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HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES

Salman Rushdie (1947)

Life and Works : Salman Rushdie, novelist and Short story writer was born in Bombay in a Muslim family. He was educated at King's College, Cambridge. Nurtured in two cultures, Rushdie's works show their influence on them. He draws from allegorical and fable-making traditions of both East and West and often classed under the "Magic realists". Beginning with his first novel **Grimus** (1975), he rose to fame when he was awarded the Booker Prize for **Midnight's Children** (1981). **Shame** (1983) has as its subject Pakistan and the culture of shame and honour oppressing the women. The **Satanic Verses** (1988) was ill received by a section of Muslims, who objected to certain passages being blasphemous, and led to a notorious 'fatwa' (death sentence), invoked by the Ayatollah Khomeini in February 1989. **Haroun and the Sea of Stories** (1990), a novel meant for the children was followed by **East, West** (1994), a collection of Short Stories.

The Moor's Last Sigh (1995) is about cultural and personal inheritance. **The Ground Beneath the Feet** (1999), deals with the birth of rock music. The novel **Fury** published in 2001 and then a collection of non-fictional writings **Step Across This Line** containing writings from 1992-2002. Recent novels include **Shalimar the Clown** (2005) and the novel about the violent politics of recent Kashmir **The Enchantress of Florence** (2008). Rushdie is an Honourary Professor in the Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a distinguished supporter of the British Humanist Association, a Fellow in literature of the University of Anglia, recipient of the 1993 Austrian State Prize for European literature, recipient of the 1996 Australian Literary Prize and Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He was also President of PEN, American Centre from 2003-2005. In 2000 he moved from London to New York. In 2006, he became the Distinguished Writer in Residence at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories

Short Summary : In a sad city of the country of Alifbay Haroun Khalifa lives with his father, a famous story teller and his mother. One day after Haroun comes back from school he learns of his mother's elopement with their upstairs neighbour. The neighbour Mr. Sengupta had been critical of the stories told by Haroun's father Rashid as he thought stories to be utterly useless. Haroun too, after his mother's elopement berates his father

for the uselessness of his stories. By way of diversion Rashid takes his son Haroun on a Story telling trip in the land of G and the valley of K. Rashid's story telling often helped the politicians in gaining public support. But on this trip sponsored by Mr. Buttoo, the politician, Rashid miserably failed in his attempts to tell stories, as no words would come out. The disappointed politicians get very mad at him.

This is how the matter stood after the father and the son, had reached the beautiful valley of K.

Rashid tells Haroun that it all reminds him of "Khattam-Shud", an ancient concept that means silence. When they reach K, Haroun and Rashid meet Mr. Buttoo, the politician, who takes them to his boat on the Dull Lake. As they depart on the lake, they are engulfed in a thick mist.

The foul smoking mist Haroun comes to understand, is actually the Mist of Misery brought on by his father's foul mood. When the sea becomes choppy, Haroun tells everyone to think good thoughts, and everyone act accordingly. The sea calms Haroun and Rashid next boards a luxurious yacht which would take them to their destination. They suffer from sleep disorder in the yacht. While Haroun dozes off, he hears a noise in his bedroom and eventually finds an old man with an onion shaped head, who disappears the moment he sees Haroun. The man drops a wrench, which Haroun takes hold of. The old man turns out to be Iff, the Water Genie who must have the wrench to restore the flow of the Story Stream for his father, Rashid. Haroun agrees to give back the wrench on the condition that Iff takes him to the Walrus in Gup city, Kahani. In order to get the wrench back the Water Genie had to accept Haroun's proposal.

The Genie tells Haroun to name a bird which will materialize and pulls out a handful of tiny magical creatures. Haroun chooses a Hoopoe and Iff throws it out into the water where it puffs up into a huge bird. The Hoopoe resembles Mr. Butt (the driver of the bus bringing them to the valley of K) and is named Butt the Hoopoe by Haroun. The Genie and Haroun climb on its back and shoot into space. They can communicate telepathically. The Hoopoe lands on the Sea of Stories of Kahani, Earth's Second moon, the rapid movement of which does not register on any human instrument. The moon evenly spreads the story water across the earth. They land in the ocean in order to get Wishwater for Haroun so as to avoid meeting the Walrus. After drinking the Wishwater Haroun wishes restoration of his father's story telling power. He can, however, concentrate on the image of his mother, and after eleven minutes, loses his concentration. An extra cup of water from the sea that contains a story and drunk by Haroun makes him look through the eyes of a hero in a Princess Rescue story.

When the hero climbs the tower to rescue the princess he is changed into a spider and the princess hacks her to the ground. When Haroun wakes up from the story, Iff informs him about Khattam-Shud's poisoning the stories.

Haroun, Butt the Hoopoe, and Iff fly to the land of Gup where they meet Mali, the Water Gardener, and the Plentimaw fishes. The land of Gup was abuzz with preparations for war against Chupwalas who Kidnapped Princess Batcheat from Gup. Apart from that they polluted the Sea of Stories so that many of the stories do not make any sense. Prince Bolo, General Kitab, and the Walrus detail about the plans of war before the Pages of the Guppee Library (*i.e.* the army). With them is a spy with hood over his head. When the hood is taken off, Haroun sees his father.

Rashid informs everyone about his visit to Kahani and witnessing with his own eyes the capture of Princess Batcheat in the twilight strip. Rashid also reveals that the Chupwalas have come under the spell of Cultmaster Khattam-shud who wants to sacrifice the princes to Bezaban, an idol of silence. Prince Bolo and General Kitab spearhead the war against the Chupwalas. Rashid being their guide to the Chupwala encampment. One of the soldiers, Blabbermouth with whom Haroun makes acquaintance is later discovered to be a long haired girl when she knocks off the hat off her head. She entertains Haroun with her juggling tricks. While the army sails towards Chup discussing about the causes leading to the war, Haroun has the impression of a mutiny afoot. They come to the land of Darkness and land on the beach. While scouting the interior, they come across a dark warrior fighting his own shadow in a kind of seductive dance.

The man becomes aware that he is being watched and finds the intruders. The man makes sort of unintelligible sounds until Rashid realizes that he is speaking an ancient language of gestures. Rashid deciphers his language and it is revealed that his name is Mudra, second in command in Chup. Mudra is fighting against Khattam-Shud in order to establish peace in Chup. Mudra becomes an ally and agrees to help the Gupees to defeat Khattam-Shud.

Haroun willingly becomes a spy because of his interest in love stories. He alongwith Iff, Butt the Hoopoe, Mali, and the Plentimaw fishes begin their journey towards the Old Zone. The progress of the fish is checked because of poisonous water. The rest of the party is suddenly ambushed and caught in nets. They are taken to a very big black ship which has cauldrons of poison on its deck. To Haroun everything look insubstantial, shadowy. Khattam-Shud appears as a tiny, weasly, measly man. Haroun realizes that this is a detached shadow of Khattam-Shud. The cultmaster declares that stories being useless and inefficient are liable to destruction.

The ship is full of darkness and machines Too Complicated to Describe. Khattam-Shud then shows them where a great plug to seal the story source at the bottom of the sea is being built. The roots growing through a port window tell Haroun about the presence of Mali who breaks the machines by latching on to the generators. Haroun sets himself free and putting on a protective wet-suit jumps into the sea till he reaches the Plug. After his return to Butt the Hoopoe he drinks a draught of Wishwater from a vial given to him by Iff. Within minutes the entire land is filled with sunlight. The shadows vanish and everyone is free, the poison destroyed.

