

Haroun and the Sea of Stories Study Guide

Haroun and the Sea of Stories by Salman Rushdie

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Plot Summary

Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea Stories* is a story about a depressed professional storyteller and his adolescent son traveling to Earth's second, invisible moon, where all stories are born. They foil the poisoning of the Ocean of the Streams of Story and rescue a kidnapped Princess, get back the father's gift of gab, and see their family reunited.

Young Haroun Khalifa feels guilty about his parents' separation and father Rashid's losing his "gift of gab," dangerous in a professional storyteller. It has left Haroun's attention span 11 minutes long. They go to an engagement at Dull Lake, driven by speed-crazed Mr. Butt, and are housed on an elegant houseboat by politico Snooty Buttoo. During the night, Haroun encounters Iff the Water Genie, who has been sent to disconnect Rashid from the source of all stories. Haroun will not hear of this, declaring his father is not ready to give up. He captures Iff's marvelous Disconnecting Tool and forces him to take him to a forbidden City on Earth's invisible, watery moon Kahani. Butt the Hoopoe, a mechanical bird, is Haroun and Iff's means of conveyance. A cup of "Stream of Story" produces in Haroun a nightmare state and makes him wary of drinking anything. The nightmare shows that the Ocean is being polluted.

Haroun makes new friends Mali, a human-shaped vegetable creature, and Bagha and Goopy, Plentimaw fish, who convince him how bad the pollution is getting, particularly in the "Old Zone," where the neglected Wellspring flows. They arrive in Gup City, which is mobilizing for war to save not only the Ocean, but also ugly Princess Batcheat, who has been kidnapped by the same villain responsible for the pollution. Rashid shows up, having dreamed his way and been arrested as a spy. He has witnessed the kidnapping and agrees to serve as scout. The armada moves out, debating strategy the whole way. The Ocean is worse polluted than feared. In Chup, they meet a fearsome warrior, Mudra, and his independent-minded Shadow, ready to rebel against Khattam-Shud. The question of whom to save first vanishes, because Khattam-Shud and his shadow have gone separate ways.

Haroun and Iff go to spy on the Old Zone but are taken captive to the shadowy Dark Ship whose mission is systematically to poison the Ocean at its source. Khattam-Shud looks like a clerk but can expand dramatically into a great monster at will. As Khattam-Shud explains his actions and boasts, Haroun sees the Chupwalas' vulnerability to light, uses the Bite-a-Lite to blind them momentarily, puts on a diver's suit, and escapes. By wishing beyond his eleven-minute attention span, he saves the Source of Stories from being unobstructed, by causing the Moon to turn, making the shadows melt away. In the opposite hemisphere, the Citadel of Gup melts when the sun comes out and the great idol topples, its head squashing the fleeing Khattam-Shud. Everyone is promoted, peace reigns, restoring the Oceans is given top priority, and Prince and Princess marry. Before heading home, Haroun is granted any wish, but cannot see how it can come true. Time has been reversed, so Rashid has not missed his performance, which consists of "Haroun and the Sea of Stories," as just told. Voters connect Khattam-Shud with Snooty Buttoo and run the latter out of town. Haroun derives no pleasure from

seeing his city happy until he sees his repentant mother in the doorway. On his birthday, Haroun sees that time is on the move again.



Chapter 1, The Shah of Blah

Chapter 1, The Shah of Blah Summary

In a ruined city so sad it has forgotten its name, that breathes black smoke from "sadness factories," lives a happy child, Haroun Khalifa, the only child of Rashid and Soraya. Known as the "Ocean of Notions" and the "Shah of Blah," Rashid is a storyteller, a juggler of tales. Rashid tells Haroun that the stories come from drinking "Story Waters" flowing from an invisible tap installed by Water Genies, a process "too complicated to explain." Haroun is dubious. The happiness ends as Soraya strays with the upstairs neighbor, Mr. Sengupta. Rashid smashes the clocks, freezing them at 11 o'clock, moans that storytelling is all he knows, but runs out of stories to tell. Haroun's attention span shrinks to 11 minutes.

Invited to perform by the politicians in the Town of G in the nearby Valley of K, nestled in the Mountains of M. In Alifbay, Rashid tells his son of the glories of the valley and beautiful Lake Dull, where a luxury houseboat awaits. The spirits of ancient kings still fly as hoopoe birds. The Khalifas are met at the railway station by two villainous-looking men, driven to the political rally, where on stage Rashid can only say, "Ark." The thugs accuse him of taking a rival's bribe and warn him to do better in the Valley of K.

Chapter 1, The Shah of Blah Analysis

Chapter 1 introduces the Khalifas and establishes that young Haroun feels guilty for his parents' separation and Rashid's losing his "gift of gab." Describing the city in which they live, Salman Rushdie has an opportunity to talk about wealth and poverty and how politicians use entertainment to attract voters when feigned sincerity does not work. "Lying and butting," water genies, hoopoe birds, "Ark," and things "too complicated to explain" all become part of the story-in-a-story that lies ahead. Particularly important at the climax is the reduction of Haroun's attention span to exactly eleven minutes.



Chapter 2, The Mail Coach

Chapter 2, The Mail Coach Summary

The thugs drop Rashid and Haroun at the Bus Depot, where rhyming signs warn against excessive speed. Bus drivers tease passengers, pretending to be ready to leave. When Haroun observes it is not fair, Mr. Butt, the driver of an Express Mail coach offers to get the Khalifas to the Tunnel of I (or J) by sunset. They rocket away and passengers' howl as he continues accelerating. People at bypassed mail stops curse. In the mountains, warnings against speed are so urgent they no longer rhyme. Butt slams on the brakes as they enter the Tunnel. Beyond the Tunnel, admiring the glorious view, Rashid thanks Haroun, saying he had thought things were "khattam-shud." Haroun believes that his stories are coming back.

Word of Rashid's failure has not traveled as fast as Butt, so the Khalifas are met by the Boss, Mr. Buttoo, slickly dressed, with a scruffy mustache. He snootily leads them to the lake, surrounded by 101 armed soldiers through an unhappy population. They reach Buttoo's and are rowed out onto Dull Lake. Rashid tells Haroun about the "Floating Garden" of lotus roots that grow here. Learning that Rashid is unhappy over an "affair of the heart," Buttoo declares, "There are plenty more fish in the sea." Haroun is offended for his mother. When Rashid longs for his Angel Fish, a thick mist surrounds the boat.

Chapter 2, The Mail Coach Analysis

Chapter 2 introduces elements of the complex allegory that is to come: speed-crazed Mr. Butt, a swan, a floating garden, and "more fish." Rashid recalling the story of Khattam-Shud, the villain in the coming allegory, appears a good sign that his storytelling powers are intact. The Bus Depot and wild ride to Dull Lake allow Rushdie to inject more local color about life in Kashmir, India. Note the signs of political unrest, which will be resolved in the story's happy ending, with the downfall of Snooty Buttoo.



Chapter 3, The Dull Lake

Chapter 3, The Dull Lake Summary

The night air stinks with the "Mist of Misery." Buttoo has hired Rashid to tell happy, praising stories to get people to vote for him. A harsh, hot wind clears the mist and the lake grows choppy. Haroun declares the lake is like "Moody Land," where nature magically responds to people's moods. Buttoo is angry at the idea of telling a sad story. The wind responds to Buttoo's outburst and the mist returns. As waves rise and the oarsmen panic, Haroun orders dead silence. It works. Haroun tells him it is only a story. Buttoo calls Rashid gullible.

The houseboat is named Arabian Nights Plus One. In their assigned bedrooms, Rashid finds the bed shaped like a peacock, while Haroun's is a turtle. Buttoo departs, warning Rashid to be good on stage. Haroun finds it hard to sleep in a turtle and, hearing his father moaning, goes in to hear about losing his magic and canceling his subscription. When father and son trade rooms, Haroun confronts a blue-whiskered burglar with a great onion head and aubergine (eggplant) legs, removing the invisible "Story Tap." The figure disappears, dropping his "Disconnecter," which is fluid and multi-colored. Returning, he introduces himself as Iff the Water Genie from the Ocean of the Streams of Story. Rashid supposedly has turned in his resignation and the Story Water supply can only be restored by the Grand Comptroller on Kahani. Haroun holds the Disconnecting Tool ransom.

Chapter 3, The Dull Lake Analysis

"Moody Land," one of Rashid's most beloved stories is acted out on Lake Dull. The particulars of the tale will be found when Haroun reaches Kahani and the allegory unfolds. Rashid is so depressed he has "canceled his subscription" to the special power that enlivens good stories, and the powers that be dispatch a water genie to disconnect Rashid. Haroun will not hear of it, for his father is not ready to give up. He captures Iff's marvelous Disconnecting Tool and forces him to take him to forbidden City. There is a reference to the Beatles' song "I am the Walrus," itself a reference to Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*.



Chapter 4, An Iff and a Butt

Chapter 4, An Iff and a Butt Summary

Iff pulls out a handful of miniature birds. Haroun selects a tiny crested hoopoe, which Iff tosses out the window to grow as large as a double-bed. Haroun and Iff hop on and fly into the sky. When Haroun wonders how a bird can fly this fast, the hoopoe in a booming voice like Butt's insists that machines require respect. Haroun is uncomfortable with having his mind read. They are bound for Earth's second moon, which travels too fast to be detected and constantly varies its orbit to pass over every spot on earth to provide Story Water. They land in an ocean brilliantly colored and steaming. They watch for extra-bright patches of ocean, "Wishwater." Iff fills a crystal bottle, telling Haroun that the harder he wishes after sipping the water, the better the results. He can restore his father's "gift of gab." Haroun takes a gulp but cannot concentrate.

