, reminding him of their friendship. Liza arrived, lively and commanding, setting up lessons at Temirbolot's bedside. Together with Belek, they studied diligently for hours. Later, Aykan, Asanakun, and Liza's father came. Sergey showed remedies for burn care, teaching traditional methods to soften scabs and strengthen new skin. Temirbolot listened carefully, surrounded by friends and family, learning that courage, care, and knowledge heal as much as medicine.

Power, Deceit, and Consequences At a school meeting, Sadyr Kalmurzaev boasted of improving academic performance and defended himself regarding Temirbolot's case, blaming a disruptive woman, Kalyikan, and accusing colleagues, Janargul and Akmat, of stirring distrust. The assembly sided with him, silencing dissent. Celebrating privately, Sadyr reveled in his influence, serving tea and vodka to guests. Yet his dreams of control and justice were hollow. His past corruption embezzling school funds, forging diplomas, and taking bribes, caught up. Both Sadyr and his accomplice, Sapar, were expelled from the party, removed from work, and their crimes sent to court, leaving their schemes exposed.

Temirbolot's Lesson in Responsibility Temirbolot eagerly prepared lessons, helped classmates, and cared for the calf while waiting for teacher Janargul. She taught him schoolwork, proper note-taking, and organized his studies, showing how to focus on key ideas. Aykan scolded him for skipping meals but joined in, learning alongside him despite her limited education. Temirbolot stayed up late, copying notes and practicing diligence, forgetting other tasks. The next morning, he served tea to Janargul and Aykan, proudly calling himself the youngest commune member. They praised his hard work, asking how he learned Russian, and he expressed gratitude to his mother and teachers for guidance and care.

Temirbolot Organizes the School Concert Temirbolot organized a school concert, rallying classmates despite initial chaos. Plays from Grandpa Asankojo's book were chosen, and students joined the choir and drama club, trained by a visiting director with costumes, wigs, and makeup. On concert day, some performers refused roles, so Temirbolot and Liza improvised, acting as an old couple, delighting the audience with humor and lively gestures. The concert continued with songs, duets, and traditional music on komuz, flutes, and instruments, guided by teacher Janargul and elder Ashym. Villagers cheered, officials praised the young talents, and the event celebrated cultural heritage, creativity, and community spirit.

WORK, RESPONSIBILITY, AND THE SHEPHERD'S LIFE

Temirbolot's Dream of Shepherding Since entering eighth grade, Temirbolot has been thinking about his future. He wants to become a shepherd, believing happiness awaits him there. Though inexperienced and too young to manage a flock alone, he asks his mother, Aykan, for guidance over the next two years. Uncle Keneshbek encourages Aykan to take a leading role in animal husbandry, offering responsibility for a flock while ensuring Temirbolot continues his studies. Torn between duty and fear for her son and elderly mother, Aykan feels trapped. One evening, Temirbolot arrives energetically, ready for work, carrying his staff, determined to pursue his dream.

Temirbolot's Commitment to Shepherding Temirbolot pleaded with his mother, Aykan, to let him help her as she became head shepherd. Encouraged by teacher Janargul, who assured that Aykan's elderly mother could move in safely, Aykan agreed. Temirbolot ran to inform Uncle Keneshbek, showing his earnestness and books of knowledge. He explained why he chose shepherding over more prestigious careers: society needs skilled shepherds to care for livestock, grow crops, and sustain daily life. He vowed to study animal husbandry diligently and modernize practices. Keneshbek approved, setting clear conditions: Temirbolot must excel in school before handling a flock. The boy eagerly accepted, ready to pursue his dream.

Spring Work and Transformation Spring awakened the village, people, animals, and fields. Kolkhoz workers labored with tractors, joyfully fulfilling the grand plan. Temirbolot learned from Asankojo how to protect crops while respecting nature. Kalyikan, once rebellious, now worked silently and carefully, her diligence earning quiet admiration. Temirbolot struggled to ask about pests, teasing sparked debate, and Aykan reminded him that respect and patience matter as much as knowledge. He realized that learning is not only about farming but about understanding people, humility, and restraint. Spring brought growth, responsibility, and wisdom, blending labor, life, and the quiet lessons of the field.

Temirbolot's New Chapter Temirbolot excelled at exams, receiving his diploma first, awarded by Janargul. Celebrated by Eshim and Keneshbek, he chose Eshim's historic binoculars as a gift, he was friend of Meder, Temirbolot's father, symbolizing vigilance and responsibility. Returning to the mountains, he immediately led his flock, studying books on sheep care and pasture management. He carefully guided the herd, ensuring rest and grazing efficiency, learning from elders like Sagyndyk about observing nature and predicting weather. Temirbolot realized that modern shepherding demanded knowledge, discipline, and scientific approach. Beyond herding, he pondered family roles, education, and future marriage, understanding that success required not just hard work, but wisdom and preparation.

Temirbolot and the White Ewe Temirbolot guided his flock to the northern slope, observing from a boulder with binoculars. He recalled Eshim's praise and watched for wolves. Noticing Chyrmash and his wife Suksur moving oddly among the herd, he stayed hidden, puzzled by their actions. Suddenly, a white ewe gave birth to twins. Carefully, Temirbolot helped the newborn lambs, managing the anxious mother. When the ewe wandered toward Chyrmash's flock, he acted quickly, coordinating with Suksur and Chyrmash to secure her and the lambs. Grateful for their help, he safely returned the flock to his village, reflecting on vigilance, care, and community support.