In Chup, Khattam-Shud sends an ambassador to the Gupee army. The ambassador begins to juggle and pulls out a bomb. Only Blabbermouth's quick action keeps anyone from being blown up, but it is revealed that Blabbermouth is a girl in the process. Bolo tries to fire her, but Mudra asks her to be a part of his army because of her bravery. The battle between the army commences. Because the Guppees have had such open and honest communication, they fight as a team. The Chupwalas, because of their silence, distrust each other. The Guppee army overwhelms The Chupwala army. As the battle ends, there is a great earthquake and the moon begins to spin.

The real Khattam-Shud is crushed under the statue of Bezwan. Peace is ensured and everyone is duly promoted. Haroun, while preparing to leave is told to visit Walrus. At Walrus's office the misgivings of Haroun come to an end. He meets all his friends there. Walrus tells him that for Haroun's bravery his story will have a happy-ending. Haroun hardly believes it, but at the same time he is concerned about the sadness prevailing in his city. He wakes up back in the city of K where his father is working on his political story. As he stands delivering the story, his father tells the story of **Haroun and the Sea of stories**. The crowd loves it and turns against their autocratic ruler, Mr. Buttoo.

Haroun and Rashid return home amidst rain. They found people there dancing. On being asked they tell that the city has remembered its name Kahani. Haroun realizes that the Walrus has infused a happy ending in the raindrops.

At home he finds his mother admitting that he made a mistake in running away with Mr. Sengupta. The next day was Haroun's birthday and he heard his mother singing in another room of the house.

CHAPTERWISE SUMMARY

Chapter - I

THE SHAH OF BLAH

The novel begins in the 'Saddest of Cities' of the country of Alifbay. The seashore is full of glum fish and all the people in the city are sad and melancholic. Haroun Khalifa lives with his famous storyteller father, Rashid, in the middle of the city. To his admirers Rashid is a master storyteller full of cheery stories as the sea is full of fish — the Ocean of Notions, but to his detractors he is the Shah of Blah. Haroun has to travel a lot to cater to the growing demands of his stories which are fantastical, full of strange characters and dramatic situations. Haroun wonders at the never ending fund of his father's stories. On being asked his father says that his stories come from the great Story Sea. Haroun continues to ask these questions until one day he asks "one question too many, and then all hell broke loose". In a city of big families, curiously enough Haroun is an only child, and stranger still are the Senguptas, the Khalifa's upstairs neighbour who have no children at all. Mrs. Sengupta is motherly by in her behaviour to Haroun, which he sometimes likes and sometimes not. Mr. Sengupta often criticizes Rashid telling Haroun mother thar Rashid has "his hand stuck in the air and his feet off the ground. What are all these stories? Life is not a storybook or a joke shop.....What's the use of stories that are not even true?"

One day after his return from school Haroun finds Mrs. Sengupta crying. Going inside his house he finds his father crying too and comes to know that his mother has run away with Mr. Sengupta. In a kind of retaliating rage Rashid breaks every clock in the house stopping them at 11 O' clock sharp. In her letter Haroun's mother accuses his father for not having any room for facts in his mind. Haroun, too, in a fit of anger yells at his father saying, "What's the point of it? What's the use of stories that are'n't even true?" After this, when Rashid stands up in front of an audience no words come out, while Haroun feels guilty for having said harsh words to his father.

Haroun finds that he cannot concentrate for more than eleven seconds, which Mrs. Sengupta explains is because of his mother leaving them at the same time. She diagnoses his problem as located in his "pussy-coller-gee"—her rendering of the term 'psychology', Rashid decides to take Haroun with him for a story-telling tour sponsored by some politicians. Rashid is often hired by politicians to help them in winning elections by telling flattering stories. With this in mind the father and the son go to the town of G. To his dismay Rashid finds that no words would come out except "Ark, ark, ark". To politicians threaten him with dire consequences — the cutting of his tongue, if he fails to tell a story in the valley of K to

which he was ordered to go. Haroun feels that he must do something in order to rejuvenate his father's story telling capacity as it was his fault that led to his father's loss of story telling power.

Chapter - 2

THE MAIL COACH

At the bus station, Haroun and Rashid have a tough time getting the ticket for the valley of K as there was a big crowd. The bus station has rhyming signs all over the place like "If you try to rush or zoom/you are sure to meet your doom", or "All the dangerous overtakers/end up safe at undertakers."

Haroun comes across a man looking more or less like a parrot. The man tells him that he is Butt, "driver of the Number One Super Express Mail Couch to the valley of K". Haroun requests the driver to take the road which climbs, "like a serpent through the pass of H towards the Tunnel I" so that he and his father Rashid may enjoy the beauty of the road from the Town of G to the valley of K. Mr. Butt after protesting a bit about his being already late agrees in the end to fulfill the young man's request.

The mail-coach hurtles with breakneck speed bypassing even the mailbags is supposed to pick up on its way. Butts reaction is. "Need's a slippery term, that's what it is, it's been said of me that Butt Needs Speed, but but it may be that my heart truly needs a Different Sort of Thrill. O. Need's a funny fish : it makes people untruthful." Passengers request Butt to slow down, but he ignores them and speeds up. Haroun feels rather guilty as he was the person who wanted to see the beauty of the valley of K.

As the bus climbs up with reckless speed Haroun thinks in his mind that he is going to be "wiped out, like a word on a blackboard, one swoosh of the duster and I'll be gone for good."

It is a beautiful valley which reminds Rashid of **Kattam-Shud**, "A the Arch-Enemy of all stories, even of language itself. He is the prince of silence and the Foe of Speech."

Haroun thinks that the view is helping his father in recalling his crazy stories. The bus makes its downward journey and Haroun sees sign "daubed with crude, irregular letters" that reads "Welcome to Kosh-Mar". Rashid is reminded of the meaning of Kosh-Mar in the old tongue which means 'nightmare'.

K is a far-off place and so the news of Rashid's failure as a storyteller have not reached the poliesticos there. Mr. Buttoo one of the political big shots receives Rashid and Haroun. He is a very slick man viewed by Haroun with distrust. All of them are accompanied by large contingent of armed soldiers—hundred and one in number to be exact. Before Haroun was about to tell his father to leave the company of Mr. Buttoo, a luxurious

swan boat arrives to pick them up and take them across Dull lake. Mr. Buttoo can see that Rashid is sad and says, "She (Haroun's mother) may have you but there are plenty more fish in the sea." Rashid only answers, "Ah, but you must go a long, long way to find an Angel Fish". While talking they feel hot winds blowing and thick mist gathering and obliterating everything from view.

Chapter - 3

THE DULL LAKE

Unhappiness hangs in the air of Dull lake. It exudes a hideous smell and everyone thinks that someone has released a stink. Haroun thinks that it must be Mood Land that features as a fantastic land in father's stories. In Moodland the weather changes with the change in mood of the people. It seems to him that the respective moods of his father and Mr. Snooty Buttoo have effected the change in weather—mist due to his father's sadness and hot wind because of the mood of Mr. Snooty Buttoo. There is great turmoil in the water and the oarsmen warn that the boat is about to Lapsize. Haroun advises everyone to think pleasant thoughts which they do, and the weather clears and become fair once again. Haroun now understands "That the real world is full of magic, so magical worlds could also be real." Mr. Buttoo's boat is named **Arabian Nights Plus one**, elaborately decorated inside and having luxurious rooms. The library of the boat contains shelves of books, though mostly fake. Rashid's bedroom has a very large peacock which when removed reveal a large bed. In the same way Haroun's bedroom has a turtle serving the same purpose. When Haroun moderately praises the accommodation by saying "very pleasant" Mr. Buttoo is infuriated as he wishes that the boat be called "Super—Marvelloso, Incredible, and wholly Fantastick." Haroun and Rashid spend sleepless night in their beds. Rashid fears that he will not be able to say anything before the audience except "ark". In his room Haroun hears some noise in the bathroom and eventually finds an extra ordinary figure having an outside onion for a head and aubergines for legs. It holds a toolbox and mumbles. Haroun quietly goes to the bathroom and listens to his mutterings. The figure turned out to be an old man wearing a purple turban and baggy silk pajamas. He was muttering about how he had been compelled to take out something at the last minute because a subscription ran out, when he did not have time for such things. Haroun, in advertently makes a creaking noise while stepping on a creaking board resulting in a quick vanishing act by the strange old man spinning very fast before vanishing. While leaving he drops a wrench on the floor.