Haroun catches the magic of the Ocean of the Streams of Story, sees a billion and one colors in the currents, weaving a complex tapestry, which Iff explains are "Streams of Story" that combine into tales. The stories stay liquid, changeable, intermixable, and alive. Various parts of the Ocean contain different kinds of stories. Iff shows Haroun how to dip in a cup and obtain a pure "Stream of Story." When Haroun drinks it, he sees himself on a giant chessboard, slaying monsters, climbing a white tower, halfway up turning into a spider, and being hacked apart by the princess in the window. This ending demonstrates Ocean pollution, which could bring war with the Chupwalas led by the Cultmaster of Bezaban, Khattam-Shud.

Chapter 4, An Iff and a Butt Analysis

Brief Chapter 4 whisks Haroun from Earth to the invisible, watery moon Kahani, where the bulk of the rest of the novel is set. Butt the Hoopoe, a mechanical bird is Haroun and Iff's means of conveyance. "Wishwater" plays a vital role at the climax of the novel. A cup of "Stream of Story" produces in Haroun a nightmare state and makes him wary of drinking anything. The nightmare shows that the Ocean is being polluted.



Chapter 5, About Guppees and Chupwalas

Chapter 5, About Guppees and Chupwalas Summary

As they race toward Gup City, Haroun asks about Khattam-Shud. Butt explains that the Eggheads at P2C2E House control Kahani's rotation so the Land of Gup always faces sunlight and Chup darkness. Between lies the "Twilight Strip" with an unbreakable and invisible "Wall of Force," named "Chattergy's Wall" after the King. As they near Gup City, Haroun is distracted by a patch of thick, tough vegetation, which rears up and knots itself into the shape of a man. The "Floating Gardener" speaks softly but abruptly. Mali explains that he untwists twisted Story Streams. He reports that the pollution is lethal, spreading fast, and could take years to clean up. Haroun hears a chorus of voices speaking in unison below the surface. Angel Fish as big as sharks are covered with mouths that suck in Story Streams and blow them out again. Plentimaw Fishes travel in pairs and speak in rhymes. Bagha and Goopy complain that filthied-up sagas passing through them are painful. Things are worst in the "Old Zone," neglected because no one wants ancient stories any more. The Streams of Story are believed to originate long ago in a Wellspring. They reach Gup City in record time.

The capital of Gup is built on a 1,001-island Archipelago. By the multicolored Lagoon is the Pleasure Garden with fountains and domes surrounding the Palace, Parliament, and P2C2E House. Extremely thin Guppees wearing rectangular garments covered in writing for Gup's army. "Pages" are organized into "Chapters" (platoons), "Volumes" (regiments), and "Library" (army). The Library is commanded by General Kitab, who stands on the Palace balcony with the Speaker of the Chatterbox (parliament), King Chattergy, the dashing but somehow foolish-looking Prince Bolo, fiancé to Princess Batcheat, and a bald man with a mustache like a dead mouse, who looks like Snooty Buttoo—the Walrus. The King raises his hands to speak, but words fail him, so impetuous Bolo announces that Batcheat has been kidnapped. Kitab believes that Khattam-Shud holds her. The Speaker declares a state of war. They display a captured spy: Rashid.

Chapter 5, About Guppees and Chupwalas Analysis

Chapter 5 introduces Mali, Bagha, and Goopy, and describes how bad the pollution is getting, particularly in the "Old Zone," where the neglected Wellspring flows. A strong ecological message is delivered in few words: if we have overlooked our responsibility for the Ocean, we deserve what we get. The threat of ultimate catastrophe sets up the ensuing quest. Gup City, its rulers, and army, which uses publishing rather than military terms in organizing, are introduced. The pages (soldiers) wear rectangular uniforms, reminiscent of the playing card soldiers serving the Queen of Hearts in Alice in Wonderland. With war looming, the melodramatic Prince Bolo emerges as a significant

character, out to save his ugly Princess—a reversal of the usual roles in princess rescue stories, a genre into which Haroun has been injected in Chapter 4. He still refuses to turn over the Disconnecter and simply go home. An unexpected twist is the return of Rashid Khalifa as a suspected spy.



Chapter 6, The Spy's Story

Chapter 6, The Spy's Story Summary

The Guppees are outraged, seeing two Earthlings in nightshirt among them. Racing to the balcony, Haroun shouts that his father is guilty only of losing the gift of gab. Rashid is mortified. A Page, Blabbermouth escorts Haroun and Iff to the Throne Room, where Rashid tells his story of being transported by food-induced "Rapture," aiming for Gup, but landing in the freezing Twilight Strip. He sees the black-tented Chupwala Army encampment, silent under Khattam-Shud's Silence Laws. Rashid flees, finds Chattergy's Wall in bad repair, and sees Batcheat and her handmaidens trying to touch it when the Chupwalas jump out and carry them away. In camp, Rashid overhears that at the Great Feast of Bezaban Batcheat's lips are to be sewn shut, she is to be renamed "Princess Khamosh" (silent), and sacrificed. Bolo issues a call to arms.

Assigned to show Haroun to his room, Blabbermouth gets lost, explains that the stupid uniforms are Batcheat's idea, turning the Pages into laughing stocks. Exhausted and exasperated, Haroun takes a swing at the Page, knocks off the cap, revealing a torrent of long, black hair. Girls may not serve as Pages. They must fool people every day for their entire lives to get anywhere. Blabbermouth suggests they go up on the roof where, in dazzling sunlight, Haroun views the Land of Gup as it readies for war. Blabbermouth juggles, reminding Haroun of his father's performances. They find Haroun's room and he is asleep in seconds awakening to find Blabbermouth squeezing his throat, warning him not to give away her secret.

Chapter 6, The Spy's Story Analysis

Rashid, it turns out, has dreamed his way to Kahani, and witnessed the kidnapping. Impetuous Bolo flares several times about chivalry, and preparations for war commence. When the Princess' fate is tied to the idol Bezaban, the flames are further fanned, but rescuing the Oceans remains an equal or higher priority for everyone but hapless Bolo. Blabbermouth is introduced as an upbeat character, in her ramblings explaining how Batcheat invents their horrible uniforms, in which classics are rewritten to star her fiancé. When she is revealed to be female, Blabbermouth delivers a brief tirade against sex discrimination, a topic that recurs. Her juggling on the roof, while allowing a reflection on how storytelling is a form of juggling tales, becomes important at the novel's climax.



Chapter 7, Into the Twilight Strip

Chapter 7, Into the Twilight Strip Summary

A fanfare in the Pleasure Garden brings a rustling of Pages as they loudly argue about what order in which to "collate." Haroun, still in his nightshirt, hurries after Blabbermouth and finds Rashid and Iff, who is happy to have his tool back. Proclaiming, "For Batcheat and the Ocean!" the Guppee forces move out. Rashid joins Haroun and Iff aboard Butt the Hoopoe. Iff provides "Laminations" to keep them warm. A low buzz grows into a roar as members of the armada debate strategy. General Kitab flits about, listening to insubordination with glee. Reading Haroun's mind, Butt asks what good Freedom of Speech is if it is not exercised through the Power of Speech. Bolo remains aloof, watching the horizon, intent on saving Batcheat. Mali proclaims tenderly that Bolo is doing it for love, which can be a foolish thing. As the armada enters the Twilight Strip, Haroun's courage weakens and the sky matches his fatalism. As the bleak coastline of Chup comes into view, the pollution worsens and the Ocean cools. On shore, there are no birds, wind, voices. The air stinks. Only the shadows seem alive. The Guppees land without opposition and Rashid is summoned to serve as guide.

In a clearing, a lone man furiously battles an invisible opponent—his own shadow—and it is fighting back in movements that do not match. The warrior is a striking figure with guards and pads make him look larger than he is. His eyes are terrifying—like film negatives—convincing Haroun that the Chupwalas must be blind in sunlight. Watching the silent, graceful dance of combat, Haroun thinks about the opposites in this war and reminds himself that silence has its own grace and beauty—just as speech can be graceless and ugly. Sensing the Guppee in the bush, the Shadow Warrior has his Shadow stretch out, rear up, and menace them, while he moves his hands furiously, emphatically, and tries to speak.

Chapter 7, Into the Twilight Strip Analysis

Chapter 7 watches the armada move out. The talkative Guppees debate the general's strategy the whole way, convincing the Earthlings that they will easily be conquered. The Ocean is worse polluted than feared and the coastline of Chup desolate. Recall that this novel is written while Rushdie is in hiding for having written *Satanic Verses*. He takes the liberty of pointing out that freedom of speech is useless if not exercised fully. Watching the fearsome warrior and his independent shadow, Haroun sees all the dualism vanish. The nature of shadow and light becomes a major theme going forward. Its first introduction is quite dramatic.



Chapter 8, Shadow Warriors

Chapter 8, Shadow Warriors Summary

Rashid explains that Chupwalas rarely speak, because of the Cultmaster's decrees. The Warrior, Mudra, is "speaking" Abhinaya, a Gesture Language. The Shadow joins in. Rashid tells Kitab and Bolo that Mudra is a friend, disgusted with the cruel cult of Bezaban, and has broken with Khattam-Shud, to whom he is second in authority. Chupwalas fear Khattam-Shud's sorcery, but if he were defeated, most would follow Mudra, who wants peace. The Shadow explains that because Chupwalas live in the dark, their shadows are independent, able to change. Sometimes a Shadow's personality is stronger than the Person and leads. They can quarrel but are partners. Khattam-Shud has, through black magic, become more shadow than Person, and they have in fact split and gone their separate ways. This means beating Khattam-Sud twice.

Kitab respectfully asks for Mudra's help, and the Shadow Warrior agrees, but asks which Khattam-Shud to attack first—the one holding Batcheat captive or the one ruining the Old Zone. Bolo insists that Person must have priority over Ocean, but Kitab decides to divide forces. Haroun volunteers to investigate the Old Zone, having for so long enjoyed wonderful stories that he must do his bit. He chooses Iff, Goopy, Bagha, and Mali to go along. They speed south until the water temperature drops and it grows hellishly filthy. The Plentimaws drop out. The rest come upon a forest standing up from the Ocean, into which Mali wades to clear a path—and disappears. Moving into the channel, they are caught in the "Web of Night."

