The Kite Runner is the story of Amir, a Sunni Muslim, who struggles to find his place in the world because of the aftereffects and fallout from a series of traumatic childhood events. Along the way, readers are able to experience growing up in Afghanistan in a single-parent home, a situation that bears remarkable similarities to many contemporary households. Many of the ruling-class elite in Afghanistan view the world as black and white, yet Amir identifies many shades of gray. And Amir's father, Baba, who does not consistently adhere to the tenets of his culture, confuses rather than clarifies things for young Amir. Although Amir and Baba toil to create a new life for themselves in the United States, the past is unable to stay buried. Amir views coming to America as an opportunity to leave his past behind. During a crucial episode, which takes place during an important kite flying tournament, Amir decides not to act — he decides not to confront bullies and aggressors when he has the chance — and this conscious choice of inaction sets off a chain reaction that leads to guilt, lies, and betrayals.