

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficial, the Most Merciful

## INCOMING SENIORS SUMMER READING 2018

### Schedule and Assignment

Be sure to read and answer the reading questions through your annotations. These guide your reading, so you can better understand the major points. Be sure to note **IMAGERY, SYMBOLISM, SIMILES, METAPHORS, IRONY, CHARACTERIZATION**, and any other details. Explain the **SO WHAT** for full credit. You will need to have at least **ONE** annotation per chapter. Be **THOROUGH!!** The more time you take to read and understand the content and its implications, the better prepared you will be for the **TEST**, essay and class activities.

Be forewarned, there is some mature subject matter in this text. There is also some language. The author uses it to enhance the characters (and make us feel a certain way towards particular groups). Overall, the novel takes a war-torn region that we know little about and creates a universal story of redemption, friendship, loyalty, prejudice and the relationship between fathers and their sons.

#### Week ONE- Ch. 1-5 (pages 1-47)

1. The novel begins with a flashback. What do you think is its purpose? What do you learn about the narrator?
2. What does Baba give Hassan for his birthday? What does his present suggest about his character? How does Amir react to this present? Why did the present turn out to be ironic?
3. Who is Assef? What is his ancestry? What is he famous for? What is his political vision?

#### Week TWO-Ch. 6-9 (pages 48-109)

4. In chapter 6, how does Amir feel about Hassan? (Think about his conflicted feelings.) What does he mean by "my life as a ghost"? p. 56
5. What is inscribed on the pomegranate tree in the back yard? So, why then is it significant that Amir tries to pick a fight with Hassan in front of that tree? (Think symbolism.) What ends up happening? Why is that symbolic?
6. How is the end of chapter nine a turning point in the novel?

#### Week THREE- Ch.10-14 (pages 110-194)

7. "America was different. America was a river roaring along, unmindful of the past. I could wade into this river, let my sins drown to the bottom, let the waters carry me someplace far." This quote from Chapter 11 is said by whom? What does it reveal? What does this metaphor mean?
8. NOTE FORESHADOWING AND IRONY IN CHAPTER 10!!!

#### Week FOUR- Ch.15-20 (pages 195-258)

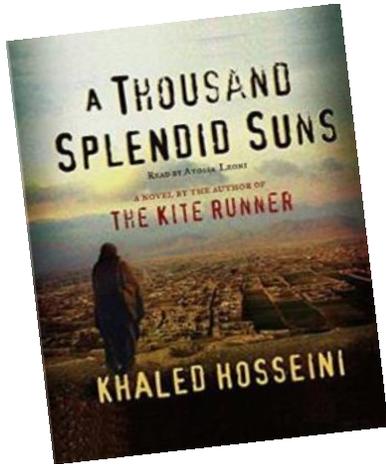
9. In Chapter 17, Rahim gives Amir a letter from Hassan, who wrote it six months before. What is the tone of this letter? How does Amir react?
10. How does the cliché, "like father, like son" mentioned on page 226, relate to Baba and Amir?
11. What clues hint at the secret that is revealed in Chapters 17-18?
12. In Chapter 20, Amir sees Kabul for the first time since leaving. Describe what he sees and note similarities to other war-torn countries. Try to connect to personal experiences of returning to a place after a long time or experiences you have read about.

#### Week FIVE- Ch. 21-25 (pages 259-371)

13. In Chapter 22, we encounter many "full-circle" endings as we reach the climax, or turning point, of the plot. List three.
14. Think about the ending of the novel. Is there any symbolism? On what TONE does the novel end?

#### Themes to connect annotations to:

- Bullying
- Coming of Age
- Role of books, literacy
- Resilience of the human spirit
- Friendship, guilty & redemption
- Man's inhumanity to man
- Fathers & sons
- Discrimination, prejudice, bigotry, class structure
- Master/slave relationships: loyalty & devotion vs. duty



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Be forewarned, there is some mature subject matter in this text. There is also some language. The author uses it to enhance the characters (and make us feel a certain way towards groups). Overall, the novel takes a war-torn region that we know little about and creates a universal story of friendship, hope, loyalty, prejudice and the relationship between different types of families.

Week One: Section ONE (Chapters 1-15) pgs. 1-104

1. The novel opens with a curse word, uttered in frustration by Mariam's mother, when Mariam breaks a treasured heirloom. What does Mariam's memory of this suggest about her sense of herself and her relationship with her mother? How does this open the tone for the novel?
2. Jalil, Mariam's father, is a complex character. Does he love his daughter? 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?
3. The beginning of Mariam's marriage to Rasheed seems to promise happiness. What are the signs that this may be short lived?

Week Two: Section TWO (Chapters 16-26) pgs. 107-195

4. In this section we are introduced to nine-year-old Laila and her family. What were Laila's parents like when they were young? How have they changed? What is undermining their relationship? How does their relationship affect Laila?
5. What is the role of religion in the novel? Does it give consolation to the people?
6. In what ways is Laila like her mother, and in what ways is she like her father?

Week Three: Section THREE (Chapters 27-36) pgs.199-292

7. What is the significance of Mariam and Laila having tea together?
8. How is the violence in the streets of Kabul parallel to the violence in Rasheed's home?
9. How is Laila's son being educated in the male-dominated culture of the Taliban? How does Zalmai show that he is following his father's example in how he responds to Laila and Mariam? How is Laila's daughter taught to conform to the role laid out for women?

Week Four: Section FOUR (Chapters 37-47) pgs. 293-371

10. What is ironic in what the judge says to Mariam about carrying out God's laws?
11. How is Aziza changing in the orphanage?
12. How does Mariam show that she has grown into a woman of strong character?

Week Five: Section FIVE (Chapters 48-51) pgs. 376-415

13. How does the letter of Mariam's father show his character? Does it redeem him in some way? In what ways is it ironic?
14. How do the drawings by the children in the orphanage express their experiences? How do they show the contrast between the time when Aziza was there and now?
15. How has Mariam become a symbol of Kabul for Laila?

Themes to connect annotations to:

- Education
- Women's rights
- Domestic Violence/patriarchy/effects of abuse
- Hope and Disappointment /resilience of the human spirit
- Identity-gendered, class, Afghan
- Relationships and love of all kinds
- Visions of Afghanistan

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<http://www.novelguide.com/a-thousand-splendid-suns/theme-analysis>