



LETTER Let the READERS

Dear Readers,

Warm greetings, and welcome to the 4th Edition of Literature Unbound: The December Edition! This magazine showcases original poems, articles, and literary works by the talented writers of Grades 9 and 10.

As Celeste Ng beautifully said, "The story is truly finished—and meaning is made—not when the author adds the last period, but when the reader enters." Thank you for bringing life to our words.

We deeply appreciate Meghana Ma'am for her inspiration and unwavering support in creating this platform for literature enthusiasts. Your feedback and contributions are always welcome—reach out at sarah.tshaikh1@gmail.com or aryagupta1635@gmail.com.

Thank you for exploring the world of words with us. Keep reading, writing, and discovering!

Warm regards, Sarah Shaikh President, Drafting Committee Literature Unbound



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In the secret chambers of the heart, a museum unfolds, Where emotions are the artefacts, each one a story to be told, A labyrinth of memories, where love and sorrow entwine, Each step a revelation, each breath a whispered rhyme.

Hope is the cartographer, mapping the twists and turns, Fear is the shadow, lurking in the corners that burn. Joy is the maestro, conducting the symphony of the soul, Sorrow is the librarian, cataloging the heart's darkest role,

Time is the curator, weaving the tapestry of our past Each thread a moment, each hue a feeling that will forever last...

Memories linger, like the scent of old books on the shelf. Emotions swirling, as the stories of our lives unfold themselves!

In the attic of the soul, the echoes of our hearts reside A kaleidoscope of feelings, forever shifting, forever alive... And when the dust settles, and the memories fade from sight, The echoes remain, a reminder of the beauty and the fight.

— Tanishka Parmar

THE GHOST OF FUTURE

The Ghost of Future

A Youth Scared of truth; Leaked NEET sheets, At 3 a doctor weeps.

Lost jobs Our dear heart sobs Humans replaced by AI No one to hear our cry

Sleepless nights Worthless fights Attempts , attempts, Inner child yet tempts

A Youth
Scared of truth;
Future not ensured,
Safety not assured.

A Youth Scared of truth......

— Japjas Kaur

ECHOES OF THE MIND

I've done it again,
Mistakes all over the same.

Don't wanna suffer the pain,

Of which god is playing the