

	the same Hazara woman from Bamiyan. This created a <i>“kinship that not even time could break”</i>, which is ironic as whilst Amir abandons Hassan for the US, Hassan never stops loving Amir. Of course, an adult Amir finds out that they are in fact half-brothers. Amir’s first word - <i>“Baba”</i> - is significant because by Baba’s death, the pair have developed a close, loving relationship despite their rocky start. Baba becomes the person Amir looks up to for advice, and the man that he is constantly trying to impress. Hassan’s first word - <i>“Amir”</i> - shows his loyalty to Amir, even when trust is broken and they’re separated. Both their first words reflect the people who will never truly appreciate them.
Context	Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan and are Sunni Muslims, speaking the language Pashto. Historically, they persecuted the minority Hazaras and <i>“burned their homes and sold their women”</i>, with many being taken as slaves. Hazaras are descendents of Mongol settlers and Genghis Khan. They are Shi’a Muslims and are often considered outsiders in their own country. Their ancestry gives them Chinese-like features and they were only granted equal rights in Afghanistan in 2004. The vast majority of Muslims (85%) are Sunni, with the remaining 15% divided into Shi’a factions. Whilst they share many beliefs - including most of the 5 pillars and 6 beliefs of Islam - Shi’as believe that Ali was the rightful successor to Muhammad (as opposed to Abu Bakr). Shi’as known as Twelvers believe in 12 imams, with the hidden imam appearing on Judgement Day, whilst Sunnis place their emphasis on Allah’s oneness (Tawhid). Polio is a viral, infectious disease which is associated with poor living conditions and lack of sanitation. There is no cure for it, but a vaccine for Polio has been widely administered since the mid-1950s, reducing morbidity rates dramatically (especially in the UK). The disease can cause paralysis and deformities.
Afghan vocabulary	Allah-u-Akbar = God is great. Naan = bread. Babalu = bogeyman (insult for Ali). Wazir Akbar Khan = wealthy suburb of Kabul where Amir lives.