The Kite Runner: Chapters 21-25

1. Have you ever moved and returned to your old home or neighborhood years later? If you have never moved, maybe a close relative has and you can relate? Or think of going back to your elementary school all of these years later. What were these experiences like for you? Explain. Now look back at the beginning of Chapter 21 (p.259-265). How is the Kabul Amir remembers from his childhood SO drastically different from the Kabul of today? How is his Baba’s house so sharply contrasted from what we read in chapter 2??
2. It is inevitable that Assef would have to return to the novel at some point. Were you surprised once he identified himself? Did you come to this conclusion prior to their meeting? Has Assef changed at all over the years?
3. Amir’s confrontation with Assef marks an important turning point in the novel. Why does the author have Amir, Assef, and Sohrab all come together in this way? What is the significance/symbolism of the scar that Amir develops as a result of the confrontation? It is an INTENSE scene…what were your thoughts and opinions of it? Did Assef get what he ultimately deserves?
4. Rahim states in his letter, “*Sometimes I think everything he (Baba) did, feeding the poor on the streets, building the orphanage, giving money to friends in need, it was all a way of redeeming himself. And that, I believe, is what true redemption is, Amir jan, when guilt leads to good*” (302).

Do you agree with this statement? Do you feel Baba redeemed himself? Do you feel Amir has redeemed himself after this trip back to Afghanistan?

1. Why is this experience important in Amir’s journey toward forgiveness and acceptance? Is Amir a changed man? Baba feared that “a boy that doesn’t stand up for himself becomes a man that doesn’t stand up for anything.” Did Amir eventually defy this? If so, how?
2. “Like father, like son” relates to Amir and Baba, but it also relates to Hassan and Ali, and Hassan and Sohrab. Can you expand on the importance of this statement in relation to Hassan?
3. There are many instances of where this novel comes full circle. Can you explain 2-3 examples? What was your opinion of the ending? Now that you have finished reading, what was your opinion of the novel as a whole???
4. What is the significance of the novel’s title? What might the kite fighting tournament symbolize? Does the competition’s combination of physical brutality and aesthetic beauty parallel any other aspects of the book?
5. Before we started reading, we asked for you to make a list of principles, beliefs and values you grew up with. We asked you to think about one of your favorite memories as a child and to sum up your childhood in one word. We also asked you to think of life at the age of 12. We discussed Afghanistan, pre and post-Taliban rule. How has this novel helped put everything into perspective for you? Why is it still relevant and worthy of reading and discussion today?