Chapter 8, Shadow Warriors Analysis

Chapter 8 introduces Mudra and his Shadow, rebels against Khattam-Shud, who agree to join forces with the Guppees. Rushdie goes to great length to describe the Shadow Warrior and Warrior Shadow and explain how in a world of no light, shadows enjoy an independent existence. A Chupwala's eyes are reversed: pupil white and surrounding area black. The scenes in which Mudra struggles to make himself understood—and the general puts the prince in his place—build tension and bond the characters. The Shadow's taking on mythological forms (enumerated to let the mind pictures flash by) as he looms over the undiplomatic Prince provides a wonderful comeuppance—which Mudra watches in amusement. The question of priorities vanishes because there are two Khattam-Shuds to face. The war is about to be joined.



Chapter 9, The Dark Ship

Chapter 9, The Dark Ship Summary

Haroun's eyes adjust to the darkness as the captors drag them toward a huge black hole. When they reach the wall of night, few roots and weeds survive. Armed Chupwalas surround the party. They all have Mudra's reversed eyes but are scrawny, sniveling creatures wearing hooded black cloaks with the insignia of the "Sign of the Zipped Lips." They ride dark mechanical sea-horses. Realizing that the wall of night is a colossal ship, Haroun croaks: "Ark." The Chupwalas herd Haroun and Iff aboard and remove Butt's electronic brain. Iff hands Haroun a container of "Bite-a-Lite," which provides two minutes of bright emergency light when activated. Haroun hides it under his tongue. The Chupwalas use "darkbulbs" to help them see in the twilight. On deck, black cauldrons, piping, cranes, and personnel reveal this is a deadly factory ship. A massive arm is lowering something into the water on immense chains. Despite its size, the Dark Ship seems shadowy and impermanent, conjured up and fanciful. The Union of the Zipped Lips, hundreds of Khattam-Shud's loyalest servants, work monotonously at the minor tasks needed to destroy the Ocean.

The captives are pushed forward to meet an unimpressive creature, Khattam-Shud, who speaks of this "tiresome melodrama." Observing that the Cultmaster's body is fuzzy, Haroun figures it is the Shadow. As Khattam-Shud juggles Butt's brain-box and talks contemptibly about stories, Haroun sees in him Mr. Sengupta, and demands he return his mother. Khattam-Shud shocks Haroun and Iff by changing into an enormous monster, and then reverts, just showing off.

Chapter 9, The Dark Ship Analysis

Chapter 9 brings the captives to the Dark Ship. It and the crew appear to be shadows. Their task is to poison the Ocean. The purpose of the enormous crane is left mysterious but ominous. Khattam-Shud appears like a clerk—a double of the man who runs off with Haroun's mother—but shows off a bit by becoming a great monster. The "101" motif is meant to elicit the Arabian Nights. Haroun's reaction to see the "real" Cultmaster is so like Dorothy's when the curtain is pulled back in *The Wizard of Oz* that it is hard not to believe Rushdie has it in mind. Khattam-Shud's contempt for stories provides clear motivation for his crimes—although it appears they are dealing with his Shadow. The "darkbulbs" and "Bite-a-Lite" become important in the pages ahead.



Chapter 10, Haroun's Wish

Chapter 10, Haroun's Wish Summary

The absolute black created by darkbulbs gives way to twilight in the ship's hold. Chupwalas wear dark glasses to improve their vision. Khattam-Shud explains the Poison Blenders customized to ruin each type of story with its "anti-story." Every Stream of Story is getting a shadow-self to cancel it out. Concentrated poisons are being released, one by one, and soon the Ocean will be dead and Khattam-Shud's victory complete. The world is not for fun, but for controlling. Since stories cannot be ruled, they must be destroyed. The poisons are refrigerated, purified, and allowed to "breathe" like fine wine. The Cultmaster next explains "The Plug," which will exactly fit the Wellspring in the ocean bed, removing the only source of renewing Story Waters. Suddenly, Mali arrives, eludes guards, and flings roots and tendrils all over the Generator, bringing all machinery to a halt. With Khattam-Shud distracted, Haroun bites down on the emergency light, blinding the Chupwalas. Haroun pockets Butt's brain-box, dons a diver's suit, and notices that 1) Khattam-Shud has grabbed Iff, 2) the Chupwalas lack shadows, and 3) the Bite-a-Lite is making the Dark Ship lose three-dimensionality. If only the sun would come out, everything would become flat and shapeless. As time runs out, Haroun jumps overboard.

As he sinks, Haroun sees the water freshen. Chupwala divers are assembling the football stadium-sized Plug. Haroun sees that if he keeps the Source from being plugged, Khattam-Shud's plan will fail. Feeling the Wishwater bottle, Haroun surfaces, gasps for air, climbs onto a gangway, restores Butt the Hoopoe's brain-box (on the third try), drinks the Wishwater, and wishing with all his being for Kahani in an instant to turn so night and day are reversed. Eleven minutes pass. Chupwala searchers are about to grab him when Haroun's wish comes true with a mighty shudder. In Gup City, the supercomputers and gyroscopes that control the moon burn out. Beside the Dark Ship, searchers shriek as sunlight hits them, grow fuzzy, and melt into the lethal Ocean. The ship too loses shape. Poison is evaporating from the cauldrons, which deform, as does the gigantic crane holding the Plug. Iff and Mali escape and flee—"Mission accomplished!"

Entering the channel that Mali had cut, Butt blows a fuse. Mali begins to push as a strange, sad sucking sound reaches them: the end of the Dark Ship. The Plug falls harmlessly to the seabed. Mali pushes until exhausted, at which point Goopy and Bagha begin towing. Haroun thinks of Kitab, Mudra, Rashid, and especially Blabbermouth, hoping she has missed him. He is happy that Kahani will from now on be a sensible moon.



Chapter 10, Haroun's Wish Analysis

Chapter 10 details how and why Khattam-Shud is poisoning the Ocean, and the pieces fall into place for Haroun to be a hero. He figures out the Chupwalas' vulnerability to light, uses the Bite-a-Lite to blind them momentarily, puts on a diver's suit, and escapes. He realizes that as long as the Source of Stories is unobstructed, the Ocean can renew itself. He then remembers receiving the bottle of Wishwater, and fights his eleven-minute attention span to cause the Moon to turn. When it does, shadows melt away.



Chapter 11, Princess Batcheat

Chapter 11, Princess Batcheat Summary

Meanwhile, the Guppee Army marches on Chup City, where in the black ice Citadel Batcheat is imprisoned. Chupwalas wear black nosewarmers to prevent icicles from forming in the bitter cold, and the Pages of Gup don red nosewarmers and helmets with brightly-lit headbands, making them look like angels or saints. The combined light lets them see their opponents and dazzles the Chupwalas. Rashid sees it as a war of buffoons. The battle takes place on the wide plain of Bat-Mat-Karo, with hills at either end for the commanders' convenience. While the commanders are eating, a Chupwala rides up under a white flag of truce, bringing greetings from Khattam-Shud, who refuses to negotiate. If the Guppees do not retreat, they will be annihilated and Bolo will watch Batcheat's mouth being sewn shut. The messenger has been instructed to entertain them. Blabbermouth warns that this is a trick, but is silenced. The ambassador pulls out an array of objects whose juggling hypnotizes the audience. Only Blabbermouth sees the bomb, which she plucks from the air and throws harmlessly away. The effort dislodges her helmet and Bolo fires her. Mudra hires her instantly.

As the battle is joined, the black-nosed Chupwalas look too frightening to lose, while the Guppees are still arguing orders. The talk unifies the Guppees, however, and they fight with common purpose, while the Chupwalas are a rabble, silence and secrecy having created distrust in the ranks. Most mutiny or surrender. The Library of Gup enters Chup City in triumph. Maidens rush out to kiss Liberators. Bolo shouts in his usual dashing but foolish way, challenging Khattam-Shud and vowing to rescue Batcheat. Chupwalas, who have broken the vow of silence, tell him to listen to her singing. Rashid has never heard anything as horrible. Bolo prepares to storm the Citadel when the ground shakes and the sun comes out. The shrouds of silence and shadow are torn away, the Citadel begins melting. The colossal ice-idol of Bezaban falls, smashing the remains of the Citadel and breaking apart as it tumbles down the terrace. Rashid tries to warn a sniveling, clerkish fellow with no shadow running for his life, but too late: Khattam-Shud is crushed to bits.

Peace breaks out between Chup and Gup. In Gup City, all of the heroes are promoted to top positions. The Old Zone is to be restored as soon as possible. Rashid is awarded the "Order of the Open Mouth" and his water supply is to be restored. The King proposes that all sing to celebrate victory, cooperation, and the wedding, and prevents a riot by overruling Bolo's suggestion that Batcheat solo. It is appropriate that the people serenade the couple. An Egghead delivers to Haroun the Walrus' summons to explain destroying his machinery.



Chapter 11, Princess Batcheat Analysis

Chapter 11 figures to display a great battle, but it ends up an anti-climax, as the Citadel of Gup melts when Kahani begins to rotate on its axis and the sun comes out. The forces of disunity fostered among the Chupwalas leave them open to desertion, while the Guppees' penchant for debating everything creates esprit de corps. Freedom of speech is vindicated. When Blabbermouth foils a suicide bomber, she is sacked by Bolo but has no need for a sexual harassment suit, because Mudra hires her on the spot, but she taunts her ex-boss' gullibility. When the sun comes out, the great idol topples, and the head squashes the fleeing Khattam-Shud. The scene suggests the falling house in *The Wizard of Oz*. As the Tin Woodman gets a heart, so the mechanical Hoopoe receives a replacement brain. Everyone is promoted, peace reigns, and restoring the Oceans is given top priority. The Princess' horrible singing voice comes front and center, shattering windows and nearly causing a riot. Bolo remains love-sick blind, but her Father judiciously suggests the people serenade them on their wedding day.



Chapter 12, Was It the Walrus?

