

KSBN
K-STATE BOOK NETWORK



2019

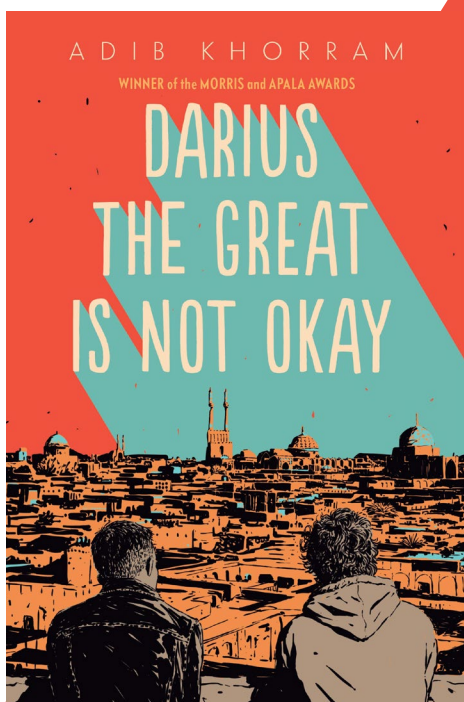
DARIUS THE GREAT IS NOT OKAY



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ABOUT THE BOOK

Darius Kellner is a Persian American high schooler struggling with clinical depression, bullying, and fitting in with his family. He has trouble relating to his dad, despite their shared passion for *Star Trek*, and can hardly communicate with his Persian side of his family as he was never taught Farsi, unlike his younger sister who speaks it fluently. When Darius' parents decide it's time to go back to Iran to visit relatives, Darius feels he'll still have issues fitting in. When he meets Sohrab, however, he finds himself playing soccer, overlooking the city from rooftops, and engaging more with Persian culture. As Darius navigates this new friendship, his mental health, and Persian culture, he begins to feel more comfortable in himself and his identity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

If Adib Khorram is not writing (or at his day job as a graphic designer), you can probably find him trying to get his 100-yard freestyle under a minute, learning to do a Lutz Jump, or steeping a cup of Oolong. He lives in Kansas City, Missouri, where people don't usually talk about themselves in the third person. You can find him on Twitter (@adibkhorram), Instagram (@adibkhorram), or on the web at adibkhorram.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Darius struggles to make friends in school and is bullied by some classmates. How does Darius respond to the bullying he faces at school? What changes when he returns from Iran? What leads someone to bully others? What could you do if you were a witness to this?
2. “Everyone wants you here. We have a saying in Farsi. It translates ‘your place was empty.’ We say it when we miss somebody. ...Your place was empty before. But this is your family. You belong here” (190). What makes this statement so powerful to Darius?
3. “The thing is, I never had a friend like Sohrab before. One who understood me without even trying. Who knew what it was like to be stuck on the outside because of one little thing that set you apart” (267). What are some of the experiences or reasons that you’ve connected with your friend(s) in a more meaningful way?
4. In his afterword the author, Adib Khorram, states, “But depression can be just as hard to witness as it can be to live with. It’s frustrating to love someone and be unable to help them” (314). What are some ways you can support someone with depression, while taking care of yourself?
5. In what ways does Darius articulate his feelings about being different in his family and school?
6. What cultural differences does Darius struggle with in his time in Yazd (culture shock)? What is it like for him when he goes back home to the United States (reverse culture shock)?
7. How do the descriptions of Iran in this book compare to the descriptions you’ve seen in U.S. mainstream media?
8. Describe Darius’s and Laleh’s relationship. How does Laleh challenge Darius?
9. Sohrab and Darius become good friends. What is it about Sohrab’s communication style that is different and helps Darius to feel more comfortable?
10. How do you think Darius perceives his own sexuality?
11. How does Darius become more comfortable in his identity through his experiences visiting family in Iran?
12. How does Darius not knowing Farsi contribute to his issues in connecting with others?
13. Why does Laleh speak Farsi when Darius does not? What reasons might a parent have when deciding whether to raise a child to be bilingual?
14. When Darius returns home, how does he react differently to situations that bothered him before the trip?
15. What are some similarities and differences between your family and Darius’s?
16. What do you think the significance of the Star Trek episodes are to this book?
17. Darius is hurt several times in the book by people who question why he has depression. What leads people to ask that question? Who deserves to know that information? How do you respond if you don’t want to answer?
18. “Sohrab was a good listener. He never played devil’s advocate or told me what I was feeling was wrong, the way Stephen Kellner did. He nodded to let me know he understood, and laughed if I said something funny” (193): What makes Sohrab a “good listener”? How do you become a better listener?
19. Who are the fathers in this book? What are the father/child relationships in the book, and what makes them so complex?
20. Darius struggles to make friends at home. What makes finding good friends hard? What responsibility do you have to help others find and keep relationships with others?
21. Darius tells his dad, “Sometimes I can’t help crying. Okay? Sometimes bad shit happens. Sometimes people are mean to me and I cry. Sorry for being such a target. Sorry for disappointing you. Again” (283). Why is it there such shame over his tears? How do we treat mental illness differently in men and women? ([Questions About Men and Masculinity](#)).
22. How do we recognize and deal with mental illness when we see signs of it in our friends?
23. Sohrab apologizes to Darius before he leaves Iran: “I was hurting. And you were there. And I knew how to make you hurt as bad as me” (294). Why do we sometimes intentionally hurt the people we care about the most? How do you mend a relationship after the fact?

HOW TO USE THE BOOK:

In your class:

- Use this book to analyze current events and create a productive discussion.
- Some students may not have read the book over the summer. Be sure to indicate on the course schedule the date that it will be referenced in class and whether you are requiring students to read part or all of the book by that date.
- Create relevant assignments to the book and your course outcomes, or use the book to reinforce the theories, philosophies, and practices of your discipline.

Assignment ideas:

- Select a quotation (2-3 sentences in length) from the novel and explain how it offers insight on one of the course objectives.
- Select one of the novel's characters and explain how their experience offers insight on one of the course objectives.
- Create anti-bullying resources for high school students.
- After reviewing best practices from health professionals, create an intervention for people who may not want to take prescribed medication because of the way it makes them feel.
- Ask students to review the two 2019 Common Works of Art selected by the Beach Museum (see p. 12): Which work of art best represents the themes of the book? Why?

Outside the classroom:

- Give students time to read the book. If they do not have a copy, have them borrow a copy from K-State Libraries or one of Sigma Tau Delta's Lending Libraries.
- Create questions or activities inspired by the book that will allow people to participate even if they have not read the whole book.

When planning events:

- Partner with other established groups on campus. They can help fund, advertise, and bring people to the event.
- Select your day and time around who you want to attend.
 - Faculty/staff - 8am-5pm Monday-Friday.
 - Students - Tuesdays/Thursdays after 7pm, though those are also common exam times.
- If you are planning a daytime event for students, keep in mind...
 - MWF classes generally start on the half hour.
 - TU, TH classes can start on the hour, half hour, or five after the hour.
 - Work with instructors to schedule the event when their class meets and ask them to bring their class.

RESOURCES:

- Kansas City Live! (2018, August 21). Author Adib Khorram releases debut novel [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRttkOixlVk>
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- Mattu, A. (2013). A Beginners Guide to the Star Trek Universe. Brain Knows Better. Retrieved from <http://brainknowsbetter.com/news/2013/5/7/a-beginners-guide-to-the-star-trek-universe>
- IMDb. (2019). Star Trek: The Next Generation episode list. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0092455/episodes?season=3>

ACTIVITIES

Explore ways to use the book, including read-a-likes, watch-a-likes, classroom discussions, co-curricular activities, and exploring the common work of art

READ-A-LIKES:

- *We Are All That's Left* - Carrie Arcos
- *Girl in Translation* - Jean Kwok
- *Americanah* - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *The Joy Luck Club* - Amy Tan
- *A Place for Us* - Fatima Farheen Mirza
- *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* - Benjamin Alire Saenz
- *Listen, Slowly* - Thanhha Lai
- *The Kite Runner* - Khaled Hossini
- *The American Granddaughter* - Inaam Kachachi
- *Together Tea* - Marjan Kamali
- *A Thousand Splendid Suns* - Khaled Hossini
- *If I Ever Get Out of Here* - Eric Gansworth
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* - Sherman Alexie
- *Funny in Farsi* - Firoozeh Dumas
- *The Sun Is Also a Star* - Nicola Yoon
- *Dear Evan Hansen* - Val Emmich, Steven Levenson, Benj Pasek, Justin Paul
- *American Born Chinese* - Gene Luen Yang
- *Looking For Alibrandi* - Melina Marchetta
- *The House on Mango Street* - Sandra Cisneros

WATCH-A-LIKES:

- *The Kite Runner*
- *Raising Victor Vargas*
- *The Sun Is Also a Star*
- *The Joy Luck Club*
- *The Big Sick*
- *It's Kind of a Funny Story*
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*
- *Coco*
- *The Namesake*

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES:

Different teaching styles at K-State allow students to understand various learning practices, and help them adapt in college. Students may find a preferred method of learning, and these options, when available, allow them to study more effectively.

