

**SUBJECT NAME : SUBALTERN LITERATURE**

**SUBJECT CODE : CEN 54**

**UNIT – V**

**NOVEL**

**1. The Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh**

**2. The Kite Runner**

## **The Hungry Tide**

**by Amitav Ghosh**

### **About the Author**

Amitav Ghosh is an Indian writer. He won the 54th Jnanpith award in 2018, India's highest literary honor. Ghosh's ambitious novels use complex narrative strategies to probe the nature of national and personal identity, particularly of the people of India and South Asia.

### **Characters**

#### **Kanai Dutt**

A well-off interpreter and translator who owns his own business, Kanai is a native of New Delhi.

#### **Piyali Roy (Piya)**

Piya is a marine biologist who travels to the Sundarbans in India to survey the local river dolphins.

#### **Fokir**

Fokir is an impoverished fisherman who rescues Piya when she falls into the water.

#### **Nilima Bose (Mashima)**

Nilima is Nirmal's wife and in some ways his opposite.

#### **Nirmal Bose**

Nilima's late husband, Nirmal is a Marxist intellectual who met Nilima when teaching English in Kolkata.

#### **Kusum**

Friends with Kanai when she was a teenager and he was a child, Kusum was also close to Nirmal, who may have had romantic feelings for her.

#### **Horen**

Horen is a fisherman and a friend of Nilima and Nirmal.

#### **Moyna**

Moyna is Fokir's wife, as well as a trainee nurse at the local hospital.

### **Sir Daniel Hamilton**

A Scottish man who got rich in India, Sir Daniel bought land in the Sundarbans in the early 20th century and tried to create an ideal, equal society.

### **The forest guard**

Piya is required to be accompanied by the forest guard on her trip to the Sundarbans.

### **Bon Bibi**

Bon Bibi is the benevolent goddess of the Sundarbans and along with her brother, Shah Jongoli, she protects the area from evil and from the vicious natural world.

### **Dokkhin Rai**

Bon Bibi's evil counterpart, Dokkhin Rai is a tiger demon who haunts the people of the Sundarbans.

**Theme :** The conflict between man and nature

### **Literary Elements**

**Genre:** Novel; environmental fiction, literary fiction

**Setting and Context:** The Sundarbans, in India

### **Narrator and Point of View**

Third-person limited, switching back and forth between focusing on Kanai and Piya

**Tone and Mood :** Contemplative, hopeful

**Protagonist and Antagonist:** Piyali Roy and Kanai Dutt are the protagonists of the story, while the government and the natural world are the antagonists.

### **Summary**

On a train to the Indian city of Canning, Kanai Dutt, a wealthy middle-aged translator from New Delhi, meets Piya Roy, a young Indian-American marine biologist. Both are traveling to the Sundarbans: Kanai, who's been there once before, is going to visit his aunt and read his late uncle's notebook, while Piya is carrying out a survey of the region's dolphins. Kanai invites Piya to visit him in Lusibari.

When Kanai meets his aunt, Nilima, he finds that she is still deeply impacted by his uncle's death decades ago and that the natural landscape of the Sundarbans has already changed since his visit as a child. Furthermore, he learns that his childhood friend Kusum was killed in a 1979 massacre. Her son, Fokir, is now a fisherman with a wife, Moyna, and son of his own, Tutul.

When Kanai begins reading his uncle's notebook, he discovers it was written in a very short amount of time as his uncle, Nirmal, tried to fight to protect the refugees who had settled on a local island from the government's aggression.

Meanwhile, Piya begins her survey alongside a forest guard, who's required to accompany her, and a boater named Mej-da. Both of them are rude to her and offer no help. They approach a fisherman in the water, and the forest guard fines him for supposedly poaching. Trying to surreptitiously give the fisherman some money in return, Piya falls off her boat, and the fisherman rescues her. She decides to ask him to take her to Lusibari, and he turns out to be kind and respectful, though they do not speak the same language. He introduces himself as Fokir, accompanied by Tutul. The next day, the group observes dolphins behaving differently than usual, which intrigues Piya. As they travel, Piya and Fokir get along extremely well and find that their work styles are very complementary despite their apparent differences.