Chapter 12, Was It the Walrus? Summary

Haroun goes to P2C2E House alone to face the music. Finding the Walrus' office, Haroun knocks and waits, reflecting that this is where he intended to come in the first place when he arrived on Kahani. Entering, Haroun sees all of the dignitaries and his friends, grinning, and is flabbergasted. The Walrus grants Haroun any wish in exchange for his service. What Haroun wants, no one can grant— even in a Sea with Plentimaw Fish. The Walrus talks about happy endings. As they are so rare, P2C2E House has learned to synthesize them. Most people would agree that what has happened to Haroun lately is impossible. Haroun boldly asks for a happy ending not just to his adventure but for his sad city as well. Haroun realizes that Rashid has missed his appointment in K and Snooty Buttoo will be angry, but Butt reads his mind and says that when one travels with Butt time is on one's side. "Leave late, arrive early!"

It is night when they arrive at the houseboat. In the morning, as Snooty Buttoo takes them to the show, Haroun wonders how the adventure could have taken less than a night but remembers nothing is impossible. Haroun finds on his pillow a note from his friends on Kahani, inviting him to return whenever he wants and stay as long as he likes, and reminding him to remember that when one flies with Butt the Hoopoe, time is on one's side. With the note is a perfect miniature hoopoe. The stage is decorated but scowling faces show that the audience does not like Buttoo. As Rashid begins "Haroun and the Sea of Stories," Haroun is relieved he has not forgotten and the audience is in the palm of Rashid's hand. Listeners see the similarity between Khattam-Shud and Snooty Buttoo, understand the Chupwalas' hatred for the Cultmaster, and begin chanting: "Mister Buttoo—khattam-shud." Buttoo and company escape, being pelted with rubbish, and are never seen again. Rashid is cheerful in spite of not being paid.

Reaching the sad city, Rashid skips in muddy water like a boy and soon Haroun catches the mood. He notices that everyone is jumping, splashing, and laughing. An old man tells Haroun not to sing Tragedy Songs. The Walrus has granted Haroun's wish. They have even remembered the city's name: Kahani. Miss Oneeta hails them. She has said good riddance to her husband, taken a job in a candy factory, and has several admirers. In the doorway stands beautiful Soraya. Father and son freeze, wondering if it is the Walrus' work. Soraya is sorry and wants to come back. They all agree that Sengupta is khattam-shud. That night, Haroun tells the miniature Butt the Hoopoe that it is good to know it is here, but Haroun does not need to go anywhere, and puts it under his pillow and sleeps. In the morning—Haroun's birthday—he finds new clothes and a new clock. His parents are waiting for him, mother singing. Time is again on the move.



Chapter 12, Was It the Walrus? Analysis

The mock severity with which Chapter 11 ends, Haroun being summoned to explain why he has destroyed all of the computer equipment, carries over into the start of Chapter 12, as Haroun's friends all refuse to vouch for him with the Walrus. It is too risky. When Haroun enters the Walrus' office, everyone is waiting and laughing at the joke they have played on him. He is granted a wish, although he cannot see how it could come true. Father and son return to Earth, and time has reversed so Rashid has not missed his performance. Haroun worries about everything. Rashid recounts the contents of chapters 1-11, the voters connecting Khattam-Shud with Snooty Buttoo and running him out of town. Haroun cannot accept that the ending he wishes—his hometown growing happy—has been accomplished, and certainly does not anticipate seeing his family reunited. This happens, however, on his birthday, and he sees that time is on the move again.



Characters

Haroun Khalifa

The novel's protagonist, Haroun is the adolescent son of Rashid and Soraya Khalifa. Khalifa in Arabic means "caliph," and the legendary Caliph Haroun-al-Rashid appears frequently in the Arabian Nights tales. Father and son here share his name. Haroun begins the book as a happy boy in an unhappy city. He would like to have had siblings, but is an only child. He accompanies his storytelling father to engagements. This ends when the upstairs neighbor runs off with Haroun's mother and Haroun becomes brooding, distrusting, and easily angered. His father's smashing of the household clocks at 11 AM—the time of his mother's disappearance—makes it impossible for Haroun to concentrate on anything for more than eleven minutes. Rashid, meanwhile, has lost his "gift of gab."

Father and son go to a political rally. On the eve, Haroun meets Iff the Water Genie disconnecting Rashid's Story Tap, but manages to steal Iff's Disconnecting Tool to hold hostage for a reconnect order. Iff produces a tiny mechanical hoopoe bird which enlarges and carries them to the invisible watery moon Kahani, source of all stories. Haroun intends to talk to the Walrus, Iff's boss, but a war breaks out over polluting the Ocean of the Streams of Story, and Haroun volunteers to spy on the culprit, Khattam-Sud. Haroun and his companions are taken captive and brought to the Dark Ship, where poisons are being brewed to kill all stories in the Ocean. Haroun manages to escape, drinks a magic potion, Wishwater, and concentrates beyond the 11-minute mark to make the Moon spin on its axis. The appearance of sunlight makes the Dark Ship melt, saving the Ocean.

For his heroics, Haroun is granted another wish, but doubts that it can be fulfilled. He asks that his sad town be made happy, and returning, he sees it has happened. Coming home, he sees his mother in the doorway, sorry for having strayed. The next day is Haroun's birthday. Having become bitter and cynical, Haroun sees it is time to move on.

Rashid Khalifa

The father of the novel's protagonist, Haroun, Rashid is a storyteller known by fans as the "Ocean of Notions" and by detractors the "Shah of Blah." Rashid has plump red lips, slightly bulging eyes, a wobbly stomach, mysteriously wiggling eyebrows, and witchy finger movements that annoy Haroun. When Rashid's wife, Soraya, leaves him for the upstairs neighbor, Rashid loses the "gift of gab," being able to say only "Ark." He and Haroun rue the next speaking engagement.

During the night, Rashid is transported by a food-induced "Rapture" to the Earth's invisible, watery second moon, Kahani, to which Haroun has earlier been taken by Butt the Hoopoe and Iff the Water Genie. While he aims at waking up in Gup, Rashid lands



instead in the freezing Twilight Strip. There he observes the black-tented Chupwala Army encampment and at Chattergy's Wall witnesses Princess Batcheat's kidnapping. Rashid agrees to serve as guide to the Guppee Army, which sets out to liberate her. This proves lucky, because Rashid understands Abhinaya, the ancient "Language of Gesture" used in Indian classical dance, which is Shadow-Warrior Mudra's only means of communication. Mudra's presence with the Guppee Army helps turn many Chupwalas, resulting in a swift and bloodless victory.

Rashid is awarded the "Order of the Open Mouth" and his water supply is to be reconnected. Returning to Earth, Rashid tells "Haroun and the Sea Stories" and the audience identifies the villain, Khattam-Shud with the politician Snooty Buttoo who hires Rashid. Rashid does not mind not getting paid. They return to find their sad town dancing in the rain. Rashid catches the mood, but Haroun is depressed and pessimistic. Haroun has wished for this happy ending along with the restoration of his family. They find a repentant Soraya at the door, and Rashid takes her back.

Khattam-Shud

Hindustani for "completely finished" or "over and done with," Khattam-Shud is the novel's antagonist, the "Arch-Enemy of all Stories, even of Language itself," the "Prince of Silence and the Foe of Speech," and the "Cultmaster of Bezaban." Khattam-Shud rules the dark hemisphere of Earth's second moon, the invisible, watery Kahani (meaning "story") from the Citadel of Chup. Inside stands a colossal, tongueless, grinning idol carved out of black ice, Bezaban. Living in perpetual darkness, Chupwalas have developed a special arrangement with their shadows. While attached at the feet, Shadows have minds of their own. Khattam-Shud's has taken the added step of detaching. This leaves two evil powers to be conquered.

Khattam-Shud's shadow has seized the south polar region, the Old Zone, and anchored his enormous Dark Ship directly above the Wellspring of Stories. The Dark Ship produces poisons customized to serve as anti-stories for every genre. Khattam-Shud cares only about control. Since he cannot control stories, he must poison and kill them. When his elite forces, bearing the "Sign of the Zipped Lips," capture Haroun Khalifa spying for the Guppees, Khattam-Shud proudly shows him around his operation, assuming he will not escape to make a report. Scoring stories, Khattam-Shud's Shadow swells to 101-feet tall, with 101 arms, then shrinks back to the unassuming visage of Mr. Sengupta. Haroun escapes, forces the Moon to spin on its axis by the power of wishing and willpower, and Shadow-Khattam-Shud melts along with his Dark Ship.

The real Khattam-Shud has instituted a "Cult of Dumbness" and decreed "Silence Laws." Some fanatic devotees sew their lips shut to die of hunger and thirst as sacrifices for Bezaban. When the Guppee Army camps outside the Citadel of Chup, Khattam-Shud sends word that he will not bargain for Prince Batcheat, whose lips he intends to sew shut before offering her as a sacrifice. His ambassador fails in his attempt as a suicide bomber. As the Army masses at the gates, the Moon spins on its axis and sunlight begins the melting process of the Citadel. Khattam-Shud, running for his life in



his normal guise as a clerk, is killed when the head of Bezaban rolls down a hill and squashes him.

Blabbermouth

A Page (soldier) in the Library (army) of Gup, the easily disoriented Blabbermouth is leading visiting Earthling Haroun Khalifa to his room in the palace on the invisible watery moon, Kahani, when Haroun knocks off her hat, revealing she is a female.

Blabbermouth delivers a speech on how women have to fight all the time for rights and complains about Princess Batcheat getting kidnapped and endangering all of Gup—on top of designing their ridiculous uniforms. Blabbermouth's speech patterns with a heavy emphases of "Valley Girl" is deftly indicated by italics. Haroun develops a crush on her, but she has eyes for Mudra, who hires her when Prince Bolo discovers on the battlefield that she is female and fires her. An expert juggler, Blabbermouth grabs away a live bomb being juggled by an ambassador from Khattam-Shud and saves the assembled military brass. She kisses Haroun goodbye when he departs and pens on behalf of all his new friends an invitation to return any time he wants.

