Chapter One

The narrator, Amir, recalls a day in the winter of 1975 that changes his life. On this day, he remembers hiding behind a crumbling mud wall, peering down an alley. He does not go into greater detail, but he notes that the memory haunts him. He speaks of committing suicide.

He also recalls a phone call he received the summer before from his friend Rahim Khan, who requests that Amir visit him in Pakistan.

After the phone call, Amir walks through San Francisco, where he now lives. He sees two kites and remembers the words Rahim Khan said before he hung up- “There is a way to be good again.”

Chapter Two

Hassan is another childhood friend. He has a cleft lip, but is otherwise beautiful. Hassan is always loyal to Amir and tries unfailingly to please him. Hassan’s father is Ali, who works for Amir’s father. They live in a mud shack on the property. Hassan’s mother left one week after he was born to live with traveling dancers. This is considered very shameful.

Amir’s father is well-to-do and they own an estate in an affluent neighborhood in northern Kabul. Amir calls his father Baba. Baba has many friends, but his best friend is Rahim Khan. Amir’s mother died while giving birth to him.

Ali’s lower facial muscles are paralyzed, so he cannot show much emotion. He also has a twisted right leg, which causes him to have a strange walk. He is a Hazara and a Shi’a Muslim. Amir’s family is Pashtun and Sunni Muslim. Which he recieves verbal abuse by the Pastuns for.

Hassan and Amir grew up together. Amir’s first word was Baba. Hassan’s was Amir. Amir believes this laid the foundation for what happened in 1975.

Chapter Three

Baba is a formidable man, both in stature and business. Amir longs to be close to him, but always fears his father is distant because his wife died giving birth to Amir. Some of Baba’s businesses are an orphanage, a restaurant, and a carpet-exporting business. He is one of the richest merchants in Kabul.

Baba says that theft is the one true sin. All other sins (such as murder) are variants of theft. He believes that a murderer robs a wife of a husband, a child of a father. Baba’s father was murdered when Baba was a child.

Amir overhears a conversation between Baba and Rahim Khan. Baba says that he doesn’t understand Amir because he does not stand up for himself. Even when teased and pushed in the streets, Amir lets Hassan defend him. Baba does not respect this quality, and says that if he did not see Amir’s birth, he would not believe Amir is his son.

Rahim Khan says Amir just lacks a mean streak. Baba is glad Rahim Khan understands Amir and can be close to him.

The next day, Amir snaps at Hassan out of jealousy. Amir says he does have a mean streak.

Chapter Four

Baba’s father was a judge who adopted an orphan and raised the boy along with his son. The orphan was Ali. Baba never refers to Ali as a friend, and Amir realizes he never refers to Hassan as a friend.

Hassan and Ali are servants in Baba’s home. Amir goes to school, but Hassan does not. Amir reads to Hassan. One time, Amir pretends to read, but makes up his own story. When he finishes, Hassan claps and says it is the best story he has heard. . He mentions that he would love to hear stories like the one he just shared.

Amir writes his first short story that night. Amir brings the story to Baba, but he is not interested. Rahim Khan reads the story and writes Amir a note, encouraging him to write because he has a God-given talent, especially his understanding of irony. Amir wishes Rahim Khan was his father. He shares the story with Hassan, who points out a problem with the plot, Amir's first introduction to the plot hole. Amir is astounded and slightly angry, because an illiterate, uneducated boy can find something he could not. At the end of this chapter Amir says that suddenly Afgahnistan changed forever.

Chapter Five

Amir and Hassan’s conversation is cut short by an explosion and gunfire. Ali hides with the boys during the attack.

Amir and Hassan are stopped by Assef, the neighborhood bully. He is relentlessly cruel to Hassan because he is Hazara. Assef says Hitler was a great leader, and the new president should follow his plan to get rid of the Hazara. (Assef himself has blue eyes and blonde hair because his mother is German; he points out, however, that his mother despises Hitler.) Hassan pulls a slingshot on Assef, Assef backs off saying he will get them later.

For Hassan’s twelfth birthday, Baba arranges for Hassan to have his cleft lip repaired by a plastic surgeon. After the surgery, his scar is barely noticeable.

Chapter Six

During the icy winter months, the schools of Kabul are closed. Kites are a popular activity. It is one of the only interests that Amir shares with Baba. Kabul holds kite-fighting tournaments that are greatly anticipated. Baba takes the boys to Saifo, a shoe repairman and the city’s most famous kite maker.

The kite strings are coated with glue and glass so that the opponent's kite string can be cut down during the fight. Kite runners run after kites after their strings are cut, chasing them until they land. The runner gets to keep the kite, but the grand prize is the last cut kite.

