

# A Thousand Splendid Suns

Khaled Hosseini

## Title, characters and relationships

- 01 What does the title, “A Thousand Splendid Suns,” signify to you? How does it relate to the themes of hope and resilience in the novel?
- 02 Which character did you admire the most in the book, and why?
- 03 What sort of relationship did Mariam have with her mother Nana? Why did Nana hang herself when Mariam left to find her father Jalil?
- 04 Do you think Jalil loved Mariam? Why? How does he show his love? How does he show that he does not fully recognize her as his daughter? Why does he treat her as he does?
- 05 Why do you think it took Mariam and Laila a long time before they became friends? What happened that helped change their relationship?
- 06 Discuss the portrayal of Rasheed. What does he represent in the context of the story, and how does he affect the lives of Mariam and Laila?
- 07 Which part of the book surprised you the most?
- 08 Mariam refuses to see visitors while she is imprisoned, and she calls no witnesses at her trial. Why does she make these decisions?

## Kabul, war and artistic expression

- 09 Explore the significance of the physical setting, particularly Kabul, in the story. How does the city change over time, and what does it represent?
- 10 Among other things, the Taliban forbid writing books, watching films, and painting pictures. Yet Titanic becomes a sensation on the black market. Why would people risk violent reprisals for entertainment? What do these restrictions say about the power of artistic expression and the threat it poses to repressive political regimes?
- 11 How does the novel depict the impact of war and political turmoil on ordinary citizens, particularly women, in Afghanistan?

## Motherhood, gender and perspective

- 12 Discuss the role of motherhood as a theme in the novel. How do Mariam and Laila’s experiences as mothers shape their characters and decisions?
- 13 Discuss the portrayal of gender roles and expectations in Afghan society. How do Mariam and Laila navigate these expectations, and how do they challenge or conform to them?

- 14 How does the alternating narrative perspective between Mariam and Laila enhance your understanding of the story? Did you find one perspective more compelling than the other?

## **Redemption, relevance and legacy**

- 15 Consider the theme of forgiveness and redemption in the novel. Do you think the characters achieve redemption by the end of the story? Why or why not?
- 16 How does *A Thousand Splendid Suns* resonate with contemporary issues and global conflicts beyond Afghanistan?
- 17 Do you think the themes of the book are still relevant today?
- 18 What lessons can we learn from the characters' experiences in the novel?
- 19 How does Hosseini portray Afghan culture and society in his novels? Do you think his portrayal is accurate and respectful?
- 20 Would you recommend this book? If yes, to whom?