

## SYNOPSIS

The novel opens with the narrator Saleem Sinai's description of his birth at midnight on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1947, which coincided with the precise moment of India's independence. Since the *Times of India* announces that it will award a prize to any mother who gives birth to a child at the precise moment of India's independence, Saleem receives many praises from everyone, including the Prime Minister of India. Actually there are two babies who was born at the same time, but Mary Pereira, a midwife at Doctor's Narlikar's nursing home, switches the two babies. Her crime is condemning the son of wealthy parents to a life of poverty (Shiva) and guaranteeing Vanita's son a life of comfort (Saleem). Luck and fame then overwhelms Saleem and neglects Shiva.

In his infancy, Saleem grows at an incredible pace. But soon, he realizes his unattractive figure so that it makes him withdraw himself from any social interaction. He finds her mother's washing chest is comfortable enough to hide him. One day when he hides as usual in washing chest, his mother rushes suddenly to the bathroom with tears in her eyes. Fearing to be found, accidentally a pajama cord is lodged up in his nose. Since then, he discovers the ability to listen the other's thoughts. When he announces this new skill to his family, they react with anger and scorn and Saleem apologizes. Without his parents' knowing, Saleem practices his talent and finds out that there are 1,001 Indian children who were born at the same night. Saleem collects them in his mind and forms the MCC (Midnight's Children Conference).

Suspects his mother's sudden shopping trips, Saleem secretly follows her and finds it disappointing fact. He witnesses his mother's rendezvous with her ex-husband, Nadir Khan. It inspires Saleem to take revenge for his disillusionment.

When he finds that there is another affair which hurts his beloved aunt's heart, he plans a behind-the-scene murder to Homi Catrack, a man who deserts his aunt for another fancy woman. He claims that his action is intended to give lesson to his mother that unfaithful wife is terrible.

The accident in his school's dance party makes him lose half of his middle finger. It also leads him to know that he shares neither Ahmed's nor Amina's blood type. The truth of his true parentage finally revealed one day in his 11<sup>th</sup> years old. Consumed by guilt, Mary Pereira at last uncovers her secret. This accident and family's business failure make Ahmed and Amina's relationship is in crisis. Disintegration breaks them when Amina finally takes a brave decision to go to Pakistan with her children leaving her husband behind. In Pakistan, Saleem's sister soon discovers her tremendous singing talent and becomes known by the name of 'Jamila Singer'. Since then, Saleem secretly keeps his deep admiration to her.

They return to India after Ahmed has heart troubles. This meeting succeeds to unite the family again because Amina and Ahmed finally fall deeply in love with each other. The trouble in Saleem's nasal passage badly disturb his breath. Ahmed and Amina trick him into an operation in which doctors clear out his nasal passage. This operation succeeds to make him breathe again but he loses his telepathy talent forever. As the compensation, he finds his new talent of distinguishing smells by his newly hypersensitive nose.

Amina soon convinces her husband to emigrate to Pakistan. Unfortunately Saleem finds it difficult to adjust himself to new environment. In Pakistan Saleem realized his somewhat incestuous love for his sister, but his confession of this love renders Jamila horrified and ashamed. It leads Saleem to frustration and

disorientation and let himself sink to the bosom of the whores. Meanwhile, Amina becomes pregnant again, but when the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 erupts, a bomb kills Amina, her unborn child, Ahmed, and her sister Alia.

Saleem suffers amnesia, which make him cannot seem to retrieve any of his memories nor feel any emotions. He joins the Pakistani army as the smell tracker like a police dog during the war preceding the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Gathered in CUTIA units, Saleem and three other soldiers enter the jungle of The Sundarbans. A poisonous snake bites Saleem, causing him to miraculously recover from his memory loss. However, his first name, mysteriously, still eludes him. When Saleem encounters Parvati-the-witch (one of his midnight's children friends), her exclamation at last results in Saleem's recollection of his name. Through her magic, Parvati enables Saleem to travel back to India by hiding in a basket of invisibility. She falls in love with him and wants to marry with him. Unfortunately, Saleem cannot erase his guilt of incestuous love to his sister. Jamila's face always appears in Parvati's face every time he tries to touch her. It makes him cannot return Parvati's love, so that he lies to her that he cannot marry her because he is an impotent man. Frustrated by her unrequited affection for Saleem, Parvati summons Shiva, who impregnates her. Parvati has become pregnant in order to convince a supposedly impotent Saleem to marry her. After the marriage, Parvati gives birth to Aadam Sinai on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1975, on the stroke of midnight. The baby is perfectly formed but has a set of colossal ears.

During the riots at the ghetto of the magicians due to the government's civic beautification program and also sterilization program, Parvati dies. Saleem is captured by the authority. A nurse administers anaesthetic to Saleem and the doctors

perform a vasectomy on him. Finally his self-professed infertility has in fact come true. They also systematically perform operations on all of the living midnight's children in order to render it impossible for them to give birth. After this accident, Saleem (and Aadam) backs to his old city of Bombay. He finds there that his ex-residence, where he spent his childhood in, now to be owned by his ex-babysitter, Mary Pereira. Mary builds a famous pickle factory there. Finally Saleem lives there with his son but he loses his optimism after that sterilization. During his staying at the pickle factory, he narrates his biography to one of the factory's workers, Padma, who finally falls in love with him. Padma never makes a problem out of his infertility and she desperately expects to marry with Saleem soon. However, Saleem sees his life meaningless and he senses that he will die soon.