Hassan was the greatest kite runner.

Chapter Seven

Amir wins the annual kite fight as Baba watches. Amir wonders if Baba is proud of him or proud of Hassan. Hassan runs after the last kite Amir cut, as Amir plans to present the kite to Baba as a trophy.

Amir looks for Hassan and finds him cornered in an alley by Assef and his friends. They want to take the kite and beat up Hassan. Assef tells Hassan that he is not really Amir’s friend, but his servant. They start to beat Hassan as Amir crouches behind a wall, watching because he is too afraid to step in.

Assef rapes Hassan as his friends hold him down. Amir runs away. He later meets Hassan and pretends he doesn’t know what happened. Hassan gives Amir the kite, and Amir wonders if Hassan knows Amir saw. Amir gives the kite to Baba, who is proud of Amir.

Chapter Eight

Hassan avoids Amir and spends most of his time in bed. Ali asks Amir if he knows what happened the night of the kite fight. Amir snaps and tells Ali to do his work.

Baba shows a lot of interest in Amir, even taking him to the movies. For one particular outing, Amir hopes to go with just Baba, but Baba invites three van loads of friends to go along. Amir cannot enjoy any of this because he feels guilty. Amir becomes an insomniac as a result of his guilt.

Hassan attempts to be friendly with Amir again, but Amir pushes him away.

Amir angers Baba by asking if he ever thought about getting new servants. Their relationship deteriorates.

Amir tries to start a pomegranate fight with Hassan, but Hassan will not fight back. He takes a pomegranate and smashes it into his own head instead of hitting Amir. This shows Hassan's loyalty to Amir.

Baba throws a huge thirteenth birthday party for Amir. Assef presents Amir with a gift- a biography of Hitler. Rahim Khan tells Amir that he can talk to him anytime and gives a blank book for writing.

Chapter Nine

Amir realizes that he cannot live with Hassan anymore. Amir lies and tells Baba that Hassan stole his birthday money and watch, a gift from his father. Baba talks to Ali, and then confronts Hassan with Amir. Hassan admits to stealing to protect Amir. Amir realizes that Hassan knew everything- including his hiding behind the wall instead of helping him.

Baba surprises Amir by forgiving Hassan. Ali tells Baba they are leaving. Baba begs them to stay, but they leave. This is the first time Amir sees Baba cry. Baba drives Ali and Hassan to the bus station.

Chapter Ten

In March of 1981, Amir and Baba flee Kabul, taking only a few personal items. They do this in secret because spies for the Russian soldiers are everywhere. They are headed for Pakistan.

At the border, they are stopped by soldiers. They say they can cross the border after they have half an hour with the young woman traveling with them. Baba protests and the young soldier pulls a gun on Baba, who won’t back down. An older officer stops the younger soldier and allows them to pass.

The group is supposed to change vehicles, but the second truck has been broken for weeks. Baba nearly kills the man when he realizes the man only transported them for the money. They will have to wait for the truck to be repaired, along with thirty other refugees and rats.

In the basement, they meet Kamal and his father, friends from Kabul. Kamal was raped just like Hassan. Kamal does not speak anymore.

All of the refugees are transported in a fuel truck to Pakistan. Kamal dies during the trip, apparently from gas fumes. Kamal’s father kills himself because he feels that he just lost his last valuable aspect in life.

Chapter Eleven

Baba and Amir settle in Fremont, California. Baba does not fit in and is not happy working at a gas station. He says he came to America for Amir. Amir says,"For me, America was a place to bury my memories. For Baba, a place to mourn his"

Amir graduates High School in 1983 at the age of 20, after graduation Baba takes him out to dinner and then to a bar where they drink. Baba winds up drinking too much but makes a good impression on all the patrons of the bar and buys them all rounds of drinks. When they get home Baba tells Amir to drive to the end of the block, a Ford Grand Torino is sitting there, Baba said it needed work, but it ran and will be needed for Amir to go to College.

Amir displeases his father when he tells him he wants to major in English in college.

Amir and Baba buy a VW bus and go to frequent garage sales. They then sell the items at a profit at the flea market. Amir meets Soraya, the daughter of Baba’s old friend, General Taheri.

Chapter Twelve

Amir begins to court Soraya. She asks to read one of his stories. Though Baba does make many allusions to honor and pride (dissuading Amir from flirting with Soraya), ultimately, the reason Amir stops courting Soraya is because of Soraya's father who finds the two talking alone together in the market. Amir had given Soraya one of his stories, which Soraya's father promptly threw in the garbage.

