

The Kite Runner

Khaled Hosseini

Reviewed by: Courtney Cheng, 17

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Two young Afghan boys – Amir and Hassan – grow up together as good friends despite their differences. Amir is a Pashtun and Sunni; Hassan is a Hazara and Shi'a who acts as Amir's family servant. A few years later, Hassan is tortured by Amir's peers and Amir does nothing to stop them. In an attempt to save his friend from further pain, Amir creates a ruse that frames Hassan as a thief. Though Amir's father doesn't believe this, Hassan and his father insist on leaving their places as servants out of shame. The years pass by and Amir and his father move to America in hopes of creating a better future for themselves in light of the war breaking out in their home country. A letter arrives in the mail one fateful day and Amir is suddenly forced to face the demons of his past for the final time.

The Kite Runner is a historical fiction novel aimed towards young adult readers in high school and older. While Hosseini's writing is beautifully structured and comprehensible, some of the topics covered in the book aren't suitable for younger readers. The powerful images painted by his words would disturb even older readers, but it is this same straightforward style that makes the novel so wonderful.

Amir, the narrator of the story, expresses his thoughts very explicitly. His friendship with Hassan is strong and too often taken for granted; its childish nature is easy to identify and readers are able to empathize with his conflicted feelings over his actions. Later in his life, the choices he makes are spurred on by twists in the plotline that Hosseini hints at throughout the development of the novel, but also portrays as implausible of happening, which gives the conclusion of the story a bittersweet tinge. It is these strong bonds of friendship, family, and love are the highlights of *The Kite Runner*. This novel is one I would definitely suggest to my friends to read – much like they had often suggested it to me – but it isn't one I would read often; its somber, yet hopeful, nature leaves readers something to long for even when the pages have all been turned.

Recommended Titles:

A Thousand Splendid Suns, by Khaled Hosseini

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, by Jonathan Safran Foer

Everything is Illuminated, by Jonathan Safran Foer

The Spanish Bow, by Andromeda Romano-Lax

The Book Thief, by Markus Zusak