The wrench is a peculiar sort of wrench with "the general outline of a wrench, but it was somehow more fluid than solid". The old man materialises after some time and asks for the wrench. Haroun refuses to part with the wrench. The old man now gives his identity as the Water

Genie, Iff from the ocean of Streams of Story. He was there to turn off the story Water from the Great Story Sea because "the gentleman no longer requires the service, has discontinued narrative activities, thrown in the towel, packed it in." Haroun is shocked to learn that his father has shut off the Story Stream and asks the genie how he came to know of it. The genie tells him that it is through "P2C2E" (Process Too Complicated to Explain) using Thought Beams. Haroun asks him how to get reconnected, to which he gets the answer that he has to contact the Grand Comptroller at P2C2E House, Gup City, Kahani. All letters should bear the name of Walrus as the addressee, who has several subordinate Eggheads working under him at Gup city. Iff shows Haroun the invisible story water tap when Haroun makes "the most important decision of his life". Haroun requests Iff to take him to the Comptroller in the Gup City and makes him agree to his proposal with a threat of seizing the wrench. They leave that night.

Chapter - 4

AN IFF AND A BUTT

The Water Genie tells Haroun to name a bird, though there was no birds in sight. The Genie tells Haroun about his power to summon any bird by saying its name, even no such real bird exists. "To give a thing a name, a label, a handle; to rescue is from anonymity, to pluck it out of the Place of Namelessness, in short identify it....well. That's a way of bringing the said thing into being". When Haroun says that this is not the way things happen in the real world, The Genie answers, "Believe in your own eyes and you'll get into a lot of trouble, hot water, a mess". Through his magic Genie creates a number of magical bird creatures and asks Haroun to pick one. Haroun picks the Hoopoe, the "bird that leads all other birds through many dangerous places." The Genie throws the Hoopoe out of the window into the water where it swells to a great size. Haroun and the Water Genie jump on the Hoopoe's back which acquires tremendous speed blurring out the earth below and the sky above.

Haroun notices the likenesses of the Hoopoe and Mr. Butt of the mail coach. The Hoopoe telepathically reads Haroun's thought and communicates its thought in the same manner to Haroun. Haroun names the Hoopoe "Butt". Haroun points towards a moon in the distance and is informed by Butt, the Hoopoe that the moon is Kahani, Earth's second moon. Kahani can be seen because of "Speed" which "brings light to reveal", but can also be used to conceal as well. Kahani has great speed and no earthly instrument can track it. The moon, Kahani, takes varying trajectories so that Story Water may be evenly distributed throughout the planet. Butt alights on the surface of a giant sea.

Haroun learns that they had to land in the middle of the ocean in order to take a bureaucratic shortcut, according to the Water Genie. Haroun further learns that his father's power of story telling can be restored by his

drinking wishwater from the sea without having to see Walrus. Haroun drinks the Wishwater, wishing for his father's story-telling power to return but he only sees the image of his mother. After eleven minutes his concentration is broken and the golden glow enveloping him uptill now goes away.

Butt decides that Haroun has to undergo a "cheering up procedure". The sea is full of thousand different streams of story. There are "all the stories that had ever been told and many that were still in the process of being invented". Iff dives into the ocean and comes out with a golden cup containing a story. Haroun drinks the water and finds him looking through the eyes of a young hero surrounded by monsters and strange things. There is a princess in the tower and the hero after slaying the monsters begins to climb the tower. Haroun is in "Princess Rescue Story Number s/ 1001/ZHT/420/41 (r) xi. As the hero continues climbing the tower he gradually changes into a spider and falls to the ground after being hacked by the princess.

Haroun comes out of the story and tells about the horrible ending. Iff gives him the reason: the ocean has been polluted by the leader of the land of Chup, "On the Dark Side of Kahani." The name of the leader is Khattam-Shud.

Chapter - 5

ABOUT GUPPEES AND CHUPWALAS

Haroun and Iff the Water Genie, continue their journey along the Ocean of Stories on the back of Butt the Hoopoe. Haroun wants to extract more information about Khattam Shud from. Iff but with little success. He only hears the same thing about Khattam Shud what he heard from his father: Khattam Shud is "the Arch-Enemy of all stories....The Prince of Silence and the foe of speech". Iff gives the further information that whatever is known about Khattam Shud is "gossip and flim-flam, because it's been generations since any of us went across the twilight strip into the "Perpetual Night". Kahani's rotation is so managed by Guppee Eggheads that the land of Gup is always in Endless Sunshine. In Chup it is always the middle of the night. Twilight strip and the invisible Chattergy's Wall serve as the boundary between the land of Chup and the land of Gup.

Haroun and Iff enter the busy Gup City. Iff comes to know that all units have been ordered back to base, but Iff was unaware of the message. They notice a strange looking weed floating side by side their boat. Butt reveals the identity of the weed as "A Floating Gardner" and the letting out of this piece of information triggers off a transformation, changing the weed into the likeness of a person. It runs across the surface of water without sinking. The job of Mali, the Floating Gardner is to untwist the stories in the water. "Iff explains that as the stories grow longer, they also become twisted and braided. Mali tells Haroun that the pollution in the

ocean is become very bad. "Certain popular romances have become just long lists of shopping expeditions. Children's stories also. For instance, there is an outbreak of talking helicopter anecdotes". *story*

A strange group of Angel fish, "as big as sharks" and "literally dozens of mouths" makes its appearance on the surface. Butt tells Haroun that the fishes are Plentimaw fishes (having plenty of mouths). The fish always move in lifelong pairs. The fish look very sick because of pollution. The fish swallow the stories in the sea which undergo a change in their stomachs and "a little bit of one story joins on to an idea from another....when they spew the stories out they are not old tales but new ones". Iff tells Haroun that no story is new but a new combination of the old. The pollution is at a higher level in the Old Zone, a Source of Stories, near the Moon's South Pole.

Everyone in the Gup city visits the Lagoon, "a beautiful expanse of multicoloured waters". There are big buildings by the waterside include which P2C2E House. Iff and Haroun come to the Pleasure Garden where he saw a large number of Guppees, "dressed in entirely rectangular garments covered in writing". These are the Pages of Gup, the city's army. They are grouped according to chapters and volumes, commanded by the Title page. The library (i.e., the army) has its commander-in-chief, General Kitab, standing on a balcony of the Palace of Gup. Next to him is Speaker of the Chatterbox and King Chattergy, a lean and weak looking old man.

Apart from them there are two others—King Chattergy's daughter princess Baatcheat and Prince Bolo her lover. There is also a rather repulsive "man with a baldhead and a disproportionately insignificant mustache that looked like the piece of a dead mouse"—the Walrus. Walrus is surrounded by baldheads wearing white lab coats. They are the Eggheads.

The people of Chup have kidnapped princess Baatcheat. Prince Bolo says war is imminent since message bore no fruit. The Ocean and Baatcheat are in great danger as Walrus sees it. Iff asks for the wrench as Walrus is not likely to meet him (Haroun), but is refused by Haroun. Iff persuades Haroun with a bar of chocolate. The people of Kahani are after "tasty and wicked luxury" food from earth. Haroun, now understands where do unidentified flying objects come from.

