

Kite Runner: Chapter 6

Element	Notes
Plot summary	This transitional chapter focuses on the Afghan tradition of kite fighting, with Amir describing how him and Hassan used to build - and now buy - their kites. The chapter also focuses on why Amir and Hassan love winter and builds up to Kabul's annual tournament, perhaps the ultimate symbol of Afghan school children's freedom. The last part of the chapter highlights Hassan's adoration for Amir and his power over Hassan, as well as how Amir feels like he must prove himself to his father - his main motivation for winning the kite fighting tournament.
Characters	Hassan.
Themes and features	At the beginning of the chapter, the narrator creates a nostalgic image of winter through his use of imagery - for example, through the phrase "<i>winter was every kid's favourite season in Kabul</i>". The idea of cosiness and comfort is portrayed through how Hassan and Amir enjoyed "<i>playing cards by the stove</i>" and their freedom from school. The natural beauty of Kabul, including the blueness of the sky and the snow's purity, is also highlighted as the narrator reverts to childlike language. Kite fighting is very important to Amir because it is the only interest that he shares with Baba and "<i>the chill between Baba and me thawed a little</i>". The sport is also portrayed as a significant cultural tradition and an inescapable part of Afghanistan's history. War imagery is used to build up the importance of the kite fighting tournament, with Amir stating that "<i>in Kabul, fighting kites was a little like going to war</i>". This is also ironic of course, a fact which the narrator notes, foreshadowing the years of conflict which will follow from the winter of 1975 (both Amir and Hassan's internal suffering and the country's instability). By comparing himself to a soldier going to war, Amir portrays the sport as brutal and violent, as seen through the scars on the boys' fingers. A sense of restlessness and anticipation is felt. Kite fighting tournaments run over the course of many hours, with boys flying bamboo and tissue paper kites that are attached to a length of glass string, which is wrapped around a wooden spool (either homemade or bought). You have to swoop under your opponents' kites and cut their string, with the kite runners themselves (the kite fighters' assistants) running to catch the fallen kites. Amir's jealousy is shown through the fact that if he asks for a bigger, better kite from Saifo's shop, Baba would oblige but would also buy the same one for Hassan. Amir begs to "<i>let me be the favourite</i>". The rules of the tournaments themselves are simple: