

Haroun and the Sea of Stories



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF SALMAN RUSHDIE

Rushdie was born in Bombay, India, to a Muslim family of Kashmiri descent. He worked briefly in Pakistan as a television writer before moving to England to work as a copywriter. His first novel, *Grimus* (1975), was mostly ignored, but his second novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981) won the 1981 Booker Prize and was awarded several other prizes over the next 30 years. His fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), created a major scandal, as many Muslims worldwide took offense to Rushdie's irreverent portrayal of Muhammad. The book was banned in 13 countries, and the following year, the spiritual leader of Iran issued a fatwa calling for Rushdie's execution. British police placed Rushdie and his family under police protection for several years. The fatwa persists to this day in some regards, as Iran neither actively supports nor discourages individuals from attempting to murder Rushdie. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* was written so that Rushdie could explain the situation to his first son, born in 1979. Rushdie has been married four times and has two sons. He currently lives in New York City.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Haroun and the Sea of Stories was written in response to the events caused by Rushdie's publication of *The Satanic Verses* in 1988. Following the release of *The Satanic Verses*, several countries with substantial Muslim populations banned the book, and the religious leader of Iran issued a fatwa calling for Rushdie's death. The combination of the fatwa and the book itself incited violence, book burnings, and bombings of bookstores around the world. In light of this, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* stands as a response to a violent attempt at censorship (à la Khattam-Shud) championing the power and necessity of both free speech and storytelling.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is most commonly compared to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* (1900) in that they all concern children embarking on a fantastic, dreamlike journey through fantasy worlds. However, as *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* makes numerous references to outside works, it also shares themes and similarities with J.M. Barrie's [Peter Pan](#) (1911), and Mudra battling his shadow can be seen as a nod to Peter's shadow. *Haroun* also draws heavily from the framing device and the many stories in *One Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of South Asian and Middle Eastern tales collected between the

8th and 13th centuries BC, with the first English translation published in 1706. The folktale *Rapunzel* also makes a literal cameo.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Haroun and the Sea of Stories
- **When Written:** Between 1988 and 1990
- **Where Written:** London, England
- **When Published:** 1990
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Young Adult/Children's Fiction; Magical Realism
- **Setting:** The fictional land of Alfbay; Kahani, the earth's second moon
- **Climax:** When Haroun's wish causes the moon Kahani to rotate
- **Antagonist:** Khattam-Shud; Mr. Sengupta; Mr. Buttoo
- **Point of View:** Primarily third person with occasional second-person asides to the reader

EXTRA CREDIT

Haroun revisited. In 2011, Rushdie published *Luka and the Fire of Life*, which he wrote for his second son. Rushdie considers it a companion to *Haroun* rather than a sequel, as it follows the same family but considers different themes and threats.

A Story for Children and Adults. Rushdie has been quoted as saying that he hopes that *Haroun* can dissolve the boundary between adult and children's literature, as he attempted to write a novel that can provide satisfaction for children and can continue to provide satisfaction when re-read in adulthood.



PLOT SUMMARY

Haroun is a young boy who lives with his parents, Soraya and Rashid Khalifa, in a city so sad it's forgotten its name, in the country of Alfbay. Rashid is a storyteller, and Soraya loves to sing. Things take a turn for the worse when Soraya stops singing. The Khalifas' upstairs neighbors are Oneeta Sengupta and Mr. Sengupta, who is a weaselly clerk and always says disparaging things about stories and Rashid to Soraya. One day he asks Soraya, "what's the point of stories that aren't even true?", and Haroun, listening from outside, can't get the question out of his head. On the first day of the rains, Haroun comes home from school to find that Soraya ran off with Mr. Sengupta at exactly 11:00. When Rashid noticed that the clocks had stopped moving, he smashed all the clocks in the

house. It soon becomes clear that as a result of this Haroun develops a problem, as he can't concentrate on something for more than 11 minutes.

Several days later, Rashid is invited by a politico (politician) to travel to the Town of G and the Valley of K to tell stories to help the politico win election. Rashid accepts and takes Haroun with him. When Rashid takes the stage in the Town of G, he opens his mouth and all that comes out is, "ark ark ark." After threatening Rashid, the politico's henchmen drop Rashid and Haroun at the bus station to find their own way to the Valley of K. While Rashid is attempting to buy their tickets, Haroun meets Mr. Butt, a mail coach driver who agrees to drive them to the Valley of K, and to make a stop at the top of the mountains so that Rashid might enjoy the magnificent view of the sunset over the Dull Lake. The drive is terrifying, as Mr. Butt drives very quickly. However, he gets Rashid to the view in plenty of time.

The politico himself, Mr. Buttoo, greets Haroun and Rashid in K. Haroun immediately doesn't like Mr. Buttoo and refers to him as "Snooty Buttoo." Surrounded by guards, Mr. Buttoo leads them to the edge of the Dull Lake and into a boat shaped like a swan, as Rashid and Haroun will be staying in a houseboat. As they begin across the lake, Rashid is sad and Mr. Buttoo starts an argument, creating both smelly mist and hot wind. Haroun realizes they're in the Moody Land. As Mr. Buttoo and Rashid argue, the weather gets worse and the boat begins to rock dangerously. Haroun yells for everyone to be quiet and implores his father to think happy thoughts, and the weather calms.

When they reach the houseboat, Rashid bids Mr. Buttoo goodnight and he and Haroun head to bed, Rashid on a bed shaped like a peacock and Haroun on one shaped like a turtle. Haroun and Rashid both can't sleep and decide to switch bedrooms. Moments after Haroun dozes off, he wakes to see a small man with a monkey wrench in the bathroom, muttering about a Story Tap. Haroun sneaks out of bed and startles the man, who disappears and drops his wrench. Haroun grabs it and the man reappears. After some arguing, the man introduces himself as Iff the Water Genie and tells Haroun that he's there to disconnect Rashid's Story Water supply. He tells Haroun to contact the Walrus to resolve the issue, and when Haroun realizes that this is an impossible task, he asks Iff to take him to see the Walrus. Iff agrees in exchange for getting back his wrench, which is actually a Disconnecting Tool.

Iff instructs Haroun to choose a tiny bird from his hand, and Haroun selects the Hoopoe. Iff throws the tiny bird out the window and the Hoopoe grows to be the size of a bed. Iff and Haroun jump on and begin the journey to the moon Kahani. On the way, Haroun is informed that the Hoopoe is actually a machine and is called Butt. Haroun also learns that Kahani doesn't rotate and is undetectable by instruments on Earth. When they land in Kahani's Ocean, Iff offers Haroun some

wishwater to fix his problem, but Haroun is unable to successfully make his wish since he can't concentrate for more than 11 minutes. Butt instructs Iff to give Haroun a happy story to cheer him up, and Haroun drinks the proffered story and finds himself in a Princess Rescue Story that has gone horribly wrong. When Haroun wakes, he tells Iff and Butt what happened. Iff and Butt are very worried and say that if the Ocean's pollution is this bad where they are, then Gup City must be close to war with the Land of Chup—which is on the dark side of Kahani—and particularly with Khattam-Shud, the Cultmaster of Bezaban.

As they travel towards Gup City, Iff explains that Chattergy's Wall in the Twilight Strip separates Chup, the land of perpetual darkness, and Gup, which experiences eternal sunshine. As they draw close to Gup City, Haroun meets Mali, who is a Floating Gardener, and Goopy and Bagha, a pair of Plentimaw fishes. When they reach Gup City, they listen to King Chattergy, General Kitab, Prince Bolo, the Walrus, and the Speaker say that Khattam-Shud has captured Princess Batcheat, is also responsible for poisoning the Ocean, and that war on Chup has been declared. A commotion breaks out on the balcony, and General Kitab announces that they've captured a spy, who turns out to be none other than Rashid Khalifa.

A Page named Blabbermouth is sent to escort Haroun to the royal quarters to meet his father. When he arrives, Rashid is telling his story to the court. He says that he accidentally ended up in the Twilight Strip, where he witnessed the Chupwalas' capture of Princess Batcheat. The court decides that they must go to war and send Blabbermouth to show Haroun to bed first. As they wander through the passageways, Haroun takes a swing at Blabbermouth's head and knocks off his cap, revealing that Blabbermouth is actually a girl. She shows off her **juggling** and when she wakes Haroun hours later, she threatens him to not tell anyone she's female. Blabbermouth and Haroun head for the garden, where the Guppee Army has just finished arranging itself. Haroun finds Rashid and Iff and the three board Butt the Hoopoe. As the army moves off towards Chup, Haroun hears arguments and debate all around him discussing the merits of General Kitab's battle plan, and whether they should save Batcheat or the Ocean first. Haroun is shocked at this talk, but Butt explains to him the importance of free speech.

The army reaches the dim shore of Chup and sets up camp. Rashid is called to show General Kitab and Prince Bolo the Chupwala camp. He leads them to a clearing and points at a man with a painted face fighting his own shadow. After the man notices his audience he tries to speak, but can't make coherent sounds. Rashid realizes he speaks Abhinaya, the gesture language, and that his name is Mudra. Mudra explains the situation in Chup, most importantly that Khattam-Shud has learned to separate himself from his shadow and can be in two

places at once. Mudra then offers to help the Guppees defeat Khattam-Shud. Since Batcheat is being held in the Citadel of Chup, Bolo and the Guppee Army decide to go there and rescue her, while Haroun offers to head to where the second Khattam-Shud is poisoning the Ocean in the Old Zone. Haroun chooses Iff, Butt, Mali, Goopy, and Bagha to go with him.

As Haroun and his companions travel, the water becomes cold and dark, and Goopy and Bagha can go no further. Iff, Butt, Haroun, and Mali soon reach an overgrown forest. Mali disappears ahead to clear a path. Butt, Iff, and Haroun follow, but a group of Chupwalas throw a Web of Night over them and draw them towards a massive ship. The Chupwalas, which look like clerks, tie Butt to a gangway, remove his brain box, and then herd Iff and Haroun up the gangway. Iff trips and presses a "Bite-a-Lite" into Haroun's hand as Haroun realizes that the Chupwalas can manufacture darkness.

When they reach the deck, Khattam-Shud comes out to greet them. He speaks to them in a dull, monotonous voice, and proceeds to switch off the darkness and lead them below deck and explain to them how he's poisoning the ocean and planning to plug the Wellspring. He tells Haroun that worlds are for controlling, and since stories cannot be controlled, he must kill them. As Khattam-Shud points out the generator, Mali quietly enters the ship and destroys it, cutting the ship's power supply. Haroun bites the Bite-a-Lite, puts on a special diving suit, grabs Butt's brain-box, and dives out the window.

After sinking deep enough to see the beauty of the Wellspring, Haroun realizes how to win. He surfaces next to Butt and reconnects Butt's brain box. Haroun swallows the wishwater he still had in his pocket and wishes for Kahani to rotate. After 11 minutes, his wish comes true. The sun melts the ship and the Chupwalas, which are all shadows. Iff and Mali make it safely off the ship.

Meanwhile in Chup City, a Chupwala messenger sent to the Guppee commanders offers them a **juggling** show, but adds a bomb to the many objects. Blabbermouth seizes the bomb and throws it far away, but is revealed to be female in the process. This angers Bolo, and after he and Blabbermouth fight, Mudra offers to employ Blabbermouth.

The battle between the Guppees and the Chupwalas is an easy one, as the Guppees are united by their trust in each other and the Chupwalas end up fighting their shadows. The army enters Chup City victorious to look for Batcheat when the ground begins to shake and the moon rotates. The Citadel of Chup begins to melt in the sun, and Bolo and a group of Pages frantically rescues Batcheat before she's harmed. The giant ice sculpture of Bezaban falls and crushes Khattam-Shud.

Batcheat and Bolo are married that day, but an Egghead finds Haroun at the festivities and instructs him to report to the Walrus. Haroun attempts to get Iff and Mali to vouch for him, but they refuse. When Haroun enters the Walrus's office, he

sees all his friends and Rashid there. The Walrus offers Haroun a happy ending in thanks, and Haroun asks that it be a happy ending for himself as well as his sad city.

Haroun and Rashid fly back to Alfibay on Butt and wake the next morning to find an impatient Mr. Buttoo. When Rashid takes the stage to tell his story for Mr. Buttoo, he tells of their adventure on Kahani. The audience boos Mr. Buttoo away and he's never seen again.

When Haroun and Rashid return to the sad city, they find it's still raining but not so sad anymore. A policeman tells them that they've remembered the city's name, Kahani, which means "story." When they reach their house, Soraya has returned and Rashid welcomes her home. The next day is Haroun's birthday, and he wakes to find a new clock. The clock is working, and he declares that time is moving again.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Haroun Khalifa – Son of Rashid and Soraya Khalifa, and the protagonist of the book. Haroun is a young, inquisitive boy who experiences a major sense of responsibility for saving both Rashid and the Ocean of the Streams of Story. While Haroun's initial questioning of the value of stories is partially responsible for Rashid's sadness, through his adventures on Kahani, Haroun grows to understand both the power of stories as well as their value in society. Haroun's inner monologue consists of constant attempts to at first neatly compartmentalize people and events into black and white categories, but as he becomes more comfortable in the fantasy world of Kahani, he learns to appreciate a balance of different ideas and qualities.

Rashid Khalifa – Husband to Soraya and father to Haroun, Rashid is a professional storyteller who's known as the "Ocean of Notions" by his admirers and the "Shah of Blah" by his rivals. When Soraya runs off with Mr. Sengupta, Rashid loses the Gift of the Gab and turns from his usually happy, imaginative, story-filled self into a sad and self-pitying man who can only say "ark" when telling stories. Rashid finds himself transported to Kahani with Haroun and is instrumental in defeating Khattam-Shud. Rashid uses his storytelling powers to overthrow Mr. Buttoo and his government by telling his and Haroun's story of their adventures on Kahani, illustrating the importance of stories as forces for good in the world.

Khattam-Shud – The villain of the novel, the archenemy of stories and language and the Prince of Silence. He's described as a clerkish, sniveling man with a monotonous voice. Because "khattam-shud" means "the end" or "it is finished," his name is used at the end of things. He is the Cultmaster of the Cult of Bezaban, which promotes silence and the end of stories. Khattam-Shud's goal is to silence all stories so that he can control Kahani and Earth. He tries to accomplish this by

poisoning stories in the Ocean and plugging the source of new stories, the Wellspring. He also figured out how to separate himself from his Shadow, allowing him to be in two places at once. He corresponds to Mr. Sengupta in Alfibay.

Iff – A Water Genie first tasked with disconnecting Rashid's Story Water supply, but thwarted when Haroun steals his Disconnecting Tool. While Iff initially looks out primarily for himself, his love of the Ocean and guilt over neglecting the Old Zone in particular cause him to fully join forces with Haroun to defeat Khattam-Shud and save the Ocean. Iff acts as a prime example of what Guppees are and stand for, as he's gentle and kind, loves to argue and debate whenever he can, and has no taste for violence.

Butt – A mechanical Hoopoe bird that communicates telepathically without moving its beak. As a machine, Butt is highly logical, but also has a flair for the dramatic and has temperamental outbursts at times. According to Iff, the Hoopoe bird is the bird that in old stories leads all the other birds through danger to their goal, and in Haroun's story, Butt is instrumental in the defeat of Khattam-Shud's shadow. Butt the Hoopoe corresponds to Mr. Butt in Alfibay.

Blabbermouth – A young female page in King Chattergy's Guppee army and Haroun's love interest. In order to obtain and keep her job, she poses as a boy but is later discovered. When she's found to be female, Mudra, whom she greatly admires, offers her a job in his service. Blabbermouth is very opinionated and not afraid to offer her opinion, and is an exceptional juggler.

Mr. Butt – The Mail Coach driver who drives Haroun and Rashid from the Town of G to the Valley of K. He's very excitable and drives extremely fast and recklessly. He corresponds to Butt the Hoopoe on Kahani, as they share the same voice and the penchant for adding "but but but" to the beginnings of their sentences.

Princess Batcheat Chattergy – King Chattergy's daughter and Prince Bolo's fiancée, princess of Gup. Batcheat is described as being extremely ugly, particularly in regard to her nose and her teeth, and she's known for her horrible singing although she isn't aware of how bad her voice is. Her songs are always about her undying love for Bolo. Batcheat's name comes from a Hindustani word meaning "chit-chat."

Mudra – A Chupwala Shadow Warrior who speaks Abhinaya, the gesture language. Mudra was originally Khattam-Shud's second in command, but he grew uncomfortable with the fanaticism and violence that Khattam-Shud promoted. His shadow, while technically part of the same person, allows Mudra to keep his true thoughts confidential, as he and his Shadow can put on opposite acts as needed.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Soraya Khalifa – Haroun's mother and Rashid's wife. Soraya is

happy and loves to sing, but after she stops singing she runs off with Mr. Sengupta, setting the events of the story in action.

Miss Oneeta Sengupta – Mr. Sengupta's wife; the upstairs neighbor of Rashid, Soraya, and Haroun. Oneeta is fat and since she has no children of her own, dotes on Haroun.

Mr. Sengupta – Oneeta Sengupta's husband, described as a sniveling and "mingy" (mean and stingy) clerk. He's the corresponding Alfibay character to Khattam-Shud in Haroun's dream world. Mr. Sengupta despises stories and imagination.

Mr. Buttoo – The politico (politician) to whom Rashid offers his storytelling services. Haroun refers to him as "Snooty Buttoo" because he's overly smooth, insincere, and fond of underhanded insults. He commands Rashid to only tell happy stories, and it's obvious to Haroun that his constituents don't like him.

General Kitab – The leader of the Guppee Army, or Library. General Kitab enjoys arguing and debating the merits of his battle strategy, and is often in charge of telling Prince Bolo to stop talking. "Kitab" is a Hindustani word for "book."

Prince Bolo – Princess Batcheat's fiancé. Prince Bolo is loud and blustery and likes to hear himself speak, and as such often says foolish things and insults people. "Bolo" is the imperative form of a Hindustani verb that means "to speak."

Mali – A floating gardener on Kahani. Mali is quite talkative for a floating gardener and often sings. His name comes from a Hindustani word for "garden."

Bagha – A Plentimaw fish, and life partner to Goopy. Bagha helps Haroun on his quest to find and stop Khattam-Shud from plugging the Wellspring.

Goopy – A Plentimaw fish, and life partner to Bagha. Goopy helps Haroun on his quest to find and stop Khattam-Shud from plugging the ocean's Wellspring.

King Chattergy – The elderly king of Gup, father to Princess Batcheat.

The Walrus – The Grand Comptroller of the Eggheads at P2C2E house on the moon Kahani.

The Speaker – A court official in King Chattergy's court.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



LANGUAGE, WORDS, AND NAMING

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is extremely concerned with words, naming, and the intricacies of language in general. It is filled with puns, plays on words, and double meanings, all of which encourage the reader to consider how exactly language works and functions, as well as what exactly its purpose is.

The novel contains many characters and locations whose names are derived from Hindustani words, and Rushdie even includes a reference glossary to provide the reader with additional tools to understand the names. This asserts, first and foremost, the idea that names and words have meaning and are worthy of consideration unto themselves. Most of the names have to do with language and speaking, such as "Gup" meaning gossip and "Batcheat" coming from a word that means chit-chat. In this way, the names of characters provide further evidence that language is something important and worthy of study. In the same vein, "Khattam-Shud" means "completely finished," and the character Khattam-Shud wishes to essentially finish and eradicate completely all the stories in the Ocean. Similarly, Rashid and Haroun's names come from Harun Al-Rashid, a historical caliph and an integral figure in *One Thousand and One Nights*. This reference provides further weight to their positions as storytellers.