In the mean while, the agitated leaders on the balcony get the news of a spy being caught in the Twilight Area and the crowd see a spy brought before them, wearing a blue nightgown and a hood. After the hood is taken off, Haroun is shocked to see his father, Rashid Khalifa.

Chapter - 6

THE SPY'S STORY

Rashid defends himself by saying that he is a subscriber to the Story Water. Haroun is concerned about the punishment meted out to his father for being a spy in the eyes of the people of Gup. Iff is of the opinion that

since no spy has ever been caught by the people of Gup the severest punishment would be making him write, "I must not spy". Haroun tells everyone that the only thing wrong with his father is that "he's lost the Gift of the Gab."

A Page named Blabbermouth escorts Haroun away from the crowd. Haroun reads the story on his uniform. The title of the story is "Bolo and the Golden Fleece", a story which Haroun thinks is about somebody else. Other pages have similar and familiar stories written on them, though altered. The Pages go to the **Throne Room** where they find Rashid encircled by prince Bolo, General Kitab, the Speaker, and the Walrus.

Rashid Tells his story thus :

He had been in search of a food that would cure his insomnia and its special concoction carrying the eater to Rapture where "a person may choose to wake up in the place to which the dream takes him; to wake up, that is to say, inside the dream". Due to miscalculation Rashid ends up in the Twilight Strip freezing almost to death. All is not well in the Twilight Strip. Preparations are going on and encampments have come up in the form of "black tents, wrapped in such a fanatical silence!" obviously in Chupwala Army's bid to counter any move by the Gup Army. The land of Chup has fallen a victim to the "Mystery of Bezaban,.....a Cult of Dumbness or Muteness." In this cult, Khattam-Shud declares hatred against stories culminating in opposition to "speech for any reason at all". Under this cult, the members sew their lips together and die of hunger and thirst by way of making sacrifices to Bezaban. Rashid explains that the giant idol of Bezaban made of ice is in Khattam-Shud's palace and frightful to look at.

The Twilight Strip is full of soldiers infiltrating through holes in Chattergy's Wall into the land of Gup. Rashid saw a young man on a swan boat with the worst singing voice. The young people of Gup often go to the Twilight Strip fascinated by the adventurous setting of darkness, mystery, strangeness and romance. The Princess wanted to touch Chattergy's wall along with her handmaidens and is arrested by the Chupwala Army while making the attempt. Rashid gives the news that the Chupwala Army is planning to sacrifice her to Bezaban during the Great Feast to the god. Bolo declares war on Chup and Rashid offers himself as guide to the Chupwala tents.

Chapter - 7

INTO THE TWILIGHT STRIP

Haroun soon finds out that by offering help to save Baatcheat he is getting involved in another princess rescue story. Blabbermouth tells Haroun that while he was asleep she took away the Disconnecting tool from under the pillow. Haroun thinks that all is ruined, but he is boosted up by Blabbermouth who tells her that Rashid can sort out his problems

with the Walrus. Haroun, however, tells her that he himself wanted to do it for him.

All the Pages in the army are jostling to find out their order. Haroun thinks this should be easy, since they are numbered, but Blabbermouth tells him that he should not "judge a book by its cover", as there are chapters and volumes that must be taken into account. Haroun and Blabbermouth make it to the Garden, and Haroun sees his father, disheveled and wearing his nightshirt, in a pavilion standing with Iff, the Water Genie. The Army gives a cry of, "For Batcheat and the Ocean", and they begin to march. Rashid, Iff and Haroun climb aboard Butt the Hoopoe and they go.

When Rashid shows his concern about the freezing cold that may adversely affect the marchers, they are promptly supplied tight laminated garments by Iff.

There is a great noise as the Pages are arguing among themselves about the cause of war. According to some it is to save Batcheat while others think that it is to save the ocean. To Haroun all this argumentation is tantamount to mutiny, but no one knows and understand 'mutiny' here. General Kitab flies around the army listening and sometimes provoking the disputes. To Haroun it appears strange that, they are not court martialled as the earth soldiers are liable to be for such behaviour.

Butt the Hoopoe, however, wonders what is the use of freedom of speech if it cannot be used. The army moves on discussing the 'secret' plans of General Kitab, which is, however, common knowledge. Prince Bolo keeps aloof, Haroun wondering why. Mali, the Floating Gardener says it is because of love— "a wonderful and dashing matter. But which can be a very foolish thing."

As the army enters the Twilight Strip, Haroun is depressed as he thinks it is a suicidal mission. Butt concludes that Haroun is suffering from "Heart Shadow" that happens to anyone while seeing for the first time the Darkness beyond. After entering the land of Chup they find that the water is poisonous and the currents are no longer warm. Guppees landing on the Shores find no attackers. Kitab and Bolo are led towards the Princess by Rashid. Through a small cleaning they see a man looking "almost like a shadow" and fighting his own shadow with a sword. The man and the shadow's movements are, however, not synchronized and they leap and dodge each other. He has a green painted face, thick leather battle armour, and black eyes with grey irises. To Haroun it appears to be a battle of opposites. "Gup is bright and Chup is dark. Gup is warm and chup is freezing cold. Gup is all chattering and noise, whereas chup is silent as a shadow.....a war between love and death. Haroun, however, notices the graceful movements of the Chup soldier and concludes that "silence has its own grace and beauty (just as speech could be graceless

and ugly). " When the warrior becomes aware of being watched, he sends his shadow to the bushes when the shadow's hands begin to move furiously and it speaks.

Chapter - 8

SHADOW WARRIORS

The Shadow warrior croaks in a strange language. Bolo demands to know what the man is saying, at which Blabbermouth calls him a 'poser'. Haroun wonders why. She is serving under such a person of whom she has such a low opinion. Rashid explains why the Shadow warrior was having difficulty in uttering articulate words—it was because the warrior had not used his voice for a long time. Some words which could be made out and used repeatedly by the warrior were "Murder, Spock Obi New Year". Rashid understands what lies behind these words: his name is Mudra and he is speaking in the ancient Gesture language of Abhinaya. Rashid begins to act as an interpreter.

From Rashid it is learnt that the warrior is second in command to Khattam-Shud but he is fed up with war and violence. Chupwalas are not in favour of the policies of Khattam-Shud or worshipping Bezaban, but out of fear. Once Khattam-Shud is vanquished Chupwalas will opt for peace. Mudra explains that in Chup a person and his shadow are treated to be equals. The shadow can have arbitrary shapes and forms or can dominate even on "Substance or Self or Person". Peace consists in each Chupwala at peace with his shadow. It is due to the black magic of Khattam-Shud that the Warrior's shadow has separated from him, and defeating Khattam-Shud would mean also defeating his shadow.

Kitab gets the help of Mudra who advises that they had to make a choice as to which Khattam-Shud they want to fight first, One is poisoning the Ocean while the other is holding Princes Batcheat Captive. Prince Bolo is in favour of saving Batcheat.

General Kitab agrees to the proposal of Bolo reluctantly. Honouring the wishes of General Kitab Haroun agrees to spy on Khattam-Shud in the Old Zone. Haroun does it because he does not "like the idea that all the good stories in the world will go wrong for ever and ever, or just die." Bolo thumps Haroun's back and lets out that Haroun is the man for the job as he is a "slave to love".

Haroun accompanied by Mali the Gardner, Butt the Hoopoe, Iff the water Genie, and the Plentimaw fishes starts for the Old Zone. After sometime the Plentimaw fishes find the going difficult because of highly poisonous water. Haroun leaves them behind asking them to keep watch. They reach a sort of forest standing on the Ocean. Mali cuts a path for them in the overgrown brush. In the clearing so made in the channel they enter but are suddenly caught in the web of Night from which there is no

escape. Haroun has a very poor opinion of him as a hero while he along with others faces black eyes peering at them.

