



**Opening:**

Consider how Hosseini chooses to open the novel with the following: “I became what I am today at the age of twelve” (1).

How far do you believe that childhood or one single event in childhood can alter the person you become?

Consider the following lines from page 2:

“For you, a thousand times over”  
“There is a way to be good again”

What might these lines foreshadow for us?

How does Hosseini Hook the reader in the opening and make it exciting?

**Chapter 1**

1. What is the significance of the past for the narrator?
2. What physical feature marks out Hassan?
3. Is it significant that Rahim Khan is mentioned three times but Baba only once, and even then only after Rahim is mentioned?
4. After reading the first chapter, what can you determine about the point of view?
5. Compare the opening and closing lines of the chapter.

Explain the significance of the following quote: “That was a long time ago, but it’s wrong what they say about the past, I’ve learned, about how you can bury it. Because the past claws its way out. Looking back now, I realize I have been peeking into that deserted alley for the last twenty-six years.”

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**Chapter 2**

1. How does the narrator introduce Hassan?
2. Compare the second paragraph on p.5 and the fourth paragraph on p.9. What do these paragraphs suggest about the relationship each boy has with their father?
3. The boys' lives run parallel to each other, how are they similar and how different?
4. The themes of childhood and friendship are important in this chapter. Can you identify another theme the author wants us to notice?
5. What is the effect of only finding out the narrator's name at the end of this chapter? What is the significance of the revelation?

**Chapter 3**

1. Choose one quotation to describe Baba.
2. Is Amir's father a religious man? A moral man? Is there a difference?
3. In what ways does Hosseini encourage the reader to be critical of Baba in this chapter?
4. Rahim and Baba each view Amir in a different light. How do each of them see him, and based on what you have read so far, who do you agree with?

Explain the significance of the following quote: "A boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up to anything."

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**Chapter 4**

1. What does the story about the death of Ali's parents show us about Afghan society?
2. How does Baba's relationship with Ali mirror Amir's with Hassan? What does Hosseini want us to think about this?
3. Amir says "I never thought of me and Hassan as friends" (Hosseini 22). Does this mean that they were never friends, or does it suggest something else about their relationship?
4. Which denomination of Islam is Amir? Does Hassan belong to the same one?
5. Read the following: "Sitting cross-legged, sunlight and shadows of pomegranate leaves dancing on his face... I would tell myself that was amends enough for a harmless prank" (Hosseini 24-25). What do we learn about the character of each boy from these events?
6. Hassan praises Amir's first short story as 'the best story you've read me in a long time'. What type of adjective is the word 'best'? Is this hyperbolic (exaggerated) or accurate praise?
7. How does Hosseini leave us in no doubt about the conflict Amir struggles with in regards to his relationship with his father?

**Find at least 3 quotations from Chapter 4 which show that the ethnic differences between Amir and Hassan affect the way Amir views their relationship.**

**Chapter 5**

1. Who does Baba call out to when he comes into the house? Do you think this is significant?
2. Why is Amir glad about the coup?
3. What does Hassan's question to Amir (Hosseini 32-33) show us?
4. Choose three quotations that describe Assef. What impression do they leave you with?
5. Is there such a thing as a 'true' Afghan? (Hosseini 35) What is the irony in Assef's speech?
6. What impact does Amir's thought that "he's not my friend!... He's my servant!" (Hosseini 36) have?
7. How do you think Ali feels about Hassan's birthday present from Baba? Explain your answer.
8. Why are we left with a sense of foreboding at the end of the chapter?

Explain the significance of the following quote: "Huddled together in the dining room and waiting for the sun to rise, none of us had any notion that a way of life had ended." (Hosseini 36)

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**Chapter 6**

1. Why is the opening sentence only a word long?
2. Does Amir enjoy the winter?
3. Why is kite fighting especially important to Amir?
4. What is it that Afghans cherish and what do they abhor?

5. What talent of Hassan's builds our anticipation about events to come?
6. What added understanding of the title do we gain from this chapter?
7. Amir is cruel to Hassan, but does anything in his story make us less critical of him?
8. Finish the quotation from p.51: 'He was so goddam pure, ...'

