

# About Love



Central  
Story



## Characters:

- Anna Alexeyevna
- Luganoyich
- Nikanor
- Pelageya
- Burkin
- Ivan Ivanych

## Types of Love Story

1. Violet Love Story
2. Selfish/financial Love Story
3. Spiritual Love Story

- Summary
- Important Question Answer

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## 2. About love, (A Story)

-Anton Chekhov

How does Alyohin define love?

Anton Chekhov is a realistic Russian writer. In "About Love" he tries to define through the mouth of first person narrator Alyohin. By observing the love between Nikanor and Pelageya, Alyohin says that love is mysterious. Everything written or said about love is not final. Whether love provide happiness or not is uncertain. We cannot generalize in love because love is an individual matter. Alyohin further says that love is usually poeticized. Nobody cares that loves is honourable or dishonourable, sensible or stupid or where love leads to. Alyohin has his own experience of love in Moscow with a girl who always counted for money. After completing graduation, his city visit gave him a chance to meet Anna. Both of them deeply fell in love but never expressed it until they departed forever. His love experience taught Alyohin that love is a hindrance, source of dissatisfaction and irritation. He concludes that we should not involve ourselves in reasoning in love.

### **Outside Environment and its relation to the story:**

When Alyohin, Burkin and Ivan are having breakfast at Alyohin's house in Sofyino, sky is gray with clouds. The trees are drenched (wet) with rain. The wind is blowing. It is not a suitable time to go out for work. While Alyohin tells his story, the rain stops and the sun appears in the sky. The former situation of the weather symbolizes a dark and gloomy situation whereas later stands for freedom and happiness. In About Love, Alyohin feels heavy and sad before telling his painful love story to his friends, which is related to the wet a gray environment. However, at the end, the expression of pain and suffering gives him solace. He feels free from the psychological pain, which resembles the bright weather. It shows that expression and sharing necessary to come out from the pain and suffering sharing of the tragic events of life releases us from mental stress.

### **Summary in Short:**

In Sofyino, Alyohin and his friends Ivan and Burkin are having breakfast. Nikanor, the cook asks what prepare for dinner. According to Alyohin Nikanor in love with Pelageya. Nikanor is a man of medium height with a puffy face and small eyes. He is clean-shaven. Sometimes he drinks alcohol and beat Pelageya. He insisted her to marry. Pelageya do not want to marry but wants to live with him. Alyohin tells his friends that when he was Moscow as student, he used to live with a girl who was really charming. When he held her in his arms, she was thinking about money. After completing graduation from university, Alyohin returns to village Sofyino. He was involved in farming to pay a debt that his father had taken for his study. During his first year of village, he tries to maintain higher lifestyle by reading books and having coffee his room. However, during summer he is so tired that he eats with his workers and sleeps elsewhere. Alyohin was elected honorary justice before he came to village. Once he is called to deal over arson case, where he gets chance to meet Luganovich. They become close friend. Accepting the invitation of Luganovich, Alyohin goes to have dinner. He met his wife Anna, who has six-month baby. Anna is a young woman of about twenty-two, very beautiful kind, intelligent and attractive. Alyohin says that has never seen such a woman before. Her husband Luganovich is good natured and simple-minded person. They play a duet on the piano to entertain Alyohin.

Alyohin spends the whole summer at Sofyino. He remembers Anna and feels that she is living somewhere inside him. In the late autumn, Alyohin and Anna meet in a benefit performance. They share their feelings.

Anna says that he is growing thinner than before. Next day he take lunch with Luganovich. After this event Alyohin goes to town regularly, visits them as single-family members. Few days gap of visiting makes Anna sad. Anna and Luganovich do not understand that being educated why Alyohin is living a farmer life. They suggest him to involve in some scholarly literacy work. If he needs money, they would help him. They give him cigarette cases, lamp and in return he send them fowls, butter and flower.