Chapter - 9

THE DARK SHIP

Haroun, Iff and Butt the Hoopoe are dragged forward in their nets by the Chupwalas. There is a mood of despair midst which Haroun tries to be optimistic. The Ocean is full of acid-like poison. Iff says self-recriminatingly. "It's our own fault"....."we didn't guard it.....The oldest stories ever made.....We let them rot, we abandoned them.....we lost touch with our beginnings." Haroun's fears that Mali who would have been useful in such a situation might have been destroyed by the poison. Haroun sees a kind of wall of night which turns out to be the hull of a colossal ship. While trying to describe the ship Haroun could only produce the sound of "ark, ark" from his open mouth.

They leave Butt the Hoopoe while boarding the ship giving the Chupwala guards a chance to take out a black circuit box, the bird's brain. Iff provides Haroun with a small tube, a Bite-a-Lite capable of emitting two minutes of bright light.

The deck of the ship has rows of massive cauldrons filled with poison. Everything on the deck looks like shadows. "there was something not quite fixed or certain about it all". They are pushed to a set of double doors which when opened lets out "skinny, scrawny, measly, weaselly, snivelling clerical type" of being, the Cultmaster of Bezaban, Khattam-Shud. Haroun is disappointed in the appearance of the man. Haroun notices that the contours of the Cultmaster is hazy. He realizes that this is the shadow of Khattam-Shud from the Citadel of Chup.

Khattam-Shud tosses the circuit box in the air and tells them that he will unassemble is and then explain those Processes 2 Complicated 2 Explain. Haroun notices a striking resemblance of Khattam Shud to Mr. Sengupta who eloped with his mother. Haroun gets angry but is checked by Iff. Khattam-Shud changes into a giant, hundred foot tall with hundred heads and arms and again reverts to his normal frame. He tells them, "stories go in for such displays, but they are unnecessary and inefficient, too". After this Khattam-Shud shows them round the ship for which they came.

Chapter - 10

HAROUN'S WISH

A cavernous place in the Ship's hull, fitted with dark bulbs emits darkness everywhere. Machines "For Too Complicated To Describe operate in the ship. The Cultmaster intends through his machines to destroy the stories of the sea by negative methods that run contrary to the free flow of the Storyline, namely, ruining a happy story by making it sad or a love story by changing

it into a hate-story etc.etc. Haroun asks the Cultmaster why he is so much against story which is just so much fun. The Cultmaster answers "The world.....is not for fun.....the world is for controlling."

The Cultmaster then takes them to the place in the bottom of the sea which is the perennial source of stories and show how the Chupwalas are going to plug and smother the source of all stories. In the mean while Mali makes an entry into the ship and spreading his tendrils stops the generator supplying the power which operates the machines.

Haroun helps by taking out the Bite-a-Lite and producing a very intense and blinding light by biting it. The blinding light baffles the Chupwala guards. Haroun puts on a protective suit suitable for diving into the ocean, snatches the Hoopoe's brain from Khattam-Shud's hands just as the light fades and jumps into the sea.

Haroun, after diving comes across the giant hole spilling out stories and the plug in the making to stop the flow. Haroun empties a vial of wishwater, that Iff had given him, by drinking and wishing that the Kahani may spin on its axis the normal way. Haroun's wish being granted Kahani was filled with ample sunlight and with that the Chupwala guards gradually faded away.

The shadows of the real guards thus dissolved away under the effect of strong sunlight.

Haroun found the ship dissolving and Mali and Iff clinging over a cauldron of poison. They fall but left unharmed as the poison turned hard and ineffective under the hard rays of the sun. All of them—Haroun, Mali and Iff ride the back of Butt the Hoopoe but the Hoopoe blows a fuse and rendered incapable of carrying them to their destination. Goopy and Bagha, Plentimaw fishes takes them towards where the battle was being fought between General Kitab and the real Khattam Shud.

Chapter - 11

PRINCES BATCHEAT

The narrator reports what happened during the war. Because of the cold all the soldiers were issued nosewarmers—black for the Chup army and red for the Pages of Gup. To Rashid it appears as the war of buffoons. The Gupees wear helmets with bright light to blind their enemy, the Chups.

The Chup offers truce by sending a band of ambassadors carrying a white flag. Prince Bolo humiliates the party but General Kitab intervenes demanding respect for the adversary. The message from the Cultmaster in that he will not return the Princess even as she is driving the entire land crazy with her singing. The ambassador says that he has been ordered to entertain them with his juggling. Everyone engrossed in the juggling fail to notice when he takes out a little bomb and begins to juggle it, except Blabbermouth, who quickly intercepts and throws away the bomb off a cliff.

In the process Blabbermouth's head gear falls off revealing his long womanly hair. Bolo is outraged at this sudden revelation and asks her to quit. Mudra comes in between and makes an offer to the Prince to the effect that he will readily accept such a brave soldier as Blabbermouth in his army if the Prince rejects her.

When the battle commences Rashid has fears that the Pages of Gup will be torn up or burned by the Chupwalas. But the Pages were united as a result of their free exchange of thought, even openly disagreeing with the official orders when they deemed it fit. Chupwalas' silence on the otherhand created distrust and confusion. The battle is won by the Guppees.

After the battle is over Rashid and Blabbermouth are reminded of Haroun. The Prince starts calling the Princess who is busy singing a familiar old blues song. While Bolo thinks the song is beautiful to Chupwalas it was insufferable and they ask her to be quiet. At that very moment Kahani begins to spin. The quaky ground demolishes the houses and fortresses of the Chup. The giant statue of Bezaban is razed to the ground and its disevered head falls on Khattam-Shud running from his hiding place, killing him on the spot.

Peace is restored. Mudra becomes the leader of Chup and invites Blabbermouth to stay and act as an ambassador and interpreter between the countries of Gup and Chup. Haroun ultimately arrives, and a reunion takes place. Iff is promoted to Chief Water Genie and personally turns on Rashids supply of story water. Cleaning of the sea is detailed to the Plentimaw fishes. Batcheat and Bolo are married in a grand manner but the proposal of Princess to sing a song is rejected by the crowd. An Egghead comes to Haroun and tells him that he is to see the Walrus to explain his conduct regarding the destruction of the complicated machinery when he wished Kahani to spin.

Chapter - 12

WAS IT THE WALRUS

Haroun wanted to take someone as witness when he visits Walrus but none of his friends are ready to go with him as they are afraid of incurring the displeasure of the Walrus. Haroun goes to the P2C2E House and find the place infested with Eggheads wandering in the tortuous and twisting hallways. He finally gets to the Walrus's office and goes in.

Haroun meets all his friends, including Blabbermouth in the office of the Walrus, who tells him that they were making fun of him. He learns from the Walrus that for his services to the nation of Gup, he will be granted whatever favour he desires. Haroun tells them that it is of no use "because what I really want is something nobody here can give me."

The Walrus is of the opinion that everyone wants a happy ending after a great adventure. To this Haroun answers that happy ending cannot be

found in an ocean. Walrus says that happy endings are hard to come by either in real life or in stories. The Eggheads can, however, synthesize a happy ending. Haroun wishes that the sad city might have a happy ending.

Haroun and Rashid ride Butt the Hoopoe to reach home. Butt, who can transport them through time as well as space takes them to the "Arabian Nights" Plus one where they fall asleep in their beds. On waking they find Snooty Buttod telling them to come to the rally. Haroun entreats his father to recall a crazy dream but his father does not pay any attention. While Haroun is dressing himself up he sees a small envelope with a note signed by all his friends, inviting him to Kahani anytime he wants. There was inside the envelope a small bird, Butt the Hoopoe.

