

The Kite Runner

Themes

- Identity
- Power
- Friendship
- Guilt
- Forgiveness & Redemption
- Destiny
- Religion
- Betrayal
- Evil
- Fathers & Sons
- History
- Persistence of the past

Symbols

- The Kites
- Hassan's Cleft Lip
- Pomegranate Tree
- Allah

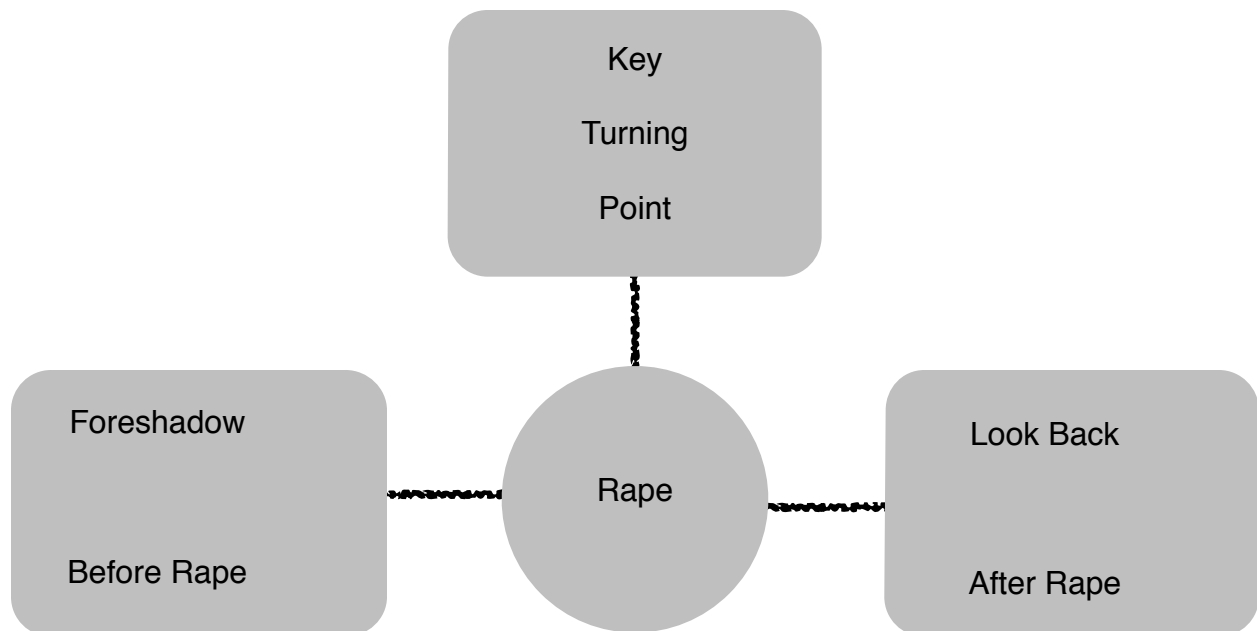
Amir - Reliability as a Narrator

- Writing in adulthood about childhood - Admits "Memory has hazy" pg 76
- Only gets Amir's viewpoint - No one else - apart from letters - We can escape this
- Only a child - immature - doesn't understand events going on

- Doesn't like himself - emphasis on what he has done wrong - wants people to dislike him - picks out example of the bad things he has done - doesn't look at the good things - describes himself as a monster
- Amir has a "Sheltered childhood"
- Such a deep event = Deep understanding?
- Amir can only see it from his 'inside' perspective - Cant see what others see

Foreshadowing:

- Creates suspense - 'Hook' to keep the reader going
- Used lots up till the rape - not used much after rape
- Book is structured - chapters before rape look forward to the rape (build session) - Chapters after the rape look back on it (emphasis on how Amir's life has now change before it - very important and dramatic event - Hosseini wants us to understand this is why Amir is what he is now - Key turning point in his life)



The Rape - Epicenter of the Book

- Narrative breaks up just before rape and during - "a memory" "a memory" "a dream" - breaking down at Amir's consciousness and understanding
- Book is not longer chronological after rape - Narrator jumps around from place to place and time
- Winter normally fun (kids off school in Afghanistan) After rape - Winter is when bad things happen

The Rape Cont.

- Indirect reference right at start of book "I became what I am today at the age of twelve on a frigid overcast day in the winter of 1975" - Shapes the whole book
 - "Frigid overcast day" = Pathetic Fallacy - Used throughout the book
 - Afghanistan is 'metaphorically' raped by the Taliban
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Ending:

- Ending - "I ran" - He has been running away from the past for the whole novel
 - He is running after a kite, He has a cleft lip - Turning into Hassan - Hosseini saying that we are all the same deep down?
 - Ending is 'over you'
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Change in Voice:

- Up until rape - stories told to us have a 'childlike' voice - told simply and embellished - events are interpreted and emotions considered
 - After rape - only shows events (no emotions etc/) - less attempt to explain them
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Juxtaposition

- When something gapped happens in Amir's life a bad thing happens - Can't escape your past - will constantly haunt you
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Allegory

- A symbolic narrative - when a plot is used as a metaphor for another idea
- Amir = People of Afghanistan
- Assef = Taliban
- Hassan = Downtrodden Afghanistan

The Kite runner can be considered a 'fable' - has moral

Father & General Character Notes:

- Amir thinks he is a failure
 - Amir "weak" - Demonstrated through travel sickness
 - Baba suspects that Amir is not his son - Must break Amir's heart - We as the reader can understand and empathize with this
 - Amir told by father that worst thing in the world is stealing - Forgives Hassan when he 'steals' - Mixed messages for Amir - How can he brought up well with this?
 - "I took her from behind" - Hasan's Mum - Hassan was also raped from behind
 - Assef raped Hassan to show power and control and to humiliate - Hazara people are overpowered
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The Dream (Page 258)

