

[*A Thousand Splendid Suns*](#) by Khaled Hosseini

Reviewed by C.L., Class of 2026

Book - Historical Fiction

5 Stars ★★★★★

What made you interested in reading/watching/playing this media?

How did you hear about it or come across it?

I read this book as an assignment for AP Lit this past year.

Setting:

The novel takes place in Afghanistan from the 1960s to the early 2000s. It takes place during many historical events such as the Soviet invasion and Taliban rule, which impacted everyday life, especially for women.

Protagonists:

There are two protagonists, Mariam and Laila. Mariam grew up isolated and was forced into marriage at a young age. Laila is younger and more educated than Mariam, and is initially more hopeful about her future. In the book their lives become very closely connected and their relationship becomes stronger as the story progresses.

Plotline:

The novel follows Mariam and Laila, two Afghan women from two very different backgrounds, whose lives become connected after they both marry the same man, Rasheed, in Kabul. They experience strict control and abuse in this marriage, especially as political conditions in Afghanistan get worse under Taliban rule.

Reflection on the novel's strong points and weak points:

A strong point is the emotional impact of the story. It is a very powerful novel and has heartbreaking moments. A weak point is that some parts may feel slow because of detailed background given.

What are some themes that come across?

gender roles, impact of war, love and sacrifice, resilience

Do you feel that the cover art is true to what the media is about?

Yes- it shows a woman in a burqa against an Afghan landscape. It shows how women like Mariam and Laila are often hidden or overlooked under the Taliban.

Did you enjoy it? Would you recommend it?

Yes, I enjoyed reading the novel. The story was powerful because of how real the characters felt. I also liked how the book combined both personal stories with real historical events in

Afghanistan because it made the book feel more meaningful. I would recommend this book for anyone who likes emotional stories, or who wants to learn more about different cultures through a personal perspective.

Readalikes/Watchalikes are:

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini, Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys

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