उपन्यास का संक्षिप्त हिन्दी सारांश

(HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES)

हारौन अपने पिता राशिद, जो प्रसिद्ध कथावाचक थे, तथा अपनी माता के साथ अलिफबे नामक देश में रहता था। हारौन अपने पिता की कहानियों की कोई उपयोगिता नहीं समझता था। हारौन से स्कूल का काम करना कठिन होता था अतः उसके पिता ने उसे कथावाचक के कार्य में लगाने का निर्णय किया।

हारौन तथा उसके पिता Valley of K जाने वाली एक बस में सवार हो गए। बस बट चला रहा था, राशिद ने बस चलाने वाले से एक सौदा किया कि वह उन्हें Valley of G तथा Valley of K के मध्य खतरनाक सड़क पर ले जाय। जब वे Valley of K के सुन्दर दृश्यों में पहुँचे तो राशिद ने हारौन को बताया कि यह सब उसे सूद की याद दिलाता है जो एक प्राचीन विचार है जिसका अर्थ शान्ति होता है, अन्ततः जब वे Valley of K में पहुँच गए तब वे Dull Lake पर गये। जहाँ अचानक उन्हें घने कोहरे ने ढक लिया। जब समुद्र तूफान से घिरने लगा तो हारौन ने अपने पिता से सबसे अच्छे विचार रखने को कहा, जब उन्होंने ऐसा किया तो समुद्र शान्त होने लगा।

समुद्र को शान्त होने के पश्चात् हारौन तथा उसके पिता राशिद छोटी नाव के निकट पहुँचे जो उन्हें अगले दिन उनके गन्तव्य तक ले जाने वाली थी। वह नाव बहुत आरामदायक थी परन्तु हारौन तथा राशिद सो नहीं सके। जब हारौन की एक क्षण के लिए झपकी लगी तो उसने शयनकक्ष में एक आवाज सुनी। उसने प्याज के जैसे सिर वाला एक बूढ़ा आदमी देखा उस बूढ़े का पेंच खोलने वाला औजार गिर गया जिसे हारौन ने उठा लिया। उसके पिता से शक्तिशाली धारा को दूर रखने के लिए उसे वह औजार अवश्य ही चाहिए।

हारौन चाहता था कि उसके पिता की कथावाचक क्षमता लौटा दी जाय। उसने अपनी माता की आकृति पर ध्यान केन्द्रित करने का प्रयत्न किया। बूढ़े ने हारौन को एक कप समुद्र का जल दिया, जिसमें कहानी मिली हुई थी। जब हारौन के पिता ने कप का जल पिया तो उसने स्वयं को Princess Rescue Story के नायक की आँखों में देखता हुआ पाया। जब वह नायक प्रिंसेस को मुक्त कराने के लिए मीनार पर चढ़ा तो वह मकड़ी में बदल गया और प्रिंसेस उसे तब तक देखती रही जब तक वह जमीन पर नहीं गिर गया।

वे युद्ध के कारणों के बारे में इस प्रकार बात कर रहे थे कि हारौन ने समझा कि यह Mutinous हो सकता है। उन्होंने समुद्र तट पर Land of Darkness में प्रवेश किया। उन्होंने आन्तरिक भाग को खोजा और उन्हें एक Dark Warrior मिला जो धोखापूर्ण कथ्यों में अपनी ही परछाई के विरुद्ध लड़ रहा था। उस व्यक्ति ने ऐसा प्रतीत किया कि

सब उस Show से प्रसन्न हुआ जब उसने करतब के लिए एक जलता हुआ बम निकाला। उसने तुरन्त ही कार्य आरम्भ कर दिया और वे चीजें उठाई तथा अपने आप उनसे करतब करने लगी। उसने क्लिफ के ऊपर बम फेंका जहाँ वह फट गया, सर का टोपी गिर गया। उसने कहा कि कैसे चालाकी थी। वह हम सबके साथ आत्महत्या करने के लिए तैयार था। बोलो ने उसे बताया कि उस पर हमला किया गया था। यह तमाशा सुनने के बाद मुद्रा आगे आया और बोलो को बताया कि क्या वह ऐसी वीर सिपाही लेना चाहेगा।

अन्त में, युद्ध आरम्भ हो गया। राशिद को डर था कि पेज ऑफ गुप को चुपवाला द्वारा नष्ट कर दिया जायेगा, परन्तु इसके विपरीत ही सत्य सिद्ध हुआ। दूसरी ओर, चुपवाला की शक्ति और योजना की कमी ने विश्वास की कमी उत्पन्न कर दी तथा भ्रम की स्थिति फैला दी थी। मुपीस ने विरोधी फौज को प्रमित कर दिया।

युद्ध के पश्चात् राशिद तथा ब्लेवरमाउथ के विचार हारौन की ओर गए और वे उसके प्रति चिन्ता महसूस कर रहे थे। बोलो ने सोचा कि गीत बहुत मधुर और सुन्दर हैं और चुपवाला ने उसे शान्त होने के लिए कहा। उस क्षण चन्द्रमा घूमने लगी। पृथ्वी हिली और परिणामस्वरूप चुप के भवन और दुर्ग गिर गये। बेजाबन की विशाल मूर्ति भी गिर पड़ी। छिपने से स्थान से बाहर भागा तथा मूर्ति का सर उस पर गिर पड़ा जिससे वह टुकड़ों में कुचल गया।

शान्ति की घोषणा हुई। उसने ब्लेवरमाउथ के अपने पास ठहरने और दोनों देशों के मध्य राजदूत बनने के लिए पास ठहरने और दोनों देशों के मध्य राजदूत बनने के लिए आमन्त्रित किया। हारौन वहाँ अपने मित्रों के साथ आया और सब फिर से संगठित हो गये। इम्फ को Chief Water Genie को रूप में प्रोत्रत किया गया और वह स्वयं राशिद को कहानी वितरण स्रोत बन गया। प्रिसेस बेटचिट तथा बोलो का शानदार विवाह हो गया। जब उसने भीड़ के सामने गाना गाने की इच्छा प्रकट की तो प्रत्येक ने आपत्ति की।

CHAPTER - 12

हारौन ने सोचा कि उसे एक गवाह की आवश्यकता है अतः वह अपने सभी मित्रों के पास एक-एक कर गया और उसके प्रत्येक मित्र ने उसे बताया कि वालरूस इतना महत्वपूर्ण है कि वे उसका विरोध नहीं करेंगे। हारौन को अकेले ही वालरूस का सामना करना था। हारौन को वालरूस का कार्यालय मिल गया और वह अन्दर गया।

वालरूस तथा ब्लेवरमाउथ सहित सभी मित्र हँस रहे थे। वालरूस ने उसे बताया कि वे मजाक में ही उसकी खिचाई कर रहे हैं और वह अपनी मजाक पर हँसने लगा। वालरूस ने उसे बताया कि कुछ भी माँगना बेकार है क्योंकि वास्तव में जो कुछ चाहता हूँ वह मुझे यहाँ कोई दे सकता। वालरूस ने उसे बताया कि साहसपूर्ण कार्य के पश्चात् प्रत्येक व्यक्ति एक समान चीज चाहता है। हारौन ने उसे बताया कि उसका आनन्ददायक अन्त समुद्र में नहीं पाया जा सकता। फिर वालरूस ने उसे बताया कि आनन्ददायक अन्त कहानियों तथा वास्तविक जीवन में कभी भी आते हैं, क्योंकि वे नियम के स्थान पर अपवाद होते हैं। एगहैड आनन्ददायक अन्त लिख सकते थे और हारौन उससे सहमत हो गया।