- **Lecture:** students listen to professor speak from podium. Usually including a PowerPoint or other presentation, students may ask questions when acknowledged.
- **Seminar:** small sized classrooms where questions are freely asked, and content is generally discussed.
- **Flipped Classroom:** listen and watch the pre-recorded lecture online at home, and discuss questions and complete the assignment in class.
- **Lab and Lecture:** conduct a pre-lab assignment, discuss the experiment in a lecture, and conduct a follow-up lab assignment using critical thinking. Common in science and engineering centered classrooms.
- **Student-Conducted Classroom:** students independently discuss the assigned topic and the professor/lecturer is available for questions
- **Online Courses:** students independently study and are examined about the class's focus. Professors are available by email or phone. Certain classes may have in-person assignments, depending on professor's preferences.
- **Demonstrations:** professor or instructor actively demonstrates a concept. Students may participate if asked to, and an idea is showcased. Common in science and engineering centered classrooms.
- **Simulations:** students participate in activities similar to real situations involving critical thinking and decision making. Students think about the outcome without the risk. Common in science, engineering, and aviation classrooms.
- **Cooperative Learning:** students in small groups work together to complete a task or solve a problem.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES (CONT.):

- **Case Studies:** students, individually or in groups, apply learned knowledge to solve a fictitious case.
- **Role Play:** students work to solve problems through acting in different associated roles. Involves identifying, acting out, and discussing problems.
- **Problem Based and Inquiry Learning:** professors provide a problem that students must solve through data gathering, organization, and explanation. Students also analyze how they solved the problem.

Active & Engaged Learning

K-State First molds active learning and engaged learning together to stimulate students into deeper thinking, about themselves, K-State, and beyond. Through GPS mentorships, First Year Seminars, CAT Communities, and the K-State Book Network, students' accessibility to learning widens beyond the average college experience.

- **Active Learning:** Process by which students engage in activities, such as reading, writing, discussion or problem solving that promote analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class content.
- **Engaged Learning:** Degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students demonstrate when learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education.

Hands-on (Kinesthetic) Learning

This practice seeks to teach students through hands-on learning experiences, rather than traditional textbooks and lectures. In doing so, students acquire technical skills to further their knowledge in their respective areas. Students may apply concepts to real life situations, in turn developing confidence and skill in that background.

- **Kinesthetic Learning Examples:** running a small business, building a robot or machine, or leading a class activity or discussion.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

Creating opportunities to teach *Darius the Great is Not Okay* is simple. The following activities can be tailored to your course content and to the time you have available. They are a great way to build community. You could start with them to get students thinking actively, or end with them if your regularly scheduled discussion and activities go faster than what you had planned. The discussion questions listed earlier will also easily fit with the following activities.

Faculty Announcement

Time: 5 min or less

Benefits:

- Students build community outside of the classroom.
- Students can bring in this content to enrich classroom discussions

Directions: Encourage Students to attend author event or other KSBN-related events. Create a meeting place at the venue so students can meet up there before the event and sit together.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES (CONT.):

Two Circles

Time: 4-5 minutes per question

Benefits:

- Students discuss specific questions
- Students build community through one-on-one interaction with their peers
- Students are more confident to speak up in class because their partner can save them if they can't
- articulate their answer

Directions: Split the class in half. Half the students form a circle on the outside of the room facing in. The other half pairs up with this outside circle, forming an inside circle. Give students a question, they discuss, discuss as a big group, have inside circle move counter clockwise. Repeat.

Student-Led Discussion

Time: 5-8 minutes per group

Benefits:

- Teaching content is often the best way to learn it
- Students gain public speaking and leadership skills
- Instructor can gauge what concepts the students understand and which concepts they struggle with Students meet and develop working relationships with others in their major/academic interests

Directions: Break students in groups determined by their major or academic interests. Assign each group a topic or group of discussion questions related to their academic interests (see earlier in the guide). Have students lead discussion.

Think, Pair, Share

Time: 10 min

Benefits:

- Students interact with the text individually and collectively.

Directions: Choose questions from the question guide. Have students free write their response, then pair up and share responses. Gather students back together and ask for pairs to volunteer their answers, or go around the room and have all pairs share.

GAMES:

Spinning Yarns (Benjamin Ward, 2011):

Objective:

In the tradition of “talking sticks” used in talking circles, the aspiration of “Spinning Yarns” is to stimulate discussion and foster involvement by only allowing players to speak when they hold the ball of yarn. The implied purpose of the game is to demonstrate the “connectedness” of the players through play, and when possible, through the questions asked.

Number of Players:

- At least 10

Duration:

- 10 to 40 minutes (depending on the number of questions asked)

Materials:

- One ball of yarn (avoid rolling the ball too tight)

Prep:

- The game facilitator will generate a series of questions to pose to the class. The discussion questions listed above could work well.

How to Play:

Ask students to raise their hands to be called on to answer questions. Stress that only students holding the ball of yarn may answer questions. Make sure that all players understand that they are to toss the ball of yarn, not throw it aggressively. This is supposed to be a fun experience for everyone.

- Ask the first question, hold one end of the the ball of yarn, then gently toss the ball to a student with a raised hand. If that student contributes to the conversation, they may hold onto the strand of yarn
- Ask the next question. The player with the answer from the previous question may choose the next person who raises a hand to answer the next question. If the student holding the ball of yarn did NOT contribute to the conversation or answer the question correctly, they do NOT get to hold onto the strand of yarn and become a part of the chain at that time – instead, they will toss the ball of yarn back to the person who had it before them (if they contribute to the conversation later, they can join the web of yarn later).
- Continue to ask questions until you have finished you question list, run out of yarn, or have run out of time.
- Review any overarching concepts that may have been brought forward by the line of questioning.
- Have students gently pass the strands of yarn to one side. And gather up the loose strands yarn.

Tips and Tricks:

- List of questions that progressively reveal a narrative, line of thought, or an interrelated set of concepts work best with this game.
- It is often difficult to salvage a ball of yarn from the tangle created by playing this game. Be forewarned.
- The farther a ball is tossed, the more fun the game. But, be sure everyone is paying attention when the ball is being tossed or someone may be lightly injured.

Medical Consult:

- Conduct a medical consult of Darius’s mental and physical health. Using the information provided by the book and researching health professional guidelines, make suggestions about what Darius can do to live healthier. Provide your reasoning and support for your recommendations using specific examples from the book and your research. Discuss in groups your suggestions and share with the class.

EXTRA CURRICULAR:

Attend the events held on the K-State campus throughout the 2018-2019 school year. See a list of all updated events at www.k-state.edu/ksbn/events.html. Do you have an idea for an event that you'd like to share? Email us at ksbn@k-state.edu and we'll add it to the list!

K-State First and KSBN Fall Event Series:

Our program sponsored events below all count towards the K-State First and KSBN K-State 360 badges. Please indicate this to your students so they can earn those badges!

Finding Your Place: Explore Darius the Great Is Not Okay

Week of Welcome Event

Wednesday, August 28, 3:30-5 pm

Holton Hall Lobby

KSU Student Welcome, Common Book and Common Works of Art Open House

September 5, 5:00-7:30 pm

Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art

Activities and features of this free event will include:

- Travel slides featuring sites the character Darius visits in Yazd, Iran
- Persian tea and snacks
- Screening of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episodes
- The exhibition Beyond Gravity – your mini trip to Outer Space
- Mini soccer tournament with prizes for all!
- Rok/Shelem, a traditional Persian card game
- Making Arabic geometric designs and coloring Tolkien coloring sheets

KSBN Author Visit: Public Lecture by Adib Khorram

September 12, 7-8 pm

Grand Ballroom, K-State Student Union

Wildcat Dialogues

September 16, 7-9 pm

Grand Ballroom, K-State Student Union

Join 1000 fellow Wildcats for a night of courageous conversation and building connections for intercultural learning and inclusive leadership development.

The City of Yazd: Understanding the Heart of Iran

October 3, 12-1:30 pm

Regnier Forum

Panel discussion with Dorna Eshрати, Todd Gabbard, Sara Hadavi, & Hamed Goharipour

2019 K-STATE COMMON WORK OF ART:

Each year, the K-State Book Network selects a common reading for first year students, providing an intellectual experience they can share with other students and members of the Kansas State University community. The 2019 K-State Common Book is *Darius the Great is Not Okay* by Kansas City, Missouri, author Adib Khorram. Beach Museum of Art staff have selected two works to complement this year's K-State Common Book.