At home, Alyohin become unhappy. He only thinks about Anna. He tries to understand the mystery of her marriage with Luganovich, who is not suitable partner's in Alyohin thinking. He feels sorry for not meeting before her marriage. He knows that both of them were in love but cannot express. Alyohin finds himself unable to give him happiness to Anna, as he is living country life. He further thinks that it is not good at all to destroy their happy family life. She often suggests him to marry a girl of intelligence and worth but it is difficult to get such a person in the whole town. The years pass and Anna already had two children. They called Alyohin uncle and hung on his neck. Anna and Alyohin go to the theatre together, sit side by side touching shoulders but after the opera they depart in separate directions. Anna seems frustrated and goes to her mother or sister. She becomes moody. She does not care about her children and husband. She gets treatment for nervous prostration (tiredness). She even disagrees with Alyohin and makes fun of him. Their separation begins when Luganovich is transferred to the western provinces and Anna has to go to Crimea for treatment. Many people come to the railway station to say goodbye to Anna. Before the third bell of the train, Alyohin runs into her compartment with her basket, which she had forgotten. Their eyes meet and they cannot control themselves. They hug and kiss each other. Anna weeps bitterly. Alyohin confesses (expresses) his love to her. Alyohin goes to next empty compartment and sits there crying. The tragic experience of Alyohin makes Ivan and Burkin very sad. With the completion of Alyohin's story, the rain stops and the sun comes out. They go to the balcony, and observe the fine view of the garden and the river.

### **Important Questions for this chapter:**

1. How does Alyohin define love?
2. Why can't they confess their love in the beginning?
3. How is the situation of Alyohin Compared with the Squirrel in the cage?
4. Draw the character sketch of Alyohin/ Anna/ Luganovich.

### **Short Answer Questions**

**2076 Set B Q. No. 2d**

How does the narrator plan to reconcile his life of toil with civilized living? [3]

- Alyohin is the narrator of the story, 'About Love' by Anton Chekhov. While narrating his own love story, he tells Ivan and Burkin, his guests, that he has been living in the countryside even after his graduation to clear the debt of his father. During his first year in the village, he tries to maintain his higher lifestyle by reading books and having coffee in his room. He lives in the upper storey of the house, reads the newspaper, drinks liquor to maintain his city luxury. He does all this to reconcile his

city life, his civilized living with the life of toil. But he couldn't maintain this. During summer, he is so tired that he eats with his workers and sleeps elsewhere. Later on, as the honorary peace of justice, he represents the village in town and gets a chance to have a civilized life sitting on good chairs and wearing black coats. In short, Alyohin tries his best to reconcile his life of toil with the civilized living but fails.

#### 2075 Set C Q. No. 2b

Why is Alyohin compared to 'a squirrel in a cage'? [3]

- Alyohin, the narrator in the story. "About Love" is compared with the caged squirrel. The Luganovichs and Ivan and Burkin develop an analogy of squirrel in the cage. The phrase 'Alyohin is said to rush round like a squirrel in the cage' is repeated in the story too. This repetition has a significant meaning. Alyohin is a man of knowledge and language. After graduation, he enters into the field to redeem his father's mortgaged land. For the man of literature and language, this is not a noble profession. He starts in the field with his preliminary great efforts. But the time and situation divert his life. He can't gear up. Instead, he is entangled in the love and poverty. He appears sad and unhappy. He has his creditors to pay. He can't express his deep emotions to his beloved, Anna. He is circumstanced and succumbs to get rid of his problems. This phrase is repeated to display his realities. The way caged squirrel can't come out which he aspires for, Alyohin can't come out of his situation. I don't think that the Ivan and Burkin's reading of Alyohin is different from that of Luganovich. All these three people compare him with a caged squirrel. Though, Ivan and Burkin find him miserable lover, all there consider him a noble fellow, a man of language and literature. They all are sympathetic to him. Luganovich takes Alyohin as a poor fellow, Ivan and Burkin find him a poor creature. They want Alyohin make a progress and live a meaningful and pleasant life.

