

CHAPTER 24

Summary

When they arrive in Islamabad, Sohrab is fascinated by the famous Shad Faisal Mosque and the color television in the hotel room. Amir remembers how he had promised Hassan once that he would buy him a color TV someday. Farid, once he sees the two settled into the hotel, tells Amir he must leave. Amir gives him two thousand dollars in thanks for all he has done and then Farid, his lips trembling, pulls away from the curb. Amir never sees him again. He thinks, as Farid drives away, about what he will do with the wounded little boy in his hotel room, but in his heart, he already knows.

When Amir awakens later, he discovers that Sohrab is gone and he is frantic. It occurs to him that Sohrab might have gone to the mosque that so fascinated him. He finds him sitting on a spot of grass outside the mosque, just as he thought. Sohrab talks to Amir there about his memories of Hassan, and Amir tells him, "You must miss your parents very much." Sohrab responds by asking if he misses *his* parents and Amir says that yes, he misses his father sometimes a lot. Sohrab is sad, because he's starting to forget their faces. At that, Amir gives him the Polaroid picture Rahim had given him of Hassan and a much younger Sohrab. He doesn't cry when he sees it, but touches it tenderly.

They find a carriage and ride back to the hotel. Sohrab asks Amir whether he will go to hell for killing Assef. Amir reassures him that what he did to Assef, he should have been himself many years before. Sohrab also feels he's a sinner, because he is dirty after Assef had raped him so many times. Amir's answer to that is to draw him close to him and allow him to cry on his shoulder. Then, he asks Sohrab if he would like to come with him to America. Sohrab quietly sobs on his shoulder as his answer.

For another week in Islamabad, neither Amir nor Sohrab discusses the question Amir had asked. One day, they travel to Daman-e-Koh where they sit on a bench watching the Pakistani children run and play. It angers Amir to see them, because the children in Afghanistan seldom do the same and he hates his countrymen for destroying his land. While they are sitting on the bench, Amir tells Sohrab that he and Hassan were brothers, but that no one had told either of them because of their social classes. He also tells Sohrab that Baba had loved them both equally, but differently, and that he wasn't ashamed of Hassan; he was ashamed of himself.

That night as they lay in bed trying to sleep, Sohrab finally discusses San Francisco with Amir. He tells him the thought of going scares him a little, because he thinks Amir and Soraya might get tired of him or not even like him. Amir reaches for his hand and reassures him that none of that will ever happen. Sohrab makes Amir promise that he will never send him back to an orphanage and then, he finally says he will go to the United States with Amir.

Amir finally gets through to Soraya who is frantic with worry, because he has been gone longer than he said. He tells her he's bringing home a little boy he wants them to adopt and he tells her everything about Hassan and Sohrab. She is more than willing to accept Sohrab and it is agreed that he will become their son.

Amir and Sohrab travel to the American Embassy in Islamabad to begin the process of bringing Sohrab to the United States. The US official is not helpful and advises Amir to give up the petition, because he can't prove his relationship to Sohrab and Sohrab has no identity papers. Amir is very angry with the man and tells him he should not be allowed to make such decisions unless he has

children. The official, Mr. Andrews, advises Amir to hire an Immigration lawyer if he means to pursue it. The secretary later tells Amir that her boss is ill mannered, because he had not been the same since his daughter committed suicide.

The next time he speaks with Soraya, she tells him that his Uncle Sharif who had recited the poems at their wedding was using his contacts with Immigration to "stir the pot for them." Meanwhile, Sohrab is beginning to go silent as their efforts to take him home with Amir are met with many brick walls.

The Immigration lawyer explains to Amir that the policy of the United States is to place orphans seeking asylum with people in their own country. He tells Amir that for his petition to even be heard he will have to live with Sohrab in Pakistan for the next two years or he could relinquish him to an orphanage for a little while and then file an orphan petition. Amir later explains this possibility to Sohrab who sobs and reminds Amir he had promised never to take him back to an orphanage. He begs him to promise again, but Amir knows he cannot and just allows Sohrab to cry himself to sleep. Then, he calls Soraya with the information that the lawyer had given him, but Soraya tells him none of that will be necessary, because Uncle Sharif had gotten a humanitarian visa for Sohrab.

When he hangs up, Amir goes looking for Sohrab in the bathroom to tell him the good news, only to find the boy lying in bloody bath water, having tried to commit suicide. Amir screams and screams even after the ambulance arrives.

Notes

Through all of his reassurances and his efforts to get Sohrab into the United States, Amir never realizes that he will once again sin against his own blood. He very much wants Sohrab as his son, but he breaks a promise to him about the orphanage. His betrayal makes Sohrab try to commit suicide and now, once again, Amir must find a way to do good.