

The issues of bravery or cowardice in the movie the kite runner and the novel a t...

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



During a lifetime, many people are put in situations where they can either help someone who needs them or they can ignore the situation and do what is the best for their own sake. In both the movie *The Kite Runner* and the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* written by Khaled Hosseini, each of the characters is put in a situation where that particular character can show either bravery or cowardice. The characters that show cowardice were not able to live with that guilt any longer and they made changes in their lives whereas the characters that show bravery die with courage.

The Kite Runner tells the story of Amir, a boy living in Afghanistan, and his life experiences. During his childhood, he is known as being a coward who does not stand up for others in a time of need, whereas his best friend, Hassan, is the complete opposite of him and stands up for what he thinks is right. In the beginning of the movie, Hassan protects Amir from Assef and his friends who are bullies. Hassan puts himself at risk when he says, “ You are right. Agha. But perhaps you didn’t notice that I’m the one holding the slingshot. ” Hassan shows bravery by standing up to a group of nasty boys from town who are older and bigger than he is. Then when Amir wins the kite flying tournament, Hassan runs to get the kite. Assef catches Hassan in an alley and wants the kite. Hassan is so loyal to his friend that he does not give Assef the kite because it belongs to Amir. Assef rapes and tortures Hassan. Amir witnesses Hassan being raped and does nothing; in fact, he runs away. This situation defines the rest of Amir’s life; he knows that he needs to make up for what he did or he will live with regret for the rest of his life. Years later, Amir goes back to Afghanistan and finds out that Hassan was killed protecting Amir’s house. The Taliban wanted to take the house, but Hassan

was so loyal to his friend that he was killed for this loyalty. Amir finds out that Hassan's son, Sohrab, has been taken by Assef. Amir sees this abduction as his chance for redemption. Amir risks his own life to make up for what happened to Hassan. By rescuing Sohrab, Amir feels free from the guilt that his childhood mistakes caused him. His act of bravery redeems him from his cowardice.

The novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, portrays Jalil as being a cowardly man at the beginning of the story. Jalil is so engrossed with keeping his reputation clean that he pushes Nana out of his house. Nana is the housekeeper who is pregnant with Jalil's illegitimate child, Mariam. Jalil keeps in contact with them and tries to stay in Mariam's life only at his convenience. For Mariam's birthday, her one wish is to go into town with him. Jalil disappoints his daughter and allows Mariam to fall asleep in the street while waiting for him. After Nana's suicide, Jalil forces Mariam to marry Rasheed, a shoemaker. There are hints that Jalil deeply regrets the way he treated Mariam as seen when Jalil keeps a box that includes a tape of the movie, *Pinocchio*. *Pinocchio* is the cartoon that Jalil promised to take Mariam to see on her birthday, but never did; he also wrote a letter about how he regretted not taking her in and he enclosed Mariam's share of an inheritance in a box that went to Mariam after his death. Mariam is one of the main characters who is very dynamic. She shows bravery throughout the novel, not so much by speaking up, but by her courageous actions. Mariam shows courage for enduring the verbal and physical abuse from her husband, Rasheed. Even though Rasheed continuously physically and verbally abuses her, she still has the courage to

wake up every single morning never knowing what Rasheed would do to her that day. Towards the end of the book, when she kills Rasheed as he was strangling Laila, she calls his name because she wanted him to see what she was doing right before she struck him over the head. In that moment, Mariam finally makes a decision for herself. When Mariam dies for the killing of Rasheed, she dies with dignity. She thinks that she could have given up a long time ago and changed her past, but, in the end, she is happy that she did not give in to the circumstances of her life.

In each of these different situations of bravery, the characters are self-sacrificing and put others above themselves to uphold values of importance to them. Mariam is self-sacrificing by protecting Laila, and, in the end, dies for her. Jalil is a cowardly man who lives with regret, but in the end tries to make things right with his daughter. Hassan is brave and is always sacrificing for his friend, Amir. Amir sacrifices himself like his friend had done for him to save Hassan's son, Sohrab. Even though it took Jalil and Amir lifetimes to redeem the mistakes both made, they were able to do the right things by the end of both stories.