#### 2. 2076 Set C Q. No. 2d

What compels the narrator to quit his prestigious position and start the monotonous work of farming? [3]

- Anton Chekhov's Alyohin is doomed because of his circumstances. He was a graduate, a learned scholar. But he was destined to work in the field to pay the debt of his father which his father took to educate him. Afraid of his city luxury, Alyohin was happy to be appointed as the "Honorary Justice of Peace". As a representative of the village, he had to participate in the court sessions. His momentary black coats and comfortable chairs in the court didn't last long. His acquaintance with the Vice-president of the court, Luganovich, drove him off from the position. To his invitation, Alyohin went for dinner where he met Anna, Luganovich's beautiful wife. This diverted his total career and life. Like the squirrel in the cage, he fluttered round his so-called beloved Anna. His circumstances overpowered him and position of Honorary Peace of Justice.

#### 3. 2075 Set A Q. No. 2e

Describe the three dimensions of love in "About love" by Anton Chekhov. [3]

The narrator, Alyohin in the story 'About Love' by Anton Chekhov, talks about the three dimensions of love: physical, materialistic and platonic. The love of Pelageya in the story is physical one. She loves Nikanor

another cook in the story, for sexual pleasure. She says she wants to live with him and just so. But she doesn't like to marry him. Similarly, the love of a girl at the University of Moscow is a materialistic love. She has expectations of beef and housekeeping. But the love between Alyohin and Anna is platonic one. They love each other ideally. Neither Anna nor Alyohin has a sense of getting each other. They admire the ideas. Both of them become spiritually one. They love but do not confess. Their love was simply idealistic and platonic, depicting another dimension of love.

#### 5. 2074 Partial D Q. No. 2e

Describe the three dimensions of Love in "About Love" by Anton Chekov.

[3] My Please refer to [2075 Set A Q. No. 2e](#)

#### 2072 Supp Q. No. 2f

How did Alyohin define love? [3]

- Alyohin's concept of love is shaped by his own love experience. He, however, doesn't produce a concrete definition of love. He thinks love is a great mass of mystery. Starting his story of love from the anecdote of Pelageya and Nikanor's love story, he displays its strange nature. Pelageya and Nikanor, the lovers of two different ideologies, falling in love with each other displays a mysterious nature of love. Similarly Alyohin, the narrator, states that the love as such can't be put in terms. Every definition of love is but an incomplete definition. This is simply a statement of the problem. For one love is one thing while for another it is another thing. Its definitions are varied and many. Thus, Alyohin offers us a fluid concept of love. The fluidity of love blocks once we venture to give its final definition. But Alyohin believes the beauty, and the poetics of love halts when they enter petty questions. The reasoning in love makes it an utter failure. By his own experience in which he starts reasoning, he thus finally says love is a source of irritation, dissatisfaction and hindrance. To sum up, Alyohin leaves the subject of love for open discussion. He believes the discussions might go on but such discussions can never reach an agreement while defining love. He leaves it to us open ended.

#### 2072 Set C Q. No. 21

Describe the circumstance which compelled Alyohin, the narrator of the story, to quit the position of the judge? [3]

- Please refer to [2076 Set B Q. No. 2d](#)

#### **8. 2072 Set D Q. No. 27**

Why did Alyohin quit the position of the judge? [3]

- Please refer to [2076 Set B Q. No. 2d](#)

#### **9. 2072 Partial Set A Q. No. 21**

Explain the significance of the statement - "a village cat driven by hunger to eat cucumber in the kitchen garden."

- Please refer to [2076 Set C Q. No. 2d](#)

#### **10. 2072 Partial Set B Q. No. 21**

Explain the significance of the statement 'a village cat driven by hunger to eat cucumber in the kitchen garden'

- Please refer to [2076 Set C Q. No. 2d](#)

#### **11. 2071 Supp Q. No. 120**

Sketch the character of Luganovich briefly. [3]

- Luganovich is a static character who harbors the philosophy of simplicity. He doesn't change. A Vice-president of Circuit Court, Luganovich is a man of honor and prestige. Though an adult, over forty years old, he marries a beautiful and intelligent girl of twenty-two. He does not in this sense, make a good couple. Luganovich, however, has his own ideals of living. He is reserved; talks only when needed. He has his friends who discuss something big even at the party. Shows little interest in recreation, which Anna, his wife, needs. Luganovich looks as if he has been put for sale. But he is humane-Luganovich shows a genuine respect to his guests and displays now and again his generosity. Despite this all, Luganovich is too simple. He never tries to know what goes in Anna's mind. He is an official father and husband but not a good friend, good lover and father. Luganovich is Chekhov's stereotypical husband. To sum it up, he is a realistic character picked from marriage and relations are the formalities in individual's happiness does not have a space.

