
Plot and Character Analysis in Khaled Hosseini' Novel A Thousand Splendid Suns

Exposition: Miriam lives with her mother who seems to be mentally unstable. Her father is Jalil, a wealthy businessman. She is a harami. When she turns 15 she wants to go to one of his cinemas but it seems he refuses to take her. So she walks to his house and waits outside all night just to realize that he has been hiding inside the whole time. When she returns to her home she finds that her mother has hung herself. Her father takes her into his home but his wives are quick to rid of her for they feel she is a burden to them all. So they marry Miriam off to a Shoemaker. The Shoemaker, Rasheed, treats her well at first but when they find Miriam can't get pregnant he begins to beat her and treat her like garbage.

Rising action: Mariam and Rasheed are married for some years. We're introduced to Laila who is a beautiful girl unlike Miriam who is plain. She lives near Mariam and Rasheed. Her father is a teacher who feels education is important and her mother seems to also be mentally unstable showing signs of bipolar disorder. After a man comes to their home to break the news that her brothers have been killed at war and her lover Tiraq and his family escape her parents are killed in a bombing that she survives. Rasheed comes to her rescue but with the intention of asking her hand in marriage. She agrees but only because she is pregnant with Tariqs child and for her safety.

Climax: Miriam and Laila get off on the wrong foot but learn to become friends. Laila is married to Rasheed for almost a decade. Mariam has been told that her lover Tariq has been killed years before but discovers that he is actually alive. She takes him to her home and they catch up. Rasheed finds out that she has taken this man into his home and becomes very angry. He beats and then tries to suffocate Laila. Miriam won't let this happen so she kills Rasheed with a shovel.

Resolution: Mariam turns herself in and is executed. Laila finally marries Tiraq. She visits Mariams old town and gets a box from Mullah Faizullah's son. The box was for Mariam from her father it had a note, a movie and some money. Laila is pregnant again if its a girl she will name her Mariam.

The theme of this Novel is perseverance through hardships . Both of the main characters in this story have been through pain, both physical and emotional, and suffering. Miriam, she has been through the death of her mother, rejection, guilt, verbal abuse, physical abuse. Laila, she's been through the death of both her parents, Tiraqs supposed death, a bomb, childbirth, and physical abuse as well. Both women learn to get through it. Another example of the theme in the book is when Laila pleads Rasheed to take her to see Aziza at the Orphanage but he refuses so she says " Then i'll go by myself. You can't stop me, Rasheed. Do you hear me? You can hit me all you want, but i'll keep going there." p.289

The moment in which the protagonist, Miriam, realizes her worth is when Rasheed is at his worst and goes into a murderous rage. She looks into his eyes and realized she had been too apologetic. She questions her entire marriage. "What harmful thing had she willfully done to to this man to warrant his malice, his continual assaults, the relish with which he tormented her?

Had she not looked after him when he was ill? Fed him and his friends, cleaned up after him dutifully?" p.309 She realizes that she didn't deserve the way he treated her. And this gives her more of a reason to kill him.

Laila is more or less Miriam's foil. Laila is beautiful, Miriam is plain. Laila can have children, Miriam can not. Laila's parents cared about her, Miriam's parents saw her more as a burden. Laila is told by her friends and her father that someday she would achieve something in life unlike Miriam's mother who told Miriam she was nothing and that she would always be nothing without her. Laila's father encouraged her daughter to go to school and emphasized the importance of an education, Miriam's mother forbid her from talking about school and claimed she would never learn anything of value there. These differences show contrast in their outlook on life, Miriam is bitter but Laila still has a sliver of hope. Laila at some degree makes Miriam's life look even more miserable.

In this novel cruelty is really all Miriam knows. Whether its physical, sexual or mental abuse Miriam has been through it. Cruelty in Miriam's life alters her sense of the world and makes her resentful. Rasheed's merciless ways motivate Miriam to murder him "He's going to kill her ,she thought. He really means too. And Miriam could not, would not, allow that to happen. He'd taken so much from her in twenty seven years of marriage. She would not watch him take Laila too". Pg 310, revealing to us that everyone has a breaking point even the most feeble and manipulated.

Mariam (Dynamic Character), Mariam would be considered a dynamic character because she was very easily manipulated and never really stood up for herself. Throughout the story she always does what anyone tells her to do. But in the end she gets to choose her fate when she kills Rasheed and turns herself in. Another way that she's changed is that she at first was a harami, unloved and a burden to her authoritative figures but realized after meeting Laila and Aziza and Zalmai she felt loved by them and she loved them back. "She thought of her entry into this world, a harami child of a lowly villager, an unintended thing, a pitiful regrettable accident. A weed. And yet she was leaving this world as a women who had loved and been loved back." pg 329. This is important for the plot because at the end of her life after all those years of being a burden to all she finally felt she had a purpose. Miriam is damaged, courageous, and tough.

Rasheed (Static Character): Rasheed would be considered a static character because he remained a horrific person throughout. He continues to abuse his wives with no signs of empathy or change of heart. He had locked Laila and her baby in a hot room with no food or water. "She woke again to Rasheeds heavy footsteps in the hallway. She dragged herself to the door, slapped her palms against it. , 'Just one glass Rasheed. Not for me do it for her. You don't want her blood on your hands.', He walked past" pg .242 . His character is important because it leads to his demise and brings forward the resolution. Rasheed is cold blooded, brutal and merciless.

Jalil (round character). Jalil would be considered a round character. His demeanor towards Miriam changes immensely. At first he only pretended to care about her, bringing her half hearted gifts and refusing to take her to his cinema. But at the end it is revealed in his note that he realized he shouldn't have taken Miriam for granted. "Now all i can say is that you were a good daughter, Miriam Jo, and that I never deserved you." p. 359. This is important because it makes the story more emotional and tugs at the heartstrings. Jalil is pitiful, deadbeat,

redeemable.

The setting Really contributes to the story and mood for Mariam and Laila because they are in Afghanistan and some time in Pakistan where women are oppressed. The mood is hopelessness. And there is also a war going on. Many of the problems these women are facing could have been easily solved if they were here in America but since they are in Afghanistan there's little they can do for their situation. "Attention women: You will stay inside your homes at all times it is not proper for women to wander aimlessly about the streets if you go outside you must be accompanied by a male relative if you are caught alone on the street you will be beaten and sent home you will not under any circumstance show your face you will cover with a burqa when outside if you do not you will be severely beaten..." p.284./p>

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