URBAI'S RETURN AND THE HIDDEN ENEMY

Urbai's Warning A stranger watched Temirbolot leave, sighing over what might have been. He recognized the boy's skill, noting he was the son of Minbaev Meder, a man lost to war. Furious over past family injustices, Urbai confronted Chyrmash and Suksur, demanding they return Temirbolot so he could witness his ancestors and exact vengeance if needed. He reminded them of threats from neighbors and dogs but insisted on the boy's fate being decided according to his instructions. Though parting with a handshake, Urbai left with a chilling warning: family ties remain, but retribution must be carried out, blooded cloth as proof.

Urbai's Return and Secret Mission Urbai, son of Chokmor from the remote Ken-Suu highlands, had long been exiled, watching from afar as his family adapted under Soviet rule. Once wealthy and feared, he learned to disguise his cunning and power among ordinary people. Years of plotting vengeance consumed him, fueled by old injustices and the loss of his kin. Returning secretly, he tested Suksur and Chyrmash, ensuring their loyalty and instructing them to assist an unknown visitor who would come on his behalf. The visitor, Momun, spy guided by subtle signals, must remain unseen by others while completing vital tasks under Urbai's strict orders, under penalty of death.

The Stranger Urbai Revealed Temirbolot reunited the white ewe with her lambs and told his mother Aykan how he had observed Chyrmash, Suksur, and a mysterious stranger through his binoculars. Aykan, startled, recognized the man by a black mole above his right nostril; he was Urbai, a formidable figure from their past. She recalled her family's hardships under Soviet rule and how Urbai had once tried to befriend her father. Though Temirbolot feared Urbai might be an enemy, Aykan urged caution.

Early Morning Tensions Before dawn, Aykan returned to her yurt while Temirbolot tended the horse. Meanwhile, Temirbolot observed Chyrmash acting strangely, lying about falling from his horse while abandoning his flock. A ewe wandered off, and Temirbolot chased her. In the distance, he spotted humans near where Urbai had stayed. Chyrmash, frightened, crouched as border guards and dogs approached, revealing a tense mix of fear, vigilance, and unfolding mystery.

The Hidden Enemy Temirbolot climbed a hill with binoculars, noticing two busy magpies circling a rocky outcrop. Remembering old hunting lessons, he suspected danger and readied his rifle. His flock climbed behind him unaware that border guards had reached Chyrmash's yurt, leaving one soldier to watch Suksur while tracking Urbai. Hidden among rocks, Urbai watched the approaching soldiers and Temirbolot, realizing escape was impossible. Fear and revenge consumed him as he plotted to kill Temirbolot and avenge his brother, imagining a final, sacred death. He disrobed partially to mislead, hid behind a stone, and clutched his knife, whispering prayers.

Temirbolot's Duel Temirbolot spotted the edge of a figure's clothing among the bushes and approached cautiously, rifle ready. Hidden, Urbai, face pale with rage, sprang at him, stabbing with a knife. Temirbolot screamed, firing accidentally, wounding Urbai again. His dog lunged, biting the attacker. Border guards

arrived, subduing Urbai and preventing his suicide. Temirbolot, injured, was tended to by the guards. Captain Chernov ensured Urbai's capture and gave orders to secure Chyrmash and the flock. Aykan, unaware of her son's wound, was relieved to hear the enemy was caught, while Temirbolot's loyal dog ran anxiously around the yurt.

Order after the Storm Suksur panicked as soldiers came, fearing for her family, while Aykan calmly organized the flocks with the border guard's help. A kolkhoz truck brought villagers, the police chief, and supplies, ensuring everyone was safe. Sagyndyk, another shepherd offered a goat and shared stories of bravery, lightening the mood. Suksur resisted giving up her yurt, breaking down when shown the prosecutor's decree. Amid the chaos, Aykan kept everyone fed and flocks cared for. Keneshbek prepared to check on Temirbolot, unaware he was still badly wounded. Despite fear and tension, the village worked together, finding relief, order, and care after the danger.

Night of Peril and Relief Keneshbek took a risky mountain path to reach the outpost quickly, but darkness and unfamiliar terrain led him astray. His exhausted horse stumbled, nearly sending him into a ravine, and wolves closed in. Armed, he defended himself until dawn, killing one wolf and scaring the rest away. Finally reaching the outpost, he reunited with Captain Chernov, who guided him to see Temirbolot. The young hero, though gravely wounded, had survived surgery without lasting damage. Relief flooded Keneshbek as the doctor confirmed Temirbolot's condition. Plans were made to keep his injury secret from Aykan, while Urbai and Chyrmash were already sent to Przhivalsk town.

Dawn of Recovery At sunrise, Temirbolot, unable to sleep, quietly moved around, careful not to wake the vigilant Semenov. Despite the doctor's strict orders, he struggled with impatience and curiosity, worried about his mother and the approaching unknown guest. Doctor Semenov, though stern, showed care, guiding Temirbolot gently and explaining the importance of rest for recovery. Captain Chernov and Irina visited, bringing comfort, meals, and reassurance. Temirbolot reflected on Semenov's own childhood losses, feeling a deep connection. Grateful for the doctor's compassion, he drank tea, rested, and appreciated this paternal care, realizing the value of patience, guidance, and kindness in healing.