American Darius Kellner describes himself as a "Fractional Persian" because of his mother's Iranian origins. His father is described as a blond, blue-eyed American. Darius is a tea lover, Tolkien lover, *Star Trek* aficionado, and diagnosed as clinically depressed. On a trip to Iran to visit his terminally ill grandfather, Darius makes a best friend, learns more about his maternal family, and resolves long-term issues with his father. Darius's journey to Iran allows him to put together the pieces of who he is and become "okay."

Two Things Happening at the Same Time, a 2016 mixed-media print by Rashawn Griffin, addresses similar themes of origin and identity. Griffin brings together abstracted forms related to his Scottish and African-American roots. Coincidentally, Griffin has said that his parents were big *Star Trek* fans and the family watched the series together. Also, his mother's love of collecting *Star Trek* memorabilia is what influenced him to collect ideas.

Patrick Shia Crabb refers to his Shard Vessel series as an effort to bridge past and present, and cultures. Crabb's teapot shares formal similarities with Griffin's print in terms of its patchwork of shapes and textures. The teapot was chosen to reflect Darius's love of tea and tea making, a drink he shares with members of his American and Persian families.

Artworks:



Rashawn Griffin (born Los Angeles, CA 1980)
Two Things Happening at the Same Time, 2016
Color lithograph with mixed media
Kansas State University, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, 2017.124



Patrick Shia Crabb (born China 1947)
Untitled teapot from the Shard Series, 1987
Glazed earthenware
Kansas State University, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of Jim, Angela, Luke and Julia Johnson in memory of Jeaneane Berryhill Johnson, 2004.232

FACTS, STATISTICS, AND TERMS TO KNOW

Explore terms used in the novel,
demographic data from various cities,
depression and mental health resources,
and the importance of *Star Trek* to Darius

TERMS:

Faludeh: A sorbet flavored with rosewater mixed with frozen cooked rice noodles topped in a fruit syrup.

Bastani Tehran. (2019). What is faloodeh en how to make it? Retrieved from <https://www.bastanitehran.com/making-faloodeh-recipe>

Qottab: Originating in Yazd, it is a fried crescent pastry with an almond, walnut, cardamom, cinnamon and sugar filling. A common recipe for Nowruz.

Ahead of Thyme. (2016). Ghotab/Qottab Pastry (Traditional Iranian almond and walnut filled crescents). Retrieved from <https://www.aheadofthyme.com/2016/03/ghotab-qottab-pastry-traditional-iranian-walnut-filled-crescents/>

Sekanjabin: a syrup combining mint, sugar, water and vinegar, often used as a dipping sauce for romaine lettuce.

Family Spice (n.d.). Persian Mint and Cucumber Cooler (Sekanjabin). Retrieved from <https://familyspice.com/persian-mint-cucumber-cooler-sekanjabin/>

Zereshk polow: A rice dish topped with barberries, a sour berry common in the Middle East.

The Persian Pot. (2015). Zereshk Polow (Barberry Rice). Retrieved from <http://www.thepersianpot.com/recipe/zereshk-polow-barberry-rice/>

Bastani: Persian ice cream is made of milk and dairy mixed with saffron, rosewater and topped with pistachios.

Bastani Tehran. (2019). How to make Persian ice cream at home? Retrieved from <https://www.bastanitehran.com/how-to-make-persian-ice-cream-at-home>

Chelo kabob: the national dish of Iran. The rice is buttery and leaves behind a golden crust at the bottom of the dish, known as tah dig. The meat is a kabob made of onions, saffron, lamb or beef, cilantro and butter.

Mirrazavi, F. (2016). Chelo-Kabob: The National Dish of Iran. Iran Review. Retrieved from <http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/Chelo-Kabab-The-National-Dish-of-Iran.htm>

Nowruz: The Persian New Year. The new year occurs on March 21, the spring equinox, as determined by the solar-based Iranian calendar. The celebratory activities occur for about a month, and often include setting up a haft seen, gathering family and friends for parties, giving gifts, and eating traditional Persian meals.

Maxouris, C. & Moshtaghian, A. (2019). More than 300 million people will celebrate Nowruz (and you should, too). CNN. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/20/world/what-is-nowruz-trnd/index.html>

Haft seen: A table decorated and adorned with seven symbolic items that begin with an “S” in Farsi. The items frequently displayed include, wheat grass, herbs, goldfish, garlic, dried food, vinegar, mirrors and candles.

Maxouris, C. & Moshtaghian, A. (2019). More than 300 million people will celebrate Nowruz (and you should, too). CNN. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/20/world/what-is-nowruz-trnd/index.html>

Chaharshanbeh Suri: A pre-Nowruz celebration, meaning “Red Wednesday,” that occurs on the last Wednesday of the year. People celebrate by gathering in public and jumping over bonfires while singing traditional songs.

Maxouris, C. & Moshtaghian, A. (2019). More than 300 million people will celebrate Nowruz (and you should, too). CNN. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/20/world/what-is-nowruz-trnd/index.html>

TERMS(CONT.):

Rook: A point-trick game with bidding common in Iran. This game uses a standard deck of cards where point values are assigned as follows; aces and tens worth 10 points, fives are worth 5 points, and tricks are worth 5 points.

Pagat. (n.d.). Card Games in Iran. Retrieved from <https://www.pagat.com/national/iran.html>

Zoroastrianism: One of the oldest active religions founded by prophet Zarathustra (Zoroaster). It is believed that it influenced Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. It has both monotheistic and dualistic beliefs. The religion was once widespread across Ancient Persia, but with the rise of Islam, the followers were persecuted. It is now classified as a minority religion practiced by populations living in Iran and India.

History.com. (2018). Zoroastrianism. Retrieved from <https://www.history.com/topics/religion/zoroastrianism>

Baha'i: One of the newest major religions of the world. Founded by Baha'u'llah in Iran in the 19th century, this religion recognizes all major religions' messengers (Abraham, Krishna, Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad) as contributing to the advancement of civilization. It believes that all these religions are successive chapters of one whole religion. They focus on the unification of humanity as one global community to advance civilization.

Baha'i International Community. (2019). The Baha'i Faith - The website of the worldwide Baha'i community. Retrieved from <https://www.bahai.org/>

Persepolis: The capital of the ancient Persian Empire. The city was established by Darius the Great to serve as the new capital location with the Palace of Darius, an audience hall, tombs, and served as a place for administration to carry out their duties. It was only used during the spring and summer because of its accessibility during seasonal weather. The site was plundered and burned by Alexander the Great during Darius III's reign.

Persepolis. (2019). In Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Persepolis>

Dowlatabad: This garden, located in Yazd, Iran, was built as an estate for a distinguished leader named Mohammad Taghi Khan. The property features impressive irrigation systems and long reflecting pools, fruit trees, and a main mansion in classic Iranian architectural style with the tallest wind catcher tower in the city.

Mirrazavi, F. (2011). Dowlatabad Garden. Iran Review. Retrieved from http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/Dowlatabad_Garden.htm

Baad gir: Also known as a wind catcher, this tower structure is a classic feature of Iranian architecture and a form of clean energy and ventilation for buildings in hot climates. The tower openings allow fresh air to enter the building while also providing an exit for hot air trapped inside.

A'zami, A. (2005). Badgir in traditional Iranian architecture. International Network for Information on Ventilation and Energy Performance. Retrieved from http://www.inive.org/members_area/medias/pdf/Inive%5Cpalenc%5C2005%5CAzami2.pdf

Towers of Silence: These monuments, located on the tops of two mountains outside Yazd, are where Zoroastrians would take their dead as part of a religious ceremony. The bodies were laid in a circle in the towers to go through a process called purification, where they are left to the elements and vultures. Once their remains were only bone, these were collected and stored in ossuaries nearby. Since the 1970s this practice has been illegal in Iran, so the sites are now open for visitors.

