

A thousand splendid suns assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A Thousand Splendid Suns Set in the ever changing country of Afghanistan, A Thousand Splendid Suns is a novel that follows the unfortunate lives of two Afghan women whose fates mysteriously intertwine toward the middle of the detailed story. They live in a time that ranges from the Soviet Invasion to the reign of the Taliban to the post-Taliban rebuilding stage when their stories end. The first section of the book follows the life of Mariam, which begins with her painful childhood. Being an illegitimate child of a well-to-do cinema owner and his maid, her mother, she lives her days in a dirty shack with her scornful mother.

Weekly visits from her father keep Mariam happy until one day he doesn't show up. After going to his house to look for him she learns that her mother has hung herself in fear that Mariam has deserted her like her father did years ago. With nothing left Mariam moves in with her father but is soon married off to a much older man named Rasheed. Her life as a wife begins fairly well but that changes when she has a miscarriage. Her life turns black and blue as Rasheed abuses her both physically and mentally, but as an Afghani woman there is nothing she can do about it.

The second section of the book revolves around the daily life of Laila, the second woman in the novel. Although she lives just down the street from Mariam, all that Laila notices about her is her quiet countenance. She is content with her life until her first love, Tariq, moves away shortly after they have their first sexual encounter with one another. Her life seems to turn around when her family agrees to move as well, but as they are leaving a rocket destroys their house and kills both of her parents. Mariam and

Rasheed nurse Laila back to health, and during this time Laila is led to believe that Tariq is also dead.

In a strange turn of events Laila becomes Rasheed's second wife in an attempt to hide her pregnancy. This pregnancy being a result of her encounter with Tariq on her living room floor. Day by day Laila begins to adapt to her new surroundings and Rasheed treats her well. That is, until Laila has a baby girl. After that despicable event she is thrown into the same abusive boat as Mariam. In years to come Laila will have a baby boy, Tariq will return to Afghanistan and Rasheed will be killed in a violent brawl with the women.

Mariam takes the blame for his death and is executed while Laila and Tariq escape with the children to Pakistan. The novel ends with what seems a happy life for the couple, but it's hard to live a happy life with such a bitter past. Mariam: subdued, persistent, courageous, responsible, caring Laila: naive, insightful, determined, tough, aspiring, hurt Rasheed: abusive, quick-tempered, lethargic, grumpy, grandiose Tariq: intelligent, brave, romantic, gentle, gutsy, handsome 1. One of the few insightful words of advice Mariam's mother tells her: is " Women like us.

We endure. It's all we have. " How does this quote foreshadow Mariam's life and the overall theme of the book and the world in general? 2. Laila and Mariam's friendship initially begins when Laila protects Mariam from one of Rasheed's cruel beatings. Why does Laila do so when Mariam has only shown contempt for her in the past? 3. The Taliban forbid " writing books, watching films, and painting pictures," yet the Taliban appears to become a very

popular movie. Why would people risk being caught by the Taliban for just a small bit of entertainment?

Why do the Taliban restrict such things? “ Mariam wishes for much in those final moments. Yet as she closed her eyes, it was not regret any longer but a sensation of abundant peace that washed over her. She thought of her entry into the world, the harami child of a lowly villager, an unintended thing, a pitiable, regrettable accident. A weed. And yet she was leaving the world as a woman who had loved and been loved back. She was leaving it as a friend, a companion, a guardian. A mother. A person of consequence at last. No.

It was not bad. This was a legitimate end to a life of illegitimate beginnings. ”

A major theme throughout A Thousand Splendid Suns is the role of women in the Afghan society. Women are seen more as objects rather than people.

This is partly because of their religious beliefs, but even more so because of the Taliban. The Taliban completely destroyed the idea of women’s rights.

Women were beaten behind closed doors, not allowed outside without an escort, and forced to cover themselves in traditional Taliban regulation clothing.

It wasn’t much of a life for the Afghan women. When Marian killed Rasheed with the shovel it was her way of “ sticking it to the man”. She entered the world as an illegitimate child, “ an unintended thing, a pitiable, regrettable accident” and from that point on her life had made little difference. By killing Rasheed she was finally making a difference in her life, as well as the life of others around her. When she picked up that shovel she became “ guardian” of Laila, her only friend and companion.

Her life finally meant something to someone, she was “ a person of consequence at last”. Throughout the novel Mariam and Laila were abused both mentally and physically by Rasheed, and he did it with no consequence; that was the society they lived in. This reoccurring theme of male dominance was shattered when Rasheed died. By standing up for themselves they were standing up for any women who has ever suffered from an abusive husband. Mariam’s final thoughts before she was executed exemplify everything the book was trying to say about a woman’s role in the Afghan society.