Reunion and Vigil Aykan hurried into the courtyard, anxious to see her son, Temirbolot, only to be met with relief: he was alive and fully recovered. Embracing him, she learned the truth, he had been wounded by Urbai, not sick. Doctors Semenov and Irina Sergevna had cared for him, and Captain Chernov orchestrated the secrecy to spare her worry. Later, fully healed, Temirbolot tended his sheep, surveying the vast mountains with awe and vigilance. He marveled at Khan-Tengri mountains and the surrounding ranges, mindful of the hidden dangers and unknown guests. Observant and cautious, he considered approaching a herd of goats, but a strange moving bundle among the rocks made him shiver.

COMMUNITY LIFE, WORK, AND YOUNG LOVE

Lessons in Courage and Care Temirbolot almost attacked his friend Sagyndyk, mistaking him for a stranger, but laughed it off and helped carry the goat home. Back at the yurt, Aykan praised her son, and Temirbolot thought about courage and patience. Later, Chairman Keneshbek Amanov reminded the shepherds to plan carefully and work together. He compared careless leaders to men trapped by wolves, unable to act. Praising Temirbolot's hard work, he explained seasonal tasks like cutting clover, tending crops, and moving flocks.

The Mowing and the Young Hearts On the mountain pastures, Aykan and Aksamay tended their flocks while sharing food and rest. Temirbolot, leading the hay mowing, joked and raced with fellow workers, earning admiration for his skill and diligence. Amid the labor, young Liza watched him closely, captivated by his strength, precision, and thoughtfulness toward her exhausted father. As Temirbolot finished his rows, Liza approached, shyly wiping sweat from his face. The brief touch, the closeness, and his gentle attention stirred unexpected emotions in both. Among laughter, work, and mountain winds, a quiet bond blossomed, marking the first gentle stirrings of young love.

Festive Melody and Mountain Bonds In the mountain pastures, the kolkhoz paused to celebrate their work. Liza joined Temirbolot, their closeness quiet but tender. Aiymbiyke played the komuz, teaching others, and soon Liza's music filled the air with energy. Elders Sergey and Ereshe recalled their youth, enchanted by song, laughter, and shared labor. In the hayfields, teasing and jokes echoed as Temirbolot

urged care, patience, and foresight for winter feed. Elders praised his wisdom, remembering harsh past winters. Through music, work, and stories, the community bonded, celebrating life, labor, cleverness, and emerging love, weaving past and present into a joyful, enduring harmony.

MOMUN'S ESPIONAGE AND THE BORDER CONFLICT

Exile, Desperation, and Dark Wishes **Winter at Urbai's Yurt** On the sunlit southern slopes, dry grasses and bare rocks marked a harsh winter. In a small, soot-stained yurt, Urbai's wife and daughter-in-law lived in poverty with a thin cow, a starving calf, and a mangy dog. Broken tools and tattered belongings showed their hard life. They whispered prayers for revenge and better days, longing for lost lands under the new Soviet rule. Days passed gray and windy while Urbai and Momun stayed in the mountains. One day, a mounted person, arrived, impatiently calling for them. Fear and tension filled the cold, quiet yurt.

Momun's Dangerous Journey Breathless, Momun met the strict person, who scolded him for hiding and gave him a mission: cross the border, avoid shepherds, and reach Ysyk-Kol in ten days. He received money, a waterproof suit, and tracking tools. Before leaving, he took bread, spoke to his mother, and promised revenge for Meder. Prayers followed him as he set off through snowy mountains, avoiding guards and shepherds. He endured hunger, cold, and fear. Mistaking Aykan for his sister, he prepared to attack but saw her skill and calm while driving sheep. Memories of lost wealth and family strengthened his resolve.

Temirbolot's Care and Heart Temirbolot walked the new farmstead with Keneshbek, chairman admiring houses, barns, and haystacks. He checked walls, feeders, salt, and lamb pens, showing wisdom that impressed the elders. Shepherds' comfort mattered, for happy homes bring dedicated work. Amid the snow and rivers, Liza and Jarkyn watched him, their hearts stirred by quiet rivalry. The mountains, forests, and rushing streams mirrored careful plans, patience, and vigilance. Work, nature, and love intertwined as Temirbolot moved through each task, tending flocks and feelings alike, learning that care and attention shape both the land and the hearts of those who dwell there.

Temirbolot and the Frozen Pass Temirbolot and the group stopped at a remote house to warm up, eat, gather firewood, and buy batteries. They then faced the icy, narrow Turgon Pass, where the truck slipped toward the cliff. Quick thinking, teamwork, and courage saved them as they stabilized it with stones and shoveled the path. The frozen road resisted, but together they cleared it, inching the truck carefully forward. Liza held Temirbolot's shoulder when danger neared, then cheered as the wheels gained traction. Hours later, breath misting in the cold, they reached the pass, triumphant, grateful for skill, vigilance, and shared effort. They were searching for Momun, a spy.

Buried in Snow As the sun set behind jagged peaks, the group walked through deep snow toward a hidden gorge. They found a cave, but Momun, watching, feared capture and caused an avalanche to block them. Snow rushed down, trapping Sergey and threatening the others. By morning, villagers and officials arrived to see the aftermath. Panic and grief spread as Liza, Jarkyn, and Temirbolot were missing. Aykan. The mountains lay silent, holding secrets under the snow, and hope waited with the thaw.

