

# [The namesake: ch 1-7 quotes](https://assignbuster.com/the-namesake-ch-1-7-quotes/)

\*CHAPTER 1\*\*chapter one\*“ Tasting from a cupped palm, she \*frowns\*; as usual there’s \*something\* missing.” verb: anger, frustrationunease, vague, ambiguous, frustratingloss, difference, disappointment“ It’s not the type of thing \*Bengali\* wives do.” rituals, traditions, cultural rules“” Won’t \*he\* be there?” she’d asked, pointing to the man whose \*shoes\* she’d briefly occupied, but who had yet to say a word to her.”“ he” – anonymity, she doesn’t know his name“ shoes” – intimate“” Pack a \*pillow\* and a \*blanket\* and see as much of the world as you can. You will not regret it. One day it will be too \*late\*.”” Ghosh

minimal, not materialistic, makes it sound easy to travel and see the world

“ He was raised without running \*water\*, nearly \*killed\* at twenty-two… None of this was supposed to \*happen\*. About Ashoke

Must this be fate? (ooh what a plot for a story)I’m sorry but the use of the word “ killed” just made it sound like he was nearly a murderer, rather than saying he nearly died.

The word “ water” signifies that he was less civilised, living in poverty, poor infrastructure of the country. The word “ killed” shows Ashoke’s near-death experience. Lahiri could’ve used the word “ died” but instead used the word “ killed” which makes it more impactful to the reader. The word “ happen” suggests that Ashoke has somehow cheated fate. Grateful, choice, gratitude.

\*CHAPTER 2\*\*chapter two\*“ Leafless trees with ice-covered branches. Dog urine and excrement embedded in the snowbanks” (p. 30)Ashima steps out of her apartment and sees America for the first time.

Factual description, negative lexis, winter and waste

Allows us to see Ashima’s negative impression of America; her focus on loss and cold reminds us of how much she has lost and how cold America seems to her.

“ Not at all like the houses in Gone with the Wind or The Seven Year Itch: (p. 30)She is disappointed with her three room with no corridor apartment.

Allusion/reference to famous Hollywood films.

Emphasises how her expectations were based on unreal media depictions of USA – typical of immigrant experience.

“ the baby’s birth, like most everything else in America, feels somehow haphazard, only half true… She has never known of a person entering the world so alone, so deprived.” (p. 25)Ashima reflects on the gifts given to Gogol and how they can’t make up for the absence of family.

Repetition of “ so” emphasises superlative nature of loneliness/deprivation

Loneliness and deprivation are really Ashima’s projection of her own feelings, not Gogol’s experience – makes him seem not fully formed, lack of identity.

“ I don’t want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It’s not right. I want to go back.” (p. 33)Ashima begs Ashoke to go home, due to her own desperate homesickness.

“ This country” – she can’t even say it’s name. Alone = absence.

Makes Ashima seem desperate and selfish (she’s not alone!) but also she’s standing up for herself, impressive.

“ She pictures her father missing a tooth… she tries to imagine how it will feel when her grandmother doesn’t recognise her.” (p. 42)Irony – she’ll never see her father – increases tragedy“[Pet names] are a reminder, too, that one is not all \*things\* to all \*people\*.” Shows the importance of family connection“ Only then, forced at \*six\* months to \*confront\* his \*destiny\*, does he begin to cry.” PassivityForeshadows difficulty of choiceshyperbole –> ridiculouscrying = weakness\*CHAPTER 3\*\*chapter three\*“ being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy – a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts” Ashima feels that she will never quite adapt to American life.

Metaphor of foreignness as “ pregnancy” – something she’s very familiar with, personal experience

Makes us appreciate the difficulty of the immigrant experience, the sense of being other and different. Sympathy for Ashima.

“ They’ve learned their lesson after Gogol.” Sonali (Sonia) is born and given only one name.

“ learned their lesson” – idiom for becoming wiser, also acting in a way subsequently regretted

“ that resembles the folded toilet paper he uses at school.” Gogol learns Bengali from books made of paper.

Metaphor

Shows the cultural difference, India is a more poor country.

“ a legacy of the British, an anglicised way of pronouncing his real surname, Gangopadhyay.” Gogol discovers that the name Ganguli is not a real Bengali name anyway.

Anglicisation, Reference/Allusion to the British having been in rule of India – they shorted names so it was easier to pronounce.

This makes Gogol lose his identity even more.(I think this is stupid .-. why not be fascinated about the history of his name instead?)