Verse, rhyming, and song are used to highlight important passages and relationships throughout the text. The Plentimaw fishes mate for life, and speak in rhyming couplets with their partner in order to show their devotion to them. Similarly, though Batcheat's physical presence is minimal throughout the text, when she does speak, she's most often singing about her love for Prince Bolo. Rhyme also works to turn the act of reading the novel from a solo endeavor to a communal one, as some rhymes are harder to pick out unless they're read aloud and heard. This works to support the idea that language is not something to be used or understood by one person, as Khattam-Shud would like it to be, since he's the only Chupwala allowed to speak. Rather, language is a means of communication between individuals.

If the Water Genie states early on that to name or label something brings that thing into existence. This raises the question of what the act of naming something means, and what the implications are when naming and language are removed. Haroun's home city in Alfibay is so sad, it's forgotten its name. Further, the logic of the novel suggests that Khattam-Shud's insistence on silence will also mean that names are lost or forgotten as a result of the silence. These relationships between silence and loss indicate that the presence of language is linked to happiness and an understanding of one's existence in the world, while the complete absence of language eliminates understanding and purpose. In this way, when Haroun's city remembers that its name is Kahani, which means "story," it is filled with happiness and celebration thanks to its

reclamation of its name and of this specific language. Essentially, the novel's insistence on the importance of naming encompasses the idea that by creating and using specific language to describe something, we can then begin to understand and engage with that thing in a meaningful and purposeful way.



STORYTELLING

The first question the novel asks is, "what is the use of stories that aren't even true?" The novel then sets out to answer this question, as well as complicate the answers. As fiction, the novel tells a story that, by default, isn't necessarily true, and the obviously fantastical and magical elements emphasize this almost to absurdity. This process and style brings into question the purpose of the novel itself as it simultaneously explores the purpose of the stories within its own pages, as well as its place in the world.

Haroun's story relies very much on the stories of others in order to add meaning and create different meanings. The outside references are numerous and range from *One Thousand and One Nights* to Beatles' songs. By including so many references to outside works, the novel then gets to pull meaning, morals, and ideas from those outside works. In this way, the novel is able to essentially borrow meaning from these stories, rather than create meaning solely out of thin air. Further, by making these references to outside fictional works, the novel insists that made-up, fictional stories in general can be meaningful, as their inclusion creates layer upon layer of meaning. Additionally, an individual reader's interpretation and experience of the novel is extremely dependent on his or her familiarity with the referenced works. In this way, the experience of reading *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* can become a highly personal experience.

In addition to exploring the meaning of stories, the novel is also very concerned with exploring its own structure and texture in regards to story structure and character archetypes. Haroun and Khattam-Shud especially make constant observations about the arc of the story in which they find themselves. Haroun remarks that Khattam-Shud himself is an anti-climactic figure, while Khattam-Shud states that Haroun's arrival is indicative of a tiresome melodrama. In exploring its texture and more general character archetypes, the novel is especially concerned with the shape and form of evil characters. By presenting evil characters that appear mundane and boring, such as Khattam-Shud and Mr. Sengupta, the novel insists that evil characters need not take an obvious or expected shape, as Mr. Buttoo and his henchmen do, in order to carry out their evil plans. As well as questioning what makes a good villain, the novel also questions the very concept of a happy ending. While Haroun's final wish for a happy ending comes at the end of the novel, it's still very close to the beginning of his life. This further supports the idea that stories are living, breathing things, and

while a story may end for the reader, the characters' lives continue after the last page.

By engaging with itself in this reflective manner, the novel asks the reader to question in a broader sense what makes a good story, what makes a good hero or villain, and what constitutes a truly happy ending. Essentially, the novel functions as a champion of the value of stories as teaching tools, entertainment, and a force for good in the world. It takes the position that whatever the specific purpose of a story might be, there is always a use for stories. Further, it encourages the reader to be an active participant in the preservation of old stories, for it is through the oldest stories that humans can connect to their roots and each other, and find common ground despite apparent irreconcilable differences.



POWER AND CENSORSHIP

Haroun and the Sea of Stories was written in the years following the publishing of *The Satanic Verses*, which sparked immense controversy and began a years-long battle between Rushdie and some Muslim-majority countries, particularly Iran, over freedom of speech. Especially in light of these events, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* can be considered a meditation on ideas of power and censorship, and how language and stories are tools that can be used to exert, maintain, or undermine power. The novel presents a very clear position that language is power, and whoever is in possession of language can exert power over those around them. Consequentially, censorship emerges as a major theme as characters battle for power over not just what language can and should say or do, but over language itself.

The relationship between power and stories is first introduced when we learn that Rashid is in high demand with politicians (politicians). The general populace believes Rashid because he is upfront about the fact that his stories aren't true, while nobody trusts the politicians that make no such claims. As such, Mr. Buttoo hires Rashid to tell happy stories so that he can win the election in Alfibay. Essentially, he understands the power that Rashid and his stories hold, and uses money and threats to attempt to censor what Rashid says. However, in spite of these threats, the novel ultimately champions the power of free speech, as Rashid's retelling of his and Haroun's adventures on the moon Kahani become an allegory for what is happening politically in Alfibay and ultimately leads to Mr. Buttoo's defeat. Khattam-Shud's desire to have absolute power stems from a need to control everything he possibly can. He sees the worlds around him as existing only for the sake of being ruled, and his preferred method of ruling is through censorship. Rather than insist that people only speak a certain way or tell certain types of stories like Mr. Buttoo, Khattam-Shud sets out to stop the existence of speech and stories altogether. As a result of this extreme degree of censorship, the Chupwalas' trust in each other is eroded. More important even than that is the idea that

the Chupwalas also lose trust in their Shadows, which possess their own personalities, and are therefore unable to exist as whole, functioning individuals. This exposes censorship as a dark force that can successfully control even an unwilling population, as Mudra the Shadow Warrior knows that many Chupwalas only obey Khattam-Shud out of fear.

Rashid is able to disobey Mr. Buttoo thanks to what he and Haroun learn from witnessing the ill effects of censorship in Chup and the positive effects of free speech in Gup. Despite the fact that Haroun and Rashid are undeniably on the side of the talkative Guppees, they initially struggle to reconcile how language functions in Guppee society with what they know of censorship in Alfibay. Haroun, for example, is shocked that some Guppees would openly state they'd sacrifice Princess Batcheat for the sake of the Ocean, describing such a suggestion as mutinous. However, Butt suggests that there's no point in granting people freedom of speech if they're unable to truly exercise that freedom. Haroun and Rashid's struggle to understand this relationship between freedom and censorship is resolved when Rashid sees that the arguments and discussions within the Guppee army lead not to mutiny, but to a greater sense of trust among the Guppee soldiers. Seeing that this style of open and honest discourse can create positive results, Rashid weaves a story that slyly reveals Mr. Buttoo as the villain he is by conflating him with Khattam-Shud.

In the novel's exploration of language and power, censorship is painted as a way to dehumanize and depersonalize a population. The novel essentially suggests that by limiting speech, knowledge of the world and knowledge of the self cannot be obtained, while simultaneously presenting the idea that open communication and the spread of ideas is the only way for individuals and societies to truly flourish.



BALANCE AND OPPOSITES

Throughout the novel, Haroun is confronted with opposing poles and concepts that are seemingly unable to coexist. Good struggles with evil; stories and language struggle with silence; absurdity struggles with logic. However, Haroun comes to realize that it's impossible to have, for example, only silence—there must be a balance of silence and sound, and this need for balance remains a common thread throughout.

The war between Chup and Gup, as well as the conflicts in Alfibay, are wars and battles of opposites. As Haroun journeys through Alfibay and Kahani, the reader is encouraged to make comparisons between the two sides. When the battle between the Guppees and the Chupwalas concludes thanks to Haroun's wish that the moon Kahani rotate, bringing day to Chup for the first time in many years, it becomes obvious that the victory wasn't just due to one side's superiority. The victory came in finding balance, not in the triumph of one side over the other.

Opposites are explored often through the use of character foils. The most developed foil is that between Rashid Khalifa and the twin characters Mr. Sengupta and Khattam-Shud. Rashid is loud, imaginative, and at times too caught up in telling stories to pay attention to what's going on in the real world. In contrast, Mr. Sengupta and Khattam-Shud are logical and down-to-earth to a fault, and have no time for stories or imagination. Prince Bolo also acts as an opposite for Mudra, the Shadow Warrior. Prince Bolo, despite speaking conventionally, never has anything particularly useful to say, while Mudra is unable to speak conventionally. However, what Mudra does "say" through the gesture language Abhinaya is fully thought out and taken seriously. By providing examples of characters on opposite ends of a spectrum, the novel further indicates the need for a happy medium. Every character is needed to truly tell the story, and as such the novel as a whole presents the balance for which it advocates.

Several characters, including Haroun, present a more balanced array of beliefs and traits. Butt the Hoopoe, as a machine, walks a fine line between scientific rationality and more human feeling and emotion. He is rational to a fault at times, which provides humor, but he also shows great insight into the human condition and the state of the world in a very emotional and human way. Mudra as well, because of his shadow, is able to achieve a great sense of balance, which helps him to be a successful communicator and warrior. He stands in stark contrast to other Chupwalas who have lost all sense of trust in their shadows, setting them completely off balance within themselves.

The Kahani lands of Gup and Chup also act as foils for each other. Gup is warm, friendly, and talkative, while Chup is a place of ice, fear, and silence. Chup, for all its seriousness, has to rely on elements of absurdity to make life livable there. All the residents wear nose warmers that look like clown noses to keep their real noses from freezing off, alluding to the idea that the extreme censorship that Chup experiences is, to some degree, absurd. In the same vein, despite Gup's belief in stories and nonsense, and an appreciation for the unpredictability of stories, the Eggheads and the Walrus rely on complicated, inherently rational science in order to keep the moon Kahani from turning, keeping life in Gup predictable and safe. In this way, despite presenting two opposite ways of life, the novel indicates that it's impossible to be fully one way or another. This idea becomes fully crystallized when the reader learns that Khattam-Shud, despite wanting silence for all, speaks—he's unable to maintain his power to dictate silence if he himself is silent.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



JUGGLING

Haroun consistently equates juggling with storytelling, as he often thinks of his father, Rashid, as juggling many different tales when he tells his famous stories. When Haroun meets Blabbermouth and sees actual juggling, and skilled juggling at that, this relationship is confirmed. Juggling, then, becomes a symbol for storytelling in both a literal and more metaphoric sense. Good storytelling, as well as good juggling, entails managing many different elements in such a way as to make them all make sense, both individually and in the context of the greater narrative. This is something that Rashid (and, it should be noted, Rushdie himself) does with his storytelling.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Granta Books and Penguin edition of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* published in 1991.

Chapter 1 Quotes

☞ "What's the use of stories that aren't even true?"

Related Characters: Mr. Sengupta (speaker), Haroun Khalifa, Rashid Khalifa, Soraya Khalifa

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 20

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun overhears Mr. Sengupta ask this question of Soraya. Mr. Sengupta despises Rashid and stories, preferring facts and rationality to imagination and nonsense. Mr. Sengupta uses this phrase to discredit Rashid and his stories, and it becomes the central question of the novel. It haunts Haroun going forward, and in a sense, Haroun's quest becomes an attempt to answer this question and discover the purpose of "untrue" stories.



By taking this question into consideration, the novel brings into question its own purpose in the world as a fictional, and therefore by nature untrue, story. Thanks to the framing device, the story of Haroun's adventure on Kahani is told twice, first by the narrator to the reader, and then by Rashid to Mr. Buttoo's constituents in the Valley of K. The reader sees firsthand the power of this fictional story, as it's powerful enough to upset Mr. Buttoo's political grip in K and bring happiness back to the valley. While the reader is then asked to answer the question for themselves as it pertains to the novel as a whole, the moral of Haroun's adventure

takes the position that stories are directly linked to power, and are best used to enact positive change in the world.

Chapter 2 Quotes

☞ "It was a figure of speech," Mr. Butt replied. "But but but I will stand by it! A figure of speech is a shifty thing; it can be twisted or it can be straight. But Butt's a straight man, not a twister. What's your wish, my young mister?"

Related Characters: Mr. Butt (speaker), Rashid Khalifa, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 33



Explanation and Analysis

Haroun is at the Bus Depot in the Town of G, waiting while Rashid purchases tickets to the Valley of K, and has just met Mr. Butt. Mr. Butt tells Haroun he's "at his service" as a figure of speech, but Haroun takes him at his word and proceeds to ask him for a favor.

The exchange between Haroun and Mr. Butt begins to explore the intricacies of language. Mr. Butt chooses to allow "at your service" to actually mean what it means, rather than exist only as a figure of speech. Further, the use of rhyme here, while subtler than other instances in the novel, denotes the importance of the phrase for the reader. Essentially, the use of verse nestled within prose flags this as something that requires further attention, while also adding to the overall theme of wordplay and absurdity.

☞ "'Need to stop?' he bellowed over his shoulder. "'Need to go so quickly?' Well, my sirs, I'll tell you this: Need's a slippery snake, that's what it is. The boy here says that you, sir, Need A View Before Sunset, and maybe it's so and maybe no. And some might say that the boy here Needs A Mother, and maybe it's so and maybe no. And it's been said of me that Butt Needs Speed, but but but it may be that my heart truly needs a Different Sort of Thrill. O, Need's a funny fish: it makes people untruthful. They all suffer from it, but they will not always admit. Hurrah!"

Related Characters: Mr. Butt (speaker), Soraya Khalifa, Rashid Khalifa, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 36

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun has just asked Mr. Butt if he's forgotten to stop the Mail Coach to deliver and pick up the mail. Mr. Butt's speech is very characteristic of the playful style of language in the novel. The text reads somewhat differently depending on whether it's read or heard, which ties in ideas of reading as simultaneously a communal activity and a highly personal one. Hearing it, one may have an easier time picking up on the subtle rhyming at play, while when reading it, the reader becomes aware of the use of capitalization to indicate important words or phrases. The capitalization takes simple words and ideas and elevates them from whatever they may be (noun, adjective) to proper noun status. This style choice is utilized throughout, and by setting up the expectation that some common words that are important (or concepts that are being converted into or considered as concrete things) will be capitalized, it adds extra weight when something that seems as though it should be important *isn't* capitalized, as in the case of Haroun's sad city.

☞ "Khattam-Shud," he said slowly, "is the Arch-Enemy of all Stories, even of Language itself. He is the Prince of Silence and the Foe of Speech. And because everything ends, because dreams end, stories end, life ends, at the finish of everything we use his name. "'It's finished!' we tell one another, 'it's over. Khattam-Shud: The End.'"

Related Characters: Rashid Khalifa (speaker), Khattam-Shud, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 39

Explanation and Analysis


Haroun asked Rashid about one of his old stories, when Rashid remarks that he thought they were "khattam-shud" throughout their harrowing bus ride. Rashid answers Haroun's question with this description of Khattam-Shud.

The novel here brings the idea of "the end" to life in the form of the character Khattam-Shud. Remember that khattam-shud without capitalization is a Hindustani word that means "completely finished," and as Rashid shares here, in Alfbay it's used to indicate the end of something (like saying "The End" when a fairy tale is finished). By bringing an idea to life as a character in this way, the idea becomes

more tangible and more easily accessible. The reader is able to engage with the idea by analyzing the idea in terms of character traits, motivation, and relationship to other characters, which transforms the idea of the end into something concrete. Further, this description of Khattam-Shud is echoed through the novel several times, and it takes the meaning of khattam-shud and clearly lays out the goals of Khattam-Shud the character: to destroy stories, enforce silence, and end everything.

- ☛ "Do those names mean anything?" Haroun asked.
"All names mean something," Rashid replied.

Related Characters: Rashid Khalifa, Haroun Khalifa (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 40

Explanation and Analysis



Haroun and Rashid are entering the Valley of K, and Haroun is asking about a vandalized sign that now reads "Kache-Mer" and "Kosh-Mar" instead of just "K." Rashid explains that Kache-Mer means "place that hides a sea" and Kosh-Mar is rude and means "nightmare."

Rashid's assertion that all names mean something indicates to the reader that it isn't just the names on the sign that mean something; all names in the novel mean something. Rushdie makes this abundantly clear by including a guide to the names at the end of the novel, where he explains the meaning and origins of the names. The names serve a variety of purposes. Some, as in the case of Mali, indicate a profession: Mali means "gardener." The names of Haroun and Rashid come from a legendary caliph from 1001 Arabian Nights, which reinforces their roles as storytellers and the champions of stories, as well as threading the motif of the 1001 Arabian Nights through the novel in a more covert way. By stating upfront that all names mean something and offering a guide to help create understanding of the names, the novel provides an easy way to both engage with it and create meaning.

Chapter 3 Quotes

- ☛ When Haroun heard his father say only a story, he understood that the Shah of Blah was very depressed indeed, because only deep despair could have made him say such a terrible thing.

Related Characters: Haroun Khalifa, Rashid Khalifa

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 48

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun, Rashid, and Mr. Buttoo are on the Dull Lake, where the weather is beginning to act up. Haroun has just asked if they're in the Moody Land, where the weather is dependent on inhabitants' moods, and Rashid replies that the Moody Land is only a story.

The novel makes it explicitly clear from the very beginning that stories are not only based in some degree of truth (or can create their own kind of truth), but are useful and worthy of preservation and consideration. Rashid, here, is denying or downplaying these facts in his misery. This is especially important considering he's a storyteller by profession, and so essentially he's stating that his entire profession is unworthy of respect.

- ☛ He knew what he knew: that the real world was full of magic, so magical worlds could easily be real.

Related Characters: Mr. Buttoo, Rashid Khalifa, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 50

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun, Rashid, and Mr. Buttoo are in a boat on the Dull Lake, and Haroun has just caused the weather to calm down by realizing that they're in the Moody Land. Mr. Buttoo simply believes that a spot of bad weather came and went away again without explanation, but Haroun makes this realization and keeps his thoughts to himself.

This realization opens Haroun up and primes him for the fantastical dream adventure on which he'll soon embark. His experience out on the Dull Lake and the Moody Land makes it very clear to Haroun that there is magic in the world. Further, as the magic he experiences there is something he heard about first in Rashid's stories, it underscores their importance for Haroun, and the power of stories in general. This moment of receiving proof of Rashid's stories allows Haroun to then take the rest of his father's stories as truth as well.

Chapter 4 Quotes

☞ To give a thing a name, a label, a handle; to rescue it from anonymity, to pluck it out of the Place of Namelessness, in short to identify it—well, that's a way of bringing the said thing into being. Or, in this case, the said bird or Imaginary Flying Organism.

Related Characters: Iff (speaker), Butt, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 63

Explanation and Analysis

Iff instructs Haroun to choose a bird, and Haroun, thinking he's being logical, replies that the only bird in the room is the peacock bed. In this passionate speech, Iff then gets at the importance of naming to the novel.

Throughout the book, Rushdie encourages the reader to consider the names of characters and places as more than just a simple way to identify someone or something, but as a way to understand and engage with them. This particular passage subtly references the idea of Haroun's sad city, which is so sad it's forgotten its name. Following Iff's logic, the sad city exists in the "Place of Namelessness" alongside the bird that Haroun has not yet named. However, once Haroun chooses the Hoopoe bird and the sad city remembers its name, both Haroun and Kahani are able to deepen their understandings of the world and of themselves. This further supports the idea that claiming specific language through the act of naming is a way to create meaning and purpose in one's life.

Chapter 5 Quotes

☞ "A strange sort of Story Moon our Kahani would be, if storybook things weren't everywhere to be found." And Haroun had to admit that *that* was a reasonable remark.