Prince Bolo

A gallant but rather foolish prince in the Kingdom of Gup, Bolo leads the forces seeking to rescue his beloved fiancée, Princess Batcheat Chattergy from the clutches of Khattam-Shud. Only because of popular demands does he accept rescuing the poisoned Ocean as well. Bolo derives from the Hindustani verb *bolna*, and means "Speak!" Speak Bolo does, always with dramatic flourish and always making himself look slightly foolish. He is blind to Batcheat's physical ugliness and atrocious voice and takes offense when anyone suggests she is less than heavenly. Several times General Kitab has to bridle him in after undiplomatic outbursts. At their wedding celebration, his new father-in-law prevents a riot by arranging for Batcheat not to sing as Bolo has suggested.

Butt

The name of two characters in the novel, the first is the driver of a mail coach on Earth and the second is a double-bed-sized mechanical hoopoe. They are both given to traveling at high speed, share verbal patterns (for example, reiterating the conjunction "but" three times), and have physical traits reminiscent of one another. The human's hair is feather-like and the mechanical bird's feathers are hair-like.

Mr. Butt, self-proclaimed driver of the "Number One Super Express Mail Coach to the Valley of K," races Haroun and Rashid Khalifa at dangerous speeds to the lake. Speaking in a booming voice, Butt the Driver promises to get the Khalifas to the Tunnel of I (or J) by sunset, to enjoy the spectacular view. Although the hour is late, Butt declares it "no problem!" He rockets away with a call of "Varoom!" Passengers howl as



he continues accelerating, and people expecting mail service whom he passes by curse.

Butt the Hoopoe on the invisible watery moon, Kahani, is a thinking machine shaped like a crested bird, on the scale of a double-bed. This Butt provides transportation for Haroun Khalifa and Iff the Water Genie from Snooty Buttoo's opulent houseboat, Arabian Nights Plus One, on Lake Dull to the Earth's second moon, the source of all stories in the world. This Butt communicates telepathically, since moving its beak would upset aerodynamics. Butt the Hoopoe takes Haroun and Iff the Water Genie to spy on Khattam-Shud. In the Old Zone they are captured by Chupwalas and taken to the Dark Ship. Butt's mechanical brain is removed and given to Khattam-Shud, who rejoices at the opportunity to explore its mysteries. Having come up with a plan to escape, Haroun gets the brain back, reconnects it on the third try, and saves the day. On the way home, Butt shorts out and has to be towed in, but in the end gets a replacement brain.

Mr. Buttoo

The top Man in the ruling political party in the Valley of K, "Snooty" Buttoo is shiny-faced, slickly dressed, but with a scruffy mustache. Surrounded by 101 armed soldiers through an obviously unhappy population, he leads Rashid and Haroun Khalifa to his swan-shaped houseboat and they are rowed out onto Dull Lake. Buttoo demands from storyteller Rashid happy, praising stories to counteract opponents' evil stories about him. The houseboat is named Arabian Nights Plus One. The Khalifas return from adventures on the Earth's invisible second moon, Kahani, with "Haroun and the Sea of Stories." As Rashid tells the hypnotic tale, the crowd identifies Snooty Buttoo with villain Khattam-Shud, and run Buttoo out of town. Buttoo's scruffy mustache is shared by the Walrus on Kahani.

King Chattergy

A frail, white-haired gentleman who wears a gold circlet and a tragic look, the King of Chup is speechless at the loss of his only child, Princess Batcheat. When she is rescued, the King is wise enough to let the people serenade the newlyweds rather than risk an uprising by letting her sing with her ear-shattering voice.

Princess Batcheat Chattergy

Deriving from the Hindustani "baat-cheet," meaning "chit-chat," Batcheat is Princess of Gup, only daughter of the elderly King and betrothed to flamboyant but slightly embarrassing Prince Bolo. Batcheat is legendary for glass-shattering, ugly singing and a nose and teeth which are legendary, and that never need be spoken about. She is instantly recognizable. When she foolishly goes to the invisible wall that separates her father's lands from the enemy Chupwalas, Batcheat and her entourage are kidnapped to Khattam-Shud's Citadel, where plans are made to sew her lips shut at the Great Feast of Bezaban, rename her "Princess Khamosh" (silent), and sacrifice her to the idol.



Batcheat is rescued when Haroun Khalifa's wish that the Moon Kahani begin to spin on its axis comes true, and sunlight melts the shadowy Citadel. Guppees forgive Batcheat's foolishness in getting kidnapped, but threaten revolt if she is allowed to sing at her wedding.

Goopy and Bagha

A pair of Plentimaw Fish that accompany Haroun Khalifa on his adventures on Earth's second, invisible and watery moon, Kahani, Goopy and Bagha get their names from the two goofy heroes in a movie by famed Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray. Their talkativeness contrasts with taciturn Mali, the Floating Gardener, who accompanies Haroun and Iff the Water Genie on their adventures. As they near the Old Zone in the south, the water grows so poisonous and frigid that Goopy and Bagha can go no farther. They remain on guard, however, and tow a disabled Butt the Hoopoe back to Gup City after it blows a fuse during the fight at the Dark Ship.

Iff

A spirited, outspoken blue-bearded water genie from Earth's invisible second moon, Kahani, Iff is sent by the Walrus to disconnect the Story Faucet in Rashid Khalifa's bathroom aboard politico Snooty Buttoo's opulent houseboat, Arabian Nights Plus One. Father and son having exchanged rooms, Haroun meets the genie and wrests away Iff's Disconnecting Tool. This forces Iff to take him to Kahani to get a reconnection order and allow his frustrated storyteller father to resume his career. All water genies wear great purple turbans that look like onions and flaring pajamas that look like aubergines (eggplants), but can be distinguished by whisker color. Iff serves as Haroun's guide on Kahani, sticking close to the Disconnecting Tool and suggesting that Haroun simply return home. Blabbermouth the Page returns the tool when she puts Haroun to bed, but Haroun joins the war effort and takes Iff with him to spy on Khatam-Shud. They are captured and Iff is suspended over a vat of acid poison, but when the sun breaks out the acid evaporates, and Iff is saved. For his bravery, Iff is promoted to Chief Water Genie.

Soraya Khalifa

The mother of the novel's protagonist, Haroun, Soraya Khalifa is introduced happily singing but wishing she had more than one child. When her storytelling husband spends too much time on his career, Soraya abandons him for their unimaginative upstairs neighbor, Mr. Sengupta, who plants discord in her heart at every opportunity. Soraya disappears until the end of the story, when she is waiting for husband and son when they return from their adventures on the hidden moon, Kahani.



General Kitab

Commander of the Library (army) of Gup on Earth's invisible, watery second moon, Kahani, Kitab, whose name in Arabic means "book," speaks in a blustery, aristocratic British manner, informing the citizenry of the abduction of Princess Batcheat, and declaring that a state of war exists with Khattam-Shud and the Chupwalas. Kitab has to contend with Batcheat's fiancé, the blustering, foolish-looking, and undiplomatic Prince Bolo. Kitab enjoys how the Guppees debate every order he issues. In the end, it creates esprit de corps and the Guppees win the war in short order.

Mali

Meaning "gardener" in Hindustani, Mali is the name of a plant creature on earth's watery second moon, Kahani, described as a "Floating Gardener." Mali first appears as protagonist Haroun Khalif and guide Iff the Water Genie are being transported at high speed to Gup City. Mali appears as a large patch of thick, tough vegetation easily keeping pace with Butt the Hoopoe. It then rears up and knots itself into the shape of a man with a lilac-colored flower serving as a mouth and cluster of weeds forming a hat. Mali turns to running on the water and speaks with a voice as soft as flower petals but in an abrupt manner. Mali untwists twisted Story Streams like weeds. He is like a "hairdresser of the Sea of Stories." Mali reports that the pollution is lethal, its nature unknown; it started recently and is spreading fast. It could take years to clean up. After carving a passage through weeds in the Old Zone, Mali escapes capture by Khattam-Shud's men. He floats slowly to the Dark Ship and creates a diversion, allowing Haroun to escape. Afterwards, when Butt the Hoopoe blows a fuse, Mali pushes the party until his strength gives out.

Mudra

A "Shadow Warrior," Second-in-command to Khattam-Shud, Mudra is fed up with the Prince of Silence, and joins forces with Rashid Khalifa and the Guppees. Mudra speaks Abhinaya, the "Language of Gesture," a kind of pantomime, which Rashid is able to interpret. Mudra's defection encourages other Chupwalas to follow, resulting in a swift, unbloody war. Mudra hires the Page Blabbermouth when Prince Bolo fires her for being female. Blabbermouth already at that point has developed a crush on the green-faced, red-lipped, dramatic-eyed warrior.

The Senguptas

The Khalifas' upstairs neighbors, Mr. Sengupta (given name never mentioned) is a clerk in the offices of the City Corporation. Skinny and whiny-voiced, Mr. Sengupta criticizes Rashid Khalifa's storytelling and runs off with his wife, Soraya Khalifa. Sengupta is allegorized as the story-in-a-story's villain, Khattam Shud.



Loud and "wobbly-fat," Oneeta is the complete opposite of her husband. She takes a liking to young Haroun Khalifa, her downstairs neighbor, and is devastated when Mr. Sengupta runs away with Soraya Khalifa. She insists on being called Miss Oneeta. Oneeta identifies Haroun's 11-minute attention span with the time of his mother's disappearance: 11 o'clock. She says the cause is "pussy-collar-jeeceal [psychological] sadness." While the Khalifas are away on their adventure, Oneeta says good riddance to her husband, takes a job in a candy factory, and attracts admirers.