**Chapter 7**

1. Hassan tells Amir “You won, Amir agha! You won!” What does Amir reply and why is this unexpected?
2. Why does Hosseini break the chapter with the description of a memory and a dream?
3. What is it called when two contrasting things are put together to encourage the reader to think? How is the technique used in this chapter?
4. How do Wali and Kamal react to the rape? Why is what Wali says important to our understanding of Assef?
5. Why is the description of the Eid sacrifice included here?
6. How much do you blame the ‘hero’ of this chapter for the way he acts when his friend is raped? Are there any mitigating factors?

Explain the significance of the following quote: “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.”

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**Chapter 8**

1. A chasm develops between Amir and Hassan and between who else?
2. What is unexpected about Rahim Khan’s reaction to the re-telling of the kite fighting triumph?
3. What does Amir ask his father? What does the question tell us about Amir, and the response tell us about his father?
4. What is an insomniac and why should it matter?

5. Why does Rahim Khan tell Amir the story about Homaira?
  
6. Consider how Hosseini ends this chapter. What is the significance of the final sentence?

Explain the significance of the following quote: “In one of those brief bursts of light, I saw something I’ll never forget: Hassan serving drinks to Assef and Wali from a silver platter. The light winked out, a hiss and a crackle, then another flicker of orange light: Assef grinning, kneading Hassan in the chest with a knuckle.”

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**Chapter 9**

1. What decision does Amir make in this chapter that has significant consequences?
2. What is the consequence?
3. Why is Baba's reaction to Ali and Hassan's decision so startling?
4. In what way are the final lines of the chapter poetic?

**Chapter 10**

1. How do you interpret Amir's 'car sickness' (p.96)?
2. How do you interpret Baba's actions in this chapter?
3. Why do you think that Amir 'was glad for darkness'? Have you noticed the increasing frequency of such references?
4. Do Amir's words 'one disappointing son and two suitcases' make you more or less sorry for him?

**Chapter 11**

1. Compare the reactions of Amir and Baba to life in America.
2. What is it that Amir cannot escape from?
3. What is Baba's greatest fear?
4. How is 'My Swap Meet Princess' introduced? (p.124)



## Chapter 12

1. How does Hosseini get the reader to enjoy the courtship?
2. By Afghan standards Amir's approach is bold (p.128), do you find it so?
3. How is gender made an issue in this chapter?
4. Why are so many Afghan words used to describe the courtship (p.128-129). Which words are explained and which are not? Why do you think this has been done?
5. This chapter sees great joy and celebration, so why does it end so negatively?

## Chapter 13

1. p.148: What do you notice about the sentence length in the description of the ceremony? Why do you think this technique has been used?
2. p.151: What simile is used to describe Baba's happiness? Why is this fitting?
3. p.154: How is Taheri described? Who does this contrast strongly with? Why do you think Hosseini offers this contrast?
4. How do the tone and ending of the chapter differ from the rest of the chapter? Why has this contrast been created?
5. Is this chapter well-balanced?

Explain the significance of the following quote: "I envied her. Her secret was out. Spoken. Dealt with. I opened my mouth and almost told her how I'd betrayed Hassan, lied, driven him out, and destroyed a forty-year relationship between Baba and Ali. But I didn't. I suspected there were many ways in which Soraya Taheri was a better person than me. Courage was just one of them."

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## Chapter 14

1. What important revelation is made?

2. “Come. There is a way to be good again” (Hosseini 168). What does Rahim Khan’s comment tells us about his understanding of Amir?
3. Why does Hosseini sometimes write in italics?
4. Explore the significance of ‘For you, a thousand times over!’

**Chapter 15**

1. How is Rahim Khan described (p.172) and what is wrong with him?
2. Why did Afghanistan welcome the Taliban at first? (p.174)
3. How does Hosseini describe the impact of the Taliban on Kabul?
4. “The truth was no. The lie was yes. I settled for something in between. “I don’t know”” (Hosseini 176). Does Amir’s honesty make us more sympathetic towards him?

