

# A thousand splendid suns essay



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BUSTER**

“ An heirloom-breaking, clumsy little harami” (Hosseini 4), sets the tone for the beginning of Mariam’s life throughout the novel A Thousand Splendid Suns. Many women are mistreated throughout the novel, but Mariam’s childhood is much tougher because she is a harami, or “ bastard child”. Mariam tries to find emotional and physical shelter in her lifetime, but struggles to find it. In the beginning of her life she can’t find emotional shelter from her mother, Nana, so she tries to find shelter from her father, Jalil, but can’t find a connection.

She then was forced to marry Rasheed, but can only find physical shelter in him. Later in the novel, she becomes friends with Laila, Rasheed’s second wife, and things start to change for her and she starts to feel wanted when Aziza wants to be held by her. From the beginning of the novel the reader can see how Mariam is unwanted by her mother. “ Of all the daughters I could have had, why did God give me an ungrateful one like you?... you treacherous little harami! ” (Hosseini 27). When Nana says this, it shows how she truly feels about Mariam.

Nana wishes that Mariam was different and had no love for her father. When Nana tells Mariam this, Mariam starts to feel lonely and unwanted by her mother and she fears talking with her. Mariam enjoys visiting her father Jalil because he gives her gifts and teaches her things. Mariam eventually decides to go live with him and her mother commits suicide and Mariam sees her dangling from a tree, “ A gust of wind blew and parted the drooping branches of the weeping willow like a curtain, and Mariam caught a glimpse of what was beneath the tree: the straight-backed chair, over turned.

The rope dropping from a high branch. Nana dangling at the end of it. ”

(Hosseini 36) When her mother commits suicide Mariam feels very guilty and it affects her greatly, “ But Mariam could not hear comfort in God’s words.

Not that day. Not then. All she could hear was Nana saying, I’ll die if you go.

I’ll just die. All she could do was cry and cry and let her tears fall on the

spotted, paper-thin skin of Mullah Faizullah’s hands. ” (Hosseini 38) Even

though Jalil has a nice house, Maraim feels uncomfortable and unwanted in

his house, “, she knew that Nana had spoken the truth.

She did not belong here. ” (Hosseini 40) Mariam did not eat much and rarely

came out of her room in Jalil’s house, “ Except for when she had to use the

bathroom down the hall, Mariam stayed in the room. ” (Hosseini 40) She

struggles to find any connection with Jalil and his family, Jalil notices this and

becomes worried, so he finds her a husband, Rasheed. Even though she does

not agree to this, “ I don’t want to,...I don’t want this. Don’t make me. ”

(Hosseini 47), she is forced to marry him.

At first, Marriam felt protected and significant to Rasheed, “ She felt prized

by his protectiveness. Treasured and significant. ” (Hosseini 81) After a

while, Mariam struggles to find connection with Rasheed and becomes

uncomfortable because she went through several miscarriages and could not

give him a child, “ Now Mariam dreaded the sound of him coming home in

the evening. ...There was always something, some minor thing that would

infuriate him, because no matter what she did to please him, no matter how

thoroughly she submitted to his wants and demands, it wasn’t enough.

She could not give him his son back. In this most essential way, she had failed him-seven times she had failed him-and now she was nothing but a burden to him. She could see it in the way he looked at her, when he looked at her. She was a burden to him. " (Hosseini 99-100) Rasheed became very abusive with her and treated her poorly. The only shelter she received from him was a roof over her head while she became emotionally distraught. Rasheed takes Laila as his second wife even though Mariam does not agree with him.

Rasheed treasures Laila much more than he treasures Mariam, " If she (Mariam) were a car, she would be a Volga...you (Laila), on the other hand, would be a Benz. A brand-new, first-class, shiny Benz. " (Hosseini 222) One night, Rasheed attempts to beat Mariam with a belt, but Laila stops him, " Stop it, bas!... Rasheed, you can't do this. ...Rasheed raised the belt again and this time came at Mariam. Then an astonishing thing happened: The girl lunged at him. She grabbed his arm with both hands and tried to drag him down, but she could do no more than dangle from it.

She did succeed in slowing Rasheed's progress toward Mariam...In the end, Mariam knew that there would be no beating, not that night. " (Hosseini 241) The next day Mariam and Laila have tea together outside in the garden and become friends, " , a look passed between Laila and Mariam. An unguarded, knowing look. And in this fleeting, wordless exchange with Mariam, Laila knew that they were not enemies any longer. " (Hosseini 250) They started doing chores together and became good companions. Mariam finally had someone who she could talk to and Laila gave her some emotional shelter.

Laila had a daughter named Aziza. Aziza always wanted Mariam to hold her, “ When Aziza first spotted Mariam in the morning, her eyes always sprung open, and she began mewling and squirming in her mother’s grip. She thrust her hands toward Mariam, demanding to be held, her tiny hands opening and closing urgently, on her face a look of both adoration and quivering anxiety. ...As soon as she was in Mariam’s arms, Aziza’s thumb shot into her mouth and she buried her face into Mariam’s neck. ” (Hosseini 252) Aziza made Mariam finally feel wanted by someone, “ Mariam had never before been wanted like this.

Love had never been declared to her so guilelessly, so unreservedly. ” (Hosseini 252) Aziza made Mariam forget about everything bad that was happening and truly gave her emotional shelter. In the end, Mariam’s life starts out rough and it is very hard for her emotionally as she moves on from Nana to Jalil and then finally on to Rasheed. She struggles to find emotional shelter throughout the novel until she meets Laila and Aziza. By the end of the novel A Thousand Splendid Suns, Maraiam finds physical and emotional shelter.