

# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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## Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

Selvi Bunce



### Amir's Life Story

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Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

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*The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (2003, Riverhead Books) is a novel about Amir, a boy who grows up in Kabul, during the time of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The reader starts out in Amir's childhood and progresses through his life. The reader sees him as a boy, and later as the man he becomes.

### **Amir and Hassan**

Amir is fairly honest and good, but sometimes he gets jealous of Hassan. Hassan is the son of Amir's father's best friend. Amir's father loves Hassan almost more than he loves Amir because Hassan's father, Ali, grew up with Amir's father and they were like brothers. Amir's father cares so much about Hassan because Hassan is also his son. Hassan's mother had cheated on Ali with Amir's father and gave birth to Hassan.

Amir has no idea of this until both his father and Hassan are dead. Amir spent his whole life treating Hassan as half servant and half friend but Hassan was okay with this because he was extremely loyal to Amir. Hassan is a Hazara, and Hazaras were despised and bullied in Kabul.

Hassan and Amir were both taunted by a bully named Assef.

### **Assef**

One day there is a kite fighting competition and Amir wins and so he asks Hassan to get the second place kite. Of course Hassan says yes, and runs off to get the kite. After some time of waiting around, Amir goes to look for Hassan, and finds that he has been jumped by Assef. Amir then ends up mistakenly watching Hassan get raped by Assef, while doing nothing to help.

This moment haunts Amir for the rest of his life. From then on the relationship between Amir and Hassan just plummets downward. This is because both Hassan and Amir know that the other one knows, and it just kills Amir that Hassan will do nothing to show any kind of hatred towards Amir.

Finally things get so bad between Hassan and Amir that Amir frames Hassan for stealing something, and both Hassan and Ali leave to live in Hazarajat.

### **Fleeing from Kabul and Settling Down in the United States**

About five years after they leave, Amir and his father flee Kabul and go to Peshawar. From there they move to America where Amir gets married to Soraya, and soon after the wedding Amir's father dies.

Fifteen years later Amir gets a call from Rahim Khan, his father's old business partner, telling Amir to come to Peshawar. Amir goes and finds out that Hassan and his wife have died, leaving

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their son Sohrab, an orphan. Rahim Kahn assigns Amir to find Sohrab and to take him to a better orphanage.

### **Assef Again**

When Amir reaches the current orphanage he finds that Sohrab has been taken to a Talib's house. Amir goes there to get Sohrab back and it turns out the man is Assef. Assef makes Amir fight to get Sohrab, and it looks like Assef will kill Amir until Sohrab uses his slingshot to shoot a cup straight into Assef's eye.

### **Sohrab in a Strange World**

Amir is then rushed to the hospital and later finds out that the only other option would be to take Sohrab home to America. Since Amir is not sure if he can do that he tells Sohrab that he might have to go back to the orphanage. After hearing that Sohrab tries to kill himself, and is then rushed to the hospital. After he recovers, both Amir and Sohrab go to America where Sohrab is never the same again. The only thing that can make him smile is flying a kite.

### **A Sense of Place**

The author creates a sense of place by being very descriptive and adding emotion from the characters for each area of the book. An example of this is seen where he is talking about the house that his father built, and how many people thought it was the prettiest house in all of Kabul. Amir then goes on to talk about the elaborate design. So, the reader can sense that Amir's family has money.

Another time the author gives a very strong sense of place is when Rahim Khan finds Hassan and walks into his yard for the first time. He describes the bare area so the reader knows Hassan is living in poverty.

Another example is when Amir arrives in Peshawar and has to take a smoke-filled taxi to Rahim Khan's house. The reader can almost smell the smoke, and instantly remember the first time Amir and his father had gone to Peshawar.

### **Quotes from Wise Persons**

This book is full of good quotes and sayings from many different wise characters. One quote that was used often was "There is always a way to be good again." This quote shows that when you make a mistake, especially a big one, there is always some way to go back and change it. A part of your life and past doesn't always have to be shadowed by something bad.

Another powerful quote was "Healed at last. I laughed." Amir says this while Assef is beating him. Amir means that after all these years this is what he's really needed all along. This is

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important because I think it's just amazing that he finds peace through all the pain.

Another quote I liked was "Every other sin is a variation of theft." I was confused when I first read this but I understood it as I read on to where Amir's Father said "If you kill a man you take his life." I was surprised that it is true that theft occurs in different ways.

### **Lessons that We Learn**

Some lessons that we could learn from this book are that sometimes your past is important to your future, and again, like Rahim Khan said, "there is a way to be good again". We learn that sometimes your past is important to your future when Amir goes back to Kabul and Peshawar to face what happened.

This fits right into his present American life, when he discovers he must take Sohrab home, considering Soraya and Amir cannot have a child. Rahim Khan's quote was correct, because there is always a way to go back and fix what you have done.

Another lesson from the book is that pain may continue to exist in someone's life till something/someone can change it. Amir finds peace in the beating that he takes from Assef since he never did anything to help his friend Hassan. He had believed that he needed to be punished for not helping his friend, and he feels that he has finally paid the price.

### **A Powerful Story of Friendship and Redemption**

I thought this was a very touching and interesting book and I was disappointed when it ended because I wanted to keep on reading. I definitely think *The Kite Runner* is a great book for other students to read because it's not boring at all.

The author's style helps the reader to picture things in Kabul and the way people lived in Afghanistan. It's also a good book to read now because Americans have heard a lot about Afghanistan in the news.

In conclusion, I think this is a powerful story of friendship and redemption. I don't think I'll forget this book for a long time.

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