Atlas Obscura. (2019). Zoroastrian Towers of Silence. Retrieved from <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/zoroastrian-towers-of-silence>

STATISTICS AND FACTS:

Circumcision statistics:

Approximately one third of the worldwide male population is circumcised, mostly for cultural or religious reasons. There are some health benefits, such as lower risk of HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, urinary tract infections, and penile cancer. The procedure is considered low risk when conducted by a medical professional. The procedure is very common in the U.S. and is a common practice for HIV prevention.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. (2010). Neonatal and child male circumcision: a global review. World Health Organization. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/hiv/pub/malecircumcision/neonatal_child_MC_UNAIDS.pdf

City/census:

Yazd, Iran	2011	486,152
Wichita, KS	2010	382,368
Kansas City, KS	2018	152,958
Manhattan, KS	2018	54,959
Dallas, TX	2018	1,345,047
Salina, KS	2018	46,716

- Yazd. (2019). In Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yazd>.
- United States Census Bureau. (2018). QuickFacts-Kansas City city, Kansas. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/kansascitycitykansas>
- United States Census Bureau. (2018). QuickFacts-Salina city, Kansas. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/salinacitykansas>.
- United States Census Bureau. (2018). QuickFacts-Dallas city, Texas. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/dallascitytexas/PST045218>.
- United States Census Bureau. (2018). QuickFacts-Manhattan city, Kansas. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/manhattancitykansas>.

DEPRESSION:

Depression is a very common disorder (the most common disorder in the United States) that affects a person's feelings, thoughts, and actions. Environmental, genetic, psychological, and biological factors can be the cause of depression. Depression occurs most often in adults. Recent studies have noticed that depression in young adults and children is starting to increase. Depression can be treated with antidepressants and psychotherapy or counseling. Talk to a medical professional if you have any questions or concerns.

The National Institute of Mental Health. (2018). Depression. Retrieved from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>

Mental Health Resources:

K-State Counseling Services: <https://www.k-state.edu/counseling/>

785-532-6927

1105 Sunset Ave, Room 101

Lafene Health Center: <https://www.k-state.edu/lafene/services/mental-health/>

785-532-6544

1105 Sunset Avenue

Office of Student Life: <https://www.k-state.edu/studentlife/>

785-532-6432

201 Holton Hall

stulife@k-state.edu

K-State Family Center Counseling Services: <https://www.hhs.k-state.edu/familycenter/services/individuals/>

785-532-6984.

139 Campus Creek Complex

K-State LGBT Resource Center: <https://www.k-state.edu/lgbt/>

785-532-5352

207 Holton Hall

lgbt@ksu.edu

Katie's Way: <https://katieswaymanhattan.com/>

785-320-7331

720 Poyntz Ave. Manhattan, KS 66502

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

1-800-273-8255

STAR TREK:

Star Trek is a famous TV and movie series that follows a group of people as they explore space. There are many different series that follow different captains and characters, but the plot of space exploration remains the same. In this series, Earth became a utopia and decided to join the United Federation of Planets. The Federation wants peace and to explore space, but not all species agree with that. These discrepancies cause friction between all the species and creates the plot for *Star Trek*. The show features technology that has yet to be invented that allows for fans (*Trekkies*) to geek out over the possibilities that stem from the show.

Series in Order:

- Star Trek: The Original Series* (TOS)
- Star Trek: The Animated Series* (TAS)
- Star Trek: The Next Generation* (TNG)
- Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (DS9)
- Star Trek: Voyager* (VOY)
- Star Trek: Enterprise* (ENT)
- Star Trek: Discovery*

Films in Order:

The Original Series films

- *The Motion Picture* (1979)
- *II: The Wrath of Khan* (1982)
- *III: The Search for Spock* (1984)
- *IV: The Voyage Home* (1986)
- *V: The Final Frontier* (1989)
- *VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991)

The Next Generation films

- *Generations* (1994)
- *First Contact* (1996)
- *Insurrection* (1998)
- *Nemesis* (2002)

Reboot (Kelvin Timeline) films

- *Star Trek* (2009)
- *Into Darkness* (2013)
- *Beyond* (2016)

Key Terms in *Star Trek*:

- **The Federation:** The United Federation of Planets is an intergalactic United Nations.
- **Starfleet:** Military of space. They defend and explore the planets.
- **Prime Directive:** Rule of non-interference. This means if the Starfleet runs into a more primitive alien race, there are not meant to interfere with their knowledge of the world or technology.
- **Warp Drive:** Engines that allow space vehicles travel beyond the speed of light.
- **Transporters:** Transports solid objects or beings by converting them into non-solid matter.
- **Jeffries Tubes:** Tunnels that people can crawl through on large spaceships.
- **Neutral Zone:** A lightyear-wide region of space that separates The Federation from the Romulans.
- **Universal Translator:** It translates any language to the native language of the person listening.
- **The Mirror Universe:** Alternative Universe.
- **Vulcans:** Vulcan people have pointy ears and prefer logic over emotion.
- **Klingons:** Slightly more aggressive people who like to feud and believe that dying in battle is a good way to die.
- **Romulans:** Look like Vulcans and went to war with the human race.
- **The Borg:** Part human, part machine. Supervillians that are intent on conquering the planets and creating a hive to become stronger.
- **Bajorans:** Peaceful and spiritual beings under the rule of the Cardassian Union.
- **Cardassians:** Cruel and military-based race.

STAR TREK (CONT.):

Star Trek episodes mentioned in the book:

“Who Watches the Watchers” (TNG) - The Enterprise ship is under Captain Jean-Luc Picard. They travel to Mintaka III to repair an observation outpost. A Federation team observes a proto-Vulcan society behind a holographic image that hides them, which ends up malfunctioning. The Vulcans are then under the impression that Captain Picard is a God and they want to make a sacrifice to him.

“Chain of Command Part 1” (TNG) - Captain Picard is replaced as captain of the Enterprise and he goes on a top secret mission with Lt. Worf and Dr. Crusher to Cardassian. While those three are on their mission, the new Captain Jellico faces resistance with his new crew.

“Chain of Command Part 2” (TNG) - Captain Jellico leads his team to prevent an invasion from the Cardassians. Captain Picard is captured and tortured on his top secret mission.

“Sins of the Father”(TNG) - A Klingon commander becomes a part of the Enterprise as an exchange program that the Starfleet created. The crew is unhappy about this exchange.

“Allegiance”(TNG) - Captain Picard is captured with three other aliens and is replaced by a replica of himself as an imposter captain on The Enterprise.

“Captain’s Holiday”(TNG) - Captain Picard takes a vacation on his home planet after a difficult trade agreement. While on vacation, he is visited by a different race of peoples from the future, who are looking for a dangerous weapon.

“Family” (TNG) - After the Borg were defeated, the crew of the Enterprise is on shore leave. Captain Picard returns to France, where his family owns a vineyard, where he deals with difficulties with his family after 20 years of being gone.

Caruana, A. (2018) A Beginners Guide to Star Trek. Retrieved from <https://www.lifehacker.com.au/2018/02/a-beginners-guide-to-star-trek/>
IMDb. (2019). Star Trek: The Next Generation episode list. Retrieved from <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0092455/episodes?season=3>
Mattu, A. (2013). A Beginners Guide to the Star Trek Universe. *Brain Knows Better*. Retrieved from <http://brainknowsbetter.com/news/2013/5/7/a-beginners-guide-to-the-star-trek-universe>

DIVE INTO THE NOVEL

Meet the major characters and utilize
chapter summaries

MEET THE MAJOR CHARACTERS:

- **Darius Kellner:** The narrator of the story and primary character. Persian-American high schooler struggling with depression, bullying, and identity. He doesn't have a strong connection with his father, Stephen Kellner, and is anxious about fitting in with the family he meets in Iran.
- **Stephen Kellner:** Darius's father. Like Darius, he has depression and a love of Star Trek. He cares for his son but struggles to connect, and is often assumed to be Darius's main antagonist.
- **Shirin Kellner:** Darius's mom. Originally from Yazd, Iran, she works as a UX Designer in Portland. She has a stronger relationship with Darius than her husband. Her father's failing health is the reason the family visits Iran.
- **Laleh Kellner:** Darius's younger sister. She is a positive child who is enthusiastic about spending time with her family and can speak Farsi almost fluently. Darius is occasionally jealous of her ease of fitting in and the attention she gets, but still has a good relationship with her.
- **Mamou:** Darius's maternal grandmother in Yazd, Iran. She is a great cook and known for the kindness and love she shares with her family.
- **Babou:** Darius's maternal grandfather in Yazd, Iran. He is a kind man who loves gardening, playing Rook, and spending time with family. Though he appears to Darius as a bit reserved and difficult to connect with, he eventually uncovers his sincere side. He has a brain tumor that is slowly causing his health to deteriorate, and it is assumed that he has a limited amount of time left to live.
- **Sohrab:** Family friend and neighbor of Mamou and Babou. He and Darius become friends and develop a strong bond that allows Darius to grow his self-confidence and establish better relationships with others.
- **Trent Bolger:** Darius's classmate and main bully. He often creates varied nicknames for Darius, playing off sexual innuendos and often uses Darius's insecurities to generate conflict.
- **Chip Cusumano:** Darius's classmate and Trent Bolger's friend. He is partially involved in bullying Darius alongside Trent. Chip likely doesn't realize the severity of the bullying toward Darius, but he begins to take more of an effort in treating Darius better as the story progresses.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES:

Chapter 1: The Chiefest and Greatest of Calamities

- Darius is having trouble with the brewing machine at his part-time job with Tea Haven. His boss Charles Apatan helps him resolve the error but isn't incredibly receptive to Darius's jokes relating tea to Farsi. Darius explains the importance of tea in Persian culture and how the quality of tea made at Tea Haven is nowhere near the quality at his dream job at Rose City Teas. As he is working, a bully from school named Trent Bolger enters the shop and proceeds to exclaim suggestive nicknames upon seeing Darius. Trent is accompanied by Chip Cusamano, another classmate who does nothing to stop Trent's pestering.

