

Kite Runner: Chapter 15

Element	Notes
Plot summary	Amir lands in Peshawar and takes a taxi to Rahim Khan's house. Amir catches up Rahim Khan with his married life and later he hears how Afghanistan is starting to change under the Taliban. Rahim Khan admits that he is likely to die before the end of the summer and Amir half-heartedly tries to convince him to come to the US and receive medical treatment. He refuses. Rahim Khan then goes on to tell Amir about Hassan's life and asks him to do him one last dying favour.
Characters	Rahim Khan.
Themes and features	Hosseini uses a highly sensory description of Peshawar to portray its diverse landscape. Amir writes how <i>"the streets were clogged...bearded vendors sold animal-skin lampshades....blare of Hindi music....rich scents...spicy aroma of pakora....feces"</i>. The taxi driver calls the area <i>"Afghan Town"</i>, highlighting how Afghans tend to congregate and set up their own communities. The use of smells, sights and sounds portrays the area as busy and exciting - much like Kabul. This also suggests that Afghans perhaps do not want to let go of their culture and traditions, and may even be reluctant to integrate (e.g. now Baba will not go to English classes in the US perhaps because he thought he would return to his homeland soon). Amir last saw Rahim Khan when he fled Kabul with Baba in 1981. Although they have briefly spoken on the phone - at least a few times a year - Amir last called following Baba's death. Amir barely recognises Rahim Khan, stating that he is <i>"a thing made of skin and bones"</i>, who has violent coughing fits, sores on his head and is regurgitating blood. Rahim Khan believes that all morals and respect for others have left Kabul, after he was hit over the head with a Kalashnikov at a football match for allegedly cheering. This is ironic, as Rahim Khan admitted to rejoicing when the Taliban arrived. However, they bombed the orphanage - the last remaining piece of Baba's legacy, suggesting that they have no regard for the most vulnerable and needy in society. When Rahim Khan moves onto the elephant in the room - Hassan - Amir feels stifled but is prepared to listen to his life after Kabul.
Context	Use of a secondary character (Rahim Khan) as a vehicle to move the main protagonist towards closure/peace. Emotional blackmail. Symbolism of the destruction of the orphanage - links to Baba's death. Loss of strength and compassion.