“ these very first immigrants to America, these bearers of unthinkable, obsolete names, have spoken to him, so much so that in spite of his mother’s disgust he refuses to throw them away.” Gogol disobeys his mother

hyperbole

\*CHAPTER 4\*\*chapter four\*“ Ashoke wonders how closely Gogol resembles himself at this age. But there are no photographs to document Ashoke’s childhood” Ashoke recognises that his son is physically growing to look like him, but that culturally, there is a distance.

Use of “ But” to increase contrast between them; third person omniscient shows us Ashoke’s inner thoughts

We appreciate the difficulty of the immigrant experience, the sense of being “ other” and different to even your own children, and the things they’ll take for granted, like photos.

“” I’m scared, Goggles,” Sonia whispers to her brother in English, seeking his hand and refusing to let go.” The second-generation children feel unease in the country of their parents’ birth.

Use of personal pet name (not Dada) and English emphasise difference – “ seeking” hand = needy, childish, emphasises fear

Suggestion of fear = distance, different reversal of experience.

“ They stand out in their bright, expensive sneakers, American haircuts, backpacks slung over one shoulder.” Gogol and Sonia don’t seem to “ belong” in India:

listing – creates a sense of materialism; stuffConnotations of America: sneakers is American slangColloquialism

Emphasises the rejection/ingratitude of their culture

“ And so the eight months are put behind them, quickly shed, quickly forgotten, like clothes worn for a special occasion… suddenly cumbersome, irrelevant to their lives.”​When they return, India is forgotten. (and also nobody asks them about their trip to India)

SimileRepetition – speed

rejection/ingratitude of their culture

“ He has never touched the Gogol book… to read the story, he believes, would mean paying tribute to his namesake, accepting it somehow.” repetition: of the title

rejection/ingratitude of his identity

“ He at once feels guilty and exhilarated, protected as if by an invisible shield. Gogol renames himself to Nikhil.

Simile: barrier

“ Shield” – hiding his identity, not connecting properly/truthfully

\*CHAPTER 5\*\*chapter five\*“ Plenty of people changed their names: actors, writers, revolutionaries, \*transvestites\*” Gogol learns in his history class that names are unstable.

Listing, anti-climax, connotations

Names are flexible and changeable, just like identity (trans?). Listing emphasises vast range of people changing names; no disgrace.

“\*Chronologically\* aware of and afflicted by the embarrassment of his name” Gogol wants to change his name because he is.“‘ In \*America\* anything is possible. Do as you wish.'” Ashok suggests that Gogol change his name.

Reference to American Dream

Pull factorAmerica represents freedom, which is what Ashoke is giving to his son.

“‘ I \*hate\* the name Gogol'” Gogol finally gives the real reason to the court why he changes his name.

Negative connotations – “ hate” (cos you know, hate is a very strong word)

Shows his rejection towards his culture and family, especially to his father.

“ if not an engineer, then a \*doctor\*, a lawyer, an economist at the very least” He is expected by his parents to be

listing

Emphasises the definity of the job choices Gogol is expected to have, which does not allow for any flexibility. Also, their parents moved to America as immigrants. In the 1960’s America was accepting immigrants that could take up work in the higher roles such as University professors, doctors, etc. And in Gogol’s parents saying this, they want him to have that security, status, and money so that their (the parent’s) immigration to America was worth it.

“ Now that he’s \*Nikhil\* it’s easier to ignore his parents” Nikhil rebels, taking a secret art class, smoking, drinking, losing his virginity and listening to new music because

Third person limited narrativeSymbols

emphasises symbolic power of names.

“ Nikhil \*evaporates\* and Gogol claims him again” When he visits home from college

Metaphor, hyperbole

his name is portrayed as something that can just fade and disappear, something that isn’t permanent. Identity

“ a confident, frequent, \*American\* smile” Sonia in high school is already wearing all black, going to parties, with

listingdiction – “ American” irony – she’s technically Indian, but she rejects thatAllusion – to the American way of life that she’s adapted to

The word “ American” makes the quote sound like a description, associating it with other words in the list and giving it a positive definition. Identity

“ cannot imagine being with her in a house he is still called \*Gogol\*” Gogol doesn’t tell his parents he had a girlfriend because he

third person limited narrative

Shows how much of a disgrace Gogol thinks of his name. That he cannot even bear for his girlfriend to find out. Identity

“ Gogol never thinks of India as desh. He thinks of it as \*Americans\* do, as India”” Gogol doesn’t identify himself as an ABCD.

third person limited narrative (this person is so bad with coming up with techniques :/)comparisonsimile

Shows that Gogol is more American than Indian and that’s how he thinks of himself. Identity.

