

A Thousand Splendid Suns: Part Three
Chapters 27-47 Discussion Questions

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

1. Rasheed digs Laila out of the rubble of the explosion that kills her mother and father and takes her into his home. Does his behavior seem unusual? What are his motives for taking care of Laila?
2. How has U.S. foreign policy led to the continuing chaos in Afghanistan?
3. Why does Laila agree to marry Rasheed, a sixty-year-old man, even when she considered the act dishonorable?
4. Why does Rasheed demand total submission from the two women?
5. Why does Mariam blame Laila for marrying Rasheed? Why does she see Laila as a competitor for Rasheed?
6. How has the death of his son affected Rasheed?
7. Why does Rasheed continue to taunt Mariam when he has absolute control over her?
8. What is the effect of wearing a burqa on Laila?
9. What are Mariam's changing feelings as Rasheed becomes more upset with Laila?
10. What is the significance of Mariam and Laila having tea together?
11. How is the violence in the streets of Kabul parallel to the violence in Rasheed's home?
12. Mariam and Laila ask a young man for help when they are trying to leave Kabul. Why does he betray them to the soldiers?
13. Why has Rasheed become so cruel to Mariam and Laila? How has the breakdown of society, as a result of the war, allowed this to happen?
14. How does the presence of the Taliban in Kabul affect Rasheed differently from Laila?
15. Why does Laila not go through with aborting Rasheed's baby?

16. What does Mariam come to understand about motherhood?
17. 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?
18. What is it about the movie, *Titanic*, that is so interesting to the people of Kabul?
19. Why does Laila confront Rasheed with his inability to keep a job when she risks being beaten by him?
20. How does Mariam feel when she finds out that her father tried to visit her when he was dying and she refused to see him?
21. What does the suffering that Laila endures to visit her daughter in the orphanage say about the Taliban's effect on society?
22. How is Aziza changing in the orphanage?
23. Is Mariam justified in killing Rasheed? How is the act of murder a kind of fulfillment for Mariam?
24. After the murder of Rasheed, how has the relationship between Mariam and Laila changed?
25. How will Laila's lying to her son affect him when he realizes the truth?
26. What enables Mariam to have the courage to bring about Laila's escape from Rasheed's home?
27. Why does Mariam request no visitors when she is put in prison?
28. What is ironic in what the judge says to Mariam about carrying out God's laws?
29. How does Mariam show that she has grown into a woman of strong character before her death?
30. How does Mariam find peace before she dies?