#### **12. 2071 Partial Set B Q. No. 12 e**

What is love according to Alyohin?

- Please refer to [2072 Supp Q. No 2f](#)

### 13. 2070 Supp Set A Q. No. 12'a

Would you call the affair between Alyohin and Anna platonic or consummate? Give reasons for your answer. [3]

- I would call their affair strictly a platonic one. In the story, "About Love", the love affair between Alyohin and Anna is magnified. The story narrates their but the love shown so far in the story is no consummate but the platonic one. Their love is not of sensuality. Unlike Pelageya, they love the idea or the soul of each other. Alyohin is fascinated toward Anna spiritually. Similarly, Anna is the mother of two children but still is seen carrying away by Alyohin. They spend hours together in silence. They talk. But they never consummate the pure and sacred love. In fact, the course of their love deepens but such depth leads them to the imaginations they develop for each other. In this sense this is not a love for attraction and sexual pleasure rather a love of spiritual bond. Anna and Alyohin are nowhere seen involved in the physical activities. Their love is silent and deep. This is a love in which they admire each other's ideas. Alyohin goes together in the theater, spends time with her in her house and so on but he never looks at her with sexual passion. He even doesn't confess his love by being worried about her and her family, so does Anna. To be specific, they love but the love they do doesn't end in sex. They separate finally for ever and show that how ideally, how platonically and how spiritually they love.

### 14. 2069 Partial Q.No. 126

What, according to Alyohin, is the definition of love? Discuss. [3]

- Please refer to [2072 Supp Q.No. 2](#)

### 15. 2068 Q. No. 12

Sketch the character of Luganovich briefly. [3]

- Please refer to [2071 Supp Q. No. 12d](#)

### 16. 2065 Q. No. 12

How did Alyohin define love?

- Please refer to [2072 Supp Q. No. 2f](#)

### 17. 2064 Q. No. 12 a

How did Alyohin define love?



- Please refer to **2072 SUPP Q. NO. 2f**

**18. 2057 Q. no. 2f**

What kinds of love experiences are suggested by Alyohin in 'About love'?

- Please refer to **2075 Set B Q.No. 3a**

## **Long Answer Questions**

**19. 2075 Set B Q. No. 3a**

What kind of love experiences are suggested by the narrator of the story, "About Love"? [10]

Alyohin, the narrator of the story, "About Love", suggests different love experiences. He shows many dimensions of love in the story. Two types of love experiences are suggested in an anecdote of Nikanor and Pelageya. Nikanor's love is a traditional type which should end in marriage whereas Pelageya's love is the physical one. In their love anecdote, he presents two cooks adoption two different ideals of love Nikanor wants to marry Pelageya whereas Pelageya wants to live with him and just so. Alyohin shares the materialistic love experiences by giving his own example of university time. He spends and thinks of making her happy, though his own ideals make an end of that love. Again, he suggests a platonic and spiritual love experience through his own love affair with Anna. They love each other spiritually and ideally. Neither Alyohin nor Anna knows how they have started loving each other. They spend hours together and, go to the theater together but never confess their love. Therefore, by suggesting various love experiences, physical, marital, spiritual, materialistic, ideal and platonic, Alyohin has made the world of heterosexual love really mysterious.

**2074. set A Q. No 3a.**

Alyohin is said to rush around like a squirrel in a cage (p. 19), and this judgement is echoed in the final paragraph of the story (p. 23). What is the significance of these repetitions? Does Luganovich reading about Alyohin differ from Burkin and Ivan?

