

enhanced by the fact that Ali has been in his family for forty years and *"Hassan's not going anywhere"*. This makes it seem like Amir is trying to punish himself and that the spell of his win at the kite fighting tournament is wearing off. This seems to be the nail in the coffin for Baba and Amir's relationship - it has returned to its normal coldness. This creates a sense of shame as Baba is ashamed of Amir, but both the boys are also ashamed of how they responded to the rape.

As Amir hurls a pomegranate at Hassan, his cry is *"pregnant with surprise and pain"*. Amir then demands Hassan to hit him, perhaps suggesting that Amir wants to feel the pain that Hassan felt during the rape. The undeserved, cruel, short and violent act against Hassan mirrors the rape, in fact. The redness of the pomegranate juice symbolises blood. Hassan's maturity is also seen once again in how he crushes the pomegranate against his own forehead - he is sick of being manipulated and controlled by Amir, but his loyalty is unwavering.

Baba invites 400 *"aunts and uncles"* to Amir's 13th birthday party, most of whom he barely knows. This presents Baba as popular and well-loved - indeed, although he hires people to help with the preparations, many of them refuse payment. This highlights Baba's status within the community, as a source of financial help and guidance. Amir recognises that Baba is *"the real star of the show"* and the party is used to show-off his wealth. Everything is all about Baba, as he insists that Amir greets every single guest for fear of them gossiping the next day about his son's lack of manners.

Assef's parents are described with adjectives like *"short"*, *"small"* and *"nervous"* which contrasts Assef and presents him as Baba's perfect son. Assef is *"strong, tall, well-dressed and well-mannered"* and a good soccer player. He appears to dominate and even frighten his weak parents, as his good looks and sociable personality win over Baba (signalled with how he calls him *"jan"* - a term of endearment which he doesn't use with Amir). This shows how two-faced Assef is - he has the capacity to hide who he really is.

Rahim Khan's birthday gift to Amir is a leather notebook, which is much more thoughtful than Baba's gift to him. This suggests that Rahim Khan is like a father-figure to Amir, who recognises and values his talent for story writing. Khan describes his forbidden love (reminiscent of Baba's affair with Sanuabar) with a Hazara girl, stating that the *"world always wins"*. Rahim Khan appears desperate for Amir to open up to him, evident through trying to relate his experiences to Amir's. Rahim Khan states that *"you don't order someone to polish your shoes one day and call them*