

The Kite Runner

Khaled Hosseini

Reviewed by Rachel Johnson,42

Teen Star Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Amir grew up in Kabal in the 1960's and 70's with his father Baba. Amir's father was a wealthy businessman, his lineage is Pashtun which came with many privileges because they are looked at as the real Afghans. Amir lived in a big house and went to a good school. His best friend is Hassan, who was the son of their loyal servant Ali. Ali and Hassan's lineage is Hazara, so they are looked down upon and teased. Hassan lived in a small house in the backyard with his father and helps with the daily chores. Amir likes books and all he wants is his father love and approval, but Baba looks at him as weak because he does not like sports, and he never stands up for himself. Hassan stands up for Amir when he is being bullied. Amir and Hassan do everything together. Amir reads Hassan stories, they play games, but their favorite thing to do is fly kites. Amir and Hassan enter the kite fighting tournament together. Hassan is a great kite runner, he always captures the last kite with little effort. During the tournament in 1975, Amir wins, and his father is overjoyed. Hassan agrees to run the kite for Amir. He retrieves the kite, then is cornered by 3 bullies and sexually assaulted. Amir witness the assault but does nothing. Their relationship is never the same.

26 years after Amir leaves, he gets a call from an old friend. He returns to Afghanistan and finds a country that has endured decades of war. His friend is sick and gives him a letter and photograph from Hassan. He also reveals family secrets and Amir is left with a tough decision and a chance at redemption. Will he face his fears? Will he stand up for what is right?

The Kite Runner is an unfortunate story about a man who has lived with the guilt of betraying a friend. Khaled Hosseini delivers vivid storytelling. He does an excellent job presenting Afghan culture, the social divide, and the devastation of countless years of war. There are times when the story takes a dark turn and made it difficult to read (rape, murder, stoning, selling children, suicide, racial slurs,). I did like that the story had a message of forgiving oneself. I also like that the ending leaves the reader feeling optimistic. This is a book for mature reader, it is very graphic, and some things are quite shocking. I would recommend it to readers 16+. (Parental Discretion Advised)

Recommended Titles

All the Light We Cannot See, by Anthony Doerr

What the Night Sings, by Vesper Stamper

All the Stars Denied, by Guadalupe Garcia McCall

