

A thousand splendid suns essay sample

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“ We live in a universe of many possible worlds.” Alison Gopnik wrote in this her article Possible Worlds: Why do Children Pretend? At first, trying to grasp the concept of this quote was not easy. But after reading the article and applying the theme to the book A Thousand Splendid Suns, counterfactual’s, or the “ woulda-coulda-shoulda’s” of life became seemingly easier to point out. Counterfactual’s appear a lot in the book. Between Mariam, her parents, Rasheed, Laila and Tariq there are many things that could’ve happened differently to change the entire plot.

For example, if Miriam’s mother never passed away she would not have went to live with her father. In saying that, his three wives would have never forced upon the marriage of Mariam and Rasheed. Because of this domino affect, Mariam got tied into an abusive marriage. To think that if there was a couple of words someone could’ve said to Nana, Mariam’s mother, to make her want to continue her life she could’ve saved her own daughter without even knowing it.

For me the most important counterfactual thinking that took place in the book was between Miriam and Laila. Growing up just down the street from each other, they grew to really know each other. Although Miriam was hurt when Lila decided to marry Rasheed after Tariq’s allegedly death, she still managed to pull through for her in the end because she knew the kind of person Laila was. “ Boys, Laila came to see, treated friendship the way they treated the sun: its existence undisputed; its radiance best enjoyed, not beheld directly.” In hopes to protect Lila after being beaten because that she found out that Tariq’s demise was a fake, she ended up killing Rasheed and coming clean about it the next day to clear the path for Laila and Tariq to

lead a somewhat normal life. There is no way someone would've taken that much of an task and responsibility on for someone who has recently wronged her but using counterfactual thinking Mariam was able to see the true colors of Laila and act accordingly.

As a strong believer in karma I feel counterfactuals work the same. When you base your decision making off of what coulda-woulda-shoulda happened you it opens up different worlds of thinking and how something happened at the right place at the right time, like karma. A Thousand Splendid Suns portrayed the main characters in ways where counterfactual thinking extremely affected the plot.