*Kite Runner* Chapter 7 Close Reading

After another thirty minutes, only four kites remained. And I was still flying. It seemed I could hardly make a wrong move, as if every gust of wind blew in my favor. I’d never felt so in command, so lucky It felt intoxicating. I didn’t dare look up to the roof. Didn’t dare take my eyes off the sky. I had to concentrate, play it smart. Another fifteen minutes and what had seemed like a laughable dream that morning had suddenly become reality: It was just me and the other guy. The blue kite.

The tension in the air was as taut as the glass string I was tugging with my bloody hands. People were stomping their feet, clapping, whistling, chanting, “Boboresh! Boboresh!” Cut him! Cut him! I wondered if Baba’s voice was one of them. Music blasted. The smell of steamed mantu and fried pakora drifted from rooftops and open doors.

But all I heard--all I willed myself to hear--was the thudding of blood in my head. All I saw was the blue kite. All I smelled was victory. Salvation. Redemption. If Baba was wrong and there was a God like they said in school, then He’d let me win. I didn’t know what the other guy was playing for, maybe just bragging rights. But this was my one chance to become someone who was looked at, not seen, listened to, not heard. If there was a God, He’d guide the winds, let them blow for me so that, with a tug of my string, I’d cut loose my pain, my longing. I’d endured too much, come too far. And suddenly, just like that, hope became knowledge. I was going to win. It was just a matter of when.

It turned out to be sooner than later. A gust of wind lifted my kite and I took advantage. Fed the string, pulled up. Looped my kite on top of the blue one. I held position. The blue kite knew it was in trouble. It was trying desperately to maneuver out of the jam, but I didn’t let go. I held position. The crowd sensed the end was at hand. The chorus of “Cut him! Cut him!” grew louder, like Romans chanting for the gladiators to kill, kill!

“You’re almost there, Amir agha! Almost there!” Hassan was panting.

Then the moment came. I closed my eyes and loosened my grip on the string. It sliced my fingers again as the wind dragged it. And then... I didn’t need to hear the crowd’s roar to know I didn’t need to see either. Hassan was screaming and his arm was wrapped around my neck.

“Bravo! Bravo, Amir agha!”

I opened my eyes, saw the blue kite spinning wildly like a tire come loose from a speeding car. I blinked, tried to say something. Nothing came out. Suddenly I was hovering, looking down on myself from above. Black leather coat, red scarf, faded jeans. A thin boy, a little sallow, and a tad short for his twelve years. He had narrow shoulders and a hint of dark circles around his pale hazel eyes. The breeze rustled his light brown hair. He looked up to me and we smiled at each other.

Then I was screaming, and everything was color and sound, everything was alive and good. I was throwing my free arm around Hassan and we were hopping up and down, both of us laughing, both of us weeping. “You won, Amir agha! You won!” “We won! We won!” was all I could say. This wasn’t happening. In a moment, I’d blink and rouse from this beautiful dream, get out of bed, march down to the kitchen to eat breakfast with no one to talk to but Hassan. Get dressed. Wait for Baba. Give up. Back to my old life. Then I saw Baba on our roof. He was standing on the edge, pumping both of his fists. Hollering and clapping. And that right there was the single greatest moment of my twelve years of life, seeing Baba on that roof, proud of me at last.

1. The mood created by Hosseini’s description of the crowd watching the kite fighting can best be described as

A. excited.

B. nervous.

C. cheerful.

D. fearful.

E. peaceful.

2. When Amir says that he smells salvation and redemption he most likely means that

A. he will be able to forgive himself for being a coward.

B. his sins will be forgiven, and, if there is a God, he will be saved.

C. his father will forgive him for not being the son of his dreams if he wins.

D. Hassan will forgive him for his cruelty and will run the kite for him.

E. Ali will forgive him for being a coward and will let him play with Hassan.

3. When Amir says that he has “endured too much, come too far,” he means that he has endured

A. responsibility for Hassan as well as the tortures of Assef.

B. his father’s disappointment as well as the pain of the glass string.

C. the boredom of the school year and then the very cold winter.

D. his grief over the loss of his mother and his frustrated writing career.

E. his own weakness as well as Ali’s teasing.

4. What mood does Hosseini create by using short sentences and sentence fragments as the kite fight comes to an end?

A. fearful

B. desperate

C. anticipatory

D. exhilarated

E. frustrated

5. What is ironic about the simile comparing the crowd chanting in support of Amir to Romans chanting for gladiators at the end of this passage?

A. Amir has already cut himself with the glass string.

B. The Romans have nothing to do with 20th-century Afghanistan.

C. This is a simple kite fight that will not involve killing.

D. The crowd knows that Amir is considered weak by his father.

E. Amir already knows that he will win.