Kanai continues reading Nirmal's notebook, which tells of his dedication to Marxist theory and his decision to involve himself in the plight of the refugees, partially because of Kusum, who he has romantic feelings for. Against the wishes of Nilima, his wife, Nirmal travels to Morichjhāpi repeatedly. One day, police begin a siege on the island and destroy a boat filled with refugees. Kusum and her young son Fokir survive, but Kusum is later killed.

Impressed with Fokir, Piya hires him for a week to help her survey the dolphins in the region. Kanai comes along to serve as a translator, and they bring Nilima and Nirmal's friend Horen, who owns a large boat. When the boat's engine dies, they float to a nearby village. That night, they hear loud voices and find a tiger captured in a building surrounded by angry people. Wanting to protect the tiger, Piya tries to break up the mob, but Kanai stops her. Later, he admonishes her for wanting to protect the tiger at the cost of the local people.

One day, as Fokir and Kanai observe the dolphins together, Fokir suggests going ashore to an island he believes is protected by Bon Bibi, a goddess. As they trudge through the mud, Kanai falls over and gets angry, sending Fokir away. He arrives onshore trying desperately to escape the crocodiles of the area, then runs into a clearing where he sees a tiger. Slowly, he backs away and returns to the rest of the group, who don't believe he saw the tiger. Kanai decides to return to Lusibari along with Horen.

Soon, Horen and Kanai realize that a major cyclone is coming, but when they turn around, they can't find Piya and Fokir. After waiting overnight, they decide they can wait no longer if they want to save themselves, so they return to Lusibari. Wading to shore, Kanai falls and drops

Nirmal's notebook. He promises to rewrite the notebook from memory, and Nilima asks him to include her story as well.

Fokir and Piya tie themselves to a tree on an island, but Fokir is crushed by a large flying object. Piya manages to navigate back towards Lusibari, running into Kanai and Horen. She stays in Lusibari for a few weeks longer, then returns soon after, planning to work on a conservation program alongside Nilima.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, Nirmal heard that the police were going to assault the island. He went with Horen to warn Kusum, and while they were there overnight, he filled the notebook. He decided to stay on the island while Horen took Fokir away, and saved the notebook for Kanai.

## **The Kite Runner**

**by Khaled Hosseini**

### **About the Author**

Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan-American novelist, UNHCR goodwill ambassador, and former physician. His debut novel *The Kite Runner* was a critical and commercial success; the book and his subsequent novels have all been at least partially set in Afghanistan and have featured an Afghan as the protagonist.

### **Introduction**

*The Kite Runner* is based on the childhood memories of Khaled Hosseini of his homeland, Afghanistan. It was published in 2003 by Riverhead Books, and immediately created ripples on the US shelves. The unusual appearance of the story seems to present the Afghan background, culture, and ethnic tensions in the city of Kabul and the country on a wider scale. Though it also encompasses the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Afghan cultural erosion, and Pakistan's support of the refugees. The story revolves around the character of Amir and his friend Hassan in the same backdrop.

### **Characters**

**Amir:** The main character and protagonist of *The Kite Runner*, Amir is Baba's representative of the elite structure of Kabul having all the luxuries and privileges.

**Hassan:** Despite being subservient to Amir, Hassan's character does not seem subdued by the circumstances.

**Baba:** Baba is a highly esoteric character in those several aspects of his personality emerge on the scene after his death.

**Rahim Khan:** Rahim Khan's character is also an important one.

**Sohrab:** Hassan's son Sohrab becomes significant in the novel in that Amir considers him his own son instead of just the son of his stepbrother, Hassan.

**Assef:** Despite belonging to double ethnicities, Assef becomes a bully as well as a villain of The Kite Runner.

**Soraya:** The significance of Soraya lies in that despite being a daughter of an ex-general

**Ali:** Despite being a secondary character, Ali has two drawbacks that force Baba to show his humane character.

**Sanaubar and Farid:** Sanaubar, though, appears for a brief period, is significant.

**Themes:** Homeland, Betrayal, Guilt and Redemption, Familial Relationships, Kite Flying, Politics, Racial Discrimination, Marginalization of Femininity

### **Literary Devices**

Metaphor, symbolism, and foreshadowing are three main literary techniques used.

### **Summary**

The plot of The Kite Runner is primarily about Amir and Hassan's relationship: their friendship, and eventual betrayal due to Amir's cowardice, and Amir's redemption via rediscovering bravery for Hassan's sake. There are three parts to the book; the first is set in Kabul during Amir and Hassan's childhood, the second covers Amir and Baba's move to the United States, and the third covers Amir's return to Afghanistan.