Chapter 2: Truck Nuts

- As Darius leaves work for the day, he walks to the bike rack outside the shop and finds the wheel and seat missing. In the seat's place are a pair of blue rubber testicles, often known as truck nuts, which are occasionally hung on the hitches of pickups. Darius is frustrated, but more so that he has to call his dad, whom he sometimes refers to by name in his internal dialogue. He and his father aren't incredibly close, and Darius has trouble relating to him. His dad picks him up in his nice Audi and inquires about who vandalized the bike. Darius tells him it must have been Trent and Chip but is careful to not mention in depth how they treated him at work. During the car ride, Darius has an internal dialogue about how different he feels from his dad's "Aryan" features and how he looks more like his Persian mom.

Chapter 3: The Distinguished Picard Crescent

- Darius sits down to dinner with his family and provides background on his family members. His mom is rather busy at her job as a UX designer, and is only able to cook traditional Persian meals on weekends. His dad is an architect for a firm that designs museums and concert halls. Laleh, his younger sister, is a second grader and speaks Farsi far more fluently than he does. Darius truly loves his sister but holds some jealousy for her ability to connect better with his mom and Persian culture. Each night after dinner, Darius and his dad watch one episode of Star Trek: The Next Generation, the one thing they have in common. His mom's computer rings as she gets a video call from family in Iran.

Chapter 4: Moby the Whale

- Darius's mom and Laleh talk with his Mamou (grandmother in Farsi), and Darius and his dad feel left out because they both aren't familiar with Farsi enough to interact. The family has a Haft-Seen in their living room, which is a display made to celebrate Nowruz, the Persian new year. Laleh adds a goldfish to the display, and names it Ahab from the book she calls "Moby the Whale." Darius goes to the kitchen with his dad to take their depression medications. While in the kitchen, Darius's dad mentions that Darius's Babou's (grandfather in Farsi) brain tumor is getting worse. Darius's parents decide that they will be taking the family to Iran to visit.

Chapter 5: Slingshot Maneuvers

- Darius sits down for lunch in his school cafeteria and tells his friend Javaneh that his family is leaving tomorrow. She is surprised and upset he will miss the Chaharshanbeh Suri celebration. This event occurs the night before Nowruz and involves Persian families gathering to jump over small fires and eat loads of Persian food. Darius and his family usually attend the celebration in Portland. Darius dislikes fire jumping and often watches on as his more daring sister takes on the challenge. Darius then goes to the nurse's office to take his depression medication and recounts the many medications he had to try to arrive at one that works for him. All of the other ones made him experience severe mood swings, one of which got him in trouble at a Boy Scout camp when he punched a fellow scout who insulted his mom's accent.

Chapter 6: A Non-Passive Failure

- On his way to gym class, Darius runs into Chip Cusumano, who tries to be cordial. Darius wasn't thrilled about how he was treated the other day with his bicycle, and tries walking away. Chip tries to make him stop by tugging on his backpack, but accidentally splits its seam as Darius resists. Chip tries apologizing for the accident and what he did the day before, but Darius is frustrated and doesn't want to hear it. In gym class, they play volleyball as part of the Net Sports unit. Darius isn't especially good at net sports aside from playing soccer as a kid. Darius is assigned to a team with Trent "Fatty" Bolger, the student that has been bullying him. Darius tries to stay out of the way of his more competitive classmates on the court, but when prompted by Coach Fortes to participate, Darius hits the ball, but it launches at the back of his classmate Craig's head. Trent then criticizes Darius and calls him "terrorist." Darius tries to ignore the insult, but is still upset about it.

Chapter 7: Intermix Ratio

- Darius is picked up from school by his dad. He asks Darius about why his backpack is ripped, and Darius explains that Chip did it. Mr. Kellner tells Darius that Chip only does those things because he knows it gets to him. Darius doesn't take his dad's advice well and sees it as another conflict. His dad then makes a comment that Darius needs a haircut since his hair is getting longer. Darius feels like his dad is being critical of him again. His resistance to the proposition leads his dad to say that Darius might not get picked on so much if he wasn't so, and he stops there and Darius feels hurt. When they get home, his dad goes upstairs to his office and Darius makes himself and Laleh some tea. The family sits down for dinner later and talks about their day. Darius avoids sharing about being called a terrorist, but talks about the backpack incident. Darius and his dad skip watching Star Trek that night as they pack for their trip. Darius has trouble connecting with his grandparents when they Skype call in anticipation of them visiting soon.

Chapter 8: Olympus Mons

- It's three in the morning and Darius and his family are waking up to leave for their flight to Iran. When Darius gets up, he realizes he has a large pimple on his forehead between his eyebrows. The pimple is aggravated and red from him popping it. Darius finishes packing his carry-on with schoolwork, Lord of the Rings, and a pyramid-shaped tin of tea he picked out as a gift for his Mamou. Darius and his family arrive at the airport in Portland, and Darius gives Laleh a piggyback ride since she is so tired. They go through TSA screening and an agent misidentifies Darius's zit as a bindi, the red dot worn between the eyebrows of Hindus.

Chapter 9: Temporal Displacement

- Darius and his family land in New York on a layover before their next flight to Dubai. Darius slept most of the flight to New York, but is wide awake for their flight to Dubai as it crosses eight time zones. During the flight, Darius's mom tells him to not take it personally when family in Iran says things about his mental health. She notes that they don't think about it in the same way. They grab lunch once they land, but Darius skips on food and goes to the bathroom. When he gets back, he overhears his mother admonishing his dad for being too controlling, but he refutes that Darius wouldn't be bullied as much if he could fit in better. Darius pretends he doesn't hear it and sits back down at the table. His dad apologizes for earlier and asks that they try to get along during the trip. As they arrive in Tehran, Iran, the women and girls put on their headscarves.

Chapter 10: There Are Four Lights

- As the Kellner family arrives and approaches customs, Darius notices how tired the officers are. When Darius's dad is asked their reason for visiting, he says that his wife's father is ill. The officer then speaks to Darius's mom in Farsi before taking Darius aside for screening. He is taken to a room with a table and two-way glass where he is asked for his passport, reason for visiting, the contents of his bag, and his depression medication. The officer is the first interaction Darius encounters that dismisses his condition. Upon telling the officer that his father is an architect, the tone changes and Darius is taken back to his family. They then exit the airport to be picked up.

Chapter 11: The Dancing Fan

- Darius notes that the air is colder and has more of a smog smell than he expected compared to home. Mamou comes running toward them with excitement and hugs each of them and kisses their cheeks. His uncle, Dayi Jamsheed, drives them from Tehran to Yazd. During the drive, Darius answers Mamou's questions about his school, and soon falls in and out of sleep during the drive while listening to the rhythm of Farsi being spoken. Darius recounts how his mom used to chant in Farsi to him at bedtime. He also notes that his dad used to tell him stories before bed, but it stopped abruptly six months before Laleh was born. It's early morning when they arrive in Yazd and Darius wakes up. He notices that the city looks less like the setting of Aladdin, and more like home. They arrive at Mamou's house and carry in their luggage after taarofing, a way of showing politeness and respect by declining a host's hospitality until either one gives in. Darius is shown to his room and experiences the different bathrooms in Iran. After showering, he goes for a nap and turns on a fan in the room that wobbles around as it runs.

Chapter 12: The History of American-Iranian Relations

- When Darius wakes up from his nap, he hears a rattling sound outside his window and sees a person's shadow. He steps outside and sees Babou climbing a ladder to the roof. Babou appears healthy, but Darius knows he isn't doing any better. Babou shouts from the roof for Sohrab, who has been helping out in the garden. Babou then instructs Darius to go help Sohrab. Sohrab is a neighbor of Mamou and Babou, and is Darius's age. They introduce themselves as they untangle the garden hose. Darius finds Sohrab has a pleasant attitude, and thinks they will get along well. They bring the hose to Babou to help him water his fig trees. Darius expresses his concern with having Babou on the roof, but Sohrab asks him to relax, since Babou does it every week, despite the fact that it's not incredibly safe.