Related Characters: Butt (speaker), Iff, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 79

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun and Iff are speeding towards Gup City on Butt the Hoopoe, and Haroun is thinking that all manner of fanciful stories are coming true. Butt's reply highlights the relationship between absurdity and logic, and the balance between the two that is necessary for such a story to make

sense. Since Kahani means "story," the fact that the moon Kahani is filled with storybook things makes perfect logical sense. However, this is one idea that builds throughout the novel and only becomes clear at the very end, when it's revealed that Haroun's sad city is also named Kahani. In this way, Butt's declaration here also serves to help the ending of the novel make sense, as one could argue that Soraya's return and the sad city's naming is a happy ending that could only be found in a storybook. However, since Kahani the moon and Kahani the city are linked by their name, they're both therefore subject to storybook logic.

Chapter 6 Quotes

☞ —"I don't know," panted Iff as he struggled to keep up with the charging boy. "We've never caught a spy before. Maybe we should scold him. Or make him stand in the corner. Or write *I must not spy* one thousand and one times. Or is that too severe?"

Related Characters: Iff (speaker), Rashid Khalifa, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 98

Explanation and Analysis

Rashid has just been captured as a spy by the Guppee forces, and Haroun is rushing through the crowd to try to fix the situation. Haroun angrily asks what Guppees do to spies, listing several gruesome torture tactics, which bewilder and offend Iff and the surrounding Guppees.

Haroun comes from a place in Alfbay that relies on censorship to maintain order. Spies in Alfbay, presumably, are subjected to interrogation and torture in order to reveal their secrets. However, the punishments Iff suggests for spies are humorously minor in comparison. This begins to provide evidence of the sort of people the Guppees are—peaceful, open, and shocked even by the possibility of having to write lines (and the number of lines proposed is another reference to the 1001 Nights). These qualities then stand in stark contrast to the cruel society of the Chupwalas, who are not only secretive but sew their mouths shut as a sacrifice to Bezaban. The opposites at play allow Haroun to consider the differences between the two sides and where a happy, balanced medium might be.

●● Haroun noted that many other Pages of the Royal Guard were dressed in half-familiar stories. One Page wore the tale of 'Bolo and the Wonderful Lamp'; another, 'Bolo and the Forty Thieves'. Then there was 'Bolo the Sailor', 'Bolo and Juliet', 'Bolo in Wonderland'.

Related Characters: Haroun Khalifa, Blabbermouth

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 99

Explanation and Analysis

Blabbermouth is leading Haroun to the Throne Room to meet his father, and Haroun is puzzled by the stories written on the Pages' tunics. The imagery of the tunics themselves reinforces that the novel is a book about books, stories, and words, as does the double meaning of "page." The many stories referenced on the Pages' tunics also provide another way for Rushdie to make overt references to outside works that span a great deal of time and geography, which further situates the novel as being dependent on these other works to form meaning. However, the changing of the title characters' names to Bolo is a relatively benign act of censorship and draws attention to the question of when censorship of this sort is appropriate, or if it's censorship it all. The novel takes the position that it's essential to preserve stories, as they're a way for humans to connect to each other and connect with their history—but the reader is then asked to question whether these stories going to be truly preserved if the names are changed. Or, as Butt says, will these stories be able to handle some shaking up and change?

Chapter 7 Quotes

●● Haroun was rather shocked. "That sounds like mutinous talk to me," he suggested, and Iff, Goopy, Bagha and Mali found that very interesting indeed. "What's a Mutinous?" asked Iff, curiously. "Is it a plant?" Mali inquired. "You don't understand," Haroun tried to say. "It's an Adjective." "Nonsense," said the Water Genie. "Adjectives can't talk." "Money talks, they say," Haroun found himself arguing (all this argument around him was proving infectious), "so why not Adjectives? Come to that, why not anything?"

Related Characters: Mali, Iff, Haroun Khalifa (speaker), Bagha, Goopy

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 118

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun and the Guppee army are speeding across the Ocean towards the Land of Chup, loudly debating whether it's better to prioritize saving Batcheat or the Ocean. Haroun has been raised in Alfibay, where he's not used to hearing such debate in the first place, but also where debate like this would certainly come with consequences. Through what he experiences both in this moment and in thinking about what the implications of free speech are (and seeing the positive effects of such at the end of the novel), Haroun begins to develop an understanding of the true power of language.

Additionally, this passage showcases how the novel engages with language in a playful but serious way. The characters are debating the seriousness of free speech, but they're also having a rather ridiculous debate regarding parts of speech, what parts of speech can do or stand for, and how different individuals can interpret language in different ways.

●● "But but but what is the point of giving persons Freedom of Speech," declaimed Butt the Hoopoe, "if you then say they must not utilize the same? And is not the Power of Speech the greatest Power of all? Then surely it must be exercised to the full?"

Related Characters: Butt (speaker), Rashid Khalifa, General Kitab, Iff, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 119

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun, Rashid, and the Guppee army are heading towards the Land of Chup, and Haroun is shocked to hear the Guppees arguing and saying out loud that they'd sacrifice Princess Batcheat for the sake of the Ocean. Haroun remarks that that kind of talk is mutinous, and Butt replies with this consideration of the power of free speech.



As far as actual speech is concerned, the Land of Gup represents a society in which the concept of free speech is taken to the extreme. Individuals can say things that are rude, inflammatory, or that go against the wishes and decisions of those in charge, and all of these vocalizations are not just okay, but encouraged. Haroun and Rashid, however, come from a place where censorship is not as

intense as in Chup but where one still cannot get away with saying such things, and so they struggle to understand how this intense display of freedom of speech functions and how it can be a good thing.

Rashid sees later the true positive effect of the debate and argument that takes place during this journey. The openness that it created means that the Guppees are able and willing to support each other and work as a team. The absence of secret thoughts and desires that then have the capacity to do harm is what allows the Guppees to win, and the opposite of this is what causes the Chupwala army to be so grossly ineffective.

“But it's not as simple as that,” he told himself, because the dance of the Shadow Warrior showed him that silence had its own grace and beauty (just as speech could be graceless and ugly); and that Action could be as noble as Words; and that creatures of darkness could be as lovely as the children of the light. “If Guppees and Chupwalas didn't hate each other so,” he thought, “they might actually find each other pretty interesting. Opposites attract, as they say.”

Related Characters: Haroun Khalifa (speaker), Mudra

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 125

Explanation and Analysis

Rashid has led Haroun and the Guppee officials to a Chupwala camp, where they come across Mudra the Shadow Warrior fighting his own Shadow. As they watch, Haroun considers the story in which he's found himself and the opposites at play within it.

With this thought, Haroun takes simply listing opposites or being aware of them one step further, and begins to synthesize them somewhere in the middle. He's seen, for example, Bolo's speech, which is what is being referred to here as “graceless and ugly.” He will soon also see Mudra speak using the gesture language Abhinaya, which further drives home the point that communicating silently can be beautiful. Most importantly is the fact that Haroun sees that the Guppees and Chupwalas have the potential to happily coexist with each other if they could be somehow brought into balance with themselves, each other, and their world, which is essentially what happens when Haroun's wish causes Kahani to turn.

Chapter 8 Quotes

“And of course there can be quarrels between the Shadow and the Substance or Self or Person; they can pull in opposite directions—how often have I witnessed that!-- but just as often there is a true partnership, and mutual respect. —So Peace with the Chupwalas means Peace with their Shadows, too.”

Related Characters: Mudra (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 132

Explanation and Analysis

Mudra and his Shadow are explaining to the Guppees about the partnership between Chupwalas and their Shadows, who often possess stronger personalities than the Person they're attached to. However, what Mudra describes demonstrates a situation in which a great degree of balance is achieved within a Person-Shadow whole, as the Person and Shadow can make up for each other's weaknesses and support their other half's strengths.

Throughout the novel, partnering is a way to achieve balance and happiness. Rashid's partnership with Soraya is strong enough to overcome the sadness of the sad city; Plentimaw Fishes mate for life and speak in verse to express their union; and Chupwalas have friends in their shadows. Through a partnership such as the one Mudra describes, the novel presents tangible examples of two different individuals, sometimes opposites, achieving balance.

“All my life I've heard about the wonderful Sea of Stories, and Water Genies, and everything; but I started believing only when I saw Iff in my bathroom the other night. And now that I've actually come to Kahani and seen with my own eyes how beautiful the Ocean is, with its Story Streams in colours whose names I don't even know, and its Floating Gardeners and Plentimaw Fishes and all, well, it turns out I may be too late, because the whole Ocean's going to be dead any minute if we don't do something. And it turns out that I don't like the idea of that, sir, not one bit. I don't like the idea that all the good stories in the world will go wrong for ever and ever, or just die. As I say, I only just started believing in the Ocean, but maybe it isn't too late for me to do my bit.”

Related Characters: Haroun Khalifa (speaker), Iff, General Kitab, Rashid Khalifa

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 137



Explanation and Analysis

General Kitab has asked for a volunteer to investigate the second Khattam-Shud's activities and the Ocean's poisoning in the Old Zone. Haroun offers to go, and delivers this speech explaining why. Through this speech, Haroun begins to answer the guiding question of the novel regarding the purpose of stories. He's seen, first of all, how beautiful the physical embodiment of these stories is. This experience builds upon a lifetime of hearing these stories, which have surely provided guidance, entertainment, and fun to Haroun's life before he even believed in Kahani's existence.

Mudra's explanation of what happens when absolute silence is enforced has also certainly influenced Haroun. In addition to hearing about the mayhem and distrust caused by mandatory silence, Haroun has seen the terrifying effects of the Ocean's poisoning firsthand through his Princess Rescue Story experience. All of these experiences culminate in Haroun realizing the value of stories and of preserving them for future generations. When expanded to incorporate not just the events of the novel itself but the novel as a whole and stories in general, this speech turns into a passionate cry against the effects of censorship, so that stories might be enjoyed by all, whatever their use.

☝ "Never thought it'd be so bad!"
 "We have failed you! We feel sad!"
 "I feel terrible! She feels worse!"
 "We can hardly speak in verse."

Related Characters: Bagha, Goopy (speaker), Mali, Iff, Butt, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 140

Explanation and Analysis

Goopy and Bagha are explaining to Haroun, Iff, Mali, and Butt the Hoopoe that they cannot continue heading south towards the Wellspring given the state of the Ocean, as the poison affects them too much. This is a prime example of how verse is used throughout the novel to highlight important passages or ideas. The Plentimaw Fish mate for life, and speak in verse with their life partners in order to express this union. Knowing this, it underscores just how poisoned the Ocean is that this pair of Plentimaw Fish is



considering that they may not be able to speak in verse as a consequence (and thus also may lose the strength of their bond).

This also mirrors what Haroun observes on the road over the mountains between the Town of G and the Valley of K. Near G, the signs along the road warning drivers to drive carefully rhyme, but as the road climbs the mountain, the signs stop rhyming. In this way, rhyming is normalized, while at the same time it serves to highlight important passages. In this system, when rhyming is given up, it indicates an even more important statement.

Chapter 9 Quotes

☝ "It's our own fault," he wept. "We are the Guardians of the Ocean, and we didn't guard it. Look at the Ocean, look at it! The oldest stories ever made, and look at them now. We let them rot, we abandoned them, long before this poisoning. We lost touch with our beginnings, with our roots, our Wellspring, our Source. Boring, we said, not in demand, surplus to requirements. And now, look, just look! No colour, no life, no nothing. Spoilt!"

Related Characters: Iff (speaker), Khattam-Shud, Mali, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 146

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun, Iff, and Butt have just been captured by Chupwalas and are being drawn through the weed jungle towards what they'll soon find out is Khattam-Shud's ship. Haroun's story can be considered a cautionary tale for what happens when a culture ceases to preserve and protect their history and oldest stories. The weed jungle and the cold, colorless Ocean act as physical representations of these forgotten cultural texts, while Khattam-Shud's entire operation shows what can then be done to the stories once they're forgotten. Iff is correct that stories can rot and decay if they're deemed boring, surplus, or no longer necessary (and then aren't told), but Khattam-Shud takes it one step further. He sees the opportunity to co-opt these old stories and poison them, and since they're no longer popular and in circulation, it becomes ridiculously easy to turn them around and use them for evil.

☝ "But this is all too fanciful for words," he told himself. "A boat made out of shadows? A shadow-ship? Don't be nuts." But the idea kept nagging at him, and wouldn't let go. *Look at the edges of everything here, said a voice in his head. The edges of the poison tanks, the crane, the ship itself. Don't they look, well, fuzzy? That's what shadows are like; even when they're sharp, they're never as sharp-edged as real, substantial things.*

Related Characters: Haroun Khalifa (speaker), Khattam-Shud, Iff

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 152


Explanation and Analysis

Haroun and Iff are being shown onto Khattam-Shud's ship in the Old Zone of the Ocean. Haroun and Iff have been warned that since Khattam-Shud can separate himself from his shadow, he can be in two places at once, and here Haroun is confronted with the instinct that he's dealing with the shadow version.

Throughout the novel, Haroun has been on a journey in which he's not only attempting to save his father and stories, but in which he's also learning to trust himself. Haroun makes many observations about his surroundings, but this situation is extremely important to his growth and development. Through this mental nagging, Haroun is learning to trust in not just the logic he grew up with in Alfibay, but in the nonsensical, storybook logic of Kahani. This, in turn, allows Haroun to triumph, as he wins the war by accepting and working within the absurdity of Kahani.

☝ "That's him? That's *him*?" Haroun thought, with a kind of disappointment. "This little minging fellow? What an anti-climax."

Related Characters: Haroun Khalifa (speaker), Khattam-Shud

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 153

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun and Iff have just been escorted onto the Dark Ship and are about to be introduced to Khattam-Shud, who has just appeared and is a disappointing villain. In this situation, the novel is engaging with conventions of how villains are supposed to look—scary, imposing, and evil, and not like an

office clerk in fancy dress, which is how Haroun describes both the Chupwalas on the ship as well as Khattam-Shud himself. The novel, then, takes the position that evil isn't always obvious, expected, or easy to identify. It can indeed take the form of a clerk—and in the same vein, someone who looks perfectly normal may be wholly capable of doing intensely evil deeds. Note also that the word “minging” and the general description of Khattam-Shud links him to Mr. Sengupta, the “villain” of Haroun's other story.

Chapter 10 Quotes

☝ "We must make a great many poisons, because each and every story in the Ocean needs to be ruined in a different way. To ruin a happy story, you must make it sad. To ruin an action drama, you must make it move too slowly. To ruin a mystery you must make the criminal's identity obvious even to the most stupid audience..."

Related Characters: Khattam-Shud (speaker), Iff, Haroun Khalifa

Related Themes:   



Page Number: 160

Explanation and Analysis

Khattam-Shud is explaining to Haroun and Iff how he and his Chupwala minions are going about manufacturing poisons to target individual stories in the Ocean. This is one situation in which the novel engages in a very direct way with storytelling elements and conventions, and asks in a more roundabout way what makes a good story. Khattam-Shud has evidently figured out how to make individual types of stories into bad stories, which will in turn mean that those stories aren't then told. This take on censorship varies greatly from what Khattam-Shud is enforcing in Chup with the Silence Laws, as he doesn't need to enforce silence to end these stories—he must merely make them unlikable, unsuccessful, and boring.

☝ "But why do you hate stories so much?" Haroun blurted, feeling stunned. "Stories are fun..."
"The world, however, is not for Fun," Khattam-Shud replied.
"The world is for Controlling."
"Which world?" Haroun made himself ask.
"Your world, my world, all worlds," came the reply. "They are all there to be Ruled. And inside every single story, inside every Stream in the Ocean, there lies a world, a story-world, that I cannot Rule at all. And that is the reason why."

Related Characters: Haroun Khalifa (speaker), Khattam-Shud

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 161



Explanation and Analysis

Khattam-Shud is explaining to Iff and Haroun why he's poisoning all the stories in the Ocean and how he's going about this task. Through this exchange, we can compare how Khattam-Shud and Haroun view their worlds. Haroun, who sees stories, and by extension, his world, as existing for fun, has a much easier relationship to his world. It is there for him to try to understand and enjoy where possible, but most importantly, he's integrated into his world. This stands in stark contrast to Khattam-Shud, who sees himself as separate from his world. This puts him in a better position to control it, and his preferred method of trying to control the world (or worlds) is through censorship, halting language, and turning stories from fun into nothing.

Chapter 11 Quotes

☞ And as for the rest, well, their vows of silence and their habits of secrecy had made them suspicious and distrustful of one another.

Related Characters: Mudra

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 185

Explanation and Analysis

The narrator is explaining for the reader what happened during the battle of Bat-Mat-Karo. This sentence is speaking specifically about the Chupwalas who didn't turn on their own Shadows, although all the Chupwalas were easily defeated by the Guppee forces.

Here, we see the dire consequences of Khattam-Shud's Silence Laws. The Silence Laws rendered the Chupwala army unwilling and unable to trust each other, as the Chupwalas were unable to share conversation with each other and build a sense of community. The novel makes it very clear through the Chupwalas' easy defeat that secrets and silence lead to this shattering of community, and in comparison, open discourse where all ideas are equally considered is how individuals build community, trust, and respect for each other.

Chapter 12 Quotes

☞ "Happy endings must come at the end of something," the Walrus pointed out. "If they happen in the middle of a story, or an adventure, or the like, all they do is cheer things up for a while."

Related Characters: The Walrus (speaker), Haroun Khalifa, Rashid Khalifa

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 202

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun has just asked the Walrus for a happy ending for his adventure in addition to a happy ending for his sad city. Throughout the novel, Rushdie has taken the position that stories are living, breathing, changing things. As an extension of the logic of this concept, the Walrus here introduces the idea that stories don't end because the physical book is out of pages. Essentially, the Walrus is making sure that Haroun understands that he is perfectly able to grant him happiness, but it's not the end of anything, as Haroun is still a young boy, at the very beginning of his life, and his life will continue after the reader closes their book. And after all, Khattam-Shud—"the end"—has been defeated.

☞ "Don't, Dad," said Haroun, his good mood deflating all at once. "Don't you get it? It isn't real. It's just something the Eggheads got out of a bottle. It's all fake. People should be happy when there's something to be happy about, not just when they get bottled happiness poured over them from the sky."

Related Characters: Haroun Khalifa (speaker), The Walrus, Rashid Khalifa

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 208

Explanation and Analysis

Haroun and Rashid have returned to the sad city to find that the rains have continued, but the city isn't as sad as when they left it. Rashid is giddy and thrilled with this turn of events, but Haroun becomes sadder when he realizes that the happiness is the Walrus's doing.

Haroun has very clear ideas of where and when happiness is appropriate—at the end of a story, possibly, or possibly in

conjunction with “something to be happy about.” This happiness that the sad city is experiencing, then, he believes is false and fabricated. This begins to get at the idea that this particular story, while it's about to end for the reader, is

just the very beginning for Haroun, as he's still a young boy with lots of life ahead of him. This further underscores the novel's insistence that stories are living, breathing entities that can take on a life of their own.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1: THE SHAH OF BLAH

The story begins in a city in the country of Alfibay that is so sad it's forgotten its name. It stands by the sea and in its factories it manufactures sadness. A young boy named Haroun lives there with his mother, Soraya Khalifa, who loves to sing, and his father, Rashid Khalifa. Rashid is a storyteller, known by his admirers as the "Ocean of Notions" and by his rivals as the "Shah of Blah." Haroun's upbringing was uncharacteristically happy, until the day Haroun's mother stopped singing. Rashid is so busy telling stories, he doesn't notice that Soraya has stopped singing.

