

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OKALOOSA COUNTY
CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

(Textbook, Classroom Resource or Media Center Resource)

Fort Walton Beach High School
 Chestnutwatches High School
 School Where Materials are Used

Fiction novel
 Type of Material

The Kite Runner
 Title

Riverhead Books
 Producer or Publisher

Khaled Hosseini
 Author, if Book

2003
 Copyright Date or Publication Date

Complainant represents:

Himself/Herself
 Organization
 Other Group

If so, Name of Complainant: Laura Stovall
 If so, Name of Organization: _____
 If so, Name of Group: _____

1. Type of instructional material: Book Video DVD Software Other

2. What brought this item to your attention? (If review or list, please give name and date of publication.)
The mention of this title as one of the items of "mature themes" that the Chestnut IB students read.

3. State the specific objections to this work. (Please be specific. Quote offensive passages and cite page numbers or list objectionable sections of non-book media.) State the reasons for your objections. Use back of page, if necessary.
Please see attachments for specific quotes. The level of profanity and "R-rated" content of the book is altogether inappropriate in our high schools.

4. What is the purpose of the material in question?
I assume the purpose of using this novel is to expose the students to powerful writing (which it admittedly is).

5. What do you feel might be the result of reading this work?
Premature exposure to considerably disturbing events and circumstances. Students should not be required to process material of this nature.

6. For what age group is the work recommended?
Adults, based on both the content and the library cataloging (this is in the Adult Fiction section).

7. Did you read or previewed this work in its entirety? Yes. What parts, if not all?
I read this book front to back to be as thorough and fair in my assessment as possible.

8. Are you aware of the value of this work deemed by literary critics? Absolutely. I even agree with some of the reviews.

9. What do you believe is the theme of this work? Primarily redemption.

10. Does this media present the subject factually and accurately?
Yes, far too factually for use in high school.

11. What other title might you suggest which could be substituted to accomplish the educational aim of this material?
I would be happy to research options. In the meantime, how about the classic "Watchdog Diner"?

12. What relief, if any, are you seeking as a result of this consideration?
Immediate removal of this work from my curriculum, including requires for suggested reading list.

Laura Stovall
 Signature of individual requesting review

10/27/08
 Date

Address: 210 Beachview Drive NE
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547-2834
864-3433 (home phone)

In order for the committee to give valid consideration, all questions should be fully answered.

Additional note: I understand some teachers tell the students they "don't have to read Chapter 7" (the rape scene). Obviously, the objectionable material is found in chapters both before and after Chapter 7, so this is not an acceptable solution.

Offensive and/or disturbing passages from Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner:

"You! The Hazara! Look at me when I'm talking to you!" the soldier barked. He handed his cigarette to the guy next to him, made a circle with the thumb and index finger of one hand. Poked the middle finger of his other hand through the circle. Poked it in and out. In and out. "I knew your mother, did you know that? I knew her real good. I took her from behind by that creek over there..." What a tight little sugary cunt she had!" the soldier was saying, shaking hands with the others, grinning. (page 7)

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I watched with horror as one of the chapandaz fell off his saddle and was trampled under a score of hooves. His body was tossed and hurled in the stampede like a rag doll, finally rolling to a stop when the melee moved on. He twitched once and lay motionless, his legs bent at unnatural angles, a pool of blood soaking through the sand. I began to cry. (page 21)

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His word was law, and if you needed a little legal education, then those brass knuckles were just the right teaching tool. I saw him use those knuckles once on a kid from the Karteh-Char district. I will never forget how Assef's blue eyes glinted with a light not entirely sane and how he grinned, how he *grinned* as he pummeled that poor kid unconscious. Some of the boys in Wazir Akbar Khan had nicknamed him Assef Goshkhor, or Assef "the Ear Eater." Of course, none of them dared utter it to his face unless they wished to suffer the same fate as the poor kid who had unwittingly inspired that nickname when he had fought Assef over a kite and ended up fishing his right ear from a muddy gutter. (page 38)

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But there were two things amid the garbage that I couldn't stop looking at: One was the blue kite resting against the wall, close to the cast-iron stove; the other was Hassan's brown corduroy pants thrown on a heap of eroded bricks. "I don't know," Wali was saying. "My father says it's sinful." He sounded unsure, excited, scared, all at the same time. Hassan lay with his chest pinned to the ground. Kamal and Wali each gripped an arm, twisted and bent at the elbow so that Hassan's hands were pressed to his back. Assef was standing over them, the heel of his snow boots crushing the back of Hassan's neck.

"Your father won't find out," Assef said. "And there's nothing sinful about teaching a lesson to a disrespectful donkey."

"I don't know," Wali muttered.

"Suit yourself," Assef said. He turned to Kamal. "What about you?"

"I... well..."

"It's just a Hazara," Assef said. But Kamal kept looking away.

