

# In a thousand splendid suns essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Women in Afghanistan overcome adversity and oppression from the opposite sex everyday of their lives. They are abused in and outside the confines of their own homes. " In A Thousand Splendid Suns" by Khaled Hosseini, the struggles of women are depicted vividly. Mariam and Laila are born generations apart, yet end up getting married to Rasheed. They are both married at the age of fifteen. A marriage in Islam is usually a sacred union of two people who choose to respect and honour one another in all situations. It is usually a joyous occasion for females.

In the novel, marriage is a nightmare in which both women are abused physically and mentally. The legal marrying age for women in Afghanistan is sixteen, however, people in rural areas " either ignore the law or claim they are not aware of it". (Afghanistan Online) Child marriages are common all over the country. It is believed that between sixty and eighty percent of all the marriages in Afghanistan are forced and out of these fifty-seven percent are child marriages (About. com). These marriages come with grave consequences.

Any type of sexual intercourse can lead to severe health risks and as a result, their babies suffer. Mariam is impregnated at the age of sixteen. While taking a shower " there was blood and she was screaming. " (Hosseini 81) Her baby died in her womb and it bled down the sewage drain. This is the case with many teenage mothers. The mother would not only put to risk her health but of her baby. The risk of getting HIV and AIDS is at it's peak at the young age. There is an increased risk of maternal and infant mortality. Besides physical abuse women also take a toll when they go through life uneducated.

In the novel, Mariam and Laila are fortunate to receive some form of education. Mariam was tutored by Mullah Faizullah in the Quran and as a result learned to read and write. Mariam had aspirations of going to a real school but Nana rejected the idea. She said that a girl needs “ only one skill. And it’s this: tahamul. Endure. “(Hosseini 17) Nana portrays the mindset of many traditional families. Due to her lack of education, Mariam was unaware of the political turmoil or life outside of the “ kobla”. (Hosseini 1) She would be called illiterate by Rasheed. Nana’s greed also held Mariam back.

She had only Mariam to spend time with and school would take away from that time. On the other hand, Laila was raised in a household in which education was advocated. In contrast to Nana, Laila’s father was very encouraging. He tells her, “ I know you’re still young, but I want you to understand and learn this now. Marriage can wait, education cannot. You’re a very, very bright girl. ” (Hosseini 103) There were countless books in her father’s library for her access. Even despite all the bad, her father was able to shine light into her life. He knew the situation with the Taliban very well.

Despite this he told his daughter, “ You know how I feel about that. That would be our absolute top priority, to get you a good education, high school then college. (Hosseini 136) This mindset was present in many people, but wasn’t allowed to be explored. The literacy rate of women in Afghanistan is currently 14%. Women are kept at home and denied the chance to get an education. According to an Afghan school teacher and principal, “ over two-thirds of the nine-year-old girls sitting on the stone floor in a classroom an hour from Tora Bora were either already married or soon to become wives.

Almost all of the older children were married, and only about one-third of the children who attended school in second grade continued to sixth grade.

“(America) These women grow up not knowing math, safe-sex or ways to keep themselves healthy. This situation worsened with the rise of the Taliban. Laila suffered, as did many other girls who were being schooled. During the Taliban period, only three percent of women were educated. All schools for girls and universities for women were closed. This lasted twenty years. As a result, the women are now illiterate and have very little to pass on to today’s generation.

They can only pass on the values they know and have learned. Today, there is a lot of hope for both genders to educate themselves. “ Education reporting that 5. 2 million students were enrolled in grades one through twelve in 2005. This includes an estimated 1. 82-1. 95 million girls and women. An additional 55, 500-57, 000 people, including 4, 000-5, 000 girls and women, were enrolled in vocational, Islamic, and teacher education programs, and 1. 24 million people were enrolled in non-formal education programs. (PBS)” The new generation is willing and eager to learn and is finally getting the chance to do so.