- Baba wrestling bear - he becomes Baba fighting bear - Fighting his conscience?
 - When you are asleep - subconscious takes over you - you are no longer in control
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The Pomegranate Tree (Page 24)

- Recurring images of "red" blood - near white walls - Powerful contrast
 - Tree = symbolize their companionship - carve names into it
 - Amir wants control over Hassan
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Winter in Kabul (Page 42)

- "Winter" - Minor sentence - cold, stillness
 - Snow represents purity - the blood stains this purity (Hassan was pure) - Hassan has been stained by his experience and Amir has been stained as well
 - Pathetic Fallacy - Winter
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The Opening (Page 1)

- Pathetic Fallacy - Clouds of guilt over Amir

- Dancing Kites - Represents unity of boys
 - Reference to alley - The event is still with him today, even as an adult
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The Stoning at football game (Page 235)

- Continual journey of atonement - Wants to leave but he stays - "but we have to stay" - Isn't running - wants to put things right
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The Kite Runner - Narrative Techniques

- Main plot = Amir searching for redemption

Sub Plots:

- War in Afghanistan - Characters developed against sub plot
 - Soraya's Story - Serves as a contrast to Amir - She came out better from her past
 - Search for Sohrab
 - Hassan and his mum
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Dreams

- Add depth to the narrative
 - Foreshadow events to come
 - Add a level of symbolism
 - Provide hidden knowledge that the characters can see for themselves
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Dream Examples

- Page 65:
 - - Foreshadows rape
 - - Symbolic - "I am lost in a snowstorm" represents his struggles ahead
 - - Symbolic - Hasan is a sheep - Amir is forcing himself to watch (pg 67)
 - - Symbolism - Amir has changed - defeated the bear now - wrestling with his conscience and guilt (pg 258)

Soraya - Impact on Amir's change of language

- Language changes to poetic, Feminine and Romantic
 - "Princess"
 - "Birthmark" "Gently hooked nose" - Describes her defeats positively
 - Get impression that he genuinely loves her
 - Amir and Soraya cant have children - Hosseini showing us Amir hasn't grown up yet - When he does grow up - He adopts Sohrab
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Sofia (Amir's mother)

- idolized view of her - Amir never got to meet her - Believes if she was around everything would be good
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Sanauber (Hasan's mother)

- Tries to put things right - Maternal grandmother role
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Additional Notes

- Page 75 - Monster dragged Hassan to bottom of lake - Amir realizes that he is the monster - start of his search of redemption
 - Ban of kite flying - symbol of what has been lost in Afghanistan
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Historical Background

- Hosseini's life parallels Amir's to an extent
- Both emigrated to America when Afghanistan turned bad
- Both born in Kabul and at similar ages (1965)
- Both mothers were teachers and both fathers were well respected in the local community

Geographical & Historical Sections:

- Kabul in 1970s
 - American in 1980s
 - Pakistan/ Afghanistan under Taliban 1990s
 - Twin towers in 2001 - People of Afghanistan aren't bade - they have been affected by Taliban - This was Hosseini's motive
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Character Analyze

Rahim Khan:

- Begins redemption for Amir - tells him about Sohrab
- Only other character to narrate
- Catalyst for truth
- Believes and loves Amir - Supports his writing

Sohrab:

- Catalyst for Amir's redemption
- Demonstrates Amir's change of perception - called him Hazara at first - at the end had a go at General T for calling him that
- Reflection on childhood catalyst - Face up to facts
- First time that Amir didn't run
- Deeply affected by what has happened to him - Represents what Hassan would have experienced but that we are never told

Baba:

- Teaches Amir about doing the right thing (no theft) - He has lied though - Hypocrite
- Proud - Gives this up when moves to America
- Like Amir - tries to put things right - build orphanage, helps people - We wont realize how much he is like Amir until later on in story - Unravels as the narrative progresses

Ali

- Accepts his life as it is
- Infertile - Like Baba, he leads a life of lies
- He and Baba are parallel Amir and Hassan - Baba does wrong to Ali (sleeps with wife)
- Bullied for being physically deformed

Hassan

- Loyal to Amir
- Used for Amir to realize his faults - Highlights Amir's faults through the way he is treated by him - Amir puts these faults right in the conclusion - Redemption plan

Amir

- Barrier between him and Hassan
- Our feeling for Amir change throughout book
- Steals Hassan dignity - takes the piss out of him
- Constantly running - Mentally and physically
- Unreliable Narrator - Very young when novel takes place
- Thoughts are always back to Hassan - even on wedding day

Assef

- Corrupt - doesn't follow Taliban rules - Gets Sohrab to dance music, wears John Lennon (western) glasses, rapes children - The Taliban didn't allow any of this

Key Terms

- Nostalgia - Amir wants to change the fact that he didn't do anything
- Empathy - We all experience change etc.
- Post colonialism Novel
- Moral choices - Amir makes bad ones - spends rest of novel trying to put them right
- Atonement - Amir is seeking this - he wants to put things right - to seek this atonement goes on a journey (Physical and Emotional)

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- Diaspora - movement of people from one country to another
- Psychoanalytical reading of Narrative (Dreams) - Adds depths - different possibilities, ideas, feelings - foreshadows
- Non-linear Narrative after rape - Time confused, all muddled
- More modernist - Mess about with things - time etc.
- Motif - recurring symbol throughout novel and brings symbolic significance
- Contemporary - it feels real and relevant