Baba is diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer. Baba refuses treatment. He collapses with a seizure at the flea market. Soraya and her family visit. Days later, Baba arranges Amir’s engagement to Soraya. She worries that her past- she ran away with a man and lived with him for a month- will cause Amir to not want to marry her. Amir envies her because her secret is out.

Chapter Thirteen

Amir and Soraya are married. She moves in with Amir and Baba because Baba is so sick. She takes responsibility for Baba’s care. She reads Amir’s stories to Baba. He dies one month later in his sleep

The couple settles into a routine. Amir finishes his first novel in 1988. The book is released the following year. Amir remembers Hassan’s belief of his writing ability.

The couple try to conceive for one year. They are unsuccessful and try in-vitro fertilization. They consider adoption, and General Taheri, her father, does not approve. They decide not to adopt.

Chapter Fourteen

Amir and Soraya, have a Cocker Spaniel, named Aflatoon, which means Plato in Farsi, they said, “that if you looked hard enough into the dog’s black eye’s that you’d swear he was thinking wise thoughts.” Soraya, has been teaching at the same school for six years. Amir tells Soraya that he has to go to Pakistan to visit Rahim Khan, who is very sick. Amir, believes that there is an un-spoken secret between Rahim Khan and himself. This is foreshadowing the fact that Rahim Khan knows all about Hassan, and how he is Amir’s brother and will soon tell him. Rahim Khan, has also always known about the circumstances surrounding Hassan, being raped, and what Amir did in order to get Hassan and Ali out of his life. Amir finally decides to go to Pakistan and visit Rahim Khan.

Chapter Fifteen

Amir returns to Pakistan. Amir sees an ill Rahim Khan, who tells Amir about the unbearable life of Afghans under Taliban rule. Rahim Khan was happy at first when the Taliban defeated the Russian soldiers because he thought life in Kabul would improve. Most people felt this way because they thought the fighting would stop.

Rahim Khan tells Amir that Hassan lived with him in Baba’s house in Kabul after he left. He says he wants to tell Amir about Hassan.

Chapter Sixteen

Rahim Khan found Hassan in 1986. Hassan was married and his wife was expecting a baby. Ali had been killed by a land mine.

Hassan asked many questions about Amir and wanted to know if Khan would read a letter from Amir. He wept when told about Baba’s death.

Hassan and his wife decide to move with Rahim Khan, but will only live in the hut and work as servants so as not to offend Amir.

Hassan’s daughter was stillborn.

Hassan’s mother returns to see him, disfigured from a recent knife attack. They nurse her back to health.

Hassan’s wife gave birth to a son named Sohrab.

Hassan’s mother died four years later.

Hassan taught his son to be a kite runner. The Taliban banned kite fighting shortly after taking power. Taliban fighters massacred the Hazaras in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Chapter Seventeen

Amir asks where Hassan can be found. Rahim Khan hands him a picture of Hassan and his son and a letter.

In the letter, Hassan tells him about living under Taliban rule and his family. Hassan clearly wishes to see his friend Amir.

A month after Rahim Khan left for Pakistan, Taliban officers came to take the house. Hassan refused to leave. He and his wife were shot dead.

Rahim Khan asks Amir to go to Kabul and bring 10 year old Sohrab to him.

He also tells Amir that Ali was sterile. Hassan was also Baba’s son. Hassan never knew.

Chapter Eighteen

Amir feels betrayed and angry. He feels his father is a thief because he stole his brother and dishonored Ali. He realizes that he, like his father, betrayed the one person who would have done anything for him. He thinks about the good life Hassan could have had in America but due to his actions he did not. Amir decides to go to Kabul.

Chapter Nineteen

Amir enters Afghanistan with the help of Farid, a man who has contempt for Amir because he was born with privilege. Farid dislikes Amir at first because he believes that the only reason Amir is returning to Afghanistan is so he can sell off property, and ultimately make money. Farid takes Amir to Wahid's house. There, Amir is served a dinner, which he offers to share with Wahid's children. Amir notices that the children are staring at his watch. During dinner, Amir reveals to Wahid and his family that he has returned to Afghanistan in order to rescue his half brother's son. This is suprising, because Amir is very reluctant to reveal his father's lack of pride and honor. Later on, he overhears Wahid and his wife arguing that they had to give food to Amir since he was a guest, even though they barely had any food for themselves. Farid thinks better of him when he learns why he is going to Kabul. Farid and Amir leave the house, and Amir gives his watch to one of the children. However, Amir realizes the kids weren't staring at his watch at all, they were staring at his food. At the very end of the chapter, Amir puts money under his matress for the children to find and buy food with. He also realized it had been 26 years since he had put money under someone's bed; the first time, however, was for a terrible purpose. This reveals how much Amir has grown and changed as a man.

