



# Unfurling Stories of Endurance: A Review of “Sea Prayer” by Khaled Hosseini

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**Abstract**— *In Khaled Hosseini’s “Sea Prayer”, a poignant and emotionally charged work of fiction, the author captures the harrowing realities faced by refugees through the tale of a father and his young son on a precarious journey. This review reflects on how Hosseini’s lyrical writing style captures the deep emotions and complex realities faced by those forced to flee their homes in search of safety and a better life. In addition, the review also explores the book’s unique format, combining text and illustrations by Dan Williams to create a visually stunning and deeply immersive reading experiences.*

**Keywords**— *Khaled Hosseini, Refugee, Death, War, Homeland*



## I. INTRODUCTION

Khaled Hosseini an Afghan – born American novelist is a highly acclaimed author whose novels often revolve around the human experience, particularly in the context of war, displacement, and the complexities of relationships. **"Sea Prayer"** is a poignant and beautifully crafted novella by him that sheds light on the harrowing experiences of refugees. With his excellent storytelling capabilities, Hosseini delves into the emotional turmoil of a father as he reflects upon the daunting journey that lies ahead for his family. The story of this novella is inspired by the tragic death of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea, trying to reach safety.

### Plot Synopsis of “Sea Prayer”

The narrative unfolds as a heartfelt letter from a father to his son, Marwan, on the eve of their precarious journey across the Mediterranean Sea, fleeing their war-torn homeland. It is a monologue, dipping into memory, evoking imagery of their once-beautiful city of Homs, Syria, now scarred by destruction, and expressing the father's unwavering love for his son and profound fear for his safety. The father describes the harrowing journey that they are about to undertake in a small boat, joining countless other refugees seeking safety in a foreign land. He hopes for a better life for his son, one free from the horrors of war and destruction. The heart-wrenching narration is filled with raw emotion, effectively conveying the sense of despair and uncertainty that

permeate the lives of those affected by conflict and displacement.

### A Captivating Pictorial Description of Refugee Struggle

Hosseini's skilful use of language and imagery adds depth and intensity to the story. His ability to conjure life into words cannot be overstated. He opens with vivid imagery of a Homs prior to war, *"I wish you remembered the crowded lanes smelling of fried Kibbeh and the evening walks we took with your mother around Clock Tower Square"* painting a lush tapestry of an ordinary world transformed extraordinary by its contrast with the now war-ravaged city. The profound juxtaposition between the past and present serves as the poignant heart at the centre of this narrative, creating an aura of palpable loss that readers can't help but feel in every word. In a broader sense, Hosseini takes up the voice of thousands of people displaced and torn from their lands, laying bare the tragic reality of our times. The emotional gravitas in **"Sea Prayer"** emanates from its unsettling relevance to the real-world events it reflects, imbuing it with a sense of urgency unlike many other works of fiction.

### Exploring the Art of Storytelling: The Narrative Technique in Focus

From a literary standpoint, the simplicity of the prose belies its emotional depth. Here, the beauty isn't in ornate wordplay or complex metaphors; it lies in raw emotions —

fear, hope, love, and desperation. These emotions resonate strongly, as the narrative employs the use of second- person perspective accentuating the connection between the reader, Marwan and his father. The narrative flows in an almost poetic manner, rich in metaphors and symbols. The Sea, for instance, is a recurring symbol that represents both hope and danger, adding layers of meaning to the narrative. However, in terms of structure, "**Sea Prayer**" is relatively short, consisting of only a few pages. Some readers may find the brevity of the book surprising, especially if they are familiar with Hosseini's previous works as "**Sea Prayer**" doesn't offer the same depth of character development or plot intricacy as "**The Kite Runner**" or "**A Thousand Splendid Suns**". Instead, it presents a powerful snapshot, a moment in time that illuminates a larger, ongoing tragedy.

### Captivating Illustrations by Dan Williams

Furthermore, the illustrations by Dan Williams complement Hosseini's words, enhancing the emotional impact of the narrative. The delicate and intricate artwork brings to life the nuances of the story, allowing readers to connect with the characters on a visual level. The colours — sometimes desaturated to reflect despair and at other times, saturated to reflect happier times — pulse with breathing vividity. This marriage of imagery and prose brings the emotional depth of "**Sea Prayer**" to life, creating a story that is as compelling to look at, as it is to read.

## II. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, "**Sea Prayer**" is an imperative work of literature that immerses readers in a sea of emotions, forcing us to confront our shared human experiences beyond nationality or borders. It is not a mere story rather a desperate prayer, a plea to the world to retain its humanity in times of dire crises. The book ends on a note of possibility, not certainty. The fate of Marwan and his father is left hanging, allowing readers to carry forward the narrative in their minds. This uncertainty is, at its core, an embodiment of the condition of millions of displaced people worldwide, waiting on their uncertain futures, uprooted from their homeland, and left to the mercy of the tides — both literal and metaphorical. In a nutshell "**Sea Prayer**" is an essential read that should not be missed.

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