Momun's Narrow Escape Believing he had killed his pursuers in an avalanche, Momun carefully descended the snowy slope. He spotted a truck and pretended to mourn his "dead son," asking for a ride. The driver, unaware, let him aboard, and Momun felt relief. As the truck moved through stormy passes, he prayed to his father's spirits and Allah, thinking of a hopeful future with family. Near familiar lands, his joy grew, but a young man in a black sheepskin appeared, questioning the driver. Momun froze, realizing danger was not over, yet the truck continued on.

Crossing to Freedom Momun, relieved to have evaded the border guards, slipped from the truck along the icy river. Familiar with every stone and trail in Turgon Gorge, he found a safe hiding place. Guided by Allah and his father's spirit, he crossed the river on a patchy ice bridge, feeling renewed strength. Recognizing an old fir tree from childhood, he recalled joyful summer hunts with his father, fires blazing under the sprawling branches, and the warmth of past days. Shedding tears for lost time, Momun buried unneeded belongings nearby, whispered a prayer for his father, and, heart steady, set off westward toward an uncertain future.

SURVIVAL AND ESCAPE FROM THE AVALANCHE

Aykan's Strength and Hope among the Flock After failing to find Temirbolot, Liza, and Jarkyn, Aykan quietly grieved while caring for the flock and preparing for lambing. Erkingul helped faithfully, earning Aykan's growing trust and affection. During the lean season, they guarded the sheep from wolves, their nights filled with warmth and shared care. Joy erupted when Aiymbiyke announced twin lambs from the white ewe, and the girls performed the blessing ritual with clarified butter. Amid celebration and vigilance, thoughts of the lost children lingered. The new life brought hope, and in their hearts, they silently wished for Temirbolot's safe return.

Trapped Under the Snow Temirbolot, Liza, and Jarkyn were trapped as a snow-and-ice avalanche sealed the cave entrance. Panic and despair gripped them. Jarkyn screamed in terror, Liza clung silently to Temirbolot. He tried to calm them, assessing the situation: the collapse was snow, not earth. Using a small flashlight and a hand hoe found in Liza's bag, Temirbolot began carving steps and a narrow passage through the compacted snow. Liza and Jarkyn assisted as best they could, moving snow and sharing provisions.

Survival in the Ice Cave Temirbolot and Liza worked tirelessly, chiseling snow with a hand hoe while crawling through the narrow tunnel, moving icy chunks into the cave. Cold numbed their hands and legs, yet they encouraged each other, pausing only briefly for warmth or food. Jarkyn, overwhelmed by fear and jealousy, resisted helping, lost in despair. Using ingenuity, Temirbolot adapted his coat for warmth and knee protection, allowing them to continue. They shared meager provisions sparingly and took turns resting. Despite tension and awkwardness, they huddled together for warmth, careful of Jarkyn's judgment, and finally drifted into a brief, exhausted sleep, ready to resume their escape.

Emerging from the Ice Temirbolot and Liza worked through exhaustion, hunger, and cold, clearing snow and ice to escape the cave. They cared for each other, sharing food and warmth, their bond growing stronger with each passing hour. Liza played her *temir-komuz*, a jaw harp, its haunting melody lifting their spirits in the dark. Jarkyn fell ill, but they pressed on, driven by hope and the dream of sunlight. Finally, a crack of light appeared. With one last push, Temirbolot broke through the icy barrier. Liza followed, hands reaching for him, hearts beating with triumph, love, and the promise of freedom.

Winter Care and Happy Reunion Aykan cared carefully for the ewes and lambs, cleaning pens, laying fresh straw, feeding twins and triplets, and helping lambs find their mothers. The women worked together, laughing and teasing Kenjebek, the veterinarian. Outside, the winter landscape glowed with snow, forests, and sunlight. After the animals were settled, tea was served. Guests arrived, greeted warmly, and joined the joyful work. Suddenly, news came that Temirbolot, Liza, and Jarkyn had survived being trapped under snow. Relief and happiness filled the house. Tears, laughter, and embraces marked their safe return. Love, hope, and family triumph shone through the celebration.

Temirbolot's Flock of Care Temirbolot carefully tended his flock, tracking lambing, milk, and wool while ensuring weak mothers' lambs were fostered. He prepared nutritious feed, guided watering, and oversaw all tasks with skill. Visitors admired his methods, clean troughs, concrete water basins, and daily fresh feed for lambs. Twins and triplets thrived, reflecting his discipline and teamwork. Aykan and Keneshbek praised his dedication, while lighthearted debates and humor kept spirits high. Temirbolot modestly credited careful observation and collaboration. His thoughtful care, innovation, and respect for tradition earned admiration from neighboring kolkhozes, marking his flock and methods as a model of diligence, skill, and communal pride.

FINAL CONFRONTATION AND VICTORY

Hidden Danger in the Mountains Temirbolot excused himself when Liza whispered someone was calling. The sun warmed the snowy slopes as they shared a meal on a blanket, eating meat and drinking wine, laughing together. Liza felt uneasy, glancing at a large spruce, while Temirbolot sang gentle songs of love and comfort. Their worries faded in the warmth of youth and affection. But high in the branches, Momun, a hidden enemy, watched them silently. He stayed unseen, leaving only traces of his passage in the Turgon gorge, a quiet reminder of danger even in their peaceful moment.

Snowy Slope Rescue Temirbolot and Liza shared food and wine on a blanket, hiding their fear as Momun, a vengeful enemy, watched from a tall spruce. Hungry and angry, he planned to strike. When Liza stood,

Momun grabbed a glass of wine, ready to attack. Temirbolot leapt, wrestling him into the snow. Liza fired warning shots, took his pistol, and held him. Border guards arrived, capturing Momun alive while dogs barked. The young couple, safe and proud, received praise and applause for their courage, quick thinking, and teamwork in the snowy mountains.

