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Thank you, Mr. Hosseini

In my senior AP Literature class, I remember staring at a list of 100 books while the voice of my teacher echoed in the background, “This year you must choose two books from this list to read and do a project on both books you choose.” I didn’t know what two books to choose. The list overwhelmed me; it included books from *Jane Eyre* to *Invisible Man*. None of the books intrigued me because these literature books seemed boring to read and didn’t catch my attention. Until I got to the last few book options and read *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini is when I became interested because I remember my mother saying to me once that this novel is extremely good, and I should read it when I get the chance. With that in my mind, I decided to read *The Kite Runner* for the first project. I am glad that I did choose this book because it opened a new perspective of genre in books that I didn’t know I would like: historical fiction. This book allowed me to sink into the story and helped me analytically think about the setting, the characters, plot, and the author’s subtle messages he conveyed from his use of imagery and metaphors. *The Kite Runner* motivated me to read *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, also by Khaled Hosseini, for my second project, and I found myself easily understanding the author's work and expanding on his views. From this experience, I have come to understand that a person does not need to read a scholastic literature piece to understand how to read or excel in literature, but simply a person can read a book that they enjoy and can get similar results. The process is still

the same such as breaking the book apart and rebuilding it slowly to connect the ideas, but when someone reads a book that they truly enjoy there can be a significantly greater impact on one's literacy development.

I remember laying in my bed reading the first chapter of the *Kite Runner* and grasping nothing of it. I decided to keep on reading thinking that the plot might become clear later, but by the time I arrived at the third chapter I was lost. I found myself re-reading sections and trying to connect ideas that didn't connect with each other, but with my frustration I wanted them to connect. I eventually decided to step away from the book and rethink strategies on how to approach reading *The Kite Runner*. I told myself that I shouldn't read the book with the mindset of having to read it for school because then I wouldn't enjoy it, and that I shouldn't feel pressured to understand every single word the author is trying to say in the book since it is impossible to do.

Once I established my plan, I read the book once again from the beginning. While reading the first chapter, I noticed ideas and subtle messages that I didn't pick up on the first time. I became more aware of the setting, the characters, and the imagery the author tried to depict in each chapter. It became easier to read the book because I was able to understand what was happening in each chapter and from this I found myself not wanting to put the book down. This experience helped me realize that the fact that I was leisure reading was helping me appreciate and comprehend the book better. I caught myself unconsciously grabbing my pencil and circling words, underlying sentences, or phrases that seemed important to know for the book. From this, I found myself connecting ideas and integrating my own interpretation of certain paragraphs to help me better understand the messages using my own words which led me to conclusions of the authors point of view. This experience was important for me because it helped

me realize that I could improve my own reading skills without having to have someone there to tell me the ideas or use spark notes to understand the book.

As I began to read further into the book, I noticed myself being immersed into it. I remember every time I read the book the entire world seemed to just freeze, and it was just me and the book. As I read every chapter, I felt like I was part of the story and I could see it vividly, which made it easier to understand what was happening. Therefore, I enjoyed reading this book because it pulled my attention. I was always engaged and excited to read every chapter. The fact that the book had drama and sudden plot twists made it difficult to stop reading. I once read from an article by David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky that discussed in their book about the many ways of reading different texts. From their book they stated, “Our experience with these texts is a remarkable one, but the challenges and surprises are reasons we read” (5). From this statement, I could agree with the authors that the challenges and surprises are reasons we read, but I think the main reason we read is because the book appeals and engages its reader to want to keep reading. The fact that *The Kite Runner* was an interesting book motivated me to challenge myself to understand and connect ideas to see the bigger picture, but if it was an unappealing book I wouldn’t have had the interest to challenge myself. Therefore, this book was teaching me new ways on how to read that I had never have done before on my own. *The Kite Runner* revealed to me that a book can give you reason to read and can leave a mark on you while you can also leave a mark on it.

After I finished reading the *Kite Runner*, I was amazed at the progress I did as a reader. I am glad that I gave the book a second chance because I was able to develop a lot of my literacy skills as a reader. Out of the many books I have read in my life, the *Kite Runner* left a major impact on me. This book made me aware of the tumultuous events that occurred in Afghanistan

and the impacts it left on many of its people. The themes guilt, and redemption played a huge role in the book because it kept the book entertaining and engaging. The endless plot twists, deceivment, and jealousy among the characters pulled the entire story together and was important for the growth of one of the main characters, Amir. For these reasons, the *Kite Runner* persuaded me to read *A Thousand Splendid Suns* for my second project because I wanted to further experience the enjoyment that the *Kite Runner* left on me through reading the second book.

After reading both *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, I was amazed of how in-depth I went into these books. I found myself analyzing the *A Thousand Splendid Suns* like I did with the *Kite Runner* to understand the main concepts and themes. From this experience of reading both the novels, I found myself relating to what Dorothy Allison explained in her writing piece about how a painting powerfully touched her and that the art remains with her till this day. In her paper she said, “art is supposed to have the power to provoke, the authority of a heartfelt vision” (591). In this case, my “art” were these two books that created a “heartfelt vision.” These books provoked me to expand and interpret the uncertainty that these books expressed in certain chapters and paragraphs. The uncertainties inspired images in my head on how I perceived them to be which helped better my understanding of the books. These books are important to me because they helped me to like reading again and develop my critical thinking and analysis skills when I read, which helps me today in my English courses when I read and write.

This experience with finding novels that were appealing and enticed me to read will always be important to me because *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* helped me to improve my reading skills and taught me how to become a better reader as well. I will always remember how I felt when I finished reading these books; accomplished and knowledgeable.

This experience taught me that I don't need to be a well-versed reader or must read a scholastic book to develop my reading skills or to understand a book. Instead, having dedication, being willing to re-read paragraphs, and applying interpretations of ideas of the book is all someone needs to do to comprehend a book that they enjoy reading. From my experience, I learned that it is important to give books a chance and allow myself to become part of the story because then I become a better reader.