

SUMMER READING FOR AP LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR
MRS. ANDERSEN AND MR. GIBBS

INTRODUCTION

This summer, we invite you to journey to Afghanistan with a reading of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, written by Khaled Hosseini and published in 2007. Against a backdrop of Soviet occupation, civil war, and the rise of the Taliban, Hosseini tells the stories of two Afghan women, Mariam and Laila, whose lives are dramatically shaped by the national and political landscape in addition to their own personal losses. Here is an overview from the Barnes and Noble website:

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.

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.

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.

GETTING A COPY OF THE BOOK

We would encourage you to get your own copy of the book (used bookstores; new/used books at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc.) or see Mrs. Andersen in room 522 to check out a copy (roughly 30 copies available—come ASAP if you want one). These options would allow you to have long-term access to the book so that you can interact with it over the summer and in the beginning weeks of the school year next fall. You should also be able to find copies freely available for short-term checkout in the school and/or local libraries.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: KHALED HOSSEINI (FROM WWW.KHALEDHOSSEINI.COM)

- ★ Born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965
- ★ Father's job as a diplomat brought his family to Paris in 1976
- ★ Family sought political asylum in the United States (San Jose, CA) in 1980 after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
- ★ Earned his medical degree at the University of California, San Diego and practiced medicine as an internist from 1996-2004
- ★ Published *The Kite Runner* in 2003, which spent over 100 weeks on the *Times* bestseller list. His third novel, *And The Mountains Echoed*, was published in 2013. In 2018, he published *Sea Prayer*, a short illustrated book to call attention to the refugee crisis in Syria.
- ★ *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* have sold over 10 million copies in the U.S. and over 38 million copies worldwide
- ★ Was named a Goodwill Envoy to the United Nations Refugee Agency in 2006
- ★ Established the Khaled Hosseini Foundation, which provides humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan

READING INSTRUCTIONS

As you are reading the novel, pay particular attention to each of the following aspects of the novel and consider how they contribute to your understanding of the meaning of the work as a whole. While you are not required to submit annotations, we would encourage you to mark passages and examples that you could use to support your understanding of each of the following elements.

★ CHARACTERS

- How does the author use specific details to reveal the characters, their perspectives, and their motivations?
- How do characters and their relationships change and develop throughout the novel?
- What are the complexities within characters and in their relationships?

★ SETTING

- Remember, setting is not just the time and place where the story occurs. It also includes the historical, political, and social context associated with those times and places.
- What are the details and values associated with the various settings in the novel?
- What are the relationships between the characters and the settings?

★ STRUCTURE, NARRATION, AND LANGUAGE

- Each of these elements reflect style choices that the author makes and the impact these choices have on your understanding of the text.
 - Structure - the arrangements of the parts or sections of the text, the relationships of the parts to each other, and the sequence in which the text reveals information
 - Narration - the author's choice of narrator to control the details, emphases, and perspectives that readers experience as they interact with the text
 - Language - the author's use of word choice, imagery, symbols, simile, metaphor, personification, and allusion to impact the readers' understanding of text

NOTE

While the book is not stylistically difficult, please be prepared for mature content, including themes and descriptions of war violence, physical abuse, and sexuality.

BEFORE CLASS STARTS IN AUGUST, READ THE BOOK CAREFULLY. COME READY TO DELVE INTO DISCUSSION OF THE NOVEL.

HAPPY READING! WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN THE FALL.