Haroun accompanies his father to his performances every chance he gets, in awe of Rashid's talent. Haroun thinks of his father as a **juggler** of stories. Haroun, however, wants to know where all these fantastic stories come from, but whenever he asks his father about it, Rashid replies with a straight face that they come from the warm waters of the Story Sea, piped into the house through an invisible tap installed by a Water Genie. This answer irritates Haroun, as he's never seen a Water Genie. When he tells Rashid this, Rashid replies that Haroun must stop "Iffing and Butting" and enjoy the stories.

The Khalifas live in a downstairs apartment of a house that is colored like a cake, and they are solidly middle class. People in the sad city mostly have big families, but Haroun is an only child, and wants to know why. Rashid tells Haroun, "there's more to you, young Haroun Khalifa, than meets the blinking eye," which Haroun takes as no real answer. Soraya answers that they tried to have more children but were unable to, and tells Haroun to think of the poor childless Sengupta family that lives upstairs. Mr. Sengupta is a clerk and is whiny and "mingy" (mean and stingy), while Oneeta Sengupta is fat and dotes on Haroun.

Mr. Sengupta always talks to Soraya when Rashid isn't around, criticizing Rashid and his stories, insisting that there's no use in stories that aren't true. Haroun, eavesdropping from outside, decides that he doesn't like Mr. Sengupta, but he can't get the question "what's the use of stories that aren't even true?" out of his head.

The first question the novel offers for consideration is, essentially, what is the importance of a name, and what does it mean when you forget a name? This question is underscored by the fact that Rushdie liberally uses capitalization to denote importance in even common nouns, and the sad city is only ever written in lowercase. The city is so sad, it can't even use a grammatical convention to refer to itself. We're also immediately introduced to the frequent wordplay of the book with Rashid's rhyming nicknames and "Alfibay," a play on the Hindustani word for alphabet.



Haroun both admires his father's stories and is exasperated by them, as what he really wants in this situation is concrete answers rather than fantasy. The "Iff and Butt" motif, as well as the rest of Rashid's story, will reappear later, as all of what happens in Haroun's life in Alfibay provides the inspiration for the dream journey he'll take later.



Rashid's statement that there's more to Haroun than meets the eye leads the reader as well as Haroun to file this away as something important for later. In the discussion of the Senguptas, the reader is asked to consider two very opposite people in Mr. Sengupta and Rashid, as well as wonder what might be a happy medium between the two. From the very beginning, Mr. Sengupta is set up as an unlikeable character to watch out for going forward.



This question of the use of stories can be considered the thesis of the novel. Here, it's used to discredit and cast aspersions at Rashid and his profession, offering for consideration the possibility that stories aren't useful.



In spite of Mr. Sengupta's disdain for stories, Rashid is in high demand with politicians (politicians) running for office, as it's an election year in Alfbay. Everyone has complete faith in Rashid because he's upfront that his stories are totally made up, but nobody believes the politicians, meaning that they need Rashid's help to win over the voters. Rashid can pick and choose which candidate he'd like to support, as they all want him to tell their stories.

Here we see that regardless of Mr. Sengupta's feelings, there are people out there who understand the power of stories and are willing to pay for them. This idea links stories with power, as Rashid essentially has the power to make an election swing in whichever way he chooses.



On the day everything went wrong, it was the first day of the rainy season in the sad city, and Haroun took his time walking home from school to play in the downpour. Upon arriving at his house, he sees Miss Oneeta standing and shaking on her balcony, although he can't tell she's crying because of the rain. When he enters his house, Rashid is crying too. It's revealed that Soraya ran off with Mr. Sengupta at precisely 11:00 am. She sent Rashid on a mission to Haroun's bedroom and while Rashid was occupied, sped away in a taxi. Rashid, noticing that the clock still stood at 11:00, smashed the clock with a hammer, and then went on to smash all the other clocks in the house. Upon finding out about his mother's departure, Haroun's first words were to ask his father why he'd smashed Haroun's clock.

The idea of time, specifically stopping it, becomes a way to explore balance. Once Haroun's life is out of balance due to Soraya's departure, time for Haroun stops, and Rashid will suffer the fate of losing his storytelling skills in his sadness. Soraya leaving at 11:00 and the motif of 11 minutes begins to allude to the 1001 Arabian Nights, which will become a more concrete motif later.



Soraya left a note for Rashid filled with nasty things about him and about storytelling. Rashid pathetically cries that storytelling is all he knows, and Haroun loses his temper and shouts, "What's the use of stories that aren't even true?" These words haunt Haroun, and he blames himself when not long after, Rashid stands up in front of an audience, opens his mouth, and has no stories to tell.

Here, a combination of sadness and questioning the importance of stories leads to stories disappearing. Rashid, like his city, becomes so sad he loses some of what defines him. Further, we are introduced to Haroun's sense of responsibility and duty to his father, which will guide him going forward.



After Soraya leaves, Haroun finds that he can't keep his attention on something for more than 11 minutes at a time, creating many difficulties in his life. Miss Oneeta realizes the source of the trouble, saying that 11:00 is when Soraya left, and Oneeta says that Haroun's psychological sadness means that he's stuck on 11 and can't get to 12. Haroun fears that this is true, and he wonders if the problem could be resolved if Soraya came back and started the clocks again.

Again, Haroun senses the need for balance to be achieved before time can move again, and balance to him means having both parents present. Until some form of equilibrium is reached, Haroun is essentially stuck in time.



Several days later, Rashid is invited by politicians to perform in the Town of G and the Valley of K. In an aside, the narrator notes that in Alfbay, many places are named after a letter in the alphabet, and since there are a limited number of letters, it causes much confusion and makes for excitable mail service employees. Rashid insists that he and Haroun go, since the weather is still nice in the Town of G and the Valley of K, while the rain in the sad city persists.

Remember that Alfbay comes from a Hindustani word meaning "alphabet." The fact that places in Alfbay are only identified by letters, and share their names with other places rather than having truly unique names creates a sense of absurdity, and also emphasizes the importance of language and naming to a sense of identity.



On the train, Rashid tells Haroun about the wonders of the Valley of K, particularly the beauty of the Dull Lake. Haroun stops listening after 11 minutes and Rashid stops talking too. They're met at the train station in the Town of G by two of the politico's henchmen, both with large moustaches, whom Haroun thinks look like villains. Rashid gets up on stage in front of the crowd to tell his story, opens his mouth, and all that comes out is, "ark, ark, ark."

Haroun and Rashid are shut in a hot office while the two large men yell at Rashid, suggesting that they'll cut off his tongue. Rashid tries to assure them that he will be magnificent in the Valley of K. Haroun, trying to diffuse the situation, asks when the plane leaves, and the men yell that Haroun and Rashid will have to take a bus. Haroun feels like it's all his fault and thinks again of the question, "what's the use of stories that aren't even true?" He feels he has to do something, but doesn't know what.

CHAPTER 2: THE MAIL COACH

The henchmen drop Rashid and Haroun off at the bus station and zoom away. The station is plastered with rhyming signs about driving safely, and the ticket window is surrounded by a violent mob rather than an orderly line. Rashid dives into the mob while Haroun stays and watches the rude game the bus drivers are playing with passengers, made possible by the fact that there's no posted bus schedule. One bus starts its engine, and when passengers hurry over to board, the driver smiles and turns off his engine and another bus hurriedly leaves the station. Haroun remarks that it's not fair.

Haroun hears a booming voice behind him, which says that the game isn't fair, but it's still fun to watch. Haroun turns to look at the man, who has an abundance of feather-like hair on his head and face. The man introduces himself as Mr. Butt, a Mail Coach driver, and tells Haroun he's at his service. Haroun replies that there is something that Mr. Butt can do for him, and asks Mr. Butt if he could give Rashid and himself front row seats in the Mail Coach all the way to the Valley of K, making sure to make it to the Tunnel of I before sunset so they can admire the fantastic view. Mr. Butt (who speaks in rhyme) begins to protest, but seeing Haroun's face, agrees.

Here, names again are used to develop a sense of absurdity with the implication that the Dull Lake is anything but dull. Notice that Haroun is characterizing people with broad strokes—there's not a lot of nuance to his assessment of the henchmen, which creates room for him to develop some of that nuance over the course of the novel. Rashid's power—his storytelling ability—has been stifled by his sadness, effectively censoring him into absurdity.



Despite the stereotyping, Haroun wasn't far off in his assessment of the henchmen. This idea comes into play more as the novel begins to explore what qualities make up a "villain." We also see again that Haroun is taking on a great deal of responsibility for the course of events, despite only trying to help and make sense of the situation.



In Alfibay, the road and traffic authorities use rhyme to encourage citizens to drive safely. As a general rule, rhyme makes things easier for people to remember (think of nursery rhymes). Further, as a literary tool, rhyming passages stand out and indicate importance to the reader. In this case, the importance of driving slowly and safely will be essential to the logic and humor of the rest of the chapter.



Haroun is beginning to take an active role in helping Rashid be successful in this storytelling adventure to G and K. This instance of actively trying to help is also the first instance in which Haroun actually experiences success in the matter, which provides him with confidence to try again later. Note too that Mr. Butt speaks in rhyme, which (along with his humorous name) adds to a fundamental absurdity in his character, as well as suggesting that what he says is important.



When Rashid reemerges from the ticket office, Haroun and Mr. Butt are waiting in the Mail Coach. Rashid and the other passengers are impressed, and Mr. Butt is extremely excited. He drives with increasing speed through the villages, completely forgetting to stop to deliver the mail. The coach begins its ascent up the mountain, going faster and faster, and the passengers first begin to argue and then fall into a terrified silence. Mr. Butt continues yelling and pointing out sites of gruesome accidents.

Haroun as well is silent with fear. Roadside signs warning of the danger no longer rhyme, and Mr. Butt has gone silent to concentrate on his driving. Suddenly a cloud appears in the road, and Mr. Butt slams on the brakes as they drive into it. Haroun then finds that they've emerged from the cloud alive and are in the tunnel of I. Mr. Butt announces that there's one hour to sunset.

Mr. Butt stops the Mail Coach on the far side of the tunnel so that the passengers can enjoy the sunset over the Valley of K. The colors are magnificent. Rashid hugs Haroun and admits that for a time, he thought they were done for: "khattam-shud." Haroun asks Rashid about a story he used to tell, and Rashid slowly responds that Khattam-Shud is the enemy of stories and of language itself, and because everything ends, people use his name at the ends of things: "khattam-shud, the end."

As the Mail Coach descends into the valley, Mr. Butt drives slowly, saying there's no need for speed now that Haroun and Rashid have had their view. A sign that had once read "Welcome to K" has been vandalized to read "Welcome to Kosh-Mar," and Haroun asks what Kosh-Mar is. Rashid explains that it's from an ancient language that is no longer spoken, and the valley used to be called Kache-Mer or Kosh-Mar. Haroun asks if the names mean anything, to which Rashid replies that all names mean something. He says Kache-Mer means "place that hides a sea," but that Kosh-Mar is rude and means "nightmare."

The Mail Coach arrives in the bus depot after dark, and as Haroun and Rashid disembark, Mr. Butt says he'll be there when they return to drive them home. Rather than being greeted by more henchmen, Haroun and Rashid are greeted by the politico himself, who is shiny-faced with an insincere smile. As he greets them, Haroun realizes that the news of Rashid's failure in Town of G hasn't reached the Valley of K yet. The politico introduces himself as Mr. Buttoo, and he leads them to the edge of the Dull Lake. As they walk, Haroun notices that they're surrounded by guards and that the citizens of the Valley look hostile.

Despite speaking in rhyme himself, Mr. Butt is evidently oblivious to the rhyming signs warning of the dangers of driving quickly. We're also encouraged to remember the earlier aside about the mail service employees being extra excitable due to the difficulty of their job. Mr. Butt is evidence of that, as having this purpose that doesn't include mail is thrilling for him.



Here, the fact that the signs no longer rhyme indicate just how dangerous the roads are, just as Mr. Butt's silence and concentration further indicates that this is a truly dangerous stretch of road.



This is our first introduction to the idea of "khattam-shud," which will go on to create the character Khattam-Shud. The novel is also beginning to pick at and consider story structure by bringing this element to life as an actual being. This is made possible in part by using the Hindustani word, as it's more natural for an English speaker to take khattam-shud as a name than "The End" would be.



This exchange makes it very clear that language and names are living things that change and evolve over time. We as readers can infer that the language Haroun speaks is both responsible for the valley now being known as "K" and is far removed from the language that called the valley Kache-Mer. This is also the first explicit mention that names mean something, which encourages the reader to consider the meaning of names going forward.



Haroun here is considering what qualities and traits make a villain. He notes physical traits, such as the smile, and also the fact that Mr. Buttoo feels the need for guards walking among his own constituents. The reader isn't given any reason to believe that Haroun is wrong in his assessment, but this mental cataloging of people is one place Haroun will later begin to develop more nuance than we see here.



When they reach the edge of the lake, a boat in the shape of a swan is waiting for them. Mr. Buttoo tells Haroun and Rashid that they'll be staying in the finest houseboat on the lake, and Haroun understands that he's being insulting. As they move across the lake, Haroun tells Rashid to not be sad, and Mr. Buttoo angrily jumps on Rashid for disliking the arrangements. Rashid truthfully tells Mr. Buttoo that he's sad because of a matter of the heart, and Mr. Buttoo replies that there are plenty more fish in the sea, angering Haroun. Rashid sighs that one must go a long way to find an Angel Fish. The weather suddenly changes, and the boat is surrounded by a mist so thick that Haroun can't even find his own nose.

Haroun is still trying to care for Rashid and help mitigate the damage done since Soraya left. He takes Mr. Buttoo's reactions to Rashid's sadness as personal attacks to both himself and his father, further cementing his belief that Mr. Buttoo isn't a good candidate. Note that despite Haroun's youth and black-and-white understanding of the world, he's able to pick up on these extremely underhanded insults. This gives a sense of how very observant Haroun is.



CHAPTER 3: THE DULL LAKE

The mist surrounding the boat smells of sadness and gloom, and Rashid demands that whoever is making the stink admit to it. Haroun explains that it's the Mist of Misery, and Mr. Buttoo cries out that Haroun is too much like the citizens of the valley and "foolish for make-believe." He tells Rashid that Rashid may only tell happy and praising stories. With that, a hot wind blows across the lake. Haroun realizes, and says out loud, that they must be in the Moody Land. The Moody Land is one of Rashid's stories, where the weather changes constantly depending on the moods of its inhabitants. Haroun asks Rashid if he's right, and Rashid replies that it was only a story. Haroun understands that Rashid must be very depressed to say such a thing.

Haroun's realization about his father's depression indicates how important stories are in the Khalifa household. Admitting that the stories are just stories, and have no meaning or basis in the real world, is a very serious rejection of what readers can assume Rashid has been telling Haroun his entire life (that stories are important, have a place and a purpose, etc.). The realization that the Moody Land exists in Alfibay itself also brings more explicit fantasy into the story.



Meanwhile, Rashid and Mr. Buttoo are arguing. Rashid insists that people can love sad stories as long as they're beautiful. Mr. Buttoo angrily commands Rashid to tell happy stories only, and their argument brings back both the stinky mist and the hot wind. As the boat begins to rock, fear rises and the rocking gets worse. Haroun, taking matters into his own hands, commands everyone to stop talking, and at the authority in his voice, everyone on the boat obeys. The wind dies down, leaving only the stinky mist, and Haroun asks his father to think of happy times. Moments later, the mist parts. Haroun happily tells Rashid that the Moody Land *wasn't* just a story, and Rashid laughs. As Mr. Buttoo insists it was only inclement weather, Haroun knows that since the real world is evidently filled with magic, magical worlds must also be real.

Haroun is beginning to open up to the fantastical things that are happening to him, and this opening creates in him a sense of confidence that enables him to exert control over individuals as well as the Lake. Further, Mr. Buttoo's insistence that Rashid tell only happy stories gives readers their first taste of the idea of censorship. Mr. Buttoo fears that sad stories aren't going to help him win the election, hence his demand that they not be told. This gets at the fact that censorship rules stem from a fear of losing control over whatever one is trying to control, which will become important later in the novel.



The houseboat they're on is called "Arabian Nights Plus One," and each window is cut in the shape of a fabulous animal. All the furnishings are amazingly intricate, and Mr. Buttoo points out a collection of books called "The Ocean of the Streams of Story." The boatmen show Rashid and Haroun to their rooms. The bed in Rashid's room is in the shape of a peacock, while Haroun's is a turtle. Haroun says it's very pleasant, which angers Mr. Buttoo (he was expecting more praise), but Rashid silences him and says it's time for bed. Mr. Buttoo huffs off the boat, insulting Rashid as he goes.

Haroun finds it hard to sleep, and finally gets out of bed when he hears Rashid lamenting his fate in the next room. When Haroun enters the peacock room, he and Rashid decide to switch beds because both find their assigned bed animals too weird.

Haroun has just dozed off when he wakes to a noise coming from the bathroom. The light is on, and Haroun sees an astonishing figure with a monkey wrench, grumbling about his workload and the difficulty he's having finding the "Story Tap." Haroun watches, noticing the tiny man's clothes—a purple turban and silk pajamas—and his impressive blue beard. As Haroun leans further around the door, a board creaks. The man in the bathroom disappears, the wrench falls to the ground, and Haroun grabs it.

Slowly, the little man reappears in the bathroom and snaps at Haroun to return the Disconnecter. Haroun refuses, and looking at the tool, notices that the tool is very beautiful and looks like it's made of a series of colored watery veins. He demands that the man tell Haroun why he's here. When the man refuses, Haroun threatens to wake Rashid, and the little man finally introduces himself as Iff the Water Genie, from the Ocean of the Streams of Story. Haroun is shocked that Rashid's story is evidently true, and Iff says that Rashid has canceled his connection to the story waters and Iff is here to disconnect the tap. Haroun is aghast, and Iff explains that Rashid canceled his subscription via a Process Too Complicated To Explain, or a P2C2E. Iff instructs Haroun to take the issue up with the Grand Comptroller via letter.

The story of 1001 Arabian Nights is a recurring motif throughout the text. Haroun's inability to concentrate for more than 11 minutes is also a nod to the Arabian Nights. The constant reminder that Haroun's story is rooted in other stories serves to assert that stories are living, breathing, and grow through and out of each other. It situates Haroun's story in the world, rather than insisting that it exists alone.



Rashid has hit the proverbial rock bottom here. He feels his fate is decided, and it's not a pretty one. This provides a jumping-off point both for Haroun to take action and Rashid to begin to improve.



Like the discovery that the Moody Land is real, fantastical things are continuing to happen in Alfibay. Haroun, however, will struggle to piece together how the magic fits into his "real," supposedly non-magical land throughout the rest of the novel. Coming to terms with the magic will also lead Haroun to better understand the power of stories. (At the same time, this moment of dozing off and then waking up to start his adventure also means the beginning of Haroun's dream sequence, when things abruptly get very fantastical.)



In these moments where the fantastical, previously believed-to-be-fictional things are coming true, Mr. Sengupta's original question (what's the use of stories that aren't even true?) requires further consideration, as now the stories obviously are true (we might remember Rashid's seemingly joking aside that he gets his story ideas from a tap installed by a Water Genie, and his reference to "Iffs and Butts"). Even more important than that is that the very real possibility exists now for these things to stop being true for Rashid if his connection to the (seemingly literal) Story Water is disconnected.



Iff continues that the scheme is perfect, as letters never arrive to the Grand Comptroller, also known as the Walrus, in Gup City on the moon Kahani. Haroun retorts that Rashid will still be able to tell stories, but Iff insists that the Story Waters provide that Extra Ingredient. Haroun, still perplexed, asks where the water comes from, and Iff instructs him to tap the Disconnecting Tool at a place on the wall between the taps. When Haroun does, the tool strikes something very solid, albeit invisible. Haroun begins asking questions again about how it all works, but then answers his own question with: “A Process Too Complicated To Explain.”

