

## Reading Guide

### *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

Read for the pleasure and excitement of the story and the experience. Since you'll have many opportunities to talk to others at SJSU about the book, as you read, you may want to jot down some notes of events and statements you find of interest and your thoughts about the story. Bring your notes to the discussion group you attend. If you have questions or want to pose questions or comments, visit the website or send an email to [sjsureads@sjsu.edu](mailto:sjsureads@sjsu.edu).

#### Characters in alphabetical order

(and page when first mentioned)

- Aflatoon – Amir's dog in the U.S. (190)  
Ali – Hassan's father; servant to Baba and Amir (2)  
Amir – storyteller/narrator  
Assef – son of one of Baba's friends; kid (and adult) with the stainless-steel brass knuckles (37)  
Baba - Amir's father (2)  
Farid – Amir's driver in Afghanistan (228)  
Farzani – Hassan's wife (205)  
Hassan – boyhood playmate and servant; one year younger than Amir (2); the kite runner (52)  
Kamal – friend of Assef (37); shows up again without Assef (120, 124)  
Rahim Khan - Amir's friend and Baba's business partner (1)  
Sanaubar – Hassan's mother; ran away soon after birth (6)  
Sofia Akrami – Amir's mother; died giving birth to him (15)  
Sohrab – Hassan's son (211)  
Soraya – Amir's wife (140)  
Zamen – director of the rundown orphanage (253)



#### As you read, think about ...

- Ø Why Amir thinks he became who he is at age 12. What events and circumstances shaped his life?
- Ø How kite flying is significant to the story. Why might it be part of both the beginning and end of the story?
- Ø The symbols and events the author uses and why (kites, the tree the boys carved their names in, the mythical stories, the slingshot, Sohrab's silence, and others).
- Ø The use of religion, culture and politics in the story.
- Ø Whether Amir and Hassan are friends. What is friendship?
- Ø Baba's opinion of Amir. Does it change after the kite flying victory? Does it change in the U.S.? How?
- Ø The significance of Amir and Soraya's infertility.
- Ø Why Farid tells Amir that he was always a tourist in Afghanistan. (p 232) Do you ever think of yourself as a tourist in San Jose? Why or why not?
- Ø Why the author may have made Assef so evil.
- Ø What Amir means by the beating healing him. (p 289)
- Ø What significance there is of Amir's lip getting split in two and the scar that will remain. (p 297)
- Ø Whether Amir redeems himself in the end.
- Ø What Amir, Soraya and Sohrab would be doing if the story continued. How would you write a sequel?
- Ø What you might want to ask the author (he will be on campus in March 2007). Perhaps why he wrote the book, whether he ever took a creative writing course at SJSU.
- Ø Whether you enjoyed the book. Why or why not?

#### A few facts about the author

- ü He was born in Kabul in 1965.
- ü His family moved to San Jose in 1980.
- ü He graduated from Santa Clara University and UC San Diego School of Medicine.
- ü He is a doctor in San Jose.
- ü His first novel is *The Kite Runner*, which has sold over 3 million copies worldwide.

#### Quick facts about Afghanistan

- ü A land-locked country just a bit smaller than Texas. A lot of the terrain is rugged mountains.
- ü The winters are cold and summers are hot (high of 90° F in July and August and 40° F in January).
- ü About 30 million people live there (about 23 million people live in Texas).
- ü Life expectancy is low (43 years) relative to the U.S. (78 years).
- ü Islam is the predominant religion with about 80% of the people being Sunni Muslims and about 19% Shi'a Muslims.
- ü The official languages are Dari and Pashto.
- ü The literacy rate, meaning those over age 15 able to read and write, is 51% for males and 21% for females; the US literacy rate is 97% for both males and females.
- ü The form of government is Islamic Republic.

Sources: CIA World Factbook and Yahoo! Weather.

#### Map of Afghanistan



Source: CIA The World Factbook

Find the events calendar and other information at <http://www.sjsu.edu/ugs/reading/>.