

*A Thousand Splendid Suns: Part Two*  
Chapters 16-26 Discussion Questions

*Please answer these questions in your notebook. Present a group copy for a group grade.*

1. 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?
2. Why does Laila feel such a strong attachment to her father?
3. Why does Laila's father believe in the importance of education for women?
4. What is wrong with Laila's mother?
5. Laila's friend, Tariq, lost one leg to a land mine explosion when he was five. How does Tariq deal with his disability? What does his behavior suggest about his character?
6. Laila enjoys spending time with Tariq's family. How does her family differ from Tariq's and why?
7. How is Laila's family affected by the deaths of their two sons? How do you understand Laila's reaction?
8. What is the role of religion in the novel? Does it give consolation to the people?
9. Why were Laila's brothers fighting? What are the motives for the rebels fighting against the communists?
10. Why does Laila's father take her to see the two Buddhas at Bamiyan? Later these statues are destroyed by the Taliban. Why?
11. Why does Laila's father stay with his wife? How are the mother's and father's dreams different and why?
12. On their outing Laila's father relaxes, re-reading Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*. Why does the novel resonate with the father?
13. In what ways is Laila like her mother, and in what ways is she like her father?

14. How does the relationship of Laila and Tariq change?
15. What is the impact of the Soviet withdrawal on the citizens of Kabul?
16. What finally convinces Laila's mother to leave Kabul?
17. How do Laila's feelings about leaving Kabul contrast with her parents' feelings?