Haroun asks Iff to take him to Gup City to see the Walrus so he can fix the mistake about Rashid's water supply. When Iff refuses, Haroun says that Iff will have to go back without his Disconnecting Tool. Iff finally agrees to take Haroun, and insists on leaving that instant.

CHAPTER 4: AN IFF AND A BUTT

Iff commands Haroun to pick a bird, to which Haroun points out that the peacock bed is the only bird in the room. Iff, disgusted, says that someone may mention something that isn't present, and that to name something brings it into being. Haroun tries to argue, but Iff asks about all the things that Haroun hasn't seen, such as Africa or kangaroos, and if they're real even if he hasn't seen them.

Iff reaches into his pocket and pulls out a handful of tiny birds and instructs Haroun to choose one. Haroun points to the Hoopoe, which impresses Iff. Iff notes that the Hoopoe is the bird in old stories who leads all other birds through danger to their goal. With that, he throws the Hoopoe out the window. Haroun rushes to the window and sees that the Hoopoe has grown as large as a bed. Iff jumps off the boat onto the Hoopoe's back, and Haroun, still in pajamas and clutching the Disconnecting Tool, follows.

The fact that letters never arrive to the Walrus (whose name is a reference to the Beatles song “I Am The Walrus”) is its own form of censorship, as nobody is ever able to truly voice concerns or issues to the authorities. This absolves the Walrus of many responsibilities he'd otherwise have, as well as gives him an immense degree of power. We see that Haroun is still struggling to wrap his very rational thought processes around these P2C2Es, despite his experiences on the Dull Lake earlier in the day.



This decision indicates, most importantly, that Haroun believes in the power and importance of stories, if only to his father. He believes in them enough to take this major risk to save them and Rashid.



Despite Haroun's willingness to accept the absurdity of his situation, he's still trying to process this new information in a very logical way. He's discovering, though, that logic isn't the same for everyone, hence Iff's disgust. This engagement with the very concept of logic adds a level of absurdity.



Even though Iff is annoyed with Haroun, he's willing to help Haroun figure out and understand Iff's logic by providing birds that are visible. Iff's comment about the historical weight of the Hoopoe will inform how we consider Butt the Hoopoe as a character going forward.



Haroun notes, as the speed of their travel pushes him deeply into the bird's feathers, that the feathers seem somehow hairy, and he thinks of Mr. Butt, the mail coach driver. Haroun yells at Iff and asks if the bird is a machine. The Hoopoe turns its head, looks directly at Haroun, and asks if Haroun has an objection to machines. The Hoopoe's voice is identical to Mr. Butt's. The Hoopoe continues, asking if as a machine he's worthy of some respect, and when Haroun accuses the Hoopoe of reading his thoughts, it replies that it's communicating telepathically as its beak must remain closed in order to remain aerodynamic. Haroun questions how this is possible, and then answers his own question with a P2C2E. Haroun asks the Hoopoe if it has a name, and the Hoopoe suggests Butt.

As they travel through the sky, Haroun spots something in the distance, which Butt says is Kahani, the earth's second moon. Haroun asks how it has gone so long undiscovered, and Butt replies that it's because of speed. Kahani travels so fast, thanks to mechanical means, that nothing can detect it, and its orbit changes by one degree per rotation as to provide Story Water evenly to the planet, as well as avoid detection. Then, Butt turns its attention to landing on Kahani, which appears to be made of only colorful liquid. As they land in the warm water, Iff says that they're in the Ocean of the Streams of Story.

Haroun, noticing that there's no land in sight, accuses Iff of playing a trick on him. Iff explains that they're taking a shortcut to avoid bureaucratic processes, and will use Wishwater to fix Haroun's problem. Butt paddles towards a bright patch of golden water, and Iff scoops up some water in a small bottle. He passes it to Haroun and instructs him to wish very hard for what he wants, drink the Wishwater, and all will be fixed. Haroun takes a gulp, but finds he can't focus. After 11 minutes, he comes out of his jumbled thoughts to a very disgruntled Iff. Butt instructs Iff to stop taking his anger out on Haroun, for it's his own fault that they're in this mess. Haroun thinks that machines are supposed to be rational, but this one is quite temperamental. Butt tells Iff to give Haroun a happy story to drink.

Iff explains to Haroun that the Ocean of the Streams of Story is made up of a thousand and one different-colored currents, which are the Streams of Story, and each stream represents a different tale. The Ocean, then, is the biggest library in the universe, but because of its fluid nature, the stories can change and merge. The Ocean is alive. Iff says that one can carefully dip a cup into the Ocean, fill it with a single Story Stream, and drink it to restore one's spirits. He offers the cup to Haroun, who drinks it.

With the conflation here of Mr. Butt and Butt the Hoopoe, it becomes more evident that Haroun is in a dream, and the characters that populate this dream are influenced by individuals in Haroun's life in Alfibay. The joke of Butt speaking without moving its beak will be a recurring motif, and serves to question the nature of language and conversations that take place both within individuals and between individuals, as Butt takes part in and is privy to both. The fact that Butt is a machine will also provide an initial point for Haroun to begin pointing out nuance and balance.



Haroun is again trying to reconcile what he knows of his world, and the logic and rules that govern it, with what he's being presented with on this strange journey. Also note that the names of both Iff and Butt are transposed into Haroun's dream from what Rashid told him earlier to stop "Iffing and Butting" and enjoy the stories—and the Ocean of the Streams of Story is a literalization of Rashid's claim that he gets his stories from the "Story Sea."



Rushdie inserts some more humor here—despite being in a fantasy land, there are still boring and burdensome bureaucratic processes to contend with. As this comes to light alongside Haroun's realization that Butt is a temperamental machine, we begin to see that Haroun is being presented with a variety of unexpected individuals and situations. This will play into and inform Haroun's eventual realization of the need for balance.



The greater argument of whether libraries are alive or dead rages on in the real world, but with this description Rushdie strongly asserts that libraries, knowledge, and stories are alive, well, and ever changing in this characterization of the Ocean.



Haroun finds himself on a giant chessboard, looking out through the eyes of the story's hero. He is fighting towards a tower, which holds a princess. Haroun soon discovers that he is in a "Princess Rescue Story" that deviates slightly from the Rapunzel story, however—in this story the princess has recently had a haircut, so the prince has to climb up the tower. As Haroun begins his climb, his hands and arms begin to change and grow hairy, and the princess cries that the prince is turning into a spider. The princess hacks and saws at Haroun's limbs with a kitchen knife, and Haroun falls off the tower.

Haroun wakes to find Iff next to him, looking worried. Iff asked if the story went as planned, and if Haroun doesn't like Princess Rescue Stories. Haroun shares what happened, and Iff and Butt look very serious. Iff gravely says that the story took the turn it did because of pollution in the Ocean, and if the pollution has gotten this bad where they are in the Great North, then Gup City must be close to crisis and war. Haroun inquires with whom, and Butt replies that war would be with the Land of Chup, on the Dark Side of Kahani, and particularly the Cultmaster of Bezaban, the leader of the Chupwalas. Iff says that his name is Khattam-Shud, and Haroun's blood runs cold.

CHAPTER 5: ABOUT GUPPEES AND CHUPWALAS

As Haroun, Butt, and Iff journey towards Gup City, Haroun considers that many ideas he formerly considered mere fiction are turning out to be true, and Butt replies that Kahani would be a very strange story moon if fictional elements weren't everywhere.

Haroun asks Iff to tell him about Khattam-Shud, and Iff replies with Rashid's exact words, that Khattam-Shud is the archenemy of stories and language, and the prince of silence. Breaking his serious tone, he then says that this is all gossip at this point because no Guppees have been to the Land of Chup in generations. Chup lies across the Twilight Strip into the Perpetual Night. Haroun asks for clarification on geography, and Butt explains that the Eggheads at P2C2E house brought Kahani's rotation under control so that the Land of Gup is in perpetual daylight, while it remains dark in Chup. The Twilight Strip lies between, with a wall, named Chattergy's Wall, separating the two lands. Butt ends the conversation in favor of paying attention to traffic in the ocean.

The Ocean itself is alive, and on Kahani the stories can be experienced as living things as well. Despite this unconventional way of experiencing the stories, the stories themselves are still catalogued in a rational system similar to a real world library system. This gives the reader another instance in which to consider both the absurdity at play here and the balance that is achieved through that absurdity.



Haroun is already familiar with the idea of khattam-shud, in that it means "the end" and goes at the end of things. Here, that idea is taken one step further as it turns the idea into a person who then becomes the antagonist of the story. Essentially, Haroun and his companions will be fighting against "the end" and fighting for the continuation of stories. The idea of fighting against the end points back to Rashid's lost gift for storytelling, as he's potentially at the end of his storytelling career.



Despite the absurdity of Kahani, it does possess its own logic in that to be a "story moon," it must contain the absurd elements of the stories it holds.



Despite striking fear in Haroun's heart, Khattam-Shud the individual is little more than a story to the residents of Gup. Notice also that in this explanation the controlled rotation of the moon—a form of censorship and an assertion of power—is normalized and accepted. Haroun begins to briefly consider the wisdom of the situation, but this situation will later allow for greater exploration of how balance plays out through the extreme and absurd measures both Chup and Gup must take to make life livable on their respective halves of the moon.



Haroun has many questions about life on Kahani, but finds his attention diverted by the numerous mechanical flying birds all rushing the same direction, with Water Genies on their backs. Iff says that something serious has happened, as everyone is being called back to base, making a jab at Haroun about stealing his Disconnecting Tool. Haroun's attention is again diverted as some sort of vegetation races next to Butt in the water, and he asks what it is. Butt replies that it's a Floating Gardener. Haroun tries to say that it's a Floating Garden, but Butt harrumphs and the Floating Gardener rises from the water and shapes itself into a man, with a lilac flower as the head.

Iff and the Gardener exchange greetings, and Haroun notes that the Gardener isn't very talkative. Iff replies that this Gardener is talkative, for a gardener. Haroun introduces himself, and the Gardener introduces himself as Mali. Mali, with Butt's help, explains to Haroun that the Ocean is like a head of hair, and Gardeners are tasked with untangling, conditioning, and cleaning the Story Streams like one would hair. When Iff asks, Mali says that the pollution in the Ocean is lethal, spreading rapidly, and will take years to clean up, although the source is still unknown.

Hearing more voices, Haroun looks down into the Ocean and sees two triangular Angel Fish, big as sharks with dozens of mouths all over, sucking in Story Streams and spitting them out again. Butt tells Haroun that they're Plentimaw Fishes, and they partner for life. To express this union, they speak in rhyme with their partners. Haroun, noticing that these fish seem unwell, inquires about their health, and the Plentimaw Fish reply that the Ocean is starting to hurt, and that their names are Bagha and Goopy. Iff tells Haroun that these fish may seem talkative, but are actually much quieter than usual due to the pollution they're ingesting.

Iff tells Haroun that Plentimaw Fish swallow stories, and in their bellies, the stories mix and then new stories are spat back out. Goopy and Bagha offer one more couplet, saying that things are worst in the Old Zone. Iff is aghast and explains to Haroun that the Old Zone is in the southernmost region of Kahani, and the ancient stories flow there but are no longer in high demand. Legend says that the source of stories, or the Wellspring, is located there, and Iff wails that they've ignored the Source for too long. Butt interrupts, telling its passengers that Gup City is ahead.

Again, elements from Haroun's life in Alfibay are appearing in his dream (remember Rashid pointing out the floating garden on the Dull Lake). We're also again confronted with the fact that Butt the machine has a definite personality, as he appears offended or at the very least exasperated by Haroun's attempt to rationalize what he's seeing.



The job of the Floating Gardener further supports Rushdie's insistence that stories are living, breathing entities, in need of care and attention to preserve them. Haroun's expectations are being turned upside down as he learns that Mali is considered talkative. Haroun's expectations will be constantly challenged (often in humorous ways), which will lead him to see the value of balance.



Similarly to Mali, the fact that Bagha and Goopy seem talkative to Haroun but quiet to Iff further upsets Haroun's expectations. Meeting these very different characters gives him a wide cross section to consider as he builds an understanding of Gup and its inhabitants (and the very idea of what being "talkative" means). The job of the Plentimaw Fish harkens back to Mr. Buttoo's comment that there are "plenty more fish in the sea," in a clever play of language. Note also how rhyme is again used to develop the plot, and that the emphasis on the Fishes' close and lifelong bond (and one based in language, at that) might reflect Haroun's desire for his parents to once again experience such a connection.



The fact that the fabled Source of Stories exists in the same place as the ancient stories again reinforces the value of all stories, even old and seemingly tired ones. Taken with the job of the Plentimaw Fishes, Rushdie creates a system in which the ancient stories necessarily play into the creation of new ones. However, as we're presented with the conflict that the Guppees have ignored their oldest stories, it also brings this relationship into question.



Gup City is built on an archipelago of 1001 small islands, crossed with waterways. The waterways are filled with worried looking Guppees heading towards the Lagoon, which separates the islands from the mainland. On the mainland stand the three most important buildings of Gup: The Palace of King Chattergy, the Parliament of Gup, and the P2C2E House. Butt drops Iff and Haroun off at the edge of the Lagoon in the Pleasure Garden. Haroun notices a number of very thin Guppees wearing rectangular garments covered in writing, whom Iff explains are the Pages of Gup, or the army, which is organized into Chapters and Volumes and led by a Title. He points out General Kitab, the leader of the "library."

Iff gestures to the balcony of the palace, pointing out General Kitab, a court Speaker, King Chattergy (looking tragic), a worked up young man that Iff says is Prince Bolo, and a bald man with an insignificant moustache. Haroun whispers to Iff that the bald man reminds him of Mr. Buttoo, and then asks who the man is. Other bald men turn to look at Haroun with disdain, and they tell him that they are the Eggheads, and the man on the balcony is the Walrus.

King Chattergy raises his hand to silence the crowd, attempts to speak, and finds he cannot. Prince Bolo instead bursts into speech, saying that the servants of the Cultmaster have seized Princess Batcheat. General Kitab adds that she's most likely being kept prisoner in the Ice Castle of Khattam-Shud in Chup City. The Speaker then says that the Guppees have sent messages to Khattam-Shud concerning both the pollution of the Ocean and Batcheat's abduction, and the demands of the messages have not been met, therefore meaning that Chup and Gup are at war.

The Walrus tells the Guppees that they need to act quickly, as the poison is spreading swiftly through the Ocean, and the crowd shouts "Save the Ocean!" Then Prince Bolo shouts "Save Batcheat!", and the crowd suffers a moment of confusion. Finally they shout "For Batcheat and the Ocean!", which seems to satisfy Bolo.

The 1001 islands again recalls the motif of 1001 Arabian Nights, reminding the reader that this story cannot stand alone—it needs to be considered as part of a whole, or as part of a library, to be fully understood. The form that the Pages of Gup take reinforces the importance of stories (as well as punning on "paiges"), as the entirety of the army makes up, essentially, a full library. Kitab means "book," which creates another layer of meaning to reinforce the relationship.



Haroun has preconceived ideas about what a man as powerful as the Walrus should look like, and those ideas do not come to fruition in this situation. This will happen several times throughout the novel as it explores both its own texture and storytelling conventions, such as what a powerful person (or a villain) should look like. Note also that the Walrus—the rather disappointing bureaucrat—is here conflated with Mr. Buttoo.



King Chattergy, despite his name, is unable to form language in his sadness. Bolo comes from the Hindustani imperative "to speak," which he does with frequency but without much consequence, nuance, or thought. Here we're also presented with the two main conflicts in Haroun's dream-story—the abduction of Batcheat and the poisoning of the Ocean.



The conflict of the relative importance of the two issues will provide humor throughout the novel, and we see that the Guppee crowd is willing to go along with both issues. It also serves to provide more information on Bolo's character, as it's obvious where his loyalties lie.



Iff turns to Haroun and tells him that with the war, the Walrus won't have time for Haroun's request, suggesting he hand over the Disconnecting Tool and allow Iff to take him home. Haroun refuses, and Iff offers him chocolate. Suddenly, a small commotion breaks out on the palace balcony, and General Kitab emerges from inside to announce that patrols from the Twilight Strip had arrested a suspicious stranger. Bolo shouts that he will question the stranger himself, and General Kitab looks somewhat embarrassed by the idea. A group of Pages lead a man in a nightshirt onto the balcony, and Haroun drops his chocolate when he sees that the man is his father, Rashid Khalifa.

Iff's easy handling of Haroun refusing to give back the Disconnector further serves to show how easygoing the Guppees can be. Despite being annoyed at Haroun for stealing, Iff is offering him a treat and doesn't seem particularly concerned, which Haroun will consider later. We again see the kind of person Bolo is (perhaps a parody of the heartbroken Rashid). Bolo's speech, full of bluster and shouting, is embarrassing to his fellow Guppee officials, and illustrates that speech isn't always useful or beautiful. In this crucial moment, Rashid himself joins in Haroun's dream, seemingly still with his own agency and character.



CHAPTER 6: THE SPY'S STORY

The presence of the captured "spy" creates a buzz of horror and outrage in the Garden, particularly when Rashid says that he is a storyteller and a subscriber to the Story Water service. Haroun begins to push his way through the crowd and as he goes, he hears Guppees muttering both about Rashid and Batcheat's poor singing. Iff follows, imploring Haroun to be patient, and Haroun angrily asks Iff what Guppees do to spies, listing several gruesome torture tactics. Iff and the Guppees in earshot are shocked, and Iff says that they've never caught a spy, and would maybe scold him or make him write, "I must not spy" 1001 times. Reaching the palace balcony, Haroun shouts up to Rashid and asks what he's doing here. He continues shouting that Rashid isn't a spy, he's just lost "the Gift of the Gab," which embarrasses Rashid.

Batcheat's poor singing (as well as her extremely ugly facial features) will be a running gag throughout the novel, and her singing in particular serves to make clear that simply being able to speak doesn't inherently mean that one's speech is good, or pleasant to listen to. (The singing princess is also perhaps a twist on Soraya, Haroun's mother, corresponding to Rashid's similarly verbose but useless Bolo.) Batcheat will later sing love songs with appropriate content but that sound awful, while Bolo has admirable intentions but is incapable of speaking eloquently. Notice again the reference to 1001 Arabian Nights.



A young page named Blabbermouth is sent to escort Haroun to the royal quarters of the palace. Blabbermouth wears a tunic with the story "Bolo and the Golden Fleece" written on it. Haroun becomes increasingly puzzled as he sees other familiar stories with the titles changed to include Bolo, but when he asks Blabbermouth about it, he refuses to answer.

The stories on the Pages' tunics are essentially censored to read a certain way. This instance of censorship appears more or less benign (and humorous), but the importance of preserving stories will come up later, and it's interesting to note these changes and consider if the stories are truly being preserved.



In the Throne Room, Rashid, sipping soup, is telling his story to Prince Bolo, General Kitab, the Speaker, and the Walrus. He tells them that he arrived in Gup thanks to eating certain food that not only induces sleep, but allows the sleeper to travel wherever they wish, and he wished to wake up in Gup. However, he slightly miscalculated and ended up in the Twilight Strip and froze half to death. When Bolo inquires as to what the food is, Rashid offers a mysterious answer. Haroun worries that they'll punish Rashid, but Bolo just laughs.

Haroun is operating on an entirely different understanding of how power works as he worries Rashid will be punished. This instance will serve to further flesh out the defining characteristics of the Guppees: namely that they're open, mild-mannered, and not easily offended by something as simple as a mysterious answer.



Haroun muses that the Guppees are quite a gentle and credulous people, as well as peaceful, if the worst they'd do to a spy is sentence him to 1001 lines. He thinks then that the Guppees will be a lost cause in a war, stopping short of thinking that they'd be "khattam-shud."