Joy, Labor, and Harmony at Khan Tengri Temirbolot, Liza, and Erkingul laughed under the warm spring sun, their happiness mirrored by the majestic peaks of Khan Tengri, trees, and pastures. Visiting kolkhoz chairmen admired Temirbolot's careful work with sheep, healthy flocks, growing lambs, and abundant wool. He explained feeding, selection, and growth, inspiring everyone. Aykan, Temirbolot, and Sagyndyk played the *temir komuz*, a jaw harp and svirel, filling the air with lively songs. Villagers shared drinks, jokes, and pride in their work, imagining endless pastures under careful care. Even the skeptical chairman smiled, moved by the harmony of labor, music, and nature. Together, joy, skill, and community created a moment of celebration and hope.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Temirbolot

Temirbolot is portrayed as a model of the ideal Soviet shepherd. He is honest, diligent, and hardworking, showing dedication to his duties and responsibility toward his community. He represents the belief that a true Soviet person should work hard, support others, and contribute to building communism. His loyalty, courage, and desire to help others show the ideals of Soviet literature.

Dignified Temirbolot is a dignified boy who strongly protects his mother from the cruel gossip spread by Kalyikan. When classmates insult his mother, he reacts with anger and often fights them. These words hurt his pride and deeply wound his feelings. However, he cannot tell his mother about the insults because he fears it will make her sad. Teachers see him as a difficult child, but behind his rough behavior there is a wounded and vulnerable heart. For Temirbolot, the dignity of his mother and his deceased father is the highest value. He wants others to respect their honor, and he tries to defend it whenever someone insults them. Even though he is young, he feels a strong responsibility to protect his family's name and show others that their dignity must be respected.

Loyal Temirbolot is also loyal to the Soviet government. He believes in the values taught by the state, such as hard work, honesty, and helping the community. In many Soviet novels, working class jobs such as shepherds and herders are highly respected. Labor close to the land is shown as noble and important for society. In this context, Temirbolot chooses to work with cattle and become a shepherd. Even though he has the ability to study at an institute or college, he decides to stay and work for the kolkhoz.

Brave The author presents Temirbolot as a heroic figure and gives him many qualities of a brave hero who can find solutions in difficult situations. The writer also connects Temirbolot to the tradition of epic heroes such as Manas. Like Manas, who was described as a strong and sometimes difficult child, Temirbolot is portrayed as bold, fearless, and ready to fight. The episode where he survives the ice block in the cave further emphasizes his bravery and endurance. Through these scenes, the author shapes Temirbolot as a modern epic hero within a Soviet context.

Aykan

Aykan is Temirbolot's mother, a hardworking village woman who works for the kolkhoz. The author may have drawn inspiration from Kanykei, the mother of Semetey in the Kyrgyz epic *Manas*, as a model for Aykan. Like Kanykei, Aykan embodies unwavering love, protection, and guidance for her son. She works hard, shows wisdom, and always stands behind Temirbolot, just as Kanykei supports Semetey through challenges. This connection reinforces the epic-like qualities of Temirbolot's story, linking traditional Kyrgyz heroism and maternal devotion with the ideals of the Soviet-era narrative.

Maternal Aykan's love and concern for Temirbolot's well-being outweigh any worries about what villagers like Kalyikan think or say. She focuses on protecting him, guiding him, and ensuring he grows up healthy and capable, rather than getting caught up in gossip. This deep, unwavering devotion makes her a model of wisdom, justice, and protective motherhood in the story.

Suffering Aykan can also be seen as a suffering woman. She carries the heavy burdens of widowhood, raising Temirbolot alone, working tirelessly in the kolkhoz, and protecting her son from danger and gossip. Temirbolot's disappearance under the snow intensifies Aykan's suffering. Her grief is profound. She fears, feels helpless, and uncertainty weigh on her as she waits for news of her son. All her labor, care, and protective efforts seem powerless against nature and fate.

Resilient Aykan is resilient. Even when women like Kalyikan gossip about her, she stays strong, focused on her work and life, showing courage, patience, and inner strength in every challenge. Despite fear, uncertainty, and grief over Temirbolot's disappearance, she cares for the flock, manages her household, and bears her pain quietly. She cares for her household, the flock, and the lambs with patience and skill. Through her guidance and example, she raises her son, Temirbolot, teaching him to become the best shepherd in the region.

Kalyikan

Kalyikan is a mischievous and troublesome lady in the village. She often spreads gossip and teases others, especially targeting Temirbolot and his family. Her actions provoke conflict, testing Temirbolot's patience and courage. Despite her mischief, she is part of the village life, reflecting the challenges and rivalries children face in a close-knit community.

Impudent Kalyikan is bold and disrespectful. She loudly complains about having heartburn, using it as an excuse to crack sunflower seeds during a meeting. She ignores the rules and the community's standards, letting the shells fall to the floor and expecting others to clean up. Her words and behavior show selfishness, and a lack of respect for authority or her neighbors, making her an impudent and provocative figure in the village.

