
Significance Of Symbols In A Thousand Splendid Suns

An author uses literary devices to improve the value and the meaning behind their story. Symbolism is often utilized to represent an idea, and can take different forms. Usually it is an object that represents another by giving it a much deeper meaning and value than what it really is. Us readers use symbolism while we read a novel, poem, or story without even knowing it because our brains think symbolically. Symbolism represents storytelling and keeps the readers interested in what's going to happen next. Throughout the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini, many symbols are used to convey a deeper significance.

The first and most obvious symbol is the symbol of the burqa. (Liesl Gerntholz) A burqa is "any clothing that covers the whole female body including the face, it is a powerful symbol of the oppression and subjugation of Muslim women." (1) The burqa is a symbol of Rasheed's control and unjust treatment. Rasheed is Miriam's abusive husband who forces her to wear a burqa so that way he can feel dominant. Since he isn't in control of what goes on in the outside world, he feels that he

is powerful enough to control what goes on in the inside of his home. Although the burqa made Miriam feel compliant to her husband as it was supposed to, it also made her feel comfort because no one knew who she was and what really went on in her life. When the women are at home with their families, it is not a requirement for them to wear the burqa, but when the women go out into public, their husbands require them to wear it to hide their emotions from other men.

Another symbol shown throughout the novel is the kolba. (Vanilla Bean) "A kolba is a little mud hut which symbolizes poverty and entrapment." (2) Throughout Miriam's life, the kolba became her home, but it also became a prison for her. The kolba was not a good place for a child to grow up in. Miriam was separated from society and felt that there was no way out. When someone would visit her, there were rules. She was unable to cross to her visitors since there was a gate.

Miriam felt stuck. People could go in but she was unable to go out. The kolba represented imprisonment.

One more significant symbol would be the shovel in which Miriam used to kill Rasheed. The shovel is Miriam's rage from being oppressed. Murdering Rasheed was the only way to freedom and Miriam wanted to do anything she could to protect her family. She even gave Rasheed a chance by accepting any little regret from him, but nothing was to be seen. (Hosseini 349) Rasheed did not feel any compassion towards any of them, "And, with that, Miriam brought down the shovel. This time,

she gave it everything she had." (3) Rasheed was not dead yet, but Miriam did have the option to finish what she had started. She took into consideration of the consequences in which will occur if she was to kill him. Miriam's role as a mother is way more valuable to her than anything else causing her to rethink her actions.

Miriam lives a tough life in which the symbols used in the novel help contribute a much deeper

understanding of what she experienced. Without symbols, a story would not be complete. Symbols take on an important role in any story, giving it a more meaningful effect on the reader as the story progresses.

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