Rashid resumes his story, telling his audience that he came across an encampment of the Chupwala Army, cloaked in silence. He continues that Chup has fallen under the power of the "Mystery of Bezaban." In the old days, Khattam-Shud only hated stories and nonsense, but now he opposes speech generally, and upholds the Silence Laws. Wild devotees to Bezaban sew their lips together with twine and die of hunger and thirst. Haroun finally inquires as to what Bezaban is, and Rashid answers that it's a gigantic idol carved out of black ice with no tongue, but a frightful grin.

Moving towards the light, Rashid encountered Chattergy's Wall, which is full of holes, and there he witnessed Batcheat's capture. Bolo leaps to his feet and speaks foolishly; the other dignitaries look embarrassed. Rashid continues, saying that he saw a boat approach the wall carrying a woman, singing the worst song he'd ever heard, with an awful nose and teeth. The Walrus asks what Batcheat was doing in the Twilight Strip, and Iff offers that many young people go to the Twilight Strip to see the stars.

Rashid assures Bolo that Batcheat wasn't there to meet another man, as she was just with her handmaidens. They tried to touch the wall, and suddenly a group of Chupwalas seized the ladies and carried them off. Bolo angrily asks Rashid why he did nothing, and the other dignitaries look pained. Iff, seeing Haroun's anger, whispers that they don't let princes do anything important and not to worry about it. Rashid points out that had he tried to save Batcheat, he would've been killed, whereas now he can bring Bolo news of Batcheat and her whereabouts. Bolo is forced to apologize. Rashid adds one final thing-- the Great Feast of Bezaban is coming, and the Chupwalas mean to offer Batcheat as a sacrifice and stitch her lips closed. It is decided that the Guppees must certainly go to war, and Haroun insists Rashid take him as well.

The idea and the necessity of khattam-shud is intrinsic to Haroun's understanding of the world. He is, however, beginning to parse out the difference between Alfibay and Gup with his realization here.



Khattam-Shud presumably figured out that as long as his subjects were allowed to speak, he was unable to truly enforce a ban only on stories. Moving from there to the Silence Laws represents a major form of censorship, as he's dictating not just what his subjects can or cannot say, but robbing them of their use of speech in general. We'll see later that this extreme censorship has dire consequences.



Bolo thus far has said nothing useful, further cementing him as a character who provides comic relief and a kind of parody of lovesickness and verbosity, but is relatively useless within the logic of the story. The Guppees will later discuss their love of sharing secrets, so the fact that young people secretly go to the Twilight Strip and successfully keep that quiet adds questions to how open the Guppees truly are.



Notice the censorship at play here: Bolo is permitted to say whatever he likes by virtue of being a prince, but Iff indicates that he doesn't actually "do anything important"; in other words, Bolo's words aren't censored, but he himself is. The rest of the dignitaries seem perfectly willing to listen to Rashid and take his story as a highly useful piece of intelligence, while Bolo is insulting and rude. However, Rashid's final item has a galvanizing effect on his listeners, as it adds a sense of urgency to rescuing Batcheat and unites them in this cause. Haroun is gaining confidence too as he insists on participating.



Haroun, despite his protests, is sent to bed, and Blabbermouth is told to lead Haroun to his room. He leads Haroun through winding passageways, spouting anti-Batcheat tirades all the while, explaining that Batcheat changed the Pages' uniforms to be all about Bolo rather than the actual protagonists of the stories. Blabbermouth, reaching a doorway, tells Haroun it's his bedroom, but the doors burst open to reveal King Chattergy's bedroom instead. Haroun and Blabbermouth are sent on their way, and Haroun asks if they're lost. Blabbermouth admits that it's a complicated palace, and Haroun, frustrated, swings at his head and knocks his cap off. Shiny black hair cascades down, and Haroun realizes Blabbermouth is a girl.

Haroun asks Blabbermouth if she's a girl, and Blabbermouth, incensed, drags Haroun behind a curtain to tell him how hard life as a Page is for a girl. The two finally resolve their argument and Blabbermouth offers to show Haroun the view from the palace roof. When they arrive at the roof, Haroun takes in the view and Blabbermouth pulls three balls from her pocket and begins to **juggle**. She's a skilled juggler, and keeps adding balls until she's reached 11. Haroun thinks that her juggling reminds her of Rashid's storytelling, and says as much. He says that he always thought storytelling was like juggling because you have different tales in the air and if you're good, you don't drop them. Blabbermouth puts her balls away, shrugs, and says that she just wanted Haroun to know who he was dealing with.

Many hours later, Haroun wakes in his darkened room with Blabbermouth sitting on his chest, squeezing his throat. She whispers that if he tells anyone about her, she won't stop squeezing next time. Haroun promises, and Blabbermouth smiles and says that the army is gathering in the Pleasure Garden.

CHAPTER 7: INTO THE TWILIGHT STRIP

As Haroun wakes, he thinks that he's in another Princess Rescue Story, and hopefully this one won't go wrong. Blabbermouth mentions that she took the Disconnecting Tool from Haroun for Iff. Haroun is deflated, but Blabbermouth notes that since Rashid is in Gup City himself, he can sort out his own problem. Haroun, sadly, says that he wanted to do it for him.

Batcheat evidently has the power to exert her own form of censorship in the control she's granted over the Pages' uniforms. Despite Blabbermouth's disdain, we see here that the thought behind this action is one of love and not a malicious bid for control, as Khattam-Shud's acts of censorship are. The stories Blabbermouth mentions are primarily stories from 1001 Arabian Nights, returning again to that motif and indicating that those stories exist in this world too.



Blabbermouth is shown to be many things in these passages, and what we're presented of her character sets us up to understand her actions later. She has evidently worked very hard to get where she is, and she's proud of both being a page and her juggling. Haroun again remarks that juggling and storytelling share certain similarities, which Blabbermouth brushes off but doesn't deny. She's also not entirely the angry person we saw when she began yelling at Haroun, as she's willing to share with him the gorgeous view from the palace roof.



Blabbermouth has a flair for the dramatic in addition to her penchant for verbally abusing her princess. Her headstrong nature will continue to be developed later.



Poor Haroun's only real goal in coming to Kahani was to fix the issue with Rashid's water supply and thus help his father, and Blabbermouth has robbed him of the chance to do so. Haroun must now decide if he's going to find another way to accomplish his goal or give up.



Hearing a commotion outside, Haroun runs to the window to see hundreds of Pages rushing around the garden and arguing about what order they need to line up in. Haroun mentions that the Pages are numbered and it should be easy, but Blabbermouth replies that things aren't so simple here. Haroun remarks that the army doesn't seem very disciplined, but Blabbermouth snaps that he shouldn't judge a book by its cover and races off to join the Pages. Haroun runs after her as they wind back through the palace hallways. When Haroun says that this place isn't the real world, Blabbermouth angrily shoots back that people from sad cities think someplace has to be miserable and dull before they'll believe in it.

When Blabbermouth and Haroun reach the garden, the Guppee Library had just finished "Pagination and Collation," and Blabbermouth flees to her place with the Royal Pages. Haroun notices Rashid, also still wearing his nightshirt, standing next to Iff, Disconnecting Tool in hand. As Haroun reaches them, Iff makes a jab at Haroun's theft of the Tool, confusing Rashid.

Rashid and Haroun board Butt the Hoopoe with Iff, and Haroun introduces his father to Mali, Goopy, and Bagha. As the entire Guppee army moves off into the Ocean, Rashid laments his and Haroun's choice of clothing, and Iff offers them "Laminations." Haroun and Rashid pull the thin film over their clothes, and it sticks to them tightly. Iff assures them they won't be cold.

As they travel, Haroun thinks about how quickly life changes, thinking that last week he'd never seen snow, but now he's heading into an ice wilderness with only Laminations to protect him from the cold, and thinks he's gone from the frying pan into the fire. Butt disagrees and says that it's a case of "out of the fridge into the freezer," and Rashid cries out in amazement that Butt spoke without moving its beak.

Haroun becomes aware that all around him, Guppees are engaged in heated debates over the pros and cons of their battle strategy. Goopy and Bagha are fully on the side of saving the Ocean before Batcheat, and Haroun, shocked, says that it sounds like mutinous talk. Curious, Iff, the Plentimaw Fish, and Mali ask what a Mutinous is. Haroun tries to explain that it's an Adjective, and Iff calls it all nonsense before turning back to the argument with the other Guppees. Haroun notices that General Kitab is flitting through the army and taking part in arguments, taking opposite sides as it suits him.

We again are reminded of Butt's earlier statement that storybook things must be true on Kahani for Kahani itself to make sense, and this seeming disorder as well as the actual issue of having page numbers but not having a clear directive both fall in line with his statement. Haroun will continue to struggle to understand how the Guppee army works, and this won't be the first time that he remarks on their lack of discipline, but this will lead him to a greater understanding of balance and difference.



It's evident that nobody shared with Rashid that Haroun is here because he blackmailed Iff into bringing him. We see, though, that Rashid and Iff seem to be friendly with each other, and Iff doesn't appear to hold Haroun's theft against Rashid.



Again, the physical nature of books is brought into play with the Laminations. The Laminations that Rashid and Haroun wear work the same way as laminating a page would, protecting them from wear and tear, and with the added bonus of warmth.



We might consider Butt's statement here deadpan comedy, but for Butt it's the truth, as the Land of Chup is a land of ice. Butt speaking without moving its beak once again encourages the reader to consider how language can happen and how it's possible to engage with it.



We're reminded again that Haroun comes from a place where saying something like Goopy and Bagha did would come with potentially dire consequences. In Gup, though, Haroun sees what he realizes is a complete lack of censorship, to the point where even General Kitab, the highest-ranking army official, can say what he likes and listens to others say what they like.



Haroun thinks that if soldiers behaved this way on Earth, they'd be reprimanded quickly. Butt asks what the point of freedom of speech is if people aren't allowed to use it, and asks whether the power of speech is the greatest power of all. Haroun remarks that Guppees couldn't keep a secret to save their lives, and Iff offers that they could tell secrets, and that he knows many that are quite juicy. Butt concurs.

As the army and the debates continue, Haroun notices that Prince Bolo is the only one not taking part in a debate. Mali says that it's because Bolo's mind is made of Love, and while it's wonderful and dashing, it can also be foolish.

The light begins to dim, and soon the army finds itself in the Twilight Strip. Haroun starts to feel fatalistic and fears that their mission is suicidal and they'll never win. Butt kindly tells Haroun that he's suffering from a Heart-Shadow, which happens to people the first time they enter the Twilight Strip. He says that he himself doesn't suffer because machines don't have hearts, but assures Haroun that the Shadow will pass.

The Chup coastline comes into view, and Goopy and Bagha are beginning to sputter more. The water is growing cooler, and the vibrant colors of the Story Streams are becoming muted due to the poison. As the army sets foot on land, they hear no sounds. Rashid notes that the Chupwala army gains an advantage the farther into the darkness they lure the Guppees. The Guppees begin to raise tents, and General Kitab and Prince Bolo send Blabbermouth to fetch Rashid so he can show them where the Chupwala tents are.

Rashid leads Prince Bolo, General Kitab, Haroun, and Blabbermouth through thorn bushes, and finally points to a clearing. In the clearing is a man who looks like a shadow, turning and slashing with his sword as though battling an invisible opponent. Haroun realizes that the man is fighting his own shadow, who is fighting back with just as much skill. Haroun points out that the shadow's movements don't match the man's, and the group watches for a minute as the man and the shadow battle each other, attached only at the feet.

The warrior is striking: his face is painted green with bright red lips and white stripes across his cheeks. As Haroun watches the warrior and his shadow battle, he thinks that it's a dance of beauty and grace, with the music only in the dancers' heads. Then, he notices the warrior's eyes—rather than whites, they have blacks, with gray irises and white pupils.

Butt here gets directly at the questions raised regarding Rushdie's controversy after The Satanic Verses. Butt questions, essentially, whether censored "free" speech is truly free speech. Bringing up the juicy secrets adds some humor and lightness to a particularly serious passage of the novel.



Here, Bolo's foolishness is considered in a more favorable light. He's so driven by his love for Batcheat that he can't even bring himself to take part in the Guppee love of argument.



Butt again is shown to not just be a cold machine, but to have thoughts and feelings all his own. He's able to point out the benefits of being a machine, but is also capable of providing true comfort and a pep talk to Haroun in this dark moment.



Goopy and Bagha serve as a physical representation of what happens when individuals are deprived of language and stories—they sputter and struggle to survive, as language and communication are intrinsically connected to being alive (and to their bond with each other, which is cemented by their rhyming speech).



Here we see the nod to Peter Pan with the characterization of the shadow as essentially its own person. Borrowing this element has the same effect as the motif of 1001 Arabian Nights does, as it situates this story within a greater literary tradition. We are also reminded of how observant Haroun is, as he's the one to point out that the shadow has its own movement.



Haroun is beginning to see that one doesn't need to make noise or be capable of speech to be graceful, beautiful, or valuable. The sight of the Warrior's eyes, however, is scary for Haroun, but their opposite coloring only serves to further represent the opposites at play in the story.



Haroun considers the adventure in which he finds himself, thinking of all the opposites at play in the battle between Chup and Gup—silence versus chatter, love versus death, bright versus dark. However, he reasons that it's not so simple, because the Shadow Warrior has made him realize that silence can be beautiful, while speech can be ugly. Haroun thinks that if Guppees and Chupwalas didn't hate each other, they'd likely find each other quite interesting. Suddenly, the Shadow Warrior notices his audience and sends his shadow towards them, following it to the Guppee hiding place. The Warrior's hands are moving quickly, but then he drops his hands and begins to speak.

Haroun is using Prince Bolo in his consideration of ugly speech, as seeing the Shadow Warrior's beautiful but silent dance throws Bolo's foolish and rude patterns of speech into even greater relief, and makes him look even more foolish in comparison. This is also a moment of clarity for Haroun, as he's beginning to realize that things aren't just black or white; it's better, if not necessary, to have a variety of traits at play in a situation. However, Haroun is able to make this realization thanks to his outsider status.



CHAPTER 8: SHADOW WARRIORS

Speaking is difficult for the Shadow Warrior, and the only sounds he can manage to make are "Gogogol" and "Kafkafka," which Prince Bolo loudly insults. Blabbermouth hisses to Haroun that Bolo is pretending to be rude because he's scared, and Haroun keeps his opinions on the matter to himself because he's beginning to develop feelings for Blabbermouth.

The Shadow Warrior's nonsense sounds are references to the writers Nikolai Gogol and Franz Kafka. Again, these references won't be picked up by every reader, and individuals' degree of familiarity with Gogol or Kafka will personalize one's experience of this moment.



Rashid attempts to explain the Warrior's mangled speech to Bolo, who is still unimpressed. The Shadow Warrior makes more hand gestures at Rashid, and croaks out "Murder, Spock Obi New Year." Bolo takes offense to hearing "murder," and General Kitab shushes him. The Shadow Warrior repeats his nonsense phrase one more time, and Rashid has a moment of clarity, saying that the Warrior has been speaking to them fluently, which Bolo ridicules. Rashid, annoyed, explains that the Warrior has been speaking Abhinaya, the Language of Gesture, and that his name is Mudra. Rashid adds that he knows Abhinaya. Mudra and his shadow nod furiously and begin gesturing quickly.

Bolo is firmly of the belief that one must be able to speak fluently in a language that he understands in order to be taken seriously, which is an absurd position to take given Bolo's own foolish speech patterns. We're again asked to consider naming, as "mudra" and "Abhinaya" are both words connected to Indian classical dance (respectively, a gesture and an aesthetic concept) and the "Language of Gesture" clearly references the various sign languages of the world. This creates another way to form meaning and understanding, even without speech itself.



After a few minutes of "listening," Rashid tells General Kitab and Prince Bolo that Mudra is a friend to them, as well as the Champion Warrior of Chup, second in command only to Khattam-Shud. Bolo suggests they capture him, which General Kitab harrumphs at. Rashid explains that Mudra has broken relations with Khattam-Shud, having grown disgusted at the cruelty of the Cult of Bezaban.

Bolo again demonstrates that although he's capable of conventional speech, that doesn't mean he has anything useful to add to the conversation. Note too that Bolo is quick to jump to conclusions. He decides immediately here that Mudra isn't to be trusted, and he previously even wondered if Batcheat was unfaithful.



Rashid interprets Mudra's Abhinaya, and Haroun notices that the language involves foot placement, eye movements, and face twitching. Mudra says that many Chupwalas are terrified of Khattam-Shud and don't worship Bezaban, and if Khattam-Shud were defeated, the Chupwalas would follow Mudra. The Shadow then takes up the tale, saying that in Chup, Shadows are the equals of the people they're joined to, since in the dark a shadow doesn't have to be a single shape, and can form their own identities independent of their person, and further, that a Shadow's personality is often stronger than that of the Person. This can lead to arguments between the Self and the Shadow, so that Peace in Chup means peace with the shadows.

Mudra picks up the narrative and says that Khattam-Shud has made trouble with shadows, as Khattam-Shud's black magic has turned him into a Shadow himself, and his Shadow into more of a Person. This culminated in the Cultmaster separating himself from his Shadow, meaning he can be in two places at once. Blabbermouth is aghast that they'll have to beat Khattam-Shud twice. Mudra's Shadow adds that Khattam-Shud's separation from his shadow has created resentment between Chupwalas and their Shadows, and the two cannot trust each other anymore.

Prince Bolo can no longer hold his tongue and suggests that Mudra is a traitor and setting a trap. General Kitab, usually mild-mannered, tells Bolo to be quiet or they'll send him back to Gup City. Bolo, angry, quiets, but Mudra's Shadow grows enormous and turns itself into all manner of terrifying creatures, while Mudra pretends to be bored. Haroun muses on the genius of this, as nobody can truly tell what Mudra and his Shadow are thinking thanks to their wholly opposite acts.

General Kitab asks Mudra if he will help them overthrow Khattam-Shud, and Mudra agrees, but says they must make a decision. Blabbermouth whispers to Haroun that the decision will be whether to save Batcheat or the Ocean, and she expresses admiration for Mudra, which makes Haroun jealous. Mudra continues, saying that there are now two Khattam-Shuds, one in the Citadel of Chup with Princess Batcheat, and the other in the Old Zone, poisoning the Ocean, and they must choose which one to pursue.

Remember that Abhinaya is the name of a concept used in Indian classical dance. This knowledge helps situate the fact that the Abhinaya in the novel uses the entire body rather than just the hands, as it stems from a dance form that uses the entire body. The characterization of Shadows here alludes to ideas of balance, as Chupwalas must be at peace with their shadows in order to be at peace with themselves, and by extension this peace must be reached in order to maintain peace throughout the country.



Khattam-Shud has essentially thwarted what the Chupwalas knew of balance in his creation of a second self, with both of these selves neither truly Self nor Shadow. We also see that it's not just silence that is tearing the Chupwala people apart; it's this distrust of their Shadows and of themselves by extension. This is proving to be an effective way for Khattam-Shud to maintain control, as presumably nobody feels safe communicating with anyone, least of all themselves.



Mudra represents the true attainment of balance that Khattam-Shud has worked so hard to upset in both himself and the other Chupwalas. Because Mudra's Shadow and his Self put on opposite acts but at the same time support each other, he's able to achieve balance within himself and protect himself more effectively against outsiders.



The reader is meant to consider which course of action is truly the best one. The havoc that the poisoning of the Ocean is causing is certainly cause for alarm, and it's also loosely alluded to that saving Batcheat may be futile if the poisoning of the Ocean is allowed to be completed.