Malicious Kalyikan is ill-tongued, meaning she speaks with sharpness, malice, and a lack of consideration for others' feelings. Kalyikan is proud and self-important, believing she has the right to judge everyone in the village. She flouts community rules, mocks others openly, and spreads harmful gossip. She loudly claimed that Temirbolot was not Meder's son but Eshim's, insulting Aykan and accusing her of shameful behavior, even alleging she had been seen drunk in Przhivalsk. When questioned, Kalyikan defiantly insisted her claims were true. Her words quickly spread among the villagers. Temirbolot, confronted with these cruel rumors, felt humiliated and isolated. He saw it as shameful to share his pain and responded to insults with his fists, fiercely defending the honor of his mother and family.

Negligent Kalyikan consistently neglects her duties and shows little regard for rules or the well-being of others. She arrives late to work, abandons her assigned fields, and takes resources, like someone's horse, without permission, causing inconvenience for others. Beyond her work habits, she spreads gossip, intimidates villagers, extorts money, and pressures people to buy her alcohol. Her selfish and reckless behavior has harmed others for years, including causing Temirbolot to be bullied.

Momun

Momun is portrayed as a dangerous and deceitful character driven by revenge. During the Second World War, he killed Meder, Temirbolot's father, because he blamed Soviet power for the destruction of his wealthy family, who had opposed the new regime. Consumed by hatred, Momun betrayed his own country during the war by going over to the enemy side. There he learned English and German and was later sent back to Soviet Kyrgyzstan as a spy. His actions show disloyalty, bitterness, and a willingness to harm others for personal revenge.

Vengeful Momun is driven by a deep desire for revenge. His wealthy family once opposed Soviet power and were destroyed because of it. This loss fills him with bitterness and hatred. Instead of letting go of the past, Momun holds onto his anger and blames the Soviet system and those connected to it. His thirst for revenge pushes him to extreme actions, including killing Meder during the war and later returning as a spy. His life becomes guided not by justice or peace, but by resentment and a constant wish to avenge his family's fate.

Treacherous Momun's character is marked by betrayal, deceit, and manipulation. To escape those pursuing him, he deliberately causes an avalanche in the mountains, hoping to bury them under the snow

and remove anyone who might capture him. Believing they are dead, he calmly descends the slope and continues his escape. When he sees a passing truck, he pretends to be a grieving father mourning his “dead son” in order to gain sympathy and secure a ride. The driver, unaware of the truth, helps him. Momun’s ability to lie, manipulate others, and endanger lives for his own safety reveals his deeply treacherous and untrustworthy nature.

Hostile Momun shows a threatening and aggressive nature. He secretly watches Temirbolot and Liza from the trees, waiting for the right moment to attack. His actions are driven by anger and revenge, and he is prepared to harm them without hesitation. By hiding, observing, and planning a sudden strike, Momun proves that he is not only hostile but also dangerous, willing to use violence to achieve his goals.

THEMES

Work: Collective Labor The novel strongly reflects the values promoted in Soviet literature, where hard work, loyalty to the state, and dedication to the collective are seen as the highest virtues. Labor, especially in agriculture, is portrayed as honorable and essential for building a strong socialist society. In this context, Temirbolot becomes an example of the ideal Soviet young man. Although he has the opportunity to continue his education at an institute or college, he chooses to remain in the countryside and work as a shepherd in the kolkhoz. This decision shows his respect for honest physical labor and his desire to contribute directly to the prosperity of the community. His success with healthy flocks and productive herds demonstrates how dedication and knowledge can improve the life of the entire kolkhoz. By presenting Temirbolot as a hardworking, loyal, and socially responsible shepherd, the author promotes the Soviet ideal that individual effort should serve the collective good and strengthen society as a whole. At the same time, the novel hints that Soviet authorities interfered in all aspects of personal life, controlling education, work, and even private choices, showing how individual freedom was limited despite the praise of loyalty and labor.

Illustrative moment: On a crisp winter morning, Temirbolot stood in the snow-dusted pasture, checking each ewe and lamb with careful hands. He measured feed, watched over weak mothers, and guided the young lambs to their foster mothers, ensuring none went hungry. Nearby, Aykan and other villagers worked alongside him, carrying hay and filling water troughs. The mountains glowed in the sunlight, and the sheep moved calmly under their care. As the villagers paused to sip warm *kymyz*, mare’s fermented milk they praised Temirbolot’s diligence, recognizing that his hard work and knowledge not only kept the flock healthy but strengthened the kolkhoz and the community as a whole.

Courage Courage against espionage in the novel is shown through the actions of ordinary Soviet people facing extraordinary challenges. Temirbolot, Keneshbek, the kolkhoz chairman, Sagyndyk, Captain Chernov, and border officers work tirelessly to protect the Soviet Union’s borders and uphold justice. Temirbolot stands out as a symbol of bravery. He confronts dangerous enemies, fights Momun to protect villagers, and survives injuries while rescuing Kalyikan’s children from a burning house. He endures being trapped with Liza and Jarkyn under ice and snow in a cave and escapes against the odds. By capturing Momun alive, he demonstrates intelligence, courage, and justice, rising as a national hero in the tradition of epic Kyrgyz heroes like Manas and Er Toshtuk. His heroism combines personal bravery, selflessness, and loyalty to the community and the state. This bravery can be understood against the historical backdrop of the Soviet Union, where fears of espionage were pervasive. The USSR was intensely concerned about Western infiltration, theft of military and scientific secrets, and internal betrayal. Ordinary citizens and officials alike were often seen as potential targets or instruments of foreign intelligence. This climate of vigilance and suspicion, combined with ideological commitment, required people to act courageously in defense of the state. The novel reflects this reality by portraying characters who not only face immediate physical dangers but also embody the broader Soviet ideal of protecting the homeland from both visible and hidden threats.

