

The baba” (hosseini,
82). by saying this,
amir



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini follows the privileged life of a Pashtun, or Sunni Muslim, Amir, clashing with the dissimilar lifestyle of his half-brother and best friend by the name of Hassan, his lowly servant. The novel explicitly depicts the prejudice against Hazaras, also known as the Shia Muslims, in Afghanistan, when Hassan, who is part of the inferior race, is raped because of his religious beliefs. Choosing cowardice over courage, Amir sees the crime being committed against his best friend, but does not try to stop it, and has to live with the guilt for the rest of his life. An internally afflicted man, Amir seeks to redeem himself and reach atonement for his past sins.

Amir progresses from an adolescent, who is a coward, into a sympathetic and compassionate adult through his perspective and choice to change the past, the setting that he currently is in, and his friendship and guilty conscience moral to redeem himself. The Kite Runner's plot consists of several events which allow Amir to atone for his past sins that left his best friend unjustly victimized, which verifies the contrast of his character from the beginning to the end. In the beginning, though he did have a relatively wealthy youth, Amir felt deprived of a connection with his father, who did not put forth much effort towards forming a bond with his only son, rather he shows affection to Hassan. This tension damages their friendship, and makes Amir feel the need to gain his father's recognition and enviously conserve his father all to himself. Needy and selfish, Amir lacks the courage and audacity to intervene in the rape of his best friend. Amir says, " I actually aspired to cowardice because the alternative, the real reason I was running, was that Assef was right: Nothing was free in this world.

Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay to win Baba" (Hosseini, 82). By saying this, Amir believes he is justifying his actions with the pursuit that they are worse than cowardice. Amir is a slave to the object of desire, his father's affection, choosing cowardice over courage.

However, as the story progresses, Amir constantly thinks of his actions and is plagued with guilt. When he gets a call from an old friend, Amir chooses to advance on a trip that will allow him to redeem himself for his past actions and purify his sins. Amir conveys his ability to change the past when he says, "What happens in a few days, sometimes in a single day can change the course of a whole lifetime" (Hosseini, 150). Only when Amir decides to trounce Assef, Hassan's rapist, and take Sohrab, Hassan's son and his nephew, to the United States for a chance to have a prosperous life, is when he takes the steps towards atonement and redemption and shows his ability to change. Stripping away his guilt layer by layer, Amir is proving that he was successfully able to compensate for his past sins, thus, changing into a sympathetic and courageous adult. As Amir's adult perspective and his ability to change allows him to develop into a compassionate and courageous adult, the setting he is in changes his way of thinking, and ultimately, his character traits.

Secondly, coming from the Pashtun class of Afghanistan, Amir has a significant superiority over Hassan, who comes from the minority ethnic group known as the Hazaras. Amir, in his mind treats Hassan as a brother, but willingly admits that he encourages Hassan to do the perilous work, so he does not earn a bad name. Behind closed doors, Hassan and Amir are best friends, but with children of the same wealth and caste as him, Amir

treats Hassan as though he is just merely the servant his father pays him to be. Amir openly confesses, " But he's not my friend! I almost blurted. He's my servant, had I really thought that? Of course I hadn't. I hadn't. I treated Hassan well, just like a friend, better even, more like a brother. But if so, then why, when Baba's friends came to visit with their kids, didn't I ever include Hassan in our games? Why did I play with Hassan when nobody was around?"(Hosseini, 42).

This relationship perfectly defines the effect of setting because, though Amir and Hassan enjoy doing everything together, when the Pashtun class is around, Amir depreciates and forgets Hassan like the Hazaras have been treated for centuries in Afghan culture. The social hierarchy in Afghanistan has poisoned Amir's thinking, and made him feel superior because of his ethnicity, thus, justifying his actions of being a coward. Nevertheless, when Amir and his father flee from Afghanistan to America because of the Russian invasion, Amir sees America as a place to escape his past, specifically the guilt of Hassan's rape, and views it as a gateway to new beginnings. Amir describes America as " a river, roaring along, unmindful of the past. I could wade into this river, let my sins drown to the bottom, let the waters carry me someplace far.

Someplace with no ghosts, no memories and no sins"(Hosseini, 144). The river symbolizes Amir's ability to advance, forgetting the past, and a purification that leaves him free of sins. This proves that the American setting allows Amir to change his perspective and redeem himself. Although the setting played a great impact on Amir's attitude and his character, his friendship and guilty conscience moral to redeem himself affect Amir and

molds him into a sympathetic and courageous adult. In addition, the theme friendship is emphasized in *The Kite Runner* and allows the readers to understand how the relationship is experienced with members of different social classes.

Young and naive, Amir is fickle with his friendship with Hassan because he views them as social unequals. Regardless of their status, Hassan loves Amir without conditions and shows it by his steadfast loyalty, which indicates his awareness of the justice in their relationship. His cheerful, loyal, and loving demeanor is what causes him pain, as he loved Amir so much that he allowed himself to be abused in the name of their friendship. Amir notes, "But in none of his stories did Baba ever refer to Ali as a friend... I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either" (Hosseini, 25).

Their friendship is a bond that is only openly acknowledged by one party, Hassan. Amir continuously disregards Hassan and criticizes him because of his ethnicity. However, on the journey of his redemption, Amir finally understands the viewpoints and values, the words and kind gestures, and the milestones and the care of Hassan's friendship. When confronted with Hassan's rapist, Amir is finally able to atone for his past, as he encounters the identical situation that was his origin of shame more than twenty years previous: Assef carrying on the rape of Hassan, but with the only living piece of him, his son Sohrab. For Amir, this situation allowed him to conquer his cowardice and fight for their friendship, something Hassan did over twenty years previous. When Amir provides his nephew with a happy life and gives Sohrab a piece of their past by showing what him and Hassan use to do,

Amir tells Sohrab in a kite-flying tournament that he will run his kite " a thousand times over" (Hosseini, 391).

By saying this, Amir redeems himself for the past and finally sees Hassan and Sohrab as true friends out of love, and not out of spite. In conclusion, Amir's ability to change and atone for his past sins, becoming a sympathetic and compassionate adult, is seen through his adult perspective and choice to change the past, the setting that he is currently in, and his friendship and guilty conscience moral to redeem himself. Change will continue to happen, as Amir overcomes his guilt and redeems himself for his past sins.