### **Part One**

Amir grows up in a wealthy household in Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan. Kabul prospers during his childhood. Amir and Baba are ethnic Pashtuns, but Baba's lifelong servant, Ali, is an ethnic Hazara (a group of people that has faced much discrimination). Despite being friends, Baba and Ali very clearly occupy very different social statuses, and this is shown through the relationship between Amir and Ali's son Hassan. Although the boys are both motherless, shared a wet nurse, and are best friends, Hassan is a servant and is not even taught to read. Amir reads different stories to Hassan; Hassan's favorite concerns a character named Sohrab.

The first part of the novel takes place in Kabul

As they grow, Amir realizes that Baba does not approve of Amir's softer personality, but does approve of Hassan's bravery. Hassan defends Amir from bullies, often threatening a particularly vile one named Assef with a slingshot. Hassan is talented with a slingshot and tells Assef he will shoot his eye out if he troubles Amir. Amir and Hassan have a great love of kite flying. Since Baba loves kite fighting competitions, Amir hopes that if he wins a contest, Baba will approve of him at last.

Kite fighting is a popular sport in Afghanistan and involves cutting the lines of other kites with your own kite

During the contest, Hassan runs to collect the kites Amir takes down; he tells Amir that "for you" he will do it "a thousand times over." Assef is enraged that Amir has done so well in the contest and decides to attack and humiliate Hassan in revenge; specifically, he rapes Hassan. Amir witnesses the assault, but is too terrified to intervene.

Amir loathes himself for not intervening but projects this self-hatred onto Hassan. He begins to pull away from his friend, and Hassan blames himself. Amir tries to provoke Hassan into defending himself against Amir by throwing things at him and insulting him, but Hassan does not fight back and Amir's self-hatred only increases. Knowing his father hates stealing above all other crimes, Amir frames Hassan for stealing to get Baba to send Hassan away. However, Baba is willing to forgive Hassan anyway, but Ali (whom Hassan confided in) tells Baba that he and Hassan are leaving Kabul. Amir never sees Hassan alive again.

## **Part Two**

When the Soviets bring the war to Kabul, Baba and Amir escape and are granted refugee status in the United States. Amir graduates medical school, while Baba struggles to adjust to life in an unfamiliar culture. Baba eventually develops cancer and passes away, but before he dies he arranges a marriage between Amir and the woman Amir has fallen in love with named Soraya. Soraya once ran away with a previous boyfriend, a past which is frowned upon by many, but Amir does not hold it against her. Their marriage is happy and Amir even becomes a published writer, but they are unable to have children and Amir cannot bring himself to tell Soraya what he

## **Part Three**

Baba's friend Rahim Khan reaches out to Amir and asks him to come to Pakistan. There, he tells Amir that Ali was not Hassan's biological father; instead, Baba had slept with Ali's wife, and Hassan is Amir's half-brother. Rahim also tells him Hassan is dead.

Years earlier, Rahim Khan asked Hassan and his wife to move in with him at Baba's old house. They did so. After the Taliban took control of Kabul, the Taliban accused them of stealing the property, motivated in part by Hassan's Hazara ethnicity. The Taliban then murdered both Hassan and his wife. Their son, a boy named Sohrab (the name of Hassan's favorite character in

a story Amir read to him as a child), has been placed in an orphanage. Rahim Khan tells Amir that there is still a chance for Amir to redeem himself by rescuing Sohrab from the orphanage.

However, Sohrab is not in the orphanage. Instead, Sohrab has been taken by a Taliban leader who turns out to be Assef, the same one who assaulted Hassan years ago. Assef sexually abuses Sohrab and, when confronted by Amir, tells him that if Amir can beat Assef in a physical fight, he can escape with Sohrab. Amir refuses to run and is badly beaten. Sohrab intervenes and shoots Assef's eye out, just like Hassan had threatened to do decades prior.

**Conclusion:** The isolation was caused by Amir because he couldn't handle his guilt. This led to him having to redeem himself, something that Hosseini wanted us to think about. Amir eventually came out of his isolation at the request of Rahim Khan and he made things right by rescuing Sohrab.