Illustrative moment: Snow whipped across the frozen mountains as Temirbolot and Liza sat on a blanket, sharing their meager food and wine. High in a spruce, Momun, a vengeful enemy, watched silently, his eyes burning with hatred. When Liza rose, Momun grabbed a glass, ready to strike. In a heartbeat, Temirbolot lunged, wrestling the enemy into the snow. Liza fired warning shots, seized his pistol, and held him down. Moments later, border guards arrived, capturing Momun alive. Hearts pounding, Temirbolot and Liza stood together, their courage tested but unbroken, showing how bravery, quick thinking, and teamwork can triumph over danger.

Childhood: Bullying In the village, Temirbolot faces relentless bullying from other children, led by Belek and encouraged by the arrogant Kalyikan. Over the years, they spread cruel rumors about his mother, Aykan, accusing her of being shameful, unfit, and dishonorable. These lies question the integrity of his family and undermine the respect he holds for them. Temirbolot cannot openly defend his mother, believing that speaking out would cause her sorrow, so he internalizes the anger, frustration, and humiliation. The constant verbal attacks and social isolation build pressure inside him, shaping his behavior in unexpected ways. As a response, he often reacts physically, striking back at those who provoke him. Though some adults and teachers interpret his actions as misbehavior or disobedience, the novel shows that his responses stem from loyalty, pride, and a fierce sense of justice. This long-term mistreatment teaches him resilience, independence, and vigilance, preparing him to confront greater dangers later in life. The bullying demonstrates how cruelty and gossip can harm a child emotionally and socially, yet it also reveals the formation of Temirbolot's moral code and courage. His experiences transform him into a self-reliant, determined young man, committed to protecting his family and standing against injustice.

Illustrative moment: One afternoon, as he walked home from school, the children cornered him near the frozen river. Belek sneered, shouting insults about Aykan while Kalyikan laughed and encouraged him. Temirbolot paused, then, driven by loyalty and pride, struck Belek on the shoulder. The boys scattered, but the tension lingered. Aykan arrived moments later, worried, and Temirbolot silently explained nothing. His physical reaction was not mere mischief but a defense of his family's dignity.

Gender: Misogyny Misogyny in the novel is shown through Kalyikan, who spreads harmful gossip about Aykan and other women. She ridicules their behavior, questions their morality, and publicly humiliates them, using rumors as a way to assert power over them. Kalyikan's actions reflect a broader social attitude that judges women harshly and limits their freedom, portraying how female characters are vulnerable to both personal attacks and societal scrutiny. Through her behavior, the novel highlights the ways in which women's reputations and dignity are constantly under threat, and how gossip and slander can be tools of oppression within the community. This shows that misogyny is not only personal but also embedded in social norms, shaping how women are treated and perceived in both private and public life.

Illustrative moment: She flouted community rules, mocked others openly, and spread harmful gossip. At a village meeting, she loudly claimed that Temirbolot was not Meder's son but Eshim's, insulting Aykan and accusing her of shameful behavior, even alleging she had been seen drunk in Przhevalsk town. When questioned, Kalyikan defiantly insisted her claims were true. Her words spread quickly among the villagers, and even the elder Ashym was splashed with sunflower husks as she gestured wildly. Temirbolot, confronted with these cruel rumors, felt humiliated and isolated. He kept his pain to himself, seeing it as shameful, and responded to insults with his fists, fiercely defending the honor of his mother and family.

Conflict: The conflict between Temirbolot and the Urbai–Momun brothers reflects a political struggle rooted in the social transformations brought by the Soviet system. Urbai and Momun come from a formerly wealthy family whose land and cattle were confiscated during collectivization. Their mother lives in a remote pasture and openly rejects Soviet authority. The loss of property and social status shapes the brothers' political hostility toward the Soviet state. Momun, who received an education in Frunze, develops strong resentment toward the system and directs his anger toward those associated with it, including Meder, Temirbolot's father, who had exposed their activities. During the war, Momun joins the enemy side and kills Meder. He later studies foreign languages such as English and German and becomes connected to foreign intelligence. Urbai flees abroad and eventually returns with the aim of acting against the Soviet system. With Meder no longer alive, the brothers target Temirbolot as his successor and representative of the same loyal Soviet line. Their actions represent resistance from elements of the former elite who lost power after collectivization. Temirbolot, supported by Soviet border officers, ultimately captures Urbai and Momun. The conflict therefore reflects a political confrontation between individuals aligned with the Soviet collective order and those seeking to undermine it through cooperation with external forces.

Illustrative moment: Temirbolot spotted the edge of a figure's clothing among the bushes and approached cautiously, rifle ready. Hidden, Urbai, face pale with rage, sprang at him, stabbing with a knife. Temirbolot screamed, firing accidentally, wounding Urbai again. His dog lunged, biting the attacker. Border guards arrived, subduing Urbai and preventing his suicide. Temirbolot, injured, was tended to by the guards. Captain Chernov ensured Urbai's capture and gave orders to secure Chyrmash and the flock.