हारौन को ऐसा प्रतीत हुआ कि यह घर आने का सही समय है अतः वह तथा उसके पिता राशिद, Butt the Hoopoe में सवार हुए जो उन्हें समय तथा अन्तरिक्ष से होकर ले जायेगा। वह उन्हें Arabian Nights Plus की ओर वापस ले गया। वहाँ वे दोनों लोग अपने बिस्तरों में सो गए। जब वे जागे तो उन्होंने Snooty Buttoo को देखा जो उन्हें सम्मेलन में आने के लिए बुला रहा था। हारौन ने अपने पिता से पूछा कि क्या उसे वह अद्भुत स्वप्न याद है जो उसने पिछली रात देखा था परन्तु उसके पिता ने उसे अनदेखा

कर दिया। जह हारून ने कपड़े पहने तो उसे एक नोट लिखा छोटा-सा लिफाफा मिला जिस पर उसके सभी मित्रों के हस्ताक्षर थे। उस नोट में उसे कहानी में आने के लिए आमन्त्रित किया गया था। हारौन के पिता राशिद भीड़ के सामने मंच पर खड़े हो गये। राशिद ने भीड़ को यह बताया कि उस दिन वह उन्हें अपने पुत्र हारौन तथा Sea Stories के बारे में बताएगा। राशिद ने हारौन की कहानी तक की यात्रा तथा वे भाग जो उसने स्वयं नहीं देखे थे उसकी पूरी कहानी बताई। जब कहानी समाप्त हो गई तो Buttoo ने प्रतीत किया कि Valley of K में उसका समय समाप्त हो गया है और कभी दिखाई नहीं पड़ेगा। राशिद और हारौन घर वापस आ गये।

जब वे वापस Sad City में पहुँचे तो वर्षा हो रही थी परन्तु राशिद ने चलते रहने पर जोर दिया। जब वह आगे चला तो वह बहुत प्रसन्न हुआ और नाचना आरम्भ कर दिया जो इतना आनन्ददायक था कि हारौन भी उसमें शामिल हो गया। उसे लगा कि नगर में प्रत्येक लोग नाच रहा था। लोगों ने उसे बताया कि वे इसलिए प्रसन्न थे क्योंकि वर्षा हो रही थी। जब वे अपने घर पहुँचे तो मिस ओनीटा ने उनका स्वागत किया और उन सबको यह खुश खबरी सुनाई जो कुछ वहाँ उसके जाने के बाद हुआ था उसने उनके घर के द्वार खोले और वहाँ हागन ने अपनी माँ को वहाँ खड़े देखा। हारौन अगली सुबह जागा तो उसने नये कपड़े तथा एक नई घड़ी अपने कमरे में देखी क्योंकि यह उसका जन्मदिन था। उसकी माँ ने घर में गीत गाना आरम्भ कर दिया।

QUESTIONS

Q. 1. Write briefly about the background of Haroun and the Sea of Stories.

Ans. Rushdie began orally to compose the stories while writing the controversial novel **The Satanic Verses**. Rushdie's son Zafar at about this period was complaining that his father was not writing anything for the children to read. Rushdie made a promise that his next novel would be for the children. Rushdie started delivering orally the story in parts while having bath. Rushdie has this to say about the story: "I would have these basic motifs, like the Sea of Stories, but each time I would improvise-not only to please him but to test myself, to see if I could just say something and take it elsewhere."

Primarily written as a story which children could enjoy Rushdie also incorporates things of adult interest. Critics also see biographical and political events shaping the development of the story in **Haroun and the Sea of Stories**. While the story was in progress Rushdie was under the threat of 'fatwa' by the Iranian cleric Ayatollah Khomeini for his novel, **The Satanic Verses**. The situation has been playfully depicted as a tussle between power of silencing and the power of storytelling-between the peoples of Gup and Chup. There are religious, political and personal overtones in some of the names and episodes in the story. For example, the Old Zone and the Twilight Strip are there as important concepts in the story. The Old Zone which is said to be the source of all stories are the religious writings. The Old Zone is the most vulnerable to corruption of Khattam-Shud.

Rushdie is symbolically accusing Islamic political dictators and religious fundamentalist of poisoning the ancient religious stories.

The names of the places are thinly veiled names of real places which had a role in Rushdie's life and career. There are ample references to Kashmir which shows that Rushdie has based his fantastic land on something real. Kashmir is the apple of discord between India and Pakistan. Rushdie thinks he belongs to Pakistan where he has his roots. Thus, the valley of K is Kashmir, "Dull lake" is Dahl Lake. The political situation of Kashmir is also shown in the dictatorship of Snooty Buttoo.

Rushdie's intention, however, was not to dish out an out and out allegorical novel as will be evident from his words about the novel: "Haroun is a tale. Even to call it a parable is too much. It must have as they say, no designs upon it. Zafar will not read it to advance the public good, or even to comfort his father. He must read it for fun."

Q. 2. What are the major themes in Haroun and the Sea of Stories?

Ans. The basic features of the narrative can be summed up as follows:

(a) **The Importance of Story** : Rashid is criticized for dealing with falsehood and unreal, imaginary things in his stories which is objected to by his neighbours and his family as they are stories "That are 'nt even true". This tells us about the central crisis of the novel. But stories are the lifeline of Rashid, which makes Haroun's quest not just an adventure to give back his father the gift of story telling but also a son's journey to make his father's life meaningful. Rushdie suggests this way that stories give a person his identity and dignity.

(b) **Censorship** : There are biographical nuances in the idea of censorship as a recurrent theme in this novel.

There is a reflection of Rushdie's plight when he was getting hostile reaction from the fanatic adherents of Islamic faith like Ayatollah Khomeini for the alleged blasphemy committed in writing The Satanic Verses. In the novel Khattam-Shud represents the menace of bigoted censorship. Khattam-Shud wants to annihilate stories completely and silence them by poisoning the Sea of Stories. The land of Chup, very characteristically, is not only the land of darkness but also of silence and censorship. Rushdie is not, however, in favour of unbridled freedom of speech as will be evident when after being seemingly in favour of the Guppees' freedom of speech he in the later passages baulks the exclusive preference for an absolute freedom of speech.

(c) **Silence vis-a-vis speech** : As has been mentioned earlier, Rushdie, at the beginning seems to support the freedom of speech prevailing in the land of Gup, but later he seems to suggest that there should be a balance between speech and silence which are but two aspects of the whole. This is shown in the Guppee's contradictory behaviour; being strong votaries of freedom they allow their Eggheads at P2C2E House create an imbalance in light that leaves the Chupwalas in perpetual darkness against their will.

He while firmly opposing the wrong kind of censorship, Rushdie is aware of the need for a balance between control and expression of speech in a disciplined society.

(d) **The evils of war** : The battle between the Guppees and the Chupwalas epitomises the war fought for political, personal and 'religious' gains. The two armies—the Gups and the Chups go to war because of the communication gap. It is a great folly to engage in war if it can be avoided through mutual negotiations. This foolishness is shown in the 'nose-warmer' of the soldiers in which look like clowns.

(e) **The efficacy of language** : Khattam-Shud emphasizes the power of language when he says to Haroun that language is not made for fun but made for controlling. He had power over the Chupwalas by polluting their stories and their language. Robbed of the language the people become silent and veritable automatons. This again points towards the authoritarian governments, especially in the Middle East, subverting the people through political, social and religious means.

(f) **The beauty of darkness** : At some point in the novel the reader comes across the dance of the Shadow Warrior, Mudra, witnessed by Haroun filling him with appreciation. The message is perhaps that darkness does not always mean the opposite of light or goodness. Darkness and light does not always cancel each other but sometimes complement each other. Darkness has its own intrinsic value.

Q. 3. What are the sources Rushdie draws on in writing the novel Haroun and the Sea of Stories?

Ans. The novel is partly autobiographical, partly philosophical, partly theoretical, but mostly an adventurous, funny story using the old oral traditions. The stories taking their origin in the older oral traditions, with the passage of time became sacred, as they provided in narrative form the deepest belief of humanity.