“‘ Not at all… you remind me of everything that \*followed\*.'” On being asked if Gogol reminds him of when Ashok died

dialogueellipsis

Shows gratitude/appreciationemotional connection – rare moment of honesty

\*CHAPTER 6\*\*chapter six\*“ He prefers New York, a place which his parents do not know well, whose beauty they are blind to, which they fear.” (p. 126)Gogol’s choice of university is a deliberate assertion of his independence and rejection of his parents’ choice:

personificationhyperbole

“ He is stunned by the house, a Greek Revival, admiring it for several minutes like a tourist” (p. 130)Gogol is deeply impressed by the Ratliff’s house:

Simile

Greek Revival connotes wealth, status, American-ness (White House!) – “ tourist” emphasises Gogol’s separation from this

“ Quickly, simultaneously, he falls in love with Maxine, the house, and Gerald and Lydia’s manner of living” (p. 137)Gogol falls in love not just with a person, but with the entirety of her life:

listinghyperbole – “ falls in love”

“ Simultaneously” emphasises Gogol’s shallowness – he should be forming a relationship with a person, not the material which surrounds her life, yet this focus on acquisition is ironically quite “ American”

“ he is conscious of the fact that his immersion in Maxine’s family is a betrayal of his own” (p. 141)Gogol feels guilt towards Ashima and Ashoke:

ConnotationsMetaphor

“ Immersion” suggests water, depth, diving – he has fully saturated himself in this culture; consciousness doesn’t lead to action, so we criticise – almost worse to feel guilt and still do nothing?

“ this essential fact about his life slipping from her mind as so many others did” (p. 156)Gogol tells Maxine about his true name, but

Metaphor, “ slips” – suggests not significant

“ So many others” suggests Maxine isn’t interested in his life, only her own, emphasising the idea that American heritage is superior to Bengali, and that she doesn’t know him or care to know him truly.

\*CHAPTER 7\*\*chapter seven\*“ She \*refuses\* to write Nikhil, even though she knows that’s what he would prefer. \*No parent ever\* called a child by their good name. Good names \*had no place\* within a family.” (p. 165)Ashima rejects Gogol’s decision to call himself “ Nikhil”:

Declarative/ negative absolutes: “ no parent ever” “ had no place”​Narrative insight

Emphasises importance Ashima still places on cultural “ rules” regarding the daknam/ bhalonam, irrespective of what Gogol actually wants; he can’t reform his identity so easily

“ She passes over \*two pages filled only with the addresses of her daughter, and then her son\*. She has given birth to \*vagabonds\*. She is the \*keeper\* of all these names and numbers now, numbers she once knew by heart, numbers and addresses her children no longer remember.” (p. 167)Ashima reflects on the differences between herself and her children while writing Christmas cards:

Biased perception of Ashima shown through connotations: “ vagabonds” is negative, “ keeper” is positive

We recognise this generational distance created by both physical distance (she has to keep track of the numerous places they live that aren’t where she feels they perhaps should be, her home) and the cultural distance created by the fact of them considering it more acceptable to move far from the family and move in with other people to whom they are not related by blood or marriage (Gogol/Maxine in NY, Sonia/housemates in California).

“ Oh, \*Nick\*. Your mother called,” Gerald had said, glancing up from the screen… he [Gogol] felt a \*sting of embarrassment\*.”(p. 170)Gogol is at a party when Ashima rings, so the news of his father’s death is delayed:

Use of Americanised name; idiom/metaphor “ sting” of embarrassment

Emphasises distance from Ashima at a time of need; he is with someone else’s father who is able to casually call him by a name Ashoke would never use, and he feels embarrassed by this reminder of her existence invading his comfortable, assimilated life with the Ratliffs

“ He doesn’t want to inhabit an \*anonymous room\*. As long as he is here, he doesn’t want to leave his father’s apartment empty.” (p. 177)Gogol chooses to ignore Maxine’s advice to book a hotel:

Significance of anonymous linking to motif of “ naming”

Finally Gogol is showing some loyalty to his family, by continuing to occupy a space that once belonged to his father, and preferring a place with connection to his family history rather than the blank, American anonymity of a hotel room

“ Early in January after the holidays they \*don’t celebrate\*, in the first days of a year that his father \*does not live to see\*, Gogol boards a train and goes back to New York.” (p. 183)The impact of his father’s death is felt long after the initial event:

Repetition of negatives; focus on what is absent or lostmotif – the train is mentioned

Sense of irreparable loss created in this paragraph as Lahiri emphasises the negative space left by Ashoke’s death; although Gogol is returning, he is not the same, and he has lost part of himself as well as his father.