Love: The love between Temirbolot and Liza reflects the literary concept of the “friendship of Soviet peoples,” a common motif in Soviet literature. Temirbolot, a Kyrgyz young man, and Liza, a Russian girl and his classmate, represent the unity of different nationalities within the Soviet social framework. Their relationship develops quietly and without explicit romantic expression, which corresponds both to the conventions of Soviet literature and to Kyrgyz cultural norms that favor modest and restrained portrayals of personal feelings. At the same time, another classmate, Jarkyn, also has feelings for Temirbolot, creating a subtle emotional triangle. However, the author does not dramatize this situation through open declarations or conflict. Instead, affection is conveyed implicitly through small actions, mutual respect, and shared experiences. This restrained depiction of love functions less as an individual romantic plot and more as a symbolic representation of social harmony, intercultural connection, and the ideological ideal of unity among Soviet peoples.

Illustrative moment: On the mountain pastures, Aykan and Aksamay tended their flocks while sharing food and rest. Temirbolot, leading the hay mowing, joked and raced with fellow workers, earning admiration for his skill and diligence. Amid the labor, young Liza watched him closely, captivated by his strength, precision, and thoughtfulness toward her exhausted father. As Temirbolot finished his rows, Liza approached, shyly wiping sweat from his face. The brief touch, the closeness, and his gentle attention stirred unexpected emotions in both. Among laughter, work, and mountain winds, a quiet bond blossomed, marking the first gentle stirrings of young love.

Parenting: The parenting theme in the novel can be understood through the Kyrgyz proverb “*Eneluu jetim erke jetim, ataluu jetim arsyz jetim*,” which suggests that a child who grows up with a mother but without a father is emotionally safer than a child raised without a mother. This idea reflects the importance of maternal attachment in a child’s development. Emotional security, care, and consistent support from the mother contribute to the formation of a stable personality and resilience in the child. In the *novel*, Temirbolot grows up without his father, who died during the war, but his mother Aykan provides constant care, protection, and emotional support, despite social pressure, gossip, and economic hardship. Temirbolot’s sense of responsibility, courage, and loyalty can therefore be seen as connected to the emotional stability and guidance he receives from his mother. Temirbolot’s love for his mother Aykan reflects the concept of filial attachment. Growing up without his father, he develops a strong emotional bond with his mother. Such relationship creates a secure emotional base that shapes the child’s identity and moral behavior. His readiness to defend his mother’s honor against insults and rumors demonstrates that the parent–child bond is not only emotional but also connected to social responsibility and family dignity.

Illustrative moment: Temirbolot spent the night chopping wood and reviewing lessons, while Janargul stayed late, speaking softly with him. Aykan watched, wondering if he had revealed the cause of his wild behavior. In the morning, Janargul hurried to school, sharing nothing, and Temirbolot felt grateful for his mother’s gentle words. As she left, Aykan hugged and kissed him tightly. Alone, he whispered, “Mother, you are pure and honest, like milk. When I grow up, I will never let anyone hurt you.” Smoke rose from stoves, mingling with straw and pine, as the quiet village slowly woke.

Leadership and Politics at the Village Level: The kolkhoz meeting in the novel reflects the structure of leadership and political life in the Soviet Union, where local governance and social order were closely connected to the collective farm system and the authority of the Communist Party. The meeting takes place in the village club, a central public space where villagers gather to discuss work plans, community issues, and social conduct. Chairman Keneshbek Amanov leads the meeting, presenting the kolkhoz agenda, which includes agricultural tasks such as seed cleaning, building barns, raising livestock, and supporting vulnerable members of the community. This setting demonstrates how leadership at the village level functioned through collective discussion and public accountability. During the meeting, the issue of Temirbolot becomes part of the public agenda after rumors about his mother spread through the village. Teacher Janargul addresses the situation, explaining that the boy’s behavior resulted from the harmful gossip directed at his family. Kalyikan openly accuses Temirbolot and continues to spread rumors, creating tension in the hall. The discussion gradually shifts from agricultural planning to a moral and social issue affecting the community. As the truth emerges, villagers recognize the consequences of Kalyikan’s actions. A group of youths and young women presents a petition accusing her of misconduct, including spreading rumors and mistreating others. Through this scene, the novel portrays how leadership, political structure,

and communal authority operated within the kolkhoz system, where decisions about work, discipline, and justice were addressed in a public and collective setting.

Illustrative moment: At a kolkhoz meeting in the village club, Chairman Keneshbek Amanov opens the session and invites teacher Janargul to address the members of the collective farm about Temirbolot. She begins by praising the growth of the collective farm and the importance of raising children worthy of the future. When she raises the question of Temirbolot's recent behavior, Kalyikan interrupts loudly, repeating rumors about Temirbolot's mother, Aykan. The hall grows restless as villagers challenge her claims, while the chairman repeatedly calls for order. Janargul explains that gossip among adults spread to the children, who began bullying Temirbolot with insults about his mother and his father's name. Ashamed and hurt, the boy withdrew into himself and responded with his fists. Kalyikan continues shouting accusations, even attacking the teacher, and the hall falls into uneasy silence as elders avoid looking at the youth. Finally, Aykan comes forward. Trembling, she presents a letter from the front proving that Meder, who died in the war, is Temirbolot's father. She explains that she endured Kalyikan's gossip in silence and even tried to appease her, but the rumors eventually reached her son. Many women in the hall begin to cry. Then Aiymbiyke presents a petition signed by villagers accusing Kalyikan of slander, intimidation, and misconduct, demanding her expulsion. The collective farmers raise their hands in agreement. Kalyikan stands alone as the decision is made, the sunflower seeds slipping from her hands.