

Kite Runner: Chapter 10

Element	Notes
Plot summary	In this tragic chapter the narrative has jumped forward 5 years and Amir is now 18. Amir and Baba are forced to flee Kabul due to the Russians' increasingly violent occupation of the city and they are smuggled into Pakistan. Amir reflects on what he's left behind. At an army checkpoint, their truck is stopped and a Russian soldier tries to rape one of the migrants however Baba puts his life on the line to prevent the "indecency". After a more senior soldier apologises, they make their way to a basement in Jalalabad where they stay for a week before travelling to Peshawar (Pakistan) on a fuel tanker. At the end of the chapter, Kamal's father shoots himself after realising that his son has died on the suffocating journey.
Characters	Any of the truck passengers (especially the couple with the baby), Baba, Karim the truck driver and the Russian soldier.
Themes and features	Amir is presented as physically weak due to his extreme travel sickness which makes Baba embarrassed and apologetic. This weakness contrasts Baba's admiration of male strength and pride, which was highlighted through his love of Assef, but Amir can never live up to his stereotypical views of masculinity. Amir is also mentally weak at this point - his lack of clarity, fear of the dark and flashbacks to Hassan's rape present him as deeply troubled. Amir and Baba's hasty exit from Kabul is demonstrated through their 2am start, the plates left in the sink and the fact that they're squashed into the back of an old Russian truck. This suggests that Baba's money and status is now worthless, which is also apparent through the business suits which were left in his closet. This creates a ghostly image which mirrors the life of power and dignity which Baba is leaving behind. A sense of corruption is created in Amir's description of Kabul as he remarks that <i>"you couldn't trust anyone in Kabul anymore"</i>. This disloyalty is mirrored through the fact that Baba has had 7 servants in 5 years. The division between eavesdroppers and non-eavesdroppers also contrasts the strong sense of community during the kite fighting tournament earlier. Children in Kabul used to be free to run around, but now the Soviets have restricted every part of their lives with curfews and soldiers aggressively patrolling the pavements. Everyone is living in a hypervigilant state, scared of who's listening to their conversations. It is clear that the city is no longer safe and that Baba and Amir want to leave (despite this meaning that Baba had to bribe a people smuggler to take them across the border, suggesting his loss of morals).