In religious and cultural studies these are often referred to as Myths. A myth (beginning with small 'm') is different from Myth (with a capital 'M') in that the latter is a narrative tradition that has become so woven with the psychological and physical culture of a society that it has become a living reality for those who hear such narratives as a part of their cultural heritage. Myth criticism demonstrates that literary works draw upon a common reservoir of 'archetypes' or recurrent images, or that their narrative patterns repeat those of ancient myths or religious rituals. Some of the themes are, quests for sacred objects, cycles of death and rebirth. Haroun and Rashid's is also a quest for the sacred fountain of stories. According to scholars, myths are not simple matter of belief, rather they are* real in the sense that they provide an ethical, moral and practical basis for living in a particular environment. These are the kinds of stories Rushdie alludes to in the Old Zone.

Some of the oldest stories which have survived to this day are creation narratives. Two of the oldest of the creation stories are in the book of

Genesis of the Old Testament of the Bible and an ancient Babylonian myth of Enuma Elish. Both are stories about a divine being Yahweh of the Hebrew Bible and in Enuma Elish, the god named Marduk. The divine being creates the earth out of the void or chaos. They gave a clue to the concerned cultures about existence. Curiously enough, these creation stories take water to be the origin of existence.

In **Haroun and the Sea of Stories** too, it is from the sea that stories are created. In creation myths 'duality' also plays an important role, be it light and dark, being and non-being and water and sky. Another source material of stories are that of heroic tales, the epics like **The Illiad, Odyssey** and the **Mahabharata**. The values and morals prevalent in the particular age when the epics were written are embedded in these heroic, tales and gave their notion of values and ideologies, their culture and world view.

The stories so pregnant with psychological, sociological and philosophical import were, however, misused by the despotic rulers, led to their inglorious end. This is the moral Rushdie wants to impress upon his readers, in his **The Satanic Verses** that deals with religion and ultimate causes. **Haroun and the Sea of Stories** is an oblique attempt by Rushdie to retrieve his privileges as an author through creating a myth by returning to the ancient tradition of creation and heroism, serving as a denouncement of the silence forced upon him by a dictator like Ayatollah Khomeini.

Q. 4. How the 'fantastic' and 'realistic' elements help to enrich the texture of the novel Haroun and the Sea of Stories.

Ans. The novel apparently an adventure novel written for children on close inspection reveals a deeper and complex structure or rather 'adult contents'. Rushdie, however, denies any such motive apart from entertaining children in general and his son Zafar in particular. The discerning critics, have discovered, different serious motifs behind the surface frivolity and comic situations and characters. Rushdie's playfulness with the language of the novel disguises his treatment of political, personal, cultural and literary concerns making inroads into the juvenile set-up of the novel.

The novel opens with Rashid's losing his power of telling stories and a break up of the family. Haroun and Rashid are on a quest for replenishing the storehouse of stories.

Rushdie's style, having ample alliteration, rhyme, and word coinage creates a frolicy, jovial, playful atmosphere. This helps in creating a fantastical world. The world depicted here is neither 'real' nor totally 'unreal' as it resembles, in many respects, the readers' world. Thus, the novel uses the so called 'magic realism'.

Let us now consider some of the questions that are being raised regarding the popular contention about the role of stories in society or matters that 'matter' in the life of individuals or groups in the society. "What's the use of stories that are 'nt even true?" forms the crux of the matter. There is a proper utilitarian answer provided in the novel :

Nobody ever believed anything a politico said, even though they pretended as hard as they could that they were telling the truth. (In fact, this was how everyone knew they were lying), but everyone had complete faith in Rashid, because he always admitted that everything he told them was completely untrue and made up out of his own head.

But there is more to the picture as 'stories' are not just Rashid's livelihood but his lifeline, his life.

The magical make-belief world of the novel is summed up in a very convincing manner by Haroun while in a state between sleep and wakefulness :

"The real world was full of magic, so magical world could easily be real."

The Ocean of the streams of story is an example of polyphonic postmodern text :

"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; so that unlike a library of books, the Ocean of the streams of story was much more than a store room of yarns. It was not dead but alive."

The above observation in modern critical parlance is known as 'intertextuality'.

The importance of fiction is foregrounded in the novel. There is a demand for great storytellers. About Rashid it is said :

"Anybody can tell stories", we are told by Iff. "Liars, and cheats, and crooks, for example. But for stories with Extra Ingredient, ah, for those, even the best storytellers need the Story Waters." *part*

Stories are a way to truth, a way to freedom, Another recurrent and central feature of Rushdie's vision of fiction is summed up in the following words.

"To give a thing a name, a label, a handle; to rescue it from anonymity, to pluck it out of the place of Namelessness, in short to identify it—well, that's a way of bringing the said thing into being."

Thus an initially simple-looking story takes on a new significance highlighting the efficiency and artistic principles of fiction. The basic principle here seems to be that stories matter and nothing can match it. As a critic notes :

"What the story is really about is the story".

Q. 5. What is 'magic realism'? Does the novel Haroun and the Sea of Stories use the technique of 'magic realism'?

Ans. The term 'magic realism' was first introduced by Franz Roh in 1925. It was used to describe a group of German artists of *neue Sachlichkeit* (new objectivity) who were known for their clear, cool, static, thinly painted, sharp-focus images, frequently showing the imaginary, the improbable, or

sensible

the fantastic in a realistic or rational manner. The term resurfaced in the United States in an exhibition of the works of such artists as Charles Sheeler (1883-1965) and Edward Hopper (1882-1947) among others entitled 'American Realists and Magic Realists'. This was in 1943. The term rapidly gained currency and began to be used to describe Latin American authors like Borges, Garcia Marquez. Elements of 'magic realism' have been noted in Günter Grass, Italo Calvino, John Robert Fowles and other European writers. In 1970s and 1980s, the younger generation of fiction writers made some original contribution to this genre, notable among them being Emma Tennant, Angela Carter, and Salman Rushdie. Magic realism is a mixture of 'fantasy' and 'reality' with a strong story-line. In it the reality mingles with the unexpected and mysterious. In it the elements of dream, fairy story and mythology combine with the common everyday life in a mosaic or kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction and recurrence'. 'Magic realism' has also some affinity with the neo Gothic.

The elements of 'magic realism' are pretty obvious in the novel **Haroun and the Sea of Stories**. It has got a typical fairy tale beginning: "There was once, in the country of Alifbay, a sad city, the saddest of cities, a city so ruinously sad that it had forgotten its name". Throughout the novel, Rushdie uses several literary devices to create an imaginary, fantastic world—alliteration, rhyme, and made up words to create a hilariously non-serious world with rules of its own. This blending of fantastical and magical with the real helps in exploring the deeper layers of reality. We also find shadows of the heroic tales and folktales of the past. The theme of Classical Greek literature, that of a hero going on a quest and the numerous challenges he faces culminating in an epic battle of the Good and the Evil is reflected in Haroun's quest and the battle between the Guppees and the Chupwalas.

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Also are to be found in the novel, Rushdie's borrowings from Eastern folktale like **One thousand and One Arabian Nights**, folktales originally written during the Islamic Golden Age (Mid 8th to Mid 13th centuries). There are numerous references of the **Arabian Nights** strewn all over the pages of the novel **Haroun and the Sea of Stories**. The first one is Snooty Buttoo's boat. Harounal-Rashid is a recurring hero in the **Arabian Nights**. Iff the Water Genie is another allusion to **Arabian Night**. Haroun's adventure in the princess rescue story is an allusion to the classic tale of **Rapunzel**, in which a prince must climb a tower to rescue a princess. Thus, we see there has been an extensive use of the so called 'magic realism' in the novel **Haroun and the Sea of Stories**.

SEM 11