"Fine," Assef snapped. "All I want you weaklings to do is hold him down. Can you manage that?"

Wali and Kamal nodded. They looked relieved.

Assef knelt behind Hassan, put his hands on Hassan's hips and lifted his bare buttocks. He kept one hand on Hassan's back and undid his own belt buckle with his free hand. He unzipped his jeans. Dropped his underwear. He positioned himself behind Hassan. Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper. He moved his head slightly and I caught a

glimpse of his face. Saw the resignation in it....From just around the corner, I could hear Assef's quick, rhythmic grunts. (pages 75-77)

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He stopped. Swayed on his feet like he was going to collapse. Then he steadied himself....He began to say something and his voice cracked. He closed his mouth, opened it, and closed it again. Took a step back. Wiped his face. And that was as close as Hassan and I came to ever discussing what had happened in the alley. I thought he might burst into tears, but to my relief, he didn't, and I pretended I hadn't heard the crack in his voice. Just like I pretended I hadn't seen the dark stain on the seat of his pants. Or those tiny drops that fell from between his legs and stained the snow black....He turned from me and limped away. (page 78)

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"I watched Hassan get raped," I said to no one. (page 86)

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But always, my mind returned to the alley. To Hassan's brown corduroy pants lying on the bricks. To the droplets of blood staining the snow dark red, almost black. (page 91)

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The Russian soldier thrust his face into the rear of the truck...His eyes settled on the young woman wearing the black shawl. He spoke in Russian to Karim without taking his eyes off her...Karim cleared his throat, dropped his head. Said the soldier wanted a half hour with the lady in the back of the truck. The young woman pulled the shawl over her face. Burst into tears...The husband's face had become as pale as the moon hovering above.... "It's his price for letting us pass," Karim said. He couldn't bring himself to look the husband in the eye. (page 114)

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Then he told Baba about Kamal. I caught only snippets of it: *Should have never let him go alone...always so handsome, you know...four of them...tried to fight...God...took him...bleeding down there...his pants...doesn't talk anymore...just stares.* (page 120)

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A moment later, Kamal's father was standing with Karim's gun in his hand. "Don't shoot me!" Karim cried. But before any of us could say or do a thing, Kamal's father shoved the barrel in his own mouth. I'll never forget the echo of that blast. Or the flash of light and the spray of red. I doubled over and dry-heaved on the side of the road. (page 124)

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"Fuck the Russia!" (page 132)

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"It's so fucking unfair," she barked. "Their sons go out to nightclubs looking for meat and get their girlfriends pregnant, they have kids out of wedlock and no one says a goddamn thing. (pages 178-179)

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"Fuck 'em," I said. (page 179)

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"She looked like she had not eaten for days. But the worst of it by far was her face. Someone had taken a knife to it and...Amir jan, the slashes cut this way and that way.

One of the cuts went from cheekbone to hairline and it had not spared her left eye on the way. It was grotesque.” (page 209)

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Hassan protested again. So they took him to the street- “No,” I breathed. - and ordered him to kneel- “No, God, no.” - and shot him in the back of the head. “No.” - Farzana came screaming and attacked them- “No.” - shot her too. Self defense, they claimed later-

But all I could manage was to whisper “No. No. No” over and over again. (page 219)

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“You bastards,” I muttered. Stood up. “You goddamn bastards!” I screamed. “All of you, you bunch of lying goddamn bastards!” (page 222)

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“I’m thirty-eight years old and I’ve just found out my whole life is one big fucking lie! What can you possibly say to make things better? Nothing. Not a goddamn thing!” (page 223)

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There had been a hanging. A young man dangled from the end of a rope tied to a beam, his face puffy and blue, the clothes he’d worn on the last day of his life shredded, bloody. (page 259)

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I will never, as long as I draw breath, forget the sound of that scream. It was the cry of a wild animal trying to pry its mangled leg free from the bear trap. Two more Talibs joined in and helped force her into one of the chest-deep holes. The blindfolded man, on the other hand, quietly allowed them to lower him into the hole dug for him. Now only the accused pair’s torsos protruded from the ground...The Talib, looking absurdly like a baseball pitcher on the mound, hurled the stone at the blindfolded man in the hole. It struck the side of his head. The woman screamed again...The man in the hole was now a mangled mess of blood and shredded rags. His head slumped forward, chin on chest...When it was all over, the bloodied corpses had been unceremoniously tossed into the backs of red pickup trucks... (pages 269-272)

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“Door to door we went, calling for the men and the boys. We’d shoot them right there in front of their families. Let them see. Let them remember who they were, where they belonged.” He was almost panting now. “Sometimes, we broke down their doors and went inside their homes. And...I’d...I’d sweep the barrel of my machine gun around the room and fire until the smoke blinded me.”...He said it fondly, like a man telling of a great party he’d attended. “We left the bodies in the streets, and if their families tried to sneak out to drag them back into their homes, we’d shoot them, too. We left them in the streets for days. We left them for the dogs. Dog meat for dogs.” (page 277)

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“You come from America?”

