

Kite Runner by Hosseini, Khaled

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/book-reviews/the-kite-runner>

- **Drinking, Drugs & Smoking**

some

Adults drink whiskey and wine, and debate the religious morality of using alcohol. A soldier's described as having become addicted to an unspecified "drug." Morphine and other pills are used for pain.

- **Parents Need to Know**

Parents need to know that *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini tells the story of Amir, who grows up in Afghanistan during the 1970s and '80s, and eventually moves to the San Francisco Bay Area. Cultural prejudice and the political power shifts as the Russians invade and the Taliban later take over strongly affect Amir's relationships. The novel includes graphic descriptions of extreme cruelty and violence, including homosexual rape, murder, beatings, and a suicide attempt. Alcohol and drugs are used in appropriate ways, though the righteousness of drinking's part of religious discussions about Islam. This beautiful, moving novel deals with complex adult issues about religion, prejudice, forgiveness, and the nature of "goodness."

- **Educational Value**

a lot

Teens will learn about Afghanistan from the 1970s through 2001, including divisions between religious and political groups, and life in Kabul before and during the Taliban's rule. They'll also pick up some Farsi words and understand more about the experience of Afghani immigrants to the United States. *The Kite Runner* also presents geographical information about Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

- **Positive Messages**

a lot

The Kite Runner points to the destructiveness of shame, and shows the good that results from forgiving others -- and yourself.

- **Positive Role Models**

some

The Kite Runner's full of flawed but important role models: Amir's father, Baba, seems noble and strong, but he disapproves of his son's emotional nature. Baba's business partner, Rahim Khan, encourages Amir's talent, but he keeps a big secret from his young friend. Amir avoids responsibility for his own mistakes well into adulthood, but he eventually shows courage and honor.

- **Violence & Scariness**

a lot

The Kite Runner's violent incidents are many and graphic: deaths by shooting, stoning, and suffocation; severe beatings; an attempted suicide. A young boy's homosexual rape is described in detail; the rapist later flaunts his power over another boy by fondling him in front of another adult. This author does not shy from detailed descriptions of blood, wounds, sickness, and fear.

- **Sex, Romance & Nudity**

very little

The author describes romantic love and caring adults' desire for affection.