Chapter Twenty

Amir enters Kabul and is shocked by the destruction and begging children. Amir and Farid locate the orphanage where Sohrab has been living. Amir convinces the director to help them find Sohrab by referring to his skills with the slingshot. When the director lets Amir and Farid in, he regretfully informs Amir that a Talib Official had come to the orphanage and bought Sohrab. Farid is furious about this, and accuses the director of selling the children to make a profit. He then begins to strangle the director until Amir intervenes. The director informs Farid and Amir that he has no choice but to sell some of the children. He says that if he refused, the Taliban would take as many children as they want instead. He adds that he had spent his life savings on the orphanage, and instead of escaping to Pakistan like many others did, he chose to stay and run the orphanage. The director then instructs Amir and Farid to go to Ghazi stadium, and look for the Talib official with the black sunglasses, this man will know where Sohrab is.

Chapter Twenty-One

Amir and Farid visit Amir's childhood home, and they find his neighborhood is now home to the rich Taliban.

The next day, they go to Ghazi Stadium to find the official who bought Sohrab. The stadium is filled with people watching soccer. During halftime, a man and a woman are stoned to death for adultery on the field by a man in white and wearing "John Lennon sunglasses," the Taliban official.

Amir and Farid arrange for a three o’clock appointment with the official.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Amir goes in alone to see the official, who lives in a palatial home. He is verbally abused and threatened by the official, who instructs guards to bring Sohrab to the room. He looks just like Hassan. Sohrab is dressed almost like a court jester, wearing make-up, and forced to dance whenever music is played.

The official asks Amir where “babalu” is, in reference to Ali. He removes his glasses, and Amir realizes the official is actually Assef. Assef says he can have Sohrab, but first he has to earn him. Assef tells his guards not to come in the room, no matter what they hear. He and Amir have unsettled business. Only one of them will come out alive. If it is Amir, then the guards will have to let Amir and Sohrab go.

Assef beats Amir badly, breaking his nose and teeth. Amir starts laughing. He believes it is funny how just now that he is being beaten up he finally feels comfort. His laughing angers Assef more.

The fight ends when Sohrab points his slingshot at Assef, who lunges at Sohrab. Sohrab’s shot takes out Assef’s eye. This fulfilles the taunt of Hassan of calling him a "One Eyed Assef". Sohrab helps Amir out of the house. Farid drives them away.

Chapter Twenty-Three

Amir fades in and out of consciousness. He wakes up two days later in a hospital with a broken jaw, punctured lung, ruptured spleen, and other injuries.

Rahim Khan has left town, leaving a letter for Amir. He tells Amir that he should forgive himself for what happened to Hassan and he should also forgive Baba someday. Baba was torn between two sons and took out his frustration on Amir. Rahim Khan also leaves his money in a safe deposit box for Amir.

Amir has to be moved soon because the Taliban are looking for him. Amir bonds slowly with Sohrab over cards. The people Amir planned to leave Sohrab with were made up by Rahim Khan. Amir takes him to Islamabad.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Amir wakes up one night and Sohrab is gone. He finds him by the mosque. Sohrab says he is beginning to forget what his parents look like. Sohrab is ashamed of what Assef did to him. Amir offers to take him to live with him in America.

Amir calls his wife and tells her about Hassan, what happened in Kabul, and his desire to adopt Sohrab.

A man at the American Embassy in Islamabad says adopting Sohrab is impossible, due to the fact that Amir would need death certificates of his parents (Hassan and Farzana), when most people in Afghanistan hardly had birth certificates. Also, he would need to prove that Sohrab is really his half nephew, which was nearly impossible as well. However, he still gives them the name of an immigration lawyer. Amir meets with the lawyer who says Sohrab may have to wait in an orphanage. He is willing to help. Soraya arranges for a humanitarian visa to get Sohrab into the U.S. Later, Amir tells Sohrab that he would need to go to an orphanage again. Terrified, Sohrab becomes very upset. Later that night, Sohrab was taking a bath; Amir enters to talk with Sohrab, but finds that he has slit one of his wrists with a razorblade. It was said that Amir was still screaming after the ambulance arrived.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Sohrab tries to commit suicide rather than be put in an orphanage. He survives, but he tells Amir he wishes that he had died. Sohrab does not speak for a year after that.

Amir and Sohrab go home to America. Sohrab remains silent.

At a party thrown by the American Afghan community, Amir buys Sohrab a kite. The two of them kite fight together and win. Just as he and Hassan had done years earlier. Amir is Sohrab’s kite runner, and for the first time Sohrab smiles for Amir.