I. M. D. Walrus

The Grand Comptroller of Gup, a land of perpetual sunshine on Earth's watery second moon, Kahani, the Walrus directs the Eggheads whose "Processes Too Complicated To Explain" (P2C2E) control the moon's rotation. The Walrus is, like the Eggheads, hairless and shiny-headed. He is honored with the name because of his luxuriant mustache, which by Haroun Khalifa's standards is but a piece of dead mouse under his nose. It reminds Haroun of politician Snooty Buttoo back on Earth. The Walrus in conjunction with the Eggheads is a reference to the Beatles' song "I am the Walrus," which refers to Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*.



Objects/Places

Abhinaya

The "Language of Gesture" used in Indian classical dance, Abhinaya is Mudra's means of communication. Fortunately, Rashid Khalifa is able to translate it for the Guppee.

Alifbay

An imaginary country whose name derives from the Hindustani word for "alphabet," Alifbay is where the earthbound parts of this novel occur.

Arabian Nights Plus One

Political candidate Snooty Buttoo's opulent houseboat on Lake Dull, Arabian Nights Plus One is the site of Haroun Khalifa's fateful meeting with Iff the Water Genie and the beginning of the story of the flight to the hidden, watery moon, Kahani. The windows are shaped like legendary birds, fish, and beasts. The living room is lined with book shelves, including a rare collection, *The Oceans of the Streams of Story*.

Bezaban

Derived from the Hindustani for "Without a Tongue," Bezaban is a colossal, tongueless, grinning idol carved out of black ice, standing in the heart of the Citadel of Chup. Under Khattam-Shud's Silence Laws and the "Cult of Dumbness," some fanatic devotees sew their lips shut to die of hunger and thirst as sacrifices for Bezaban. War breaks out when Princess Batcheat Chattergy is kidnapped and threatened with becoming a sacrifice on Bezaban's feast day. At the end of the war with the Guppees, as the sun comes out for the first time ever overhead, the great idol begins to melt. The head rolls down the hill, with ears and nose breaking off, and crushes Khattam-Shud before dissolving.

Chup

The kingdom of darkness and enforced silence on Earth's invisible second moon, Kahani, Chup is separated by a "Twilight Strip" from the Land of Gup. The word chup in Hindustani means "quiet," and the people of Chup are called Chupwalas—"quiet fellows." Following orders from Khattam-Shud, the Cultmaster of Bezaban, the Chupwalas have given up speaking and are obediently and systematically poisoning the Oceans. Most are unhappy with the regime—and their independent-minded shadows are even more discontent. War is imminent when Haroun Khalifa arrives from earth. It begins when Chupwalas kidnap Princess Batcheat Chattergy and prepare to sacrifice



her to the idol Bezaban. Dissent in the Chup camp leads to a quick, bloodless victory by the Guppees, who are welcomed into the city as liberators.

Dark Ship

Khattam-Shud's factory ship anchored in the Old Zone over the Wellspring of Stories, the Dark Ship is a shadowy factory ship producing poisons customized for every genre. Chupwalas capture spies Haroun Khalifa and Iff and take them aboard, where Haroun's careful observations and Iff's magic "Bite-a-Lite" technology and wishing potion allow Haroun to escape and wish the moon Kahani to begin spinning on its axis. Exposed to sunlight, the Dark Ship melts and the great Plug that is being manufactured to plug the source of all stories drops harmlessly to the ocean floor.

Dull Lake

Located in the country of Alifbay, Dull Lake is a take-off on Dal Lake in Kashmir. On this beautiful body of water, smells, winds, and lightning arise to match people's moods. Storyteller Rashid Khalifa and his adolescent son Haroun spend the night on political candidate Snooty Buttoo's opulent houseboat, Arabian Nights Plus One, where the trip to the Earth's second moon, Kahani, begins.

Gup

Meaning "gossip," "nonsense," or "fib" in Hindustani, Gup is the name of the hemisphere of the Earth's second, invisible and watery moon, Kahani, that is always "bathed in sunlight." Gup is always in a state of near-war with the land always plunged in perpetual darkness and enforced silence, Chup. The capital of the Land of Gup, the City of Gup, is built on a 1,001-island Archipelago and its waterways are packed with worried citizens, Guppees, as protagonist Haroun Khalifa arrives. A multicolored Lagoon separates the City from the mainland. At its edge is the formal Pleasure Garden with fountains and domes surrounding the gigantic Palace, Parliament, and P2C2E House. The military uses bibliographic categories: "Library" (army), "Volumes" (regiments), "Chapters" (platoons), and "Pages" (soldiers). Each Volume has a Title Page, and the overall commander is General Kitab (book). When the King's only child, Princess Batcheat Chattergy is kidnapped by the Chupwalas, the Library goes to war. The Guppees' key to swift and bloodless victory proves to be their penchant for discussing every order that comes down. They develop supreme esprit de corps, accept the dispirited Chupwalas' surrenders, and become liberators of Chup.

Kahani

Meaning "story" in Hindustani, Kahani designates two places in this novel. First, Kahani is Earth's second moon, a watery body, orbiting so fast that it cannot be detected in a constantly shifting orbit that brings it over every place on Earth on a regular basis so



that the stories generated there can be disseminated to all peoples. Most of the action takes place there. Kahani does not rotate on its axis, so one hemisphere enjoys perpetual daylight and the other perpetual darkness. In between is a Twilight Strip with an invisible, broken down wall. Inhabitants of the two hemispheres, bright Gup and dark Chup, adapt to light conditions and have psychologies that reflect light and darkness. The evil Khattam-Shud is defeated when protagonist Haroun Khalifa wishes the moon to rotate. Sunlight dissolves the shadowy structures of Chup.

At the end of the book, the people of the Khalifas' home town, who are normally so depressed that they cannot remember its name, are revived by rainfall and recall the name: Kahani.

The Ocean of the Streams of Story

The source for all earthbound storytellers like Rashid Khalifa, the Ocean of the Streams of Story on Earth's watery, hidden second moon, Kahani, is growing polluted through the evil workings of Khattam-Shud and his dark Chupwala followers. Rashid and Haroun Rashid lead a successful attempt to foil the plots. Aboard Snooty Buttoo's houseboat is a bound collection of tales by this title. With a billion and one different currents, each a different color, the Ocean is weaving a complex tapestry of tales. The stories remain liquid and changeable. Various parts of the Ocean contain various kinds of stories. The Ocean is the "biggest library in the universe." By keeping Khattam-Shud from plugging the spring in the Old Zone, the heroes guarantee fresh story lines to counteract the poisons.

Plentimaw Fish

Fish shaped like Angel Fish but the size of giant sharks, Pentimaw Fish have bodies covered with maws (mouths), with which they eat Story Streams in the Ocean of Kahani, mix them together internally, and spew them back to form new stories. For this they are termed "hunger artists." They mate for life, travel in pairs, and speak in poetic couplets. Their part in the allegory is to illustrate Mr. Buttoo's jibe at grieving Rashid Khalifa that there are "plenty more fish in the sea," while he pines for his Angel Fish.

Processes Too Complicated To Explain

P2C2E are developed by Eggheads, directed by the Walrus in their laboratory in the City of Gup. The greatest invention consists of supercomputers and gyroscopes that prevent the Earth's second moon, Kahani, from being detected by humans and from spinning on its axis. Lesser but important P2C2E inventions include mechanical birds, and the "Bite-a-Lite" that gets Haroun Khalifa off the Dark Ship. Defeating Khattam-Shad, who is poisoning the Ocean, requires rotating the moon so the sun can melt the shadows. Haroun accomplishes this by wishing. It burns out the equipment, and it appears that he is in big trouble with the Walrus for the damage. Quite the opposite, Haroun is a hero.



Town of G

A town near the Khalifas' home in the country of Alifbay, the Town of G is where Rashid discovers he has lost his "gift of gab." Performing on behalf of a politician's campaign, Rashid can only say, "Ark." The politico's thugs take him and Haroun to the Bus Depot to obtain transportation to the next rally site, the Valley of K in the Mountains of M, warning he had better improve when he performs there. The Bus Depot is crowded, noisy, and dusty. Bus drivers delight in starting their engines to attract passengers with no intention of leaving. Haroun is befriended by Mr. Butt, a Mail Coach driver, who takes father and son aboard.

Valley of K

Nestled in the Mountains of M in the country of Alifbay, the Valley of K offers a spectacular vista when viewed from the Tunnel of I (also known as J). Fields of gold (growing saffron) and mountains of silver (white with snow) surround Dull Lake.

Themes

Power

Haroun and the Sea of Stories appears to be a tale of classic dualism: light versus dark, with light having the characteristics of goodness, creativity, and proration, and dark being poisonous, destructive, and vindictive. The story is more nuanced than that however.

First, those who live in perpetual darkness have no say in their fate. Generations before the novel begins, the genius Guppee scientists of "Processes Too Complicated To Explain" (P2C2E) House unilaterally decide to stop the moon Kahani from rotating on its axis, casting those in the opposite hemisphere, the Chupwalas, into perpetual darkness. The Chupwalas have adapted to pitch darkness, biologically and technologically, and would appear to have nothing negative about them until an evil ruler, Khattam-Shud, appears. He seizes power, rules by instilling fear, imposes a regimen of silence, and establishes the cult of Bezaban, a tongueless deity. Khattam-Shud cares only about power and control. What he cannot control, he aims to destroy, and he cannot control the stories being created by the Ocean of the Streams of Story. He is, therefore, synthesizing "anti-stories" fitted to each genre and plans on plugging the Wellspring of new stories.

Power on the Guppee side seems dispersed. Hereditary royalty exists and receives lip service, but has nothing important to do. The legislature, or "Chatterbox," seems merely to discuss. The Walrus, head of P2C2E House, appears at all top functions and seems to receive deference. It is responsible for stewardship of the Ocean of the Streams of Story, but has been negligent. The Army, organized bibliographically rather than militarily, plays a major role in Guppee society, but discusses every order that comes down from the commanding General Kitab. Kitab not only puts up with such behavior but encourages and participates in it. To the visiting Earthlings, it looks as though the Guppee army will lose the war with the Chupwalas, but it turns out that healthy debate creates esprit de corps, while Khattam-Shud's despotism creates mutiny. In the end, however, it is the return of Kahani's rotation that makes a difference, erasing the dualism, melting the shadows, and allowing everyone to share.