“Yes”

“How is that whore these days?” (pages 277-278)

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“Bia, bia, my boy,” the Talib said, calling Sohrab to him. Sohrab went to him, head down, stood between his thighs. The Talib wrapped his arms around the boy. “How

talented he is, nay, my Hazara boy!" he said. His hands slid down the child's back, then up, felt under his armpits. One of the guards elbowed the other and snickered.... The Talib spun the boy around so he faced me. He locked his arms around Sohrab's belly, rested his chin on the boy's shoulder....The man's hand slid up and down the boy's belly. Up and down, slowly, gently....He brushed his lips against Sohrab's ear, kept his eye on me. He plucked a red grape. Put it, lovingly, in Sohrab's mouth...He kissed the side of Sohrab's neck. The boy flinched a little, closed his eyes again. (pages 280-282)

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"I asked him if he remembered me. He said no. I told him the same thing I just told you, that I never forget a face. Then I shot him in the balls. I've been on a mission since."

"What mission is that?" I heard myself say. "Stoning adulterers? Raping children? Flogging women for wearing high heels? Massacring Hazaras? All in the name of Islam?" (page 284)

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He pinched Sohrab's earlobe between his teeth. Let go. Sweat beads rolled down his brow... "What do you want to do with him?" he said. Then a coy smile. "Or *to* him."

"That's disgusting," I said.

"How would you know? Have you tried it?" (page 285)

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"Let him stay," Assef said. He grinned. "Let him watch. Lessons are good things for boys." The guards left. Assef put down his prayer beads. Reached into the breast pocket of his black vest. What he fished out of that pocket didn't surprise me one bit: stainless steel brass knuckles. (page 287)

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Mostly, I remember this: his brass knuckles flashing in the afternoon light; how cold they felt with the first blows and how quickly they warmed with my blood....Sohrab screaming....The knuckles shattering my jaw. Choking on my own teeth, swallowing them...Lying on the floor, blood from my split upper lip staining the mauve carpet, pain ripping through my belly, and wondering when I'd be able to breathe again. The sound of my ribs snapping like the tree branches Hassan and I used to break... Sohrab screaming. The side of my face slamming against the corner of the television stand. That snapping sound again, this time just under my left eye. Music. Sohrab screaming....That snapping sound again, now my nose....Sohrab screaming. (pages 288-289)

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"No more." Twin trails of black mascara, mixed with tears, had rolled down his cheeks, smeared the rouge. His lower lip trembled. Mucus seeped from his nose....Sohrab had the slingshot pointed to Assef's face....The slingshot made a *thwiiiiit* sound when Sohrab released the cup. Then Assef was screaming. He put his hand where his left eye had been just a moment ago. Blood oozed between his fingers. Blood and something else, something white and gel-like....Assef rolled on the carpet. Rolled side to side, shrieking, his hand still cupped over the bloody socket. (pages 290-291)

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I dreamed a lot, and most of it I only remember as a hodgepodge of images...How dark, almost black, Hassan's blood had looked on the snow, dropping from the seat of his pants. (pages 309-310)

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“Because-” he [Sohrab] said, gasping and hitching between sobs, “because I don’t want them to see me...I’m so dirty.” He sucked in his breath and let it out in a long, wheezy cry. “I’m so dirty and full of sin.”

“You’re not dirty, Sohrab,” I said.

“Those men-”

“You’re not dirty at all.”

“-they did things...the bad man and the other two...they did things...did things to me.”
...His little body convulsed in my arms with each sob. (pages 319-320)

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“He was sexually abused,” I said, thinking of the bells around Sohrab’s ankles, the mascara on his eyes. (page 331)

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I felt like a prick. (page 341)

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When I wake up, maybe I will discover that everything I saw in the hotel bathroom was part of a dream: the water drops dripping from the faucet and landing with a *plink* into the bloody bathwater; the left arm dangling over the side of the tub, the blood-soaked razor sitting on the toilet tank...his eyes, still half open but lightless. That more than anything, I want to forget the eyes. (page 347-348)

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In the morning, I tried not to look at the bathtub. It was clean now, someone had wiped off the blood, spread new floor mats on the floor, and scrubbed the walls...I pictured Sohrab filling it with warm water. Saw him undressing. Saw him twisting the razor handle and opening the twin safety latches on the head, sliding the blade out, holding it between his thumb and forefinger. I saw him lowering himself into the water, lying there for a while, his eyes closed. I wondered what his last thought had been as he had raised the blade and brought it down. (page 350-351)

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Profanities in addition to those included in the passages cited above:

goddamn: pages 58, 89, 92, 116, 233, 257

shit: pages 108, 123, 222, 223