

The Kite Runner of Khaled Hosseini

This is a deeply moving fictional book about an illiterate Afghan boy with an uncanny instinct for predicting exactly where a downed kite will land.

Growing up in the city of Kabul in the early 1970s, Hassan was narrator Amir's closest friend even though the loyal 11-year-old with "a face like a Chinese doll" was the son of Amir's father's servant and a member of Afghanistan's despised Hazara minority. But in 1975, on the day of Kabul's annual kite-fighting tournament, something unspeakable happened between the two boys.

Narrated by Amir, a 40-year-old novelist living in California, *The Kite Runner* tells the gripping story of a boyhood friendship destroyed by jealousy, fear, and the kind of ruthless evil that transcends mere politics. Running parallel to this personal narrative of loss and redemption is the story of modern Afghanistan and of Amir's equally guilt-ridden relationship with the war-torn city of his birth. The first Afghan novel to be written in English, *The Kite Runner* begins in the final days of King Zahir Shah's 40-year reign and traces the country's fall from a secluded oasis to a tank-strewn battlefield controlled by the Russians and then the trigger-happy Taliban.

This is a lovely book and really worth reading if only to understand better the goings on in Afghanistan and with its people during the 1970's. Again it gave rise to much discussion in the Filkins Book Club, we all enjoyed it and some of us found it hard to put down.