- Please refer to **2075 set C Q. No. 2b**

**22. 2074 Set B Q. No. 3a**

Would you consider Alyohin a successful person? Or a failure one? If failure, what makes you judge him as a failure person? Explain on the basis of the text. [10]

- Alyohin is the narrator in the story, 'About Love'. He appears to be a failure in the story. He is a university graduate, a man of language and literature. Despite his literary and educational position, he is bound to spend the life of a peasant. He has failed here. Similarly, he has entered the field to clear the debt of his father. He reaped, sowed and cultivated the field himself without hiring the labors. However, he could not continue there with concentration. Despite working in the field, he chose to



represent the village in the court. This diverted his life. He happened to meet Anna with whom he fell in love but could not get through he has failed here too. Alyohin fell in love with Anna. They spent time together, talked hours together, went to the theater together, and cared for each other. Alyohin appeared as a noble fellow for her who made her life pleasant. Anna appeared to be very beautiful, fascination and intelligent girl for Alyohin. Despite being in her love, he could not achieve it. Thus, he is failure in every field.

### 23. 2071 Set C Q. No. 3 a

Sketch the character of Alyohin. Do you consider him Anton Chekhov's Alyohin is consider him a successful of a failure person? [10]

- Alyohin is the narrator in Anton Chekhov's celebrated story, "About Love". He narrates his own love experiences by sitting an occasion in which Pelageya and Nikanor are shown as unique lovers. A university graduate, Alyohin is also the hero of his own love story. Representing contemporary Russians, he devotes his life after graduation in the fields and spends a life of a caged squirrel. He is a bachelor and ideally is in love with Anna, a beautiful and intelligent young woman of 22. Alyohin is a Chekhov's realistic character picked from everyday society. He is not a character from the fairy tales but a struggling, sensitive and hopeful graduates who works day and night in the field but being optimistic that he can clear off his father's debt By nature Alyohin is cooperative helpful and friendly. At Anna's absence, he spends hours with her children and maid. He is a man of great splendor who every woman finds worthy for her love. Physically Alyohin is attractive: young, frank, lively, animated and an interesting person. Anna starts loving him from the day she sees him. Economically he is poor: works in the field, borrows frequently the money and suffers his father's debt. Emotionally he is delicate, thus leaving his work aside peruses Anna and her love. However, temperamentally, he is a man of great self-respect who does not accept the offer of money from Anna and Luganovich rather borrows frequently from his friends. Alyohin, a well-developed character, dominates the whole plot of the story. His experience of love becomes in a sense a meaning of love. When we find him in a great difficulty of expressing his love, we generalize that. Finding him reasoning in love, we know where reasoning leads the lovers. Thus, Alyohin is seen as a socially victimized person who neither can express his love nor can spend his days with her freely and frankly. Every time after the theater, they part like strangers. To sum up, Alyohin is a realistic character representing every bachelor who falls and then fails in love since he lives in a society that needs an explanation. I consider him a failure. He fails both in the field and in love. In the field, he works quite hard but his work does not produce any results. Consequently, he borrows money and worries about where he can take Anna after marriage. Forgetting his field, he starts going into town to represent the village. On the other hand, in love he utterly fails. He cannot express his love in time, which ultimately deteriorates both Anna and him. She leaves him for forever.

### 24. 2074 supp Q . No. 3a

Why couldn't Alyohin remain in the position of 'honorary justice' of the peace? What are the circumstance that compelled him to leave the honorary status? Explain on the basis of the story 'About love'? [ 10]

- Anton Chekhov's Alyohin is doomed because of his circumstances. He was a graduate, a learned scholar. However, he was destined to work in the field to pay the debt of his father, which his father took to educate him. Afraid of his city luxury, Alyohin was happy to be appointed as the "Honorary Justice of Peace". And a representative of the village, he had to participate in the court sessions. His momentary black coats and comfortable chairs in the court didn't last long. His acquaintance with the Vice-President of the court, Luganovich, drove him off from the position. To his invitation, Alyohin went for dinner where he met Anna, Luganovich's beautiful wife. This diverted his total career and life. Like the squirrel in the cage, he fluttered round his so-called beloved Anna. His circumstances overpowered him and position of Honorary Peace of Justice. He represents the village in town and gets a chance of having a civilized life sitting on good chairs and wearing black coats. In short, Alyohin tries his best to reconcile his life of toil with the civilized living but fails.