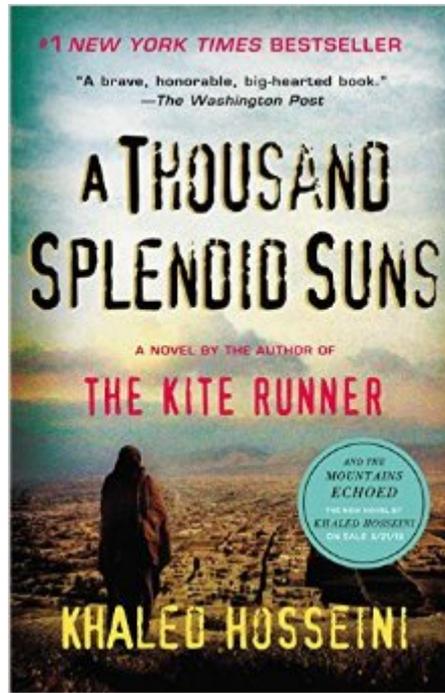


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# A Thousand Splendid Suns



## Synopsis

After 103 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list and with four million copies of *The Kite Runner* shipped, Khaled Hosseini returns with a beautiful, riveting, and haunting novel that confirms his place as one of the most important literary writers today. Propelled by the same superb instinct for storytelling that made *The Kite Runner* a beloved classic, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is at once an incredible chronicle of thirty years of Afghan history and a deeply moving story of family, friendship, faith, and the salvation to be found in love. Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them-in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul-they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival. A stunning accomplishment, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a haunting, heartbreaking, compelling story of an unforgiving time, an unlikely friendship, and an indestructible love.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read many books in a year. Some I read for entertainment and others to increase my knowledge. Then there is the rare book that does both of those things, plus touches your heart as well. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini does just that. Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* was a

magnificent book, and I enjoyed *A Thousand Splendid Suns* even more. *Splendid Suns* follows the lives of two Afghani women, Mariam and Laila, as they move from children to adults. The book spans 30 years, beginning with the Soviet invasion and ending with the overthrow of the Taliban. It's difficult to explain more of the story without spoiling the plot, but these two women go from being enemies to unlikely friends. *A Thousand Suns* is a moving story about the power of love, the bonds of friendship, the love of country, and the struggle to survive. I hated to see it end. I like books that teach me something, and there is a lot to learn in *Splendid Suns*. Previously, I didn't know much about the political turmoil in Afghanistan and the various factions vying for power. I knew women had an appalling time living under the Taliban regime, but I didn't realize how horrible conditions really were. The childbirth section will fill you with horror. I also learned of the natural beauty of Afghanistan and her fascinating history. I was especially moved by Hesseini's eloquent writing and observations. In writing of friendship, "Boys, Laila came to see, treated friendship the way they treated the sun: its existence undisputed; its radiance best enjoyed, not beheld directly." There aren't too many writers who can produce back-to-back masterpieces. Khaled Hosseini is one of those rare talents who can pull off such a feat.

This is not a book for the timid, this is a melancholy story with four parts that eventually overlap. This emotional rollercoaster ride of a story covers the period from 1964 to roughly the present day in the hardluck country of Afghanistan. It centers on the lives of two women, Mariam { a harami= illegitimate} raised in a hut by her mother, the only highlight of her destitute life is the Thursday visits from her father. When her fathers family rejects her she is forced into a marriage with the brutal shoemaker Rasheed. A devout follower of the Taliban's cruelty towards females. Laila lives down the street from Mariam in very different circumstances. She is raised in a modern family, by a loving father & depressive mother. The book covers the issues of class, religion, work, education, sexual roles, & raising children. All are highlighted by the tumult of Afghanistan's history. This is a very descriptive, well written story, you can feel & sense the characters lives. The first half was a little slow, & it is clear that this will be a "blue journey." The sacrifices these two women gives the reader a slideshow of the harshness of their lives. Part three, is the peak of the story. This is where the two women's relationship truly meshed. The fourth part sees Afghanistan opening to modernity & is less traumatic. A very good & poignant read.

...for me to read *The Kite Runner*. I read *A Thousand Splendid Suns* in six. This book is less disturbing than *The Kite Runner*. There is more quiet desperation. A bit less personal story, and a

bit more history. But, it is no less gripping. The story and the history are beautifully woven together. The author holds nothing back in painting a stark picture of what it means to be a woman in a culture where they are valued only for how well they keep a house, and how many sons they produce. A culture where they are subject to the whims of men. Those that value them as worthwhile human beings are welcome oases - they seem to be the exceptions in their world, rather than the norm. He also paints a stark picture of how much harm religious fanaticism and intolerance can do. But, it also paints a picture of hope that the winds of change can blow cool and refreshing. It also shows us the rich history of Afghanistan, a country that has endured, much like Nana said that women must. It shows a country and a people with much potential. My eyes welled in a few places. At one point, I had to stop reading, close my eyes, and gather myself as the story hit close to home. I even laughed (Islamic flamingos.) By the end, tears were streaming down my face, and I was once again left feeling immensely satisfied. It is rare that you find a writer who, with their first novel, shows that they are an immense talent. I had previously only ever read one such author in my life. From the first chapter of *The Kite Runner*, I knew that Khaled Hosseini would be one of them. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is more proof of it. I am already looking forward to what he produces next.

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