Prince Bolo bursts out that they must save Batcheat before the Ocean, insulting Shadows in his tirade. General Kitab agrees, but decides that someone must go to investigate the Old Zone. Haroun volunteers to go, sparking disbelief. General Kitab asks why Haroun would volunteer, and Haroun feels like a fool, but says that he's heard about the Sea of Stories forever but only just started believing in it now that he's in Kahani. He says that if they do nothing, the Ocean will die, and he doesn't like the idea that stories will just die. Rashid says, "There's more to you, young Haroun Khalifa, than meets the blinking eye." Bolo suggests that Haroun is fueled by love for the Ocean and he should go. General Kitab instructs Haroun to choose his companions.

Haroun, Iff, Goopy, Bagha, Mali, and Butt make their way through the Twilight Strip to the Southern Polar Ocean. They see that the waters are even more colorless here, and the temperature is even colder. Goopy and Bagha sputter in the poisoned water, but Mali walks along the surface with no problem. Mali explains that Gardeners are tough and some poison won't hurt him, breaking into a rough song. Iff suggests that they head for the South Pole, where the fabled Wellspring, the Source of Stories, would be, as that's where Khattam-Shud will likely be.

Soon after, Goopy and Bagha are unable to keep swimming in the thick, poisoned water, and Haroun asks them to keep watch. Iff, Haroun, Butt, and Mali continue south, and a forest appears in the Ocean. Mali says that it's not truly a forest, but neglected and overgrown water. Mali sets about clearing a path through the vegetation, returning to the group after a minute to report on his progress.

When a reasonable channel had been cleared, Haroun, Iff, and Butt enter. Haroun calls for Mali but gets no answer. Suddenly, they hear a hiss and see a huge net fall over them. Butt says that it's a Web of Night, struggle is futile, and that their "goose is cooked." Haroun sees eyes like Mudra's peering at them through the net and hears chuckles. He angrily thinks that he's a poor hero, and wonders where Mali is.

For all Bolo's foolishness, his dedication to Princess Batcheat is admirable. This instance draws on the confidence Haroun found within himself in the boat on the Dull Lake. Haroun is becoming in actuality, rather than just in thought, a champion for stories despite his earlier questioning of their value and worth. Rashid recognizes this development in his son and seems proud of Haroun, which will positively affect their relationship. In this situation we're also asked to compare Bolo and Haroun, and consider their similarities and differences.



Rushdie here is drawing partially on well-used stereotypes in the form of the weathered and dedicated gardener character. This again brings into play individual readers' individual, outside knowledge of these stereotypes. Notice as well that the Wellspring at this point is only a story itself—it hasn't yet been seen or proven real by Haroun or any of his companions.



The forest here draws on the imagery of the floating garden on the Dull Lake, in line with the imagery of the rest of Haroun's dream. It also represents the neglect that the ancient stories that flow in the area are suffering, as we see in a real life, concrete example of the extent of the neglect.



The neglect of the ancient stories provides the Chupwalas a perfect hiding place from which to capture Haroun and his friends. This loosely alludes to the idea that we can't ignore history or our old stories without dire consequences, as Haroun has demonstrated.



CHAPTER 9: THE DARK SHIP

Iff, Butt, and Haroun are pulled slowly forward, but Haroun cannot think of what they're being taken to. Iff and Butt, cheerless, remark on their dismal state. Butt wails about the hopelessness of their situation and of what Khattam-Shud will do to them, and Haroun tries to be light-hearted. He reprimands Butt, saying that for a machine, he lets an awful lot frighten him. Iff instructs Haroun to look at the Ocean, which is now very dark, and as cold as death. Iff weeps that this is their own fault for not properly guarding the Ocean, and that they lost touch with their beginnings and the Wellspring, and now it's spoiled. Haroun wonders where Mali is, thinking the sight of the Ocean here would horrify him.

The dark waters splash as Butt is brought to a halt, and one of Iff's slippers falls into the water and is quickly eaten by the acid, horrifying Haroun. Haroun remarks that Butt must be tough to not be eaten himself, and Butt moodily brushes off the compliment. Haroun thinks again of Mali, hoping the acid hasn't destroyed him.

The Chupwalas pull the Web of Night away, and Haroun sees that they've reached a clearing in the weeds. In front of them is what looks like a wall of night. 13 Chupwalas surround Iff, Butt, and Haroun, and all of these are scrawny and "weaselly-looking," with black cloaks bearing Khattam-Shud's insignia of the Zipped Lips. Haroun thinks that they look like a gang of office clerks dressed up, albeit dangerous ones. They gather around Butt on their dark sea horses, and Butt shares that the horses are machines, although dark horses are unreliable and untrustworthy. Haroun isn't listening, as he's just realized that what he thought was a Wall of Night was actually a massive ship. But when Haroun tries to tell Iff this, all that comes out is "Ark, ark, ark."

The Chupwalas lead Butt to a gangway so Haroun and Iff can board the ship. Two Chupwalas remove Butt's brain box amidst Butt's cries, and with its removal, Butt falls silent. As Haroun and Iff climb, Iff stumbles and presses something into Haroun's hand. He explains quietly that it's a Bite-a-Lite that will provide two minutes of light when bitten.

Haroun sees darkness pouring out of the ship's portholes like light would pour out of normal portholes, and realizes that the Chupwalas have invented artificial darkness. Upon reaching the deck, Haroun understands how huge the ship is. On the deck are tanks and cauldrons, which Haroun guesses are filled with poisons. The hugest thing on deck is a towering crane with many chains descending into the Ocean, but Haroun cannot think of what they must be attached to.

Emotion appears to finally be affecting Butt, but in this situation, Haroun encourages it to be more like a machine and less human. The emotional highs and lows that Butt experiences help turn it into a balanced individual who is capable of rationality but also of emotion, though at times like this the emotion is considered to be a detriment. Iff's lament further underscores the importance of maintaining old stories to keep them alive, again indicating that this wouldn't have happened had the Guppees done that.



The poison is intense here, which both creates a sense of awe at those who are unaffected by it (Butt, potentially Mali) and a sense of dread for those who may be eaten by it. Butt is still suffering a great deal of emotion.



Butt's deadpan descriptions of these terrible individuals and things provides some comic relief to their capture. Butt's description of the Chupwalas' dark horses is a nod back to Mr. Butt's decision to use a figure of speech as a truthful, face-value statement, which plays into the novel's exploration of wordplay as well as further linking Butt and Mr. Butt. Haroun will struggle with reconciling his expectations for what villains look like with what he's confronted with here and through the following chapters. We also see another link established between Haroun and Rashid with the "ark"s.



Removing Butt's brain box leaves no room to question whether or not it's truly a machine. However, hope isn't all lost. The reader is able to follow that despite the hopelessness of the situation, Iff and Haroun have a secret weapon on their side.



Haroun is confronted with the fact that the Chupwalas on the ship are truly the exact opposite of the Guppees, and the manufactured darkness underscores that. Finally, Haroun gets to see something that to him looks evil and has the markers of evil—cauldrons, darkness, poison, huge and mysterious chains.



Haroun is struck by what he terms a “shadowy” quality that everything on the ship possesses. He tries to talk himself out of the idea, thinking it's too fanciful, but he notices that the edges of objects are fuzzy, like shadows. He's also struck by how ordinary the Chupwalas look, and how ordinary and mundane their work of poisoning the Ocean seems.

Iff and Haroun are pushed towards a large hatchway, and out of the doors comes Khattam-Shud. He looks like the other Chupwalas—skinny, sniveling, and clerical, but at his presence the other Chupwalas bow and work even harder. Haroun, disappointed, thinks that Khattam-Shud is quite the anti-climax. To add to the surprise, Khattam-Shud doesn't hiss like the Chupwalas on board, but speaks in a dull, unmemorable voice without inflection. Looking at Iff and Haroun, he remarks that spies are a tiresome melodrama. Iff, brave for a moment, says loudly that it's so typical for Khattam-Shud to do exactly what he wants his followers *not* to do, as he speaks while they sew their lips shut. Khattam-Shud pretends to ignore this.

Haroun thinks that Khattam-Shud looks a little fuzzy or shadowy. He thinks this is likely the Cultmaster's Shadow, although this Shadow is three dimensional and very lifelike. One of Khattam-Shud's minions hands Khattam-Shud Butt's brain box, and the Cultmaster quietly murmurs that he'll now be able to unravel the Processes Too Complicated To Explain.

Suddenly, Haroun thinks that Khattam-Shud reminds him of someone. Khattam-Shud comes close to Haroun and begins a dull tirade on stories and the seriousness of spying, and finishes with “what's the use of stories that aren't even true?” Haroun shouts that Khattam-Shud is actually Mr. Sengupta, who stole Soraya, and demands to know where he's hiding her. Iff calms Haroun and tells him that this is definitely Khattam-Shud, not Mr. Sengupta.

Khattam-Shud seems not to notice Haroun's outburst, but says that stories have warped Haroun's brain. He says that stories have made Haroun think that someone like Khattam-Shud should “look like this,” and the Cultmaster grows to be 101 feet tall, with 101 heads and arms, all with swords and fire, before shrinking back to his original form. He then says that since Iff and Haroun are spies, they should see what they came to see. He turns towards the doors, and commands that his minions bring Haroun and Iff down into the ship.

The ordinariness of the evil that's taking place stands in stark contrast to what the evil actually is. As Haroun struggles to understand what his instincts are telling him about the ship, he's learning to trust himself and his instincts.



Khattam-Shud looks, sounds, and acts as boring as the act of poisoning the ocean does (and this then connects him to the boring Mr. Sengupta, the “villain” of the other story). Both Khattam-Shud and Haroun consider storytelling conventions in their remarks about each other's role in the story—if Khattam-Shud were an exciting and memorable villain, then this would make for a good story, and he stands in opposition to all stories. The fact that Khattam-Shud speaks also introduces a key part of censorship, which is that in order for Khattam-Shud to effectively maintain his power, he has to (hypocritically) reserve the power of speech for himself.



We can infer here that the Eggheads have kept their P2C2E's secret to keep them from the likes of Khattam-Shud. While we don't know exactly what Khattam-Shud could learn from the brain box, it's already been established that knowledge is power, and the brain box will provide him with more knowledge.



Rushdie makes it very clear that Khattam-Shud in Haroun's dream is modeled off of Mr. Sengupta in Haroun's real life. Khattam-Shud seeks to take Mr. Sengupta's ideas to the extreme, and not just deprive Haroun and Rashid of stories and Soraya, but deprive everyone of language itself.



Khattam-Shud, like Mr. Sengupta and Mr. Buttoo, sees stories as dangerous and the enemy of logic and normalcy. He illustrates this by becoming the villain he knows Haroun expects, which is another way in which the novel questions what a good or real villain looks like. The 101 heads and arms is again a nod to 1001 Arabian Nights.



CHAPTER 10: HAROUN'S WISH

Standing at the top of the stairs, suddenly the darkness created by the darkbulbs switches off and turns to twilight, and Iff and Haroun can see into the ship. They follow Khattam-Shud into the ship's belly, and Haroun thinks that the Chupwalas look like rock stars as they don "rather fashionable wrap-around dark glasses" to help them see. Iff and Haroun look around at all the whirring and clanking machinery surrounding them.

Khattam-Shud begins to explain that each story in the Ocean requires its own type of poison to properly ruin it, and suggests how one can ruin different types of stories. Iff mutters that to ruin an Ocean of Stories, you add a Khattam-Shud. The Cultmaster continues that each story has an anti-story that cancels the original story out, which he mixes on the ship and pours into the ocean. Haroun, stunned, asks why Khattam-Shud hates stories so much, and says that stories are fun. Khattam Shud replies that the world isn't for fun, it's for controlling. He continues that in each story there is a world he cannot control, which is why he must kill them.

After 11 minutes, Haroun stops listening but continues following Khattam-Shud and Iff. He starts paying attention again when he hears Khattam-Shud mention "the Plug." Khattam-Shud explains to a horrified Iff that the crane on deck is suspending a massive Plug that is being constructed by divers to fit perfectly into the Wellspring, so that no more stories can flow to make Khattam-Shud's work more difficult, and then the Ocean will freeze over.

Haroun asks how the divers can survive in the water without being hurt, and Khattam-Shud shows him a cabinet of protective suits, and then points out their Generator, which is the ship's sole power supply. Suddenly, through a porthole, vegetal tendrils enter the ship, and Haroun recognizes Mali (Haroun will later learn that Mali escaped capture by pretending to be lifeless roots). Mali leaps at the Generator as Khattam-Shud yells for his minions to switch on the darkness, but Mali pokes roots and vines into the machine, cutting off the ship's power supply. Chupwalas try to attack him, but Mali only sings.

The "rather fashionable" dark glasses add a sense of absurdity to the situation, which is already a confusing combination of the appearance of normalcy and true evil. Remember too that twilight represents a balance point between light and dark, where neither the Chupwalas nor the Guppees can see perfectly.



Iff here simplifies Khattam-Shud's explanation, as all that's needed to really end a story is to say it's over. However, Khattam-Shud is working to not just end stories by simply saying they're over, but to make them unappealing to audiences, which will then insure that they won't be told, Silence Laws or not. Think about the ancient stories around the Wellspring; they exist as an example of what happens when stories are deemed boring and not useful.



Khattam-Shud isn't just working to squash the stories already in existence; the Plug will function to stop creativity from even existing. The importance of this statement is indicated by the fact that even after Haroun has reached his 11-minute attention span, a mention of the Plug is dire enough to bring his attention back to the conversation.



It's an interesting turn that the Chupwalas are affected by the poisons in the same way the Guppees and the stories are. This alludes to the idea that attempting to censor language, ideas, or people is tricky and harmful for the censors as well as the censored. Further, the fact that they're all affected by the poison draws similarities between the Chupwalas and the Guppees, further supporting Haroun's thought that they'd find each other interesting.



Haroun, noticing that Khattam-Shud's attention is not on him, bites the Bite-a-Lite. Light pours from his mouth, scattering shrieking and cursing Chupwalas who are blinded by the light. Haroun grabs Butt's brain-box from Khattam-Shud and runs for the cupboard of diving suits. He tries frantically to put on a suit. As he struggles, he notices that none of the Chupwalas have shadows and are therefore shadows themselves. He notices too that with the glare of the light, the Chupwalas become more shadowy, and he wishes that the sun would come out. As Haroun's two minutes of light run out, he manages to zip his suit, put on goggles, and dive out a window into the Ocean.

Haroun is overcome with hopelessness as he hits the water, and he falls through the Ocean. He sinks deep enough to see the Plug, which is the size of a football stadium. Still sinking, he finally catches sight of the Source of Stories, a giant chasm in the seabed with pure, colorful, unpolluted Streams of Story flowing up from it. Haroun suddenly understands that if he can stop the Source from being Plugged, he can save the Ocean. One of Haroun's hands brushes against a pocket in his nightshirt and feels something in there. He knows he put Butt's brain-box in another pocket, and then realizes what's in this pocket and knows what he can do.

Returning to the surface, Haroun notices that he's come up right next to the disabled Butt the Hoopoe. He sees a search party of Chupwalas looking for him heading towards the weed jungle. Haroun pulls out Butt's brain-box, climbs onto Butt's back, and lifts the lid of Butt's head. He sees three leads and three matching connector points on the brain box. When he plugs them in, Butt begins to sing a strange song, and Haroun quickly disconnects the wires. Plugging them in differently, Butt begins to buck, and Haroun disconnects and reconnects the leads one more time. Haroun then hears Butt's voice in his head, asking what took so long. Haroun asks Butt to stay still and pretend it's still missing its brain.

Haroun reaches into his other pocket and pulls out the half-full bottle of Wishwater that Iff had given him earlier. Haroun drinks the water, thinking it might take more than 11 minutes, but he'll try. Closing his eyes, Haroun wishes that Kahani would turn and the sun would shine down on the ship. Butt says that Haroun's willpower is now up against the Processes Too Complicated To Explain.

Even though Haroun struggles practically during his two minutes of light, he's able to gather extremely important information. By understanding that the Chupwalas aboard the ship are only shadows and are therefore inherently out of balance, Haroun will later be able to make the jump to understanding how to defeat them.



Haroun's glimpse of the Source of Stories indicates a great reverence for creativity and creative thought. Similarly to how the Story Water is a physical representation of stories, the Wellspring is a physical representation of where the stories come from. This sight is magnificent enough to trigger Haroun's epiphany of how to save the Ocean.



The three tries to reconnect Butt's brain box is a nod to the rule of three that is so prevalent in fairy tales (essentially the convention that things happen in threes, à la the three little pigs, or the story of Goldilocks). This again situates Haroun's story as being a part of the greater world library and not as a standalone entity, and also provides the reader another avenue through which to make connections to the many outside works that rely on the convention.



Haroun realizes that shadows are unable to exist in sunlight without a Self to be attached to. In this moment, Haroun is embracing the absurdity and the storybook logic of Kahani in order to accomplish the impossible and overpower extremely complicated, inherently rational science.



Haroun lies on Butt's back, concentrating, for 11 minutes, at which point the Chupwala search team notices him. As they began to charge towards him, Haroun's wish comes true: Kahani turns and the sun rises.

Haroun opens his eyes to the sunlight. Chupwalas begin to shrink and melt, and the ship is doing the same. Haroun, yelling for Iff and Mali, runs up the gangway. When he reaches the deck, it feels like tar beneath his feet. Poison is evaporating from cauldrons, and Iff and Mali, suspended by ropes woven from shadows over cauldrons, fall into the cauldrons. They are able to tear out holes in the now-empty (and softened) cauldrons and escape. The three of them race down the gangway and onto Butt's back. Butt swims quickly away from the ship and into the weeds, and then a burning smell comes from Butt's head and Butt stops.

Iff declares that Butt has blown a fuse and Haroun feels responsible for ruining Butt. Iff says that a mechanical brain can be replaced, and if they can make it to the Service Station in Gup City, they'll be fine. Mali offers to push, and as he begins, they hear a sucking sound as Khattam-Shud's ship melts away and the plug falls to the ocean floor. After pushing for several hours, Mali can push no further. Suddenly, Goopy and Bagha appear out of the Ocean and offer to pull them.

Haroun wonders out loud what happened to Khattam-Shud, and Iff shrugs and says that he certainly melted like the other shadows. Haroun thinks of everyone still battling the real Khattam-Shud, and thinks of Blabbermouth. He thinks too that Kahani will now be a sensible moon with day and night.

CHAPTER 11: PRINCESS BATCHEAT

The narrator jumps quickly to explain what took place in Chup while Haroun was in the Old Zone. Princess Batcheat was being held at the Citadel of Chup, so General Kitab, Prince Bolo, and Mudra the Shadow Warrior led the Guppee forces there to rescue her. The air in Chup City is so cold it freezes icicles on peoples' noses, so resident Chupwalas wear black, spherical clown noses to keep their noses warm. The Guppee Army issued red nosewarmers to the pages, which made Rashid think that the war was looking like "a war between buffoons." To add to the absurdity, the Pages of Gup were given helmets with a hatband that lit up brightly, making the army look like saints or angels with shining halos.

Haroun's wish comes true once he's able to power past the 11-minute mark in this climactic moment. It's simultaneously a breakthrough for Haroun personally as well as an act that destroys the Guppees' censorship.



Haroun was right in his evaluation that the ship and this Khattam-Shud are shadows, and therefore inherently off balance. Here, the opposite of the environment that these Chupwalas are used to is what destroys them. Consider the fact that now that Kahani will rotate normally, this kind of imbalance attained by detaching from one's shadow will be wholly impossible. By putting Kahani back into balance, Haroun restores balance to the Chupwalas as well.



Haroun's deep sense of responsibility for those around him crops up again as Butt blows a fuse. However, we're again reminded of the benefits of being a machine, as Butt's brain is simply replaceable.



