

## CHAPTER 9

### Summary

The next morning, Amir opens all his presents. He doesn't even know why he bothers, because they bring him no joy. He sees them as blood money - Baba would never have thrown him such a grand party if he had not won the kite tournament. His father has given Amir a top-of-the-line Schwinn bicycle and a wristwatch. Sitting there on his bed and holding the wristwatch, Amir remembers what Rahim Khan had told him about his wife and how it was for the best that she had been sent away, because she would only have suffered there. Later, he takes the Schwinn for a spin and is stopped by Ali who gives him a present from him and Hassan. It is an illustrated edition of the *Shahnamah*, the book he had spent many hours reading to Hassan. He ends up tossing it on the heap with all the other presents which bring him no joy. That night, he asks Baba if he has seen his new watch anywhere in preparation for his plan to rid his home of Ali and Hassan.

The next morning, Amir waits until Ali and Hassan leave to do the shopping. He picks up the watch and a couple of envelopes of cash and takes them to the mud hut. Inside, he places them under Hassan's mattress. Then, thirty minutes later, he goes into Baba's study where he tells him the first of a long line of shameful lies. When Ali and Hassan return, Amir watches his father telling them whatever Amir has told him. He comes into the house and tells Amir to come downstairs so they can settle this thing. When Amir comes into his father's study, he can see how Ali and Hassan have both been crying and he wonders how and when he had become capable of causing such pain. When Baba asks Hassan if he stole Amir's gifts, Hassan actually says yes. Amir understands that this is Hassan's final sacrifice for him and he feels like he has been slapped. Furthermore, he understands now that Hassan knows that he watched everything that happened in the alley and yet he is rescuing Amir once again. He wants to tell everything and admit that he is a liar, a cheat, and a thief, but he just can't bring himself to do what will cause Baba to never forgive him. He's also glad that this will be over soon, because he thinks Baba will dismiss them and life will just move on.

Then, Baba stuns Amir by telling Ali and Hassan that he forgives them. Amir is stunned, because Baba had told him that theft was the one true sin. He hates his Baba at that moment for not being able to forgive *him* for killing his mother and not being the son he'd always wanted. However, Baba's forgiveness is short-lived, because Ali insists that he and Hassan are leaving. Life here for them is now impossible. The grimace which shows on Ali's face mirrors his pain and Amir realizes how deep the pain is if he can see it reflected on a paralyzed face. When Baba asks Ali to tell him why, Amir knows that Ali will never answer, because Hassan has probably made his father promise that he will never tell the truth. They are going to Hazarajat to live with Ali's cousin and they only ask Baba to drive them to the bus station. At this point, Amir sees his father cry for the first time and beg the servants with a fearful plea, "Please . . ."

Amir notes that it rarely rains in the summer in Afghanistan, but that afternoon, it rains in sheets with thunder and lightning. They pile their belongings into the car. Later, Amir discovers that Hassan has left all his toys behind, piled in the corner of the mud hut, just like Amir's presents are piled in the corner of his room. Baba tries once more in the pouring rain to convince them to stay, but in the slump of his father's shoulders, Amir knows that the life he has always known is over. Amir watches the car pull away while the rain pours down like melting silver.

### Notes

Amir's guilt is so great that all he knows how to do is repudiate it. The only way he can do that is to repudiate Hassan. So, he frames his friend for stealing his gifts and forces Ali to insist on leaving. The irony is that he will only make his guilt even greater by inflicting such horrible pain on two of the people he loves the most in his life. The worst of the guilt is that Hassan has once again sacrificed to protect Amir.