Chapter 13: A Holodeck Vision

- After watering the fig trees, Babou comes down from the roof and says hello to Darius, whom he calls Darioush, the traditional version of his name. He gives him a hug and welcomes him to Yazd. He then formally introduces Sohrab and suggests the two become friends. Sohrab invites Darius to go with him to his uncle's store in town. Darius walks alongside Sohrab through the neighborhood, observing the unfamiliar cars, the boulevard layout of the street, and the heat that women must endure wearing headscarves and chadors. Darius shares casual conversation with Sohrab about this being his first visit, but notes that he feels comfortable being silent with him. They go into the grocery store and Sohrab introduces him to his uncle. Darius realizes that Sohrab is Baha'i from the greeting his uncle says. Darius picks up two bottles of robe and considers grabbing some faludeh for the walk back. Sohrab is fasting, and declines to grab some for himself. Sohrab explains to Darius that he is fasting until Nowruz. Darius decides not to eat in front of him and says they can come back and pick up faludeh after Nowruz. Sohrab pays for the robe and they walk back to Mamou and Babou's house. Sohrab asks Darius if he plays soccer and invites him to join him and a couple of his friends. When Darius gets home, he and Babou have some tea and later sit down for dinner. Darius still has some jetlag and dismisses himself early from dinner to catch up on sleep.

Chapter 14: Soccer/Non-American Football

- When Darius wakes up in the morning, he goes to the kitchen to take his depression medication. Babou asks about the medication and then insists that Darius think positive and try harder to fix it. It bothers Darius, but it isn't his first time hearing this. Sohrab shows up and he and Darius go to play soccer. Darius changes into some borrowed clothes and shoes from Sohrab. On the field, they play against Ali-Reza and Hossein, two students from Sohrab's school. Darius recounts how he used to play soccer growing up, but once he started his depression medication, he had trouble focusing and keeping up, and had to drop it. As they play, Darius notices that there is a personal conflict between Sohrab and Ali-Reza that fuels their competition. Darius executes a perfect sliding tackle and enjoys showing off his skills again. They play for a long time, until Sohrab announces that he and Darius won by three goals. After the game, Sohrab explains why he and Ali-Reza haven't been getting along. Ali-Reza is prejudiced against Baha'is and was making rude comments on the field. Sohrab doesn't let it get to him, luckily.

Chapter 15: The Ayatollah's Turban

- Darius, Sohrab, Hossein and Ali-Reza go to the locker rooms to change and shower. Darius isn't used to taking a shower in a locker room since they don't have enough time to after gym class at home. Darius is nervous to shower in front of the other guys, since the showers are completely open with no walls for privacy. As he showers, he feels so anxious that he has an anxiety attack. As uncomfortable as Darius already is, Sohrab then asks why his penis looks different and Darius has to explain that he is uncircumcised. To make matters worse, Ali-Reza then compares it to the Ayatollah's turban and proceeds to create that nickname for Darius. He feels betrayed by Sohrab, who he thought was supposed to be his friend. He rushes to get dressed and get out of the locker room to leave.

Chapter 16: Standard Parental Maneuver Alpha

- When Darius arrives at Mamou and Babou's place, Babou asks him how the game went. Darius responds as simply as he can and avoids mentioning the incident in the shower, but says that the boys didn't like him very much and cries. Babou tells him to not be so upset, and Darius goes to take a proper shower. After his shower, he climbs into bed and doesn't sleep as he tries to avoid interacting with his family. Darius's dad stops in later and urges him to leave his room to join the family for tea. Darius resists, but decides to get up anyway.

Chapter 17: The Dessert Capital of the Ancient World

- Darius gets dressed and grabs the tea gift for Mamou from his bag. He gives Mamou the gift, and she is thrilled and thanks him with a hug and kisses. Mamou made qottab, a traditional Yazd pastry, and as much as Darius loves them, he mentions how his dad wouldn't be thrilled if he ate more sweets. He gained some weight going on the depression medication, a side-effect, and his dad encourages him to eat healthier. Despite that, he eats one. Sohrab arrives at the door to bring Darius back his Vans that he left in his haste to leave. He steps in to grab his cleats from the kitchen, and is happily greeted by Mamou. Darius is still upset about earlier, but feels bad holding the grudge. He goes down the hall to put away his Vans and avoid the happy conversation in the living room, but Sohrab follows him. Sohrab tries to bring up what happened, but Darius is resistant. Sohrab mentions that it was nice to not be the one being made fun of by Ali-Reza for once and that he got carried away. He asks for a second chance at friendship and Darius says okay.

Chapter 18: Sins of the Father

- Darius thinks his father would be happier if he was more like Sohrab, and notes that his weight, clothing choices, and other qualities frustrate him. He feels like his sister Laleh was a replacement for him, and that his dad was eager to have a child that, in Darius's words, "wouldn't be such a disappointment." At dinner, he notices that Babou isn't a big fan of his dad, and assumes it's because he's the reason Darius's mom chose to stay in the U.S. Babou is also frustrated that Stephen couldn't bring up his children as Zoroastrian, since the religion is patrilineal. Babou and Darius's mom begin to speak in Farsi, and Darius and his dad feel left out because neither of them are fluent. Babou then asks Darius to tell him more about high school and his friends. He tells Darius's mom that she hasn't taught him enough about how to be Iranian and that he is too much like his dad. Sohrab then interrupts the conversation to ask about the tah dig and help Darius avoid the conversation. Darius watches Star Trek later, but the tradition is interrupted by his sister joining, and he is frustrated that she has to take that away from him, too.

Chapter 19: The Kolinahr Discipline

- It's the next morning and Darius and his family get up to go to Persepolis. Everyone piles into Babou's car, which Darius affectionately calls the Smokemobile because of its excessive exhaust. They stop by Sohrab's house to take him along. Babou is a speedy driver with very sudden lane changes that get the family there in 4 ½ hours instead of 6. When they get into the ruins, Darius's dad begins sketching them, and Sohrab explains the significance of the site. Darius's namesake, Darioush the Great, was an influential leader in ancient times and his palace was one of the ruins that they observe. Darius wants to ask his dad to hang out with him and Sohrab around the site, but he doesn't know how, so he doesn't ask. Babou tells Darius the reason they named him after Darioush the Great is because he was strong, smart, and brave. Darius feels like he hasn't lived up to their expectations and isn't Persian enough for his family. When he gets a little upset, Sohrab is perceptive of this and comforts him and tells him he understands.

Chapter 20: Bette Davis Eyes

- Just outside Yazd on the drive home, Babou drives much slower and the family realizes that he is lost, as a result of his tumor affecting him. Darius's dad takes over driving the rest of the way home. The family all know the weight of what happened, and even upon arriving home, everyone talks quietly and Darius's mom cries because they know how much worse Babou's condition is getting. Darius offers Babou some tea, but instead Babou beckons for him to sit with him as he shares old photo albums of Darius's mom and uncles. Babou tries to focus on the happy times, but there is a lot of sadness about his condition that remains unsaid so as not to burden him. Darius then joins Mamou in the kitchen and she compliments the tea he made. She tells him that she wishes he lived there and had known about his namesake and family history better. She changes the topic when it gets to Babou's illness, and tells Darius that he is sweet and helpful like his dad.

Chapter 21: Persian Casual

- It is Nowruz and Darius's dad wakes him up to get ready for the festivities of the day. The kitchen is slowly being taken over by food as it's being prepared for the party. Darius is instructed to dress up in Persian Casual, an elusive dress code that implies dressing up better than the others attending while also not overdressing. Family members begin to arrive, and Darius is introduced to his other uncle, Dayi Soheil. Dayi Soheil pats Darius's stomach after meeting him and asks if it came from the medicine. Darius doesn't know how to respond to that and just tries to disregard it, but he feels ashamed. Sohrab arrives and introduces his mom. During family photo time, Darius recalls how beloved the tradition is. Darius is overwhelmed with joy to see just how much family he has, especially since he has never been in a room with all of them at once. After the photo, Babou begins shouting at Mamou for no apparent reason. When he storms off, Mamou cries. There is an unspoken understanding that this isn't how Babou usually is, that it is his tumor influencing him. In the kitchen, Sohrab and Darius talk, and Sohrab's aunt Zandayi Simin comes over and says what a pleasure it was to meet him. She says something to Sohrab in Farsi that makes him blush, and Darius is curious what was said. She also offers to answer any of his questions, and Darius has many questions, but is too overwhelmed to ask.

