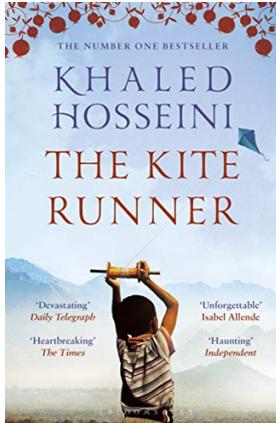


The Kite Runner

By Khaled Hosseini



Twelve-year-old Amir is desperate to win the local kite-fighting tournament and his loyal friend Hassan promises to help him. But neither of the boys can foresee what will happen to Hassan that afternoon, an event that is to shatter their lives. After the Russians invade and the family is forced to flee to America, Amir realises that one day he must return to Afghanistan under Taliban rule to find the one thing that his new world cannot grant him: redemption.

Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini established his career with the phenomenally successful debut novel *The Kite Runner*. This, along with the novels *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *And the Mountains Echoed* have been published in over 70 countries and sold over 40 million copies worldwide. In 2018 Hosseini published *Sea Prayer*, a story inspired by the suffering of those escaping the Syrian conflict.

Discussion Questions

1. Considering Amir, the narrator, is not a kite runner, why do you think Hosseini chose the title 'The Kite Runner'?
2. Amir and Hassan have a favourite story, "Rostam and Sohrab". Do you have a favourite book/story from childhood?
3. Amir and Hassan have a complicated friendship, Amir is often hateful but Hassan remains loving and loyal. Why do you think their relationship is so unequal? Do you think Amir really hates Hassan when he is younger?
4. Early in the novel Baba sees Hassan standing up for Amir and worries that if Amir can't stand up for himself as a young boy, he may not be able to stand up for what is right as an adult. How does this foreshadow later events? Do you think Baba is right?

5. Hassan is a Hazara, a persecuted ethnic group in Afghanistan, and Amir is Pashtun. Were you aware of the relationship between Pashtuns and Hazaras/Sunni and Shia Muslims in Afghanistan? How does the larger context of the racial tension between the groups affect the relationship between the characters in the novel?

6. Did the book have an impact on your feelings on immigration? Why? How does the novel help to humanise the immigrant experience?

7. Amir and Hassan play under a pomegranate tree as children, but when Amir returns to Kabul he discovers the tree is barren and it no longer bears fruit. What does the tree symbolise?

8. The relationships between fathers and sons, and between older and younger generations, are a major theme of the novel. Can you think of all the various father-son relationships in the novel? Discuss the differences between them.

9. On the last page of the novel (p. 371), when Amir runs for the kite he tells Sohrab, "*For you, a thousand times over*". These are the last words Hassan said to him before Hassan was raped. What effect does this have? Can you think of any other parallels in the narrative?

10. Does Amir redeem himself by the end of the novel? If yes, what is it that redeems him? If no, why not?

Thank you to our volunteer Lauren for choosing this title and creating the resource.