



The Kite Runner

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Overview

In the particular one finds the universal. In the film *The Kite Runner* by Golden Globe–nominated director Marc Forster, viewers are thrust into the world of 1970s Kabul, Afghanistan, in all its vibrancy and cross-cultural glory, as well as the dismal and war-torn Kabul of 2000. Based on the best-selling novel of the same name, the film is a faithful re-creation of the world and characters first envisioned by Afghan author Khaled Hosseini. The story hinges on a boyhood friendship torn asunder by an act of betrayal, which leads to one man's journey to right the wrongs of his past.

The Kite Runner is a modern fable that explores timely issues such as how class divisions and ethnic differences affect relationships, as well as the role of religion in individual lives and society. Further, the film is shot through with timeless themes that transcend the particularity of its setting. This study is designed to help you delve into a few of these themes, such as loyalty and sacrifice vs. betrayal, telling the truth vs. keeping secrets, and sin and guilt vs. redemption.

Discussion Guide

Themes:

- Loyalty and Sacrifice vs. Betrayal (Philippians 2:1–11; John 15:13; Matthew 6:14–15)
 - Telling the Truth vs. Keeping Secrets (Genesis 12:10–20; John 8:31–38; 1 John 4:18)
 - Sin and Guilt vs. Redemption (2 Corinthians 7:10–11; Psalm 38:3–8; Luke 19:1–9; Proverbs 11:17, 19, 21; Ephesians 1:3–8)
1. The strong underlying force of this movie is the relationship between Amir and Hassan. Discuss their friendship. Why is Amir afraid to be Hassan's true friend? Why does Amir constantly test Hassan's loyalty? Why does he resent Hassan? After the kite running tournament, why does Amir no longer want to be Hassan's friend?
 2. Early in Amir and Hassan's friendship, they visit a pomegranate tree where they spend hours reading and playing. One summer day, Amir uses a kitchen knife to carve their names on it: 'Amir and Hassan, the sultans of Kabul.' Discuss the significance of this tree.
 3. We begin to understand early in the movie that Amir is constantly vying for Baba's attention and often feels like an outsider in his father's life. Discuss Amir's relationship with Baba. Why do you think it was strained? How did learning that Hassan was Amir's half-brother change your opinion of Baba? Did it?
 4. America acts as a place for Amir to bury his memories and a place for Baba to mourn his. How does their life in America compare with the life they knew in Kabul?

5. What is the significance of the irony in the first story that Amir writes? After hearing Amir's story, Hassan asks, "Why did the man kill his wife? In fact, why did he ever have to feel sad to shed tears? Couldn't he have just smelled an onion?" How is his reaction to the story a metaphor for Amir's life? How does this story highlight the difference in character between Hassan and Amir?
6. Throughout the story, Baba worries because Amir never stands up for himself. When does this change?
7. 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? Why is it important in Amir's journey toward forgiveness and acceptance?
8. Who suffers the most in *The Kite Runner*?