



COMPASS 9 SUMMER READING

The Kite Runner

By Khaled Hosseini

Discussion Questions: Please use these questions both to guide your reading and to help you review.

1. The novel begins “I became what I am today at the age of twelve.” To what is Amir referring? Is his assertion entirely true? What other factors have helped form his character? How would you describe Amir?
2. Amir had never thought of Hassan as his friend, despite the evident bond between them, just as Baba did not think of Ali as his friend (page 22). What parallels can be drawn between Amir and Hassan’s relationship, and Baba and Ali’s? How would you describe the relationship between the two boys? What makes them so different in the way they behave with each other? What is it that makes Amir inflict small cruelties on Hassan? Had you already guessed at the true relationship between them? If so, at what point and why?
3. It is Amir’s dearest wish to please his father. What fuels this wish? To what extent does he succeed in doing so and at what cost? What kind of man is Baba? How would you describe his relationship with Amir and with Hassan? How does that relationship change, and what prompts those changes?
4. Khaled Hosseini vividly describes Afghanistan, both the privileged world of Amir’s childhood and the stricken country under the Taliban. How did his descriptions differ from ideas that you may already have had about Afghanistan? What cultural differences become evident in the American passages of the novel? How easy do the Afghans find it to settle in the U.S.? Compare the social structures of Amir’s life in Afghanistan vs. those he encounters in America.
5. What is the significance of the novel’s title? What might the kite fighting tournament symbolize? Does the competition’s combination of physical brutality and aesthetic beauty parallel any other aspects of the book?
6. Amir’s confrontation with Assef in Wazir Akar Khan marks an important turning point in the novel. Why does the author have Amir, Assef, and Sohrab all come together in this way? What is the significance of the scar that Amir develops as a result of the confrontation? Why is it important in Amir’s journey toward forgiveness and acceptance?