- **Language**

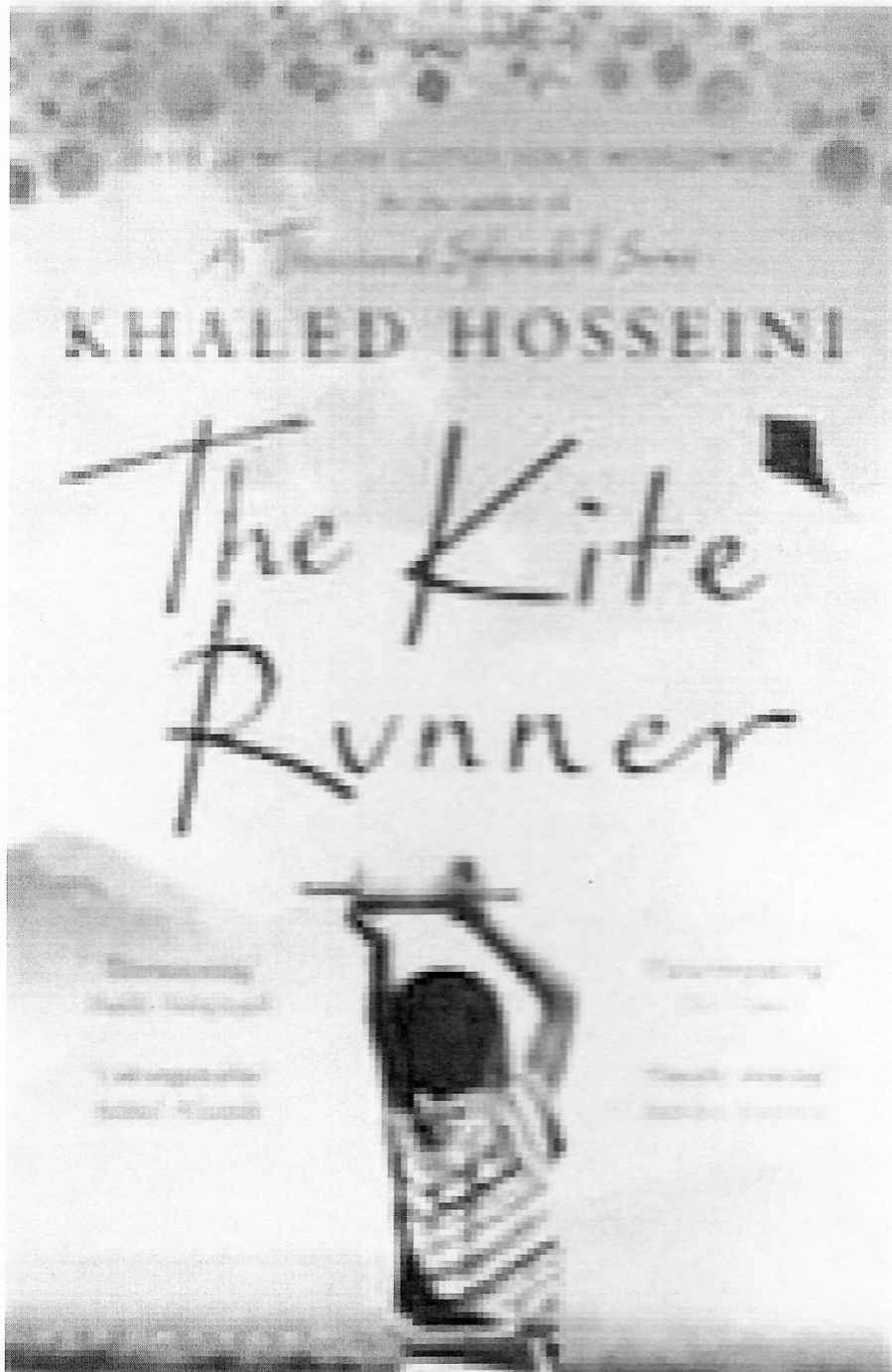
a lot

Strong language includes multiple uses of "f--k," "s--t," "piss," "bastard," "prick."
One use of "c--t."

<https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2014/jul/30/review-khaled-hosseini-the-kite-runner>

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini - review

'The message behind the very ending could be interpreted differently by different readers, but personally I feel that it offers a small sense of hope for both the future of its characters, and perhaps for war-torn Afghanistan as well'



Khaled Hosseini, The Kite Runner

A gripping and emotional story of betrayal and redemption, *The Kite Runner* had me thrilled and moved, both at the same time. It tells the story of Amir and Hassan, the closest of friends, as good as brothers, and also experts in the art of kite flying. The two young boys live in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan,

and this year they are going to try harder than ever to win the local kite-fighting tournament—a popular Afghan pastime, and this is Amir's one hope of winning his father's love. But just like the kites battling in the sky, war comes to Afghanistan, and the country becomes an extremely dangerous place.

In war, people are often forced to make great sacrifices, and the young Amir himself commits an act of betrayal, towards his best friend Hassan no less, which will haunt him for the rest of his life. Amir and his father are forced to flee Afghanistan for America, and *The Kite Runner* becomes the story of Amir's quest for redemption – righting the wrongs he committed all those years ago as a boy in Kabul.

The story is fast-paced and hardly ever dull, and introduced me to a world – the world of Afghan life – which is strange, fascinating and yet oddly familiar all at the same time. Hosseini's writing finds a great balance between being clear and yet powerful, and not only is the story itself brilliantly constructed, but the book also explores the very art of storytelling. Amir himself becomes a writer, and he reflects on his experiences in the story as though his life itself were a piece of fiction (which of course it is!).

But I think the best bit about the kite runner is its sense of fate and justice, of good overcoming evil in the end, despite all odds. Without giving away the ending, Amir ends up back in Afghanistan and makes a very different set of sacrifices in order to set things straight. The final chapter of the book is perhaps my favourite, and one that I have found moving even when rereading it. The message behind the very ending could be interpreted differently by different readers, but personally I feel that it offers a small sense of hope for both the future of its characters, and perhaps for war-torn Afghanistan as well