**Chapter 16**

1. Why does Hassan take such pains to return the house to its former glory?
2. What is the significance of Hassan’s choice of name for his son? (See also p.90.)
3. The war may be over but what shocking revelations end the chapter? Does the order they are related in matter?

**Chapter 17**

1. Why does Rahim Khan choose to tell Amir of Hassan’s death after he read the letter, rather than before?
2. What simile does Amir use to describe Hassan’s death (Hosseini 192)? Why is it effective?
3. “I’m thirty-eight years old and I’ve just found out my whole life is one big fucking lie!” (Hosseini 195). What has Amir just found out and how do you react to this revelation?

Explain the significance of the following quote: “In the wintertime, Hassan took his son kite running. There were not nearly as many kite tournaments as in the old days—no one felt safe outside for too long—but there were still a few scattered tournaments. Hassan would prop Sohrab on his shoulders and they would go trotting through the streets, running kites, climbing trees where kites had dropped. You remember, Amir jan, what a good kite runner Hassan was? He was still just as good.”

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**Chapter 18**

1. “like father, like son” (Hosseini 197). How far is this cliché true in relation to Amir and his Baba?
2. Why is there so much repetition of earlier events and conversations in this chapter?
3. This is a short chapter. Does this mean that it’s less important than the others?

**Chapter 19**

1. “You’ve always been a tourist here, you just didn’t know it” (Hosseini 204). How far is Farid’s criticism true?
2. How does Hosseini encourage us to see Amir in a positive light?

**Chapter 20**

1. Why is what Amir’s mother said so prophetic? (Hosseini 219)
2. Is it acceptable to sacrifice one or two children for the greater good? If you were in the place of the orphanage manager what would you have done?
3. How do you expect the novel to end? If you’ve already finished the novel or seen the movie, how would you end it and why?

**Chapter 21**

1. Is Farid's humour (Hosseini 232-3) appropriate in the context of the executions that follow? What is Hosseini hoping to achieve here?
2. Why do the Taliban become the Talib?
3. How is the tension built up in the description of the executions on pages 235-7?
4. Why does Hosseini include the detail of the separate trucks? (p.237)

**Chapter 22**

1. Amir is worried that he's going to 'render Soraya a biwa, a widow' (p240). Why does Hosseini use the Afghan word here?
2. Why is it important that Amir notices the track marks on the Talib's arms? (p.241)
3. What difference does it make that Assef is the man that Amir must negotiate with?
4. What hypocrisy does Amir notice? (p.245)
5. How does Amir translate Assef's phrase 'Taking out the garbage' (p.249)?
6. What do you notice about the sentence lengths in the description of the fight on page 252?
7. Who saves Amir? Is this surprising?

Explain the significance of the following quote: "My body was broken—just how badly I wouldn't find out until later—but I felt healed. Healed at last. I laughed" (Hosseini 289).

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**Chapter 23**

1. What physical scars does Amir bear from his fight with Assef? Which is most significant and why? (p.259)
2. What do you make of Rahim Khan's letter? Does it make you more or less sympathetic to any of the novel's protagonists?
3. Perhaps the most emotionally powerful words in the novel are present in this chapter. If they are, what is your bid?

**Chapter 24**

1. How does Hosseini suggest the damage that has been done to Sohrab?
2. What is one positive to come from what happened to Amir and Sohrab in that room with Assef?
3. Why does Hosseini end this chapter the way he does? Do the final lines catch you by surprise or is this juxtaposition now expected and a healthy balance to the usual romance found in novels?

**Chapter 25**

1. Sohrab doesn't die but doesn't escape unscathed. How does Hosseini suggest the psychological toll of his experience?
2. How does Hosseini show the reader that Amir has become the man his father wanted him to become?
3. This is a very individual story and tragedy but how does this chapter broaden out the perspective?
4. Is the conclusion to the novel a positive one? Does it end as you hoped? Would you have liked a different conclusion?
5. Does the title mean more to you than when you began the novel? Explain your response.