Chapter 22: My Cousin, The Ringwraith

- Gifts are given on Nowruz, and Darius gets a nice white button-up shirt and 5 million rials from his uncles. His sister Laleh is excited to shout that she is a millionaire, but Darius knows that the exchange rate is much different between the dollars and rials. Sohrab gives Darius a soccer jersey for Team Melli, the Iranian national team. Darius loves his gift but feels bad for not getting one for Sohrab. At sunset when the fast is over for Sohrab and his family, everyone eats dinner. Darius joins his dad in the kitchen after dinner to help with dishes, and tells his dad that his uncle Dayi Soheil called him fat by patting his stomach, and his dad is shocked but reminds Darius that he probably meant it in affectionate way. In the living room, furniture is moved out of the way for dancing. Sohrab and Darius are eventually pulled into the circle to join in. Back in the kitchen, Darius's dad, Babou, Dayi Jamsheed and Dayi Soheil play the popular game of Rook. Darius is surprised to see his dad fitting in and having a good time with the family.

Chapter 23: Main Sequence

- Darius gets upset, feeling like he doesn't fit in, and sits outside. Sohrab goes out to console him, and tells him that they do want him there. He says there is a phrase in Farsi that means "your place was empty" that is said when you miss someone. This makes Darius feel a lot better that Sohrab knows him well enough and can understand how he feels. Darius then tells Sohrab about how his dad treats him, being bullied at school, and his depression. Sohrab handles it better than Darius's family did, and doesn't dismiss his feelings, but asks him if he talks about it with his dad. Darius then asks Sohrab about his dad, and he tells Darius that his father is in prison. He was walking to work through a protest and was arrested because they thought he was a part of it. Since he's Baha'i, it is difficult to get him out. When the boys go back inside, they overhear Babou and Darius's dad talking about Darius's issues. Babou tells Stephen that he can't control his son, and that being friends with Sohrab is good for Darius.

Chapter 24: The Borg of Herbs

- Darius wakes up in the middle of the night and finds his mom cleaning the dishes from the party, so Darius decides to help her. They begin to talk about Babou and get upset thinking about how little time he has left. His mom tells a story from her childhood about Babou and how he gave her and her friend piggyback rides in the summer when the pavement was too hot for their bare feet. She also apologizes to Darius for not teaching him Farsi because she wanted him to feel like he belonged. In the morning, Laleh and Darius have breakfast and watch an Iranian soap opera. Darius make Mamou the tea he gave her. Traditionally, on the day after Nowruz, you visit your friends, so Darius makes his way over to Sohrab's house where they eat sekanjabin. Sohrab wants to show Darius something, so they leave the house.

Chapter 25: The Khaki Kingdom

- Sohrab takes Darius to his school park, and they decide that since Darius's birthday is before he leaves, they will celebrate. They climb a chain-link fence to the roof of the public restrooms, where Sohrab likes to go for the view of the city. He points out to Darius the different monuments and mosques. Sohrab talks about how proud Babou was of Darius and his family before the trip. He noted that he was excited to share photos of them and Skype. Darius is overwhelmed with emotion and wishes he could have known Babou better before he became ill. He cries and Sohrab comforts him. The two share their appreciation of their friendship and how they will be sad when Darius leaves.

Chapter 26: A Tactical Withdrawal

- Darius tries to convince his dad to wait for him to watch Star Trek after dinner, but since Laleh has started watching it with them, Darius doesn't join them as he feels Laleh is replacing him. After the show, his dad finds him and asks why he didn't join, and Darius argues that this was supposed to be their thing. His dad asserts that she wanted to spend time with Darius, too, but Darius remains upset claiming that his dad doesn't make an effort to include him. He storms off to go to bed, and while the two usually say they love each other before bed, neither says it this time.

Chapter 27: The Towers of Silence

- Darius and his family load into the car to go to the Towers of Silence, a landmark and burial ground for Zoroastrians at the top of two mountains outside Yazd. Babou shares how extensive generations of his family have been buried here. With Darius's family and his uncles no longer living in Yazd, Babou worries that he and Mamou will be the last Bahramis living in Yazd and that the tradition will end.

Chapter 28: Yesterday's Enterprise

- As Darius promised Sohrab, they go to get faludeh at Sohrab's uncle's store, and bring Laleh along. Despite his dad's ongoing concern of him eating too much sugar, Darius loads up his faludeh with cherry syrup. On the walk home, Laleh speaks in Farsi to Sohrab, making Darius feel left out. Sohrab is perceptive of this and tells Laleh it's impolite and makes her include Darius in the conversation. They drop Laleh off at home and go back to the rooftop spot again. Sohrab inquires as to why Darius is upset, and he explains the issue with Laleh replacing him during Star Trek nights and how she can fit in better knowing Farsi. Sohrab comforts Darius and remind him that he is his best friend and that Laleh could not replace him. At home, Darius's dad and Laleh watch another episode of Star Trek without him, but after he and Darius take their depression medication, Stephen makes a point to tell Darius he loves him before going to bed.

Chapter 29: Father Issues

- The next day, Darius's family and Sohrab go to Dowlatabad, a garden in Yazd. While walking through the park, Sohrab asks Darius to join him in another soccer game and offers to not invite the other boys. Darius is hesitant, but agrees and says to bring Ali-Reza and his friends. Sohrab tells Darius more about his dad's situation in prison. He is being held in Tehran in solitary confinement, and they can't go visit. Sohrab starts to cry and Darius comforts him. Darius likes that Sohrab feels comfortable sharing his feelings with him.

Chapter 30: Make It So

- Darius and Sohrab look at a mansion in the garden. With an opulent fountain and a baad gir (wind tower) rising out of the mansion, Darius is struck with awe. Sohrab shows him inside where light shines in through stained glass windows. After the tour, Darius and Sohrab go to play soccer again, and Darius remembers to bring the jersey Sohrab gave him. The two join Ali-Reza and some other kids that were already on the field. After playing for a bit, they huddle in the middle of the field and talk in Farsi. Sohrab insists they include Darius by speaking English. When Hossein refers to Darius as Ayatollah again, Sohrab restructures teams and has Darius captaining with him. Luckily, the new kids playing didn't know why the nickname was chosen, so they are told by Sohrab it meant he was in charge. Darius and Sohrab defeat the others after a lengthy game. Afterwards, the two go to shower again, but this time, Darius feels less uncomfortable since he's been accepted by Sohrab. When Darius gets home, he asks to buy a new pair of cleats for Sohrab. While spending time with Mamou, he hears her playing ABBA and begins asking questions to know more about her.

Chapter 31: Chelo Kabob

- Darius and Sohrab make a point to play soccer each day except Friday because Mamou is making chelo kabob. Chelo kabob requires a lot of preparation and is often reserved by Darius's family for special occasions. Mamou eventually puts Darius's dad to work with cooking the meat while Darius helps Babou set up tables in the backyard. Darius then goes to Sohrab's to ask his mother to bring more sabzi for later. While over there, Darius and Sohrab play a bit of soccer. At dinner, Darius and his family load up on kabob, and go back for seconds. Darius's dad receives some coaching from the Bahrami men on how to do the kabob properly. When he makes a suggestion and they approve of his tip, Darius wonders if maybe his dad's place had been empty too.

Chapter 32: The Virgo Supercluster

- With everyone gathered, a game of Rook ensues between Darius's dad, Babou, Dayi Jamsheed and Dayi Soheil. Sohrab brings Darius to the table with his cousins. They compliment him on his soccer abilities and teach him how to play Rook, giving advice along the way. Later, when Darius goes to bed, he sees the new cleats for Sohrab have arrived and is excited to give them to him. Darius's mom stops in to check on him, and Darius realizes what a good time he is having and that he doesn't want to leave soon. He wishes he'd grown up in Yazd and been friends with Sohrab longer. Darius is afraid of going home and leaving Sohrab behind since they are so close.

Chapter 33: The Age of Bahramis

- Darius and his family get dressed and ready to go see the Atashkadeh, Yazd's Zoroastrian Fire Temple. The fire burning inside has been burning for 1,500 years. Babou doesn't feel good when they arrive, and Darius knows it must be bad considering how excited he was to show the fire temple to them. As Darius gazes at the fire, he thinks about his family and the generations that came before him and looked at the very same fire. He gets emotional thinking that Babou will pass away sometime soon and how he could be the last generation of the Bahramis in Yazd. At home, Darius's mom looks through old photo albums of their family, and Darius mistakes a photo of him as a baby for Laleh. It is surprising to him to see a picture of him and his dad content and not fighting. Darius apologizes to his mom when she gets upset that he and his dad don't get along like they used to.