Storytelling

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is a story-within-a-story about storytelling, a universal human activity. Salman Rushdie creates a mythological second moon for the Earth, orbiting so fast it cannot be detected in an ever-shifting path such that it overflies every part of earth annually. Stories are created at the center of this moon, appropriately named Kahani (Hindustani for "story"), and surface in the Old Zone from a great Wellspring. From there, 1,001 Pure Streams of Story flow away from the polar region to



the rest of the Ocean of the Streams of Story. The number 1,001, sometimes lowered to 101 and raised to a billion and one, elicits the classic Arabian Nights collection of tales.

The Ocean of the Streams of Story is rated better than the best of Earth's libraries because the colorful currents are all fluid, flowing together in new combinations, eternally new. Plentimaw Fish swallow story bits, combine them in their bellies, and return them to the Ocean. Churning is good for stories.

Various genres, however, require different elements in certain orders to be satisfying. The villain, Khattam-Shud, seeing that he cannot control the elements of story, decides to destroy all stories and storytelling. He uses slave labor to brew and properly age poisons specific to each genre, such as wrong or mistimed endings. He is releasing these "anti-stories" from the neglected Old Zone. His larger task, however, is to manufacture a perfectly-fitted, football field-sized Plug to cut off the Wellspring, which is capable of renewing the Ocean. Youthful protagonist Haroun Khalifa thwarts this effort and saves the Ocean. The Guppees vow to make Ocean renewal a top priority.

Professional storyteller Rashid Khalifa, who partakes in this dream with his son, regains his "gift of gab" and tells the story to voters, who identify the candidate with Khattam-Shud and run him out of town. He again juggles tales to produce a seamless story. The book ends with an ending happier than Haroun can wish—a happy ending, of course, being his reward for heroism.

Beauty

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is a work of and about beauty. Salman Rushdie writes beautiful, descriptive prose. Most of the time it is in standard English, but for color he effects the intonations and unique word stock of the Indian subcontinent. The terrifying race along treacherous mountain roads is undertaken in order to enjoy an unrivaled view of the Valley of K at sunset. Adolescent protagonist Haroun Khalifa is transported to Earth's invisible second moon, Kahani, the source of all the world's stories. It is mostly covered by the Ocean of the Streams of Story, beneath whose surface flow every-changing colors and patterns: things of pure beauty.

Kahani is not exclusively a place of beauty, however. It has been stopped from rotating on its axis, so one hemisphere enjoys perpetual light and the other perpetual darkness. On the bright side, Haroun (and all Guppees) see and hear ugliness in Princess Batcheat Chattergy. They choose not to discuss her appearance but balk at her infernal singing. Her fiancé is too blinded by love to see or hear the truth. Batcheat has successfully incorporated her warped idea of literature into the Pages' uniforms.

On the dark side, Haroun perceives a different kind of beauty in the way shadows have adapted to permanent darkness. They grow independent of the people to whom they are joined at the feet, acting as they wish. A Shadow Warrior and his Warrior Shadow perform a virtual ballet of great beauty. Haroun sees that strict dualism is wrong. In the end, Kahani has to be returned to rotating in order for the villain, Khattam-Shud, to be



kept from utterly poisoning the Ocean of the Streams of Story. Light melts shadow. One wonders how the inhabitants of Kahani will adapt to this new situation and if they will do better caring for the beauty of the Ocean, at which they have been given a second chance. Back on Earth, a good rainfall has refreshed the Khalifas' dismal hometown, making everyone sing and dance with joy and Haroun sees time is again on the move.



Style

Point of View

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is a story within a story, ostensibly told in the first person by an unnamed narrator who asserts himself three times. The first time is at the beginning of the novel, claiming to have heard about a certain sad town that has forgotten its name. The story then moves forward chronologically in the third-person omniscient for a long while. The adolescent protagonist Haroun Khalifa is spirited away to an invisible moon on the brink of warfare. In time, his father also arrives, but they are quickly divided by the needs to spy on the enemy in one area and to confront him in another. The book follows Haroun through his wondrous victory over Khattam-Shud at the Dark Ship.

At this point, the nameless narrator addresses readers, saying he must summarize the events taking place simultaneously on the other side of Kahani. The narrative is again taken up as third-person omniscient. Narration outweighs dialog by far. Halfway through the final chapter, the narrator makes a formal aside to the reader, admitting that Rashid Khalifa has been telling to the people in the Valley K the story, "Haroun and the Sea of Stories," which has been unfolding on these pages. He quotes the opening words. The narrator then recedes into the background to describes how the people react to the allegory in which the political candidate who has hired Rashid is identified with the story's villain—they run him out of town—and depicts father and son's return to the depressing city that Haroun has wished could have a happy ending. Haroun gets it and more.

Setting

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is a story within a story. The outer shell is set in make-believe Alfibay, derived from the Hindustani word for "alphabet." All geographical locations are referred to by a single letter, even though everyone agrees this is inconvenient and confusing. The people in adolescent protagonist Haroun Khalifa's home town are so sad and depressed that they have forgotten the name of their town. Haroun and his professional storytelling father, Rashid, head for the Valley of K and beautiful Dull Lake, a takeoff on Dal Lake in Kashmir. The setting is clearly modern time, for there are trains, planes, and even supercomputers, in addition to the speeding, overcrowded bus that seem always to appear in stories about the Indian subcontinent.

The story within a story takes Haroun and Rashid separately to the Earth's second moon, which moves so fast in its ever-changing orbit that it avoids detection from Earth and manages to provide all of the stories told on earth. The moon's name is Kahani, Hindustani for "story." Most of its surface is covered by the Ocean of the Streams of Story, which the villain, Khattam-Shud, wants to destroy because he cannot control them. A vast poisoning operation is running in the southern polar region, in the



neglected Old Zone. Khattam-Shud's Dark Ship is anchored there, producing and deploying specific poisons to kill off every genre of story. Haroun prevents the plugging of the Source of stories on the ocean floor by wishing the Moon to resume rotating on its axis. Computers have been preventing this, so one hemisphere is always lit and the other always dark. Exposed to the light, the shadowy structures dissolve.

The Khalifas are returned to Dull Lake, where Rashid narrates "Haroun and the Sea of Stories," the dream they have both lived through. Returning to their sad city, they learn that the name has been remembered: Kahani—"story."

Language and Meaning

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is a delightful, whimsical tale reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, the *Arabian Nights*, Frank O. Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*, and traces of Doctor Seuss. The thousand-and-one motif runs throughout the book, sometimes dropped to 101 and sometimes raised to billion and one. Khalifa in Arabic means "caliph," and the legendary Caliph Haroun-al-Rashid appears frequently in the *Arabian Nights*. Thus father and son here share his name. The Pages are too reminiscent of the Queen of Heart's attendants in Carroll to be accidental, particularly in as adept a wordsmith as Salman Rushdie. Combined with the Eggmen, whom the I.M.D. Walrus directs, it is more directly a reference to the Beatles' "I Am the Walrus" on their *Magical Mystery Tour* album. The book is indeed a magical mystery tour. Oz references include flying monkeys, a crushed villain, and a happy homecoming. Khattam-Shud is a thinly-veiled Wizard, utterly ordinary but appearing grand.

Rushdie's rich mind pictures of an exotic world of water where living stories endlessly flow, blend, and mix have a deeper meaning. As he writes this book, he is hiding from death threats over his *Satanic Verses*. He embeds commentary on censorship and pornography in the context of an ecological crisis. The villain admits he is killing the Ocean of the Streams of Story because he cannot control them. Others lament that they have been so long careless, allowing the poison to spread and the classics to be ignored. One army debates every order that comes down from the General, who approves and joins in. The Earthlings figure this will seal the army's fate when it meets a tough enemy, but it creates the esprit de corps that brings a swift, bloodless victory. The army is organized along bibliographic lines in an extended figure of speech.

Finally, everything in the dreamed story-in-a-story has a counterpart in the "real world" of Alfibay, much like in *The Wizard of Oz*. Some of the characters are mixed up, corresponding physically to one Earthling and behaving like another.

Structure

Haroun and the Sea of Stories is a twelve-chapter novel followed by an alphabetic list of Hindustani words used as place and personal names in the story, and a blurb about the prizewinning author, Salman Rushdie. The chapters are numbered and titled.



The first three chapters—1, "The Shah of Blah," 2, "The Mail Coach," and 3, "The Dull Lake" take place on Earth in imaginary Alfibay, which bears a cultural affinity with Kashmir, India. The adolescent protagonist, Haroun Khalifa, accompanies his professional storyteller father, Rashid, to a performance, knowing that he has lost his "gift of gab."

The next section, Chapter 4, "An Iff and a Butt," 5, "About Guppees and Chupwalas," 6, "The Spy's Story," 7, "Into the Twilight Strip," 8, "Shadow Warriors," 9, "The Dark Ship," and 10, "Haroun's Wish," follow young Haroun as he flies off to Earth's second moon, the invisible, non-spinning Kahani, where he becomes involved in saving the Ocean of the Streams of Story that cover most of it and provide stories to all the earth. Haroun defeats a shadowy villain by wishing the moon would resume rotating on its axis. Light dissolves darkness.

Chapter 11, "Princess Batcheat," summarizes the war in the other hemisphere, also won when Light dissolves darkness. The heroes are rewarded. Chapter 12, "Was It the Walrus?" returns Haroun and Rashid back to Earth, happily not late for Rashid's performance. As he tells "Haroun and the Sea of Stories" word-for-word, his hearers identify their political leader with the story's villain and run him out of town. The Walrus gives Haroun a happy ending better than he could have imagined.



Quotes

"Haroun often thought of his father as a Juggler, because his stories were really lots of different tales juggled together, and Rashid kept them going in a sort of dizzy whirl, and never made a mistake.