Keep in mind here that the real Khattam-Shud is now hopelessly out of balance, as his Self-like Shadow is entirely gone. This will put him at a disadvantage as he battles the Guppee Army. Meanwhile Haroun has brought a huge change in favor of balance—making Kahani experience both day and night, not just one or the other.



Due to living in perpetual night (a product of the censorship upheld by the Eggheads' control of Kahani's rotation), the Chupwalas take desperate measures to make life livable. This, along with the other ridiculous clothing items the Guppees are issued, lends an air of absurdity to the entire situation. As Haroun thought earlier, the Guppees and Chupwalas would likely find each other interesting (and very similar) if they didn't hate each other, and the absurd elements here draw attention to the fact that the battle is being fought due to a ridiculous lack of communication.



The Guppees set up their command tent on a hill outside Chup City overlooking the plain of Bat-Mat-Karo, where the battle will take place. Rashid joins General Kitab, Prince Bolo, and Mudra on the hill to translate Mudra's Abhinaya, along with a group of Pages, including Blabbermouth, to act as guards and messengers. As the commanders sit down for a dinner in their tent, a Chupwala messenger rides up to meet them carrying a white flag. Prince Bolo sets about foolishly insulting the messenger until General Kitab silences him.

The messenger addresses the commanders and tells them that Khattam-Shud released him from his vows of silence to deliver his message. He says that they're trespassing on Chup land and Khattam-Shud will not give up Batcheat. Breaking professionalism, he then starts into a tirade about Batcheat's nose, teeth, and horrendous singing, but General Kitab interrupts and asks him to finish. The messenger says that Khattam-Shud will annihilate the Guppee forces and then force Prince Bolo to watch the sewing-up of Batcheat's mouth. Ignoring another of Bolo's outbursts, the Chupwala ambassador says that he's been commanded to **juggle** for the Guppees' entertainment.

Blabbermouth bursts out that it's a trap, General Kitab seems willing to argue, but Bolo cries that chivalry demands that they watch the Chupwala **juggle**. The Chupwala pulls a variety of objects from his cloak pockets and begins to juggle them all quite skillfully. Only Blabbermouth notices when the Chupwala adds a small box with a burning fuse, and she rushes forward, grabs the bomb, and runs to the edge of the command hill to throw the bomb over the edge while other Pages seize the Chupwala. The bomb explodes harmlessly, but Blabbermouth's helmet falls off her head, exposing her long hair.

Bolo, Kitab, Mudra, and Rashid rush outside to see Blabbermouth celebrating her rescue. She tells Bolo that she told him so, which infuriates Bolo, and he snappily asks if Blabbermouth is a girl. The two squabble, Bolo yells to Blabbermouth that she's fired, and Blabbermouth retorts that she quits. At that, Mudra asks Blabbermouth if she'll work for him, shaming Bolo.

Particularly in times like these, it becomes obvious to the reader that Prince Bolo might benefit from more censorship than what he currently experiences. This raises the question of when censorship (or at least discretion) may be appropriate. Bolo hasn't gotten the Guppees into too much trouble (yet), but with what the reader knows of Bolo, it's foreshadowed that he will at some point cause trouble with his foolishness.



Even the Chupwalas, when given the opportunity to speak, are more than willing to use language to go on about Batcheat's unfortunate looks and singing. However, the fact that Batcheat hasn't yet been silenced somehow in accordance with the Silence Laws indicates that her song has power, and for whatever reason can't be silenced. Batcheat's singing also creates some suspense for the reader, as the reader still hasn't experienced it firsthand.



Haroun has already set up the relationship between juggling and storytelling, and in this situation we're asked to consider how good the jugglers/storytellers in question are. The Chupwala likely would have gotten away with this plan had Blabbermouth not been a skilled juggler herself, which primarily serves to create drama in the situation.



Blabbermouth has essentially censored herself by pretending to be male, and she's now free of this censorship. A female posing as male to achieve her goals is also a relatively common trope, particularly in theatre (think Shakespeare's [As You Like It](#) or [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#)), which again ties this story to others.



Finally, the battle is set to begin. Rashid, watching from the hill, is afraid that the Pages of Gup will be torn or burned. The Chupwala Army looks extremely frightening, while the Guppee Army is still arguing over battle strategy. However, when the forces rush at each other, Rashid sees that the argument and debate among the Guppees has created deep bonds between them, which enable them to remain united and support each other, while the Chupwalas end up, as Mudra predicted, primarily fighting their own Shadows. After a short skirmish, the Chupwalas throw down their weapons and run away.

After their victory, the Library of Gup enters Chup City, where many Chupwalas join the Guppees, calling them liberators. Bolo, riding in front of the Army, begins shouting for Khattam-Shud to come out, and crying out for Batcheat. Chupwalas shout at him that if he'd be quiet, he'd hear Batcheat's "racket." Quieting, the army hears a horrible voice singing love songs. The voice shatters windows as it sings, and Bolo yells that it's beautiful.

As the Guppee Army is about to attack the Citadel of Chup, the ground begins to shake and the sun rises in the sky. At the light, Mudra and other Chupwalas don their dark glasses, while the Citadel begins to melt. Bolo, Mudra, and several Chapters of Pages rush the Citadel, calling for Batcheat. Servants of Khattam-Shud rush around in blind terror at the sun and the collapse of the Citadel. Batcheat and her handmaidens slide down the banister of a staircase, whose steps had melted. Batcheat flies into Bolo's arms and the groups turn to flee.

As Bolo, Batcheat, Mudra, the Pages, and the Handmaidens run from the Citadel, the huge ice statue of Bezaban begins to shake and then falls. The statue crashes through the parts of the Citadel that are still standing, rolling down the hill towards the rest of the Guppee forces. Suddenly, Rashid shouts "look out!" to a scrawny, clerkish man—Khattam-Shud himself—as the head of Bezaban bounces and crashes into him. The Cultmaster is never seen again.

Mudra is chosen to head the new government of the Land of Chup, which states a desire for peace with Gup and an acceptance of Night and Day, Silence and Speech. Mudra invites Blabbermouth to stay in his service to learn Abhinaya and act as a messenger, and Blabbermouth happily accepts. Water Genies sent to search the Ocean soon locate Butt the Hoopoe, Haroun, Iff, Mali, Goopy, and Bagha. The party is reunited with Rashid and Blabbermouth on the shores of Chup, and they set off for Gup City to arrange the marriage between Bolo and Batcheat.

Here we see the positive effects of the free speech that Rashid and Haroun struggled to understand earlier. The novel takes the position, then, that free speech naturally creates this sense of openness. On the same note, the Chupwalas have suffered such intense censorship that they are completely unable to trust each other, let alone themselves. What Rashid learns from watching this will influence how he handles Mr. Buttoo in Alfibay.



Mudra's predictions proved correct; the Chupwalas turn to Mudra and the Guppees. The censorship that they experienced, then, is further delineated as something extremely negative. Finally, in this case Batcheat's singing is not just "racket," it's how Bolo and the Pages are able to find her in the Citadel.



The dark glasses create a sense of absurdity the same way the Guppee helmet halos do, by drawing attention to how ridiculous the censorship and division of this society is through the desperate (and silly) ways in which people adapt to it. The melting of the Citadel mirrors the melting and disintegration of Khattam-Shud's power and hold over the Chupwalas, as well as the dissolving of the Silence Laws and censorship.



The symbolism of Khattam-Shud being crushed by his own idol and a symbol for his work is a nod to the idea that such extreme and complete power will certainly corrupt and get out of hand. It's also notable that Khattam-Shud is destroyed by his own doing, and the Guppees really don't have to be violent to win.



Thanks to Haroun's wish and the Guppee victory, a sense of balance can now be achieved on Kahani, in which opposites will exist peacefully with each other. The marriage between Bolo and Batcheat is one way to look at this, as their marriage represents a marriage of many opposites: male and female, horrendous-sounding but loving song with sweeping speech lacking in substance.



In Gup City, Iff, Mali, Goopy, and Bagha are all promoted and given joint responsibility for cleaning up the Old Zone and the Ocean, and Rashid is given his Story Water subscription back.

On Batcheat and Bolo's wedding day, the two of them look so happy that the guests decide to forget Batcheat's stupidity at getting herself captured, as well as Bolo's general foolishness. King Chattergy suggests that the people sing to Bolo and Batcheat, but is forced to smooth over the situation when Bolo suggests that Batcheat sing and the guests beg her not to. Batcheat stays quiet and remains happy as the people "show them their love" by singing to them.

Haroun, wandering around the party, is approached by an Egghead who coldly tells him that he must report to P2C2E House to discuss the destroyed machinery with the Walrus. Haroun tries to explain that it was for a good cause, but the Egghead walks away.

CHAPTER 12: WAS IT THE WALRUS?

Haroun decides that he needs Witnesses to help him explain to the Walrus why his wish was necessary. Winding through the wild party, Haroun spots Iff dancing. Iff refuses to argue with the Walrus. Haroun, disappointed, heads for the second wedding party on the Lagoon. Mali is serenading an audience with another of his songs from Butt the Hoopoe's back, but pauses to tell Haroun that he can't help. Butt calls after Haroun that he can't help either since he's only a machine.

Haroun enters P2C2E House and watches the Eggheads moving about. He asks three Eggheads how to reach the Walrus' office. When he finally arrives at the door, he takes a breath and thinks that he finally got the interview he wanted, but not for the reason he thought, and knocks. The Walrus calls for him to come in. Upon entering, Haroun sees that the Walrus isn't alone. He's surrounded by King Chattergy, Prince Bolo, Princess Batcheat, Mudra, Blabbermouth, General Kitab, Iff, Mali, and Rashid, all smiling, and video monitors with the smiling faces of Goopy, Bagha, and Butt the Hoopoe. Haroun, perplexed, asks if he's in trouble or not, sending the entire room into a laughing fit.

It would seem that all is well with the world in Kahani now. This will provide a counterpoint for Haroun's rude awakening hours later.



Happiness here is indicated to be powerful enough to allow individuals to forget that those in charge may be stupid or foolish. Keep this in mind later when Rashid is addressing Mr. Buttoo's constituents, as in that situation the exact opposite will prove true.



Haroun knows that what he did was for the greater good of Kahani, but this summons to speak with the Walrus calls into question whether doing the right thing was actually the right thing.



One might logically think that Butt would be the perfect witness for Haroun since he'd be able to give an account of what happened from a purely rational, emotionless point of view, but his refusal to do so because he's a machine is once again humorous, as his tone is more facetious than emotionlessly mechanical.



P2C2E House appears cold and sterile, in look as well as in attitude, which lines up with its purpose in Gup of discovering very complicated and serious science. Haroun is approaching this meeting with a sense of doom. Remember that he originally wanted to meet with the Walrus to reconnect Rashid's water supply, but that opportunity was taken from him long ago. The reader experiences the wonder, dread, and bafflement of this turn of events alongside Haroun.



The Walrus explains that this is their "little yolk," sending the room back into laughter. When the laughter subsides, the Walrus rises and tells Haroun that to honor him for the service he's done for Kahani and the Ocean, he's granting him the right to ask for any favor he desires. Haroun, silent, looks unhappy, and he finally says that he can't ask for anything because what he wants is something nobody can give him. The Walrus tells a belligerent Haroun that he wants a happy ending after his adventure, but Haroun says that his happy ending can't be found.

The Walrus sits and begins to explain that happy endings, both in stories and in life, are rare enough to be exceptions rather than rules, and because of their rarity, the Eggheads have learned how to synthesize them. Haroun protests that it's impossible to put happy endings in bottles, but seems uncertain. The Walrus notes that everything Haroun experienced has been quite impossible, and questions the wisdom of fussing over this impossible thing.

Haroun then boldly wishes for a happy ending for his adventure, as well as a happy ending for his sad city. The Walrus points out that happy endings have to come at the end of something, or all they do is fix things for a while. Haroun says that that will do.

It is then time for Haroun and Rashid to go home. Haroun has particular trouble saying goodbye to Blabbermouth, who takes matters into her own hands and kisses Haroun, who is quite pleased. At the edge of the Lagoon, Haroun, Rashid, and Iff board Butt and wave goodbye to everyone else. It occurs to Haroun that Rashid surely missed his appointment in the Valley of K, but Butt assures them that time is on their side. Arriving at the Dull Lake, it is night. Butt lands next to an open window of the "Arabian Nights Plus One" houseboat. Haroun and Rashid climb in and fall asleep immediately.

Haroun wakes to bright sunshine and finds Rashid sipping tea on a balcony, still in his nightshirt. He sees the swan boat coming at them across the lake, and Mr. Buttoo's yelling interrupts Rashid as Rashid begins to tell Haroun that he had a strange dream. Mr. Buttoo yells at Rashid that crowds are waiting and he can't be late.

Haroun's adventure on Kahani, as well as the adventure as told by this book, are both coming to a close, and Haroun's desire for a happy ending to this fits in with all of these journeys finishing. However, despite how much Haroun has embraced the absurdity of life on Kahani, he's still unwilling to trust that what happens on Kahani will be able to impact his life in Alfibay.



The Walrus's assertion about happy endings being rare encourages the reader to consider how stories end. It leads us to consider that not everyone in every story gets a happy ending—Khattam-Shud (an "ending" himself) certainly didn't. We're also again confronted with the storybook logic of Kahani, which doesn't necessarily follow the same logic as Alfibay.



This passage indicates that while the story is nearing the end for the reader, it's not actually over for Haroun (who's still very young, of course). The story may end on a happy note for the reader, but Haroun will have more struggles throughout his life—his story isn't "khattam-shud" yet.



Here we see another tie between Butt the Hoopoe and Mr. Butt when Butt insists that he'll get Haroun and Rashid back in time. Haroun and Rashid's movements throughout the novel have been made possible by these twin Butts essentially messing with time. While the molding of time certainly doesn't make logical sense, it draws on the unique logic of the story and the novel itself to become possible.



Mr. Buttoo provides a rude awakening for Haroun and Rashid's return to Alfibay. Rashid's comment about a strange dream rouses Haroun's suspicions that potentially the dream wasn't just a dream, or that at least he and his father may have shared the same dream.



Haroun realizes that his adventure on Kahani took place in less than one night, and he thinks of the Walrus telling him not to make a fuss over it. Haroun hurriedly asks Rashid if he can remember his dream, but Rashid brushes him off, greets Mr. Buttoo, and tells Haroun to get dressed, ignoring Haroun's continued urgings to remember his dream.

Returning to his room, Haroun notices an envelope on his pillow. Inside is a note from Blabbermouth, signed by her and all his other friends from Kahani. One line in the letter says to come whenever and stay as long as he'd like, and Haroun notices that there is also a tiny Hoopoe bird in the envelope.

The narrator reminds the reader that Mr. Buttoo expected Rashid to win the people's support for him by telling happy, praising stories. Mr. Buttoo had decorated the park with happy decorations and pro-Buttoo political posters, but Haroun notices that the large crowd is mostly scowling. Mr. Buttoo snaps at Rashid that he's on, and to be good or else.

Rashid takes the stage as Haroun watches from the side. Haroun is shocked when Rashid addresses the audience and tells them that the story he's going to tell them is called "Haroun and the Sea of Stories." Rashid winks at Haroun, and proceeds to tell the story that the reader has just been told. The audience is hooked and even sings along with Rashid when he sings Mali's songs. When Rashid talks about Khattam-Shud, the audience stares at Mr. Buttoo and his henchmen, who look very unhappy. After the fall of the two Khattam-Shuds in the story, the audience starts chanting for Mr. Buttoo to go, and he slinks away. Mr. Buttoo is never again seen in the Valley of K. True to his promise, Mr. Butt is at the bus depot to take Rashid and Haroun home.

When Haroun and Rashid arrive in the sad city, it's still pouring. Rashid happily suggests they walk home, making Haroun suspicious. They play in the downpour, and Haroun notices after a bit that the streets are full of people playing just as he and Rashid are. Haroun notes that the sadness factories are still producing sadness and everyone is still poor, but an old man yells at him to not sing those "tragedy songs" here. Haroun realizes that the happiness is the Walrus' doing, and he suddenly deflates. He tells Rashid that it's all fake, and that people should be happy when there's something to be happy about.

Haroun is finally willing to trust in the power of the stories, particularly in regards to what the Walrus told him. However, Haroun is still unwilling to trust that Rashid experienced the same dream that he did.



The letter moves Haroun's adventure on Kahani from merely a dream to something that truly happened. This renders Mr. Sengupta's question moot, as Haroun's story is proven true.



Mr. Buttoo is still expecting to censor and control what Rashid says. Mr. Buttoo is trying to tell his own story through his posters and his chosen decorations, but his story evidently isn't convincing his constituents that they should vote for him.



Here we see what the "point" of stories can be. Haroun's story becomes more than just something Haroun alone can learn from and apply to his life; through Rashid's retelling, the story has the power to enact positive change in the world by overthrowing Mr. Buttoo. Most notably, storytelling shifts power to the masses and robs Mr. Buttoo of his power to control them. Rashid essentially is borrowing what he learned from the Guppees and denying Mr. Buttoo's censorship, and the positive result is obvious.



In this instance, the novel is considering how happy endings truly work within stories. Haroun's insistence that this happiness is fake points to the idea that stories live on after the last page; they only end for the reader. Haroun's story and life are just beginning, and he sees the happiness here as cheering things up for a while, as he previously discussed with the Walrus.



A policeman, floating by on an umbrella, interrupts and tells Haroun that there *is* something to be happy about—the city remembered its name, Kahani, which means "story."

Rashid is still overjoyed and Haroun is still in a dark mood as they turn onto their lane. Miss Oneeta comes onto her balcony to greet them and tells them that they're going to celebrate. She joins them in the street as Haroun demands what there is to celebrate, and Miss Oneeta lists her many good fortunes, including saying a final goodbye to Mr. Sengupta. When Haroun tells her that it's not all celebration for Rashid and him, Miss Oneeta suddenly becomes mysterious.

Soraya Khalifa opens the door to the apartment and Haroun and Rashid are frozen, staring at her. Soraya joins them in the rain and says that she made a mistake, but she's back now if they want her. Soraya continues and calls Mr. Sengupta sniveling, "mingy," and weaselly, and says that he's done for. Haroun adds "khattam-shud." Rashid welcomes her home and they fall into a hug with Miss Oneeta.

When Haroun goes to bed that night, he holds the Hoopoe in his hand and tells it that with the way things are now, he doesn't need to go anywhere. Butt replies in a miniature voice, "but but but, no problem," and Haroun falls asleep. When he wakes he sees new clothes and a new clock. After a moment of confusion he remembers it's his birthday. He gets dressed and, looking at his clock, remarks that time is definitely moving again. In the living room, Soraya is singing.

The city's name meaning "story" brings both the ideas of naming and stories to a final conclusion, linking them together to bring happiness to the city.



Miss Oneeta has experienced a transformative couple of days as well, and her happiness and confidence in her new life mirrors the confidence that Haroun has built up (even though it's not showing in this moment). Further, she's also vanquished her own Khattam-Shud by saying goodbye to Mr. Sengupta.



The language used to describe Mr. Sengupta is the same as the language used to describe Khattam-Shud, further denoting that they're the same person. Also, there's a certain humor in having the real-life Khattam-Shud be "khattam-shud" and done with, again stressing the importance of wordplay.



All is well: Haroun was able to sort out his questions and problems in his dream, and no longer feels the need to rely on Butt and Kahani to provide a different angle on his problems. Now that Haroun has achieved balance in his life through his adventure on Kahani, saving Rashid's storytelling skills, and the return of Soraya (and her happiness), the clocks can move again and Haroun's life can move forward.





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