Chapter 34: Magnetic Containment

- On the day of Darius and Sohrab's last soccer game, Darius wraps the new cleats and takes them over to Sohrab's house. When he arrives, there is a new car there, and when they don't answer the door, Darius tries the back door. Sohrab's uncle answers it, and Darius sees Sohrab and his mom sobbing. He tries to be comforting, but Sohrab yells at him to leave. He tells Darius that his dad has died. Darius hands Sohrab the gift when he asks what it is, and Sohrab gets mad when he finds out it contains cleats. Sohrab tells Darius that he's selfish for coming over to play soccer when Sohrab's dad is dead, that Darius is always crying and complaining when he has no reason to be sad, and that no one wants him there. Darius runs home upset.

Chapter 35: First, Best Destiny

- Darius's depressive emotions set in on his run back to the house. He thinks about how he doesn't like Yazd anymore, he wants to go home, and tells himself he really is selfish. He is sad to think how much he let Sohrab into his life only to be struck down all at once. Darius climbs up to their spot on the rooftop to cry. His dad finds him and climbs up to join him. Darius's dad does a better job of trying to comfort Darius. He reminds Darius that he's not disappointed in him and wants to make sure he is being healthy in how he handles his illness. Darius asserts that his dad doesn't want him around and that he isn't good enough for him. His dad tells him how much he loves him and has loved him growing up, but Darius asks why he stopped telling him stories before bed as a kid if he says he loved that. His dad gets honest with him and tells Darius that he had suicidal thoughts then and his meds weren't helping. The tranquilizer he was put on made it difficult for him to tell stories. Darius didn't realize this was the reason, and he lets his dad hold him as he cries. Stephen asks Darius if he really loves Sohrab, and when Darius says he's his best friend, it is implied that there was more to it than he was ready to share.

Chapter 36: Through a Wormhole

- It is Darius's birthday and everyone gives him extra affection, including his dad who insists they spend more time together by walking around Yazd. They admire the beauty of the ancient buildings, and Darius thinks about how he never realized how bad his dad's depression got, and how he has a better understanding of him now. At dinner, Darius gets a new copper teapot from Mamou and Babou, and is treated to a nice meal of zereshk polow. Babou tells Darius that Sohrab is hurting right now, and to know that it's not Darius's fault. They begin to pack up their suitcases again for the journey home. Sohrab stops by because Darius didn't visit him and thanks him for the cleats. Sohrab apologizes for what he said to him. He admits that he wanted Darius to feel as bad as he did, and that real friends don't do that. He invites Darius out for a bit to spend time together before he leaves.

Chapter 37: The Cracks of Doom

- Darius and Sohrab go back to their rooftop at the park. He gives Darius a birthday gift: a framed photo of them from Nowruz. He tells Darius he admires how he doesn't change who he is. Darius says it's way different at home where he doesn't feel secure in himself, and Sohrab wishes that Darius could see himself how he sees him. When they get back to the house, the two say their final goodbyes. They hold each other in a long hug before parting ways. In the morning, Dayi Jamsheed drives Darius's family back to the airport in Tehran. When Mamou say goodbye, she has tears in her eyes and kisses Darius multiple times on the cheeks. Darius knows how much he will miss her. Darius then says goodbye to Babou. He tells Darius to take care of his dad and that he needs him before giving him a big hug. When Darius's mom says goodbye to Babou, Darius doesn't think she will ever stop crying. Everyone knows this will be the last time she gets to see her father. Darius and his family then get on their flight home.

Chapter 38: The Best of Both Worlds

- When Darius gets back, he doesn't feel any different like he was expecting, but when he is more forgiving of letting Laleh watch Star Trek with him, he wonders if he actually did change. At school, Darius is flooded with questions about where he went, and one student jokingly thought he joined ISIS. In gym, they play soccer and Darius discovers that he is one of the better players in his class. He successfully defends against Trent and Chip, who didn't expect him to do as well as he did. Chip compliments his skills, and Darius doesn't know what to make of it. Coach Fortes encourages Darius to try out for the soccer team, and he considers the offer.

Chapter 39: Darius the Great

- After school, Chip meets Darius at the bike rack and is being friendlier than usual. He asks how the trip went and notes that Darius seems different in a better way. He even recognizes that maybe Darius brought back the energy of Darioush the Great, his namesake. The fact that Chip knows this detail and cares enough to try to establish a better connection makes Darius curious about what is different. That evening, Darius and his parents watch another episode of Star Trek, and Darius explains that he and his dad made it the new tradition to talk about his day after the show. His dad is encouraging when Darius tells him he wants to do an unpaid internship at Rose City Teas. Darius feels more comfortable with his family and happier in their relationship. While drinking tea with his family and embracing the peaceful moment, he responds to his dad asking if he's okay, and says that he's actually doing great.

AWARDS AND COMMUNITY

Find information about awards and scholarships related to the novel and undergraduate research and explore how faculty, staff, and community members can get involved with KSNB and the common read

KSBN AWARDS:

Faculty/Staff Award

Faculty and staff members who have created learning activities related to the common book are encouraged to submit them for recognition. Outstanding activities may include, but are not limited to, paper assignments, events, discussions, and programs, and are selected based on creative applications of themes from the book, engagement of students in program, project, or activity, and demonstration of enthusiasm for enhancement of the educational experience at K-State.

Student Award

Students are invited to share their experience of the issues raised in *Darius the Great is Not Okay*. This experience can be shared through a non-fiction essay, creative writing, music, video, visual art, (filmed) performance art, or some other medium. Students are also encouraged to submit a short (2 minute) personal video. Entries should indicate the basis for the experience, such as the book, the author lecture, a classroom discussion, or another event or program or reading selection.

The contest is open to all K-State students. The winner will receive a \$250 scholarship for the Spring 2020 semester. For more information, see www.ksu.edu/ksbn/award.html.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH:

Contact Dr. Peter Dorhout-Vice President for Research or the [Office of Undergrad Research and Creative Inquiry](#).

Awards

K-State offers many awards for undergraduate research, including for first-year research experiences. Consult individual colleges and departments to learn more about possible undergraduate research awards. Click on the award titles to learn more!

- [Kirmser Award](#): recognizes and promotes outstanding scholarship among K-State's undergraduate students. Awards given to winners in the freshman individual, non-freshman individual, and group project categories. The grand prize for each individual category is \$1,000. Grand prize for the group project category will be a minimum of \$2,000 and will be based on the

size of the winning group. Research projects must have been completed as a requirement for a K-State course, and may encompass any academic topic. Applications are evaluated based on the use of library resources.

- [Raj and Diana Nathan Undergraduate Research Experience Award](#): \$5,000 awarded to a College of Engineering undergraduate student at the junior or senior level. Provides a meaningful research experience for the recipient. Funds are designated to support the activities of the selected student and may be paid to the student as an hourly student wage. The award should be used for an independent project or an expansion of a funded research project. A fully engaged faculty member to supervise the student's experience is important and the department head when recommending a proposal should consider this.
- [Undergraduate Research Award grant](#): provides funding for students to work under the guidance of a faculty research mentor. Students get the opportunity to network with other researchers, make contributions to their research field, and present, perform or exhibit their work publicly. Undergraduate Travel Award grant recipients will be reimbursed for travel cost associated with their research, such as presenting at a conference or conducting research at an archive.
- Nationally competitive scholarships include the Rhodes, Marshall, Udall, Truman, Goldwater, and Fulbright. Contact Jim Hohenbary for more information (jimlth@ksu.edu).

FACULTY, ALUMNI, & COMMUNITY:

You don't have to be an incoming student at K-State to participate in our common reading program. Here are some things you can do with your friends and family.

Read the book

- Purchase a copy online or from your local bookstore.
- Borrow a paper copy from your public library.

Discussion

Initiate a conversation with your incoming student about the book. Suggested questions:

- Sohrab apologizes to Darius before he leaves Iran: "I was hurting. And you were there. And I knew how to make you hurt as bad as me" (294). Why do we sometimes intentionally hurt the people we care about the most? How do you mend a relationship after the fact?
- In his afterword the author, Adib Khorram, states, "But depression can be just as hard to witness as it can be to live with. It's frustrating to love someone and be unable to help them" (314). What are some ways you can support someone with depression, while taking care of yourself?
- Are there any obstacles you have had to overcome to succeed? Who or what helped you?
- Start a book discussion or use *Darius the Great is Not Okay* in your book club.

Get Involved

- Explore the other resources on the KSBN website, including recommended books, movies and resource links.
- Follow KSBN on Twitter and Facebook
- Attend the events held on the K-State campus throughout the 2019-2020 school year.

Do you have an idea you want to share? Email us at ksbn@k-state.edu and we'll add it to the list.