"Where did all these stories come from? It seemed that all Rashid had to do was to part his lips in a plump red smile and out would pop some brand-new saga, complete with sorcery, love-interest, princesses, wicked uncles, fat aunts, mustachioed gangsters in yellow check pants, heroes, fights, and half a dozen catchy, hummable tunes.

'Everything comes from somewhere,' Haroun reasoned, 'so these stories can't simply come out of thin air...?'" Chapter 1, The Shah of Blah, pp. 16-17.

" 'See here, this bend, what a tight one!' Mr Butt sang out. 'Here, two weeks ago, occurred a major disaster. Bus plunged into gully, all persons killed, sixty-seventy lives minimum. God! Too sad! If you desire I can stop for taking of photographs.'

" 'Yes, stop, stop,' the passengers begged (anything to make him slow down), but Mr Butt went even faster instead. 'Too late,' he yodelled gaily. 'Already it is far behind. Requests must be more promptly made if I am to comply.'

" 'I did it again,' Haroun was thinking. 'If we crash now, if we're smashed to bits or fried like potatoe chips in a burning wreck, it will be my fault this time, too,'" Chapter 2, The Mail Coach, p. 37.

"While this remarkable monologue was being delivered, Haroun Khalifa moved his head very, very slowly, until half an eye was looking around the door-jamb into the bathroom: where he saw a small, ancient-looking man, no bigger than himself, wearing a huge purple turban on his head (that was the 'onion') and baggy silk pajamas gathered at the ankles (those were the 'aubergines'). This little fellow sported an impressive full set of whiskers, of a most unusual colour: the palest, most delicate shade of sky blue.

"Haroun had never seen blue hair before, and leant forward a little in curiosity; whereupon, to his horror, the floorboard on which he stood emitted a loud, unarguable creak. The blue-beard whirled about, spun all the way round three times, and disappeared; but in his haste he let the monkey wrench fall from his hand. Haroun dashed into the bathroom, grabbed it and held it close," Chapter 3, The Dull Lake, p. 55.

"So Iff the Water Genie told Haroun about the Ocean of the Streams of Story, and even though he was full of a sense of hopelessness and failure the magic of the Ocean began to have an effect on Haroun. He looked into the water and saw that it was made up of a thousand thousand thousand and one different currents, each one a different colour, weaving in and out of one another like a liquid tapestry of breathtaking complexity; and Iff explained that these were the Streams of Story, that each coloured strand represented and contained a single tale. Different parts of the Ocean contained different sorts of stories, and as all the stories that had ever been told and many that were still in the process of being invented could be found here, the Ocean of the Streams of Story was in fact the biggest library in the universe. And because the stories were held here in fluid form, they retained the ability to change, to become new versions of themselves, to join up with other stories and so become yet other stories; so that



unlike the library of books, the Ocean of Streams of Story was much more than a storeroom of yarns. It was not dead but alive," Chapter 4, An Iff and a Butt, pp. 71-72.

"King Chattergy raised his hand; the crowd fell silent. (An unusual event in Gup City.)

"The King attempted to speak, but words failed him, and shaking his head unhappily he stepped back. It was Prince Bolo who burst into impetuous speech. 'They have seized her,' he cried in his dashing, foolish voice. 'My Batcheat, my Princess. The servants of the Cultmaster purloined her some hours back. Churls, dastards, varlets, hounds! By gum, they will pay for this.'

"General Kitab took up the story. 'A blasted business, confound it! Her whereabouts are not known, but most probably she will be kept prisoner in the Citadel of Chup, the Ice Castle of Khattam-Shud in Chup City, at the heart of the Perpectual Night. Spots and fogs! A bad business. Harrumph,'" Chapter 5, About Guppees and Chupwalas, pp. 90-91.

"'And these uniforms, you wanted to know about the uniforms,' Blabbermouth continued, ignoring him, and continuing briskly on through halls, down spiral stairways, and along passageways. 'Well, whose idea do you think those were? Hers, obviously, Batcheat's, and she decided to "take the wardrobe of the Pages of the Royal Household in hand" to make us into walking love letters, that was her first idea, and after an eternity of having to wear kissy-poo and cuddly-bunny and vomitous texts like that she changed her mind and had all the greatest stories in the world rewritten as if her Bolo was the hero or something. So now instead of Alladin and Ali Baba and Sindbad it's Bolo, Bolo, Bolo, can you imagine, people in Gup City laugh as us to our faces, to say nothing of behind our backs,'" Chapter 6, The Spy's Story, pp. 106-107.

"And so the Guppee armada proceeded on its merry way, with all its members busily dissecting General Kitab's most secret battle-plans (which, of course, he cheerfully revealed to anyone who cared to ask). These plans were itemized, scrutinized, rationalized, analysed, mulled over, chewed over, made much of, made little of, and even, after interminable wranglings, agreed. And when Rashid Khalifa, who was beginning to be as dubious as Haroun about the value of so much loose talk, ventured to question its wisdom,—then Iff and Butt and Mali and Goopy and Bagha fell to arguing about this question, too, with as much energy and passion as before.

"Only Prince Bolo remained aloof. Prince Bolo rode his flying mechanical steed through the sky at the head of the Guppee forces, saying nothing, looking neither to left nor right, his eyes fixed on the far horizon. For him there was no argument; Batcheat came first; the issue was beyond dispute," Chapter 7, Into the Twilight Strip, p. 120.

"It was a narrow channel, with roots and weeds still floating on the surface ... and they were deep inside the heart of the weed-jungle when the second catastrophe occurred. Haroun heard a faint, hissing sound, and an instant later saw something enormous being thrown in their direction—something that looked like a colossal net, a net that had been spun out of the darkness itself. It fell over them, and held them tight.

"'It is a Web of Night,' said Butt the Hoopoe usefully. 'A legendary Chupwala weapon. Struggle is useless; the more you fight, the harder it grips. Our goose, I regret to inform, is cooked,'" Chapter 8, Shadow Warriors, pp. 141-142.



"Haroun and Iff both cried out in shock as Khattam-Shud changed his shape. The Cultmaster grew and grew before their appalled, astonished eyes, until he was one hundred and one feet tall, with one hundred and one heads, each of which had three eyes and a protruding tongue of flame; and a hundred and one arms, one hundred of which were holding enormous black swords, while the one hundred and first tossed Butt the Hoopoe's brain-box casually into the air ... and then, with a little sigh, Khattam-Shud shrank back into his earlier, clerkish form. 'Showing off,' he shrugged. 'Stories go in for such displays, but they are unnecessary and inefficient, too. —Spies, spies,' he mused. 'Well, you must see what you came to see. Though obviously you will not be able to make your report,'" Chapter 9, *The Dark Ship*, p. 156.

"The minutes passed: one, two, three, four, five. Haroun lay stretched out on the back of Butt the Hoopoe, oblivious of time, oblivious of everything except his wish. In the weed-jungle, the Chupwala searchers decided they were looking in the wrong place, and turned back towards the Dark Ship. Their 'darkbulbed' torches sent probing beams of darkness through the twilight. By chance, none of these beams fell upon Butt the Hoopoe. More minutes passed: six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

"Eleven minutes passed.

"Haroun remained stretched out, with his eyes shut tight, concentrating.

"A dark beam from the torch of a Chupwala searcher picked him out. The hisses of the search-party foamed across the waters. On their dark sea-horses, they galloped towards Butt the Hoopoe as fast as they could go.

"And then, with a mighty shuddering and a mighty juddering, Haroun Khalifa's wish came true.

"The Moon Kahani turned—quickly, because as Haroun had specified during his wishing, there was little time to be lost—and the sun rose, at high speed, and zoomed up into the sky until it was directly overhead; where it remained," Chapter 10, *Haroun's Wish*, pp. 171-172.

"Down and down the great head bounced; its ears, its nose broke off as it hit the ground; the teeth fell from its mouth. Down and down it came. Then 'Look!' shouted Rashid Khalifa, pointing; and a moment later, 'Look out!' He had seen an unimpressive little figure in a hooded cloak come scurrying out into this lowest courtyard of the Citadel: a skinny, scrawny, snivelling, drivelling, mingy, stingy, measly, weaselly, clerkish sort of fellow, who had no shadow but seemed almost as much a shadow as a man. It was the Cultmaster, Khattam-Shud, running for his life. He heard Rashid's cry too late; whirled around with a fiendish yell; and saw the huge head of the Colossus of Bezaban as it arrived, hitting him squarely on the nose. It crushed him to bits; not a shred of him was ever seen again. The head, grinning toothlessly, sat in that courtyard and continued, slowly, to melt," Chapter 11, *Princess Batcheat*, pp. 190-191.

" 'To speak personally,' Miss Oneeta replied, 'I have said good-riddance to Mr Sengupta. And I also have a job, in the chocolate factory, and as many chocolates as I required are free of charge. And also I have several admirers—but listen to me, how shameless, talking like this to you!'

" 'I'm happy for you,' Haroun replied. 'But in our life it is not all songs and dances.'

"Miss Oneeta put on a mysterious expression. 'Maybe you have been away too long,'



she said. 'Things change.'

"This made Rashid frown. 'Oneeta, what are you talking about? If you have something to tell...'

"The front door of the Khalifa apartment opened, and there stood Soraya Khalifa, as large as life and twice as beautiful. Haroun and Rashid couldn't move. They stayed frozen like statues in the pouring rain with their mouths hanging open," Chapter 12, Was It the Walrus?, pp. 209-210.



Topics for Discussion

How are politicians depicted in the novel?

How is the Princess Rescue motif used in the novel?

What does the novel say about the use, reuse, and misuse of stories. How does Haroun and the Sea of Stories reuse older stories?

How is juggling used in the novel? Do you find its use natural or forced?

How do "anti-stories" operate?

How does Haroun view the Guppees when he first arrives? Does his opinion change with time? If so, how?

What role does Soraya Khalifa play in the novel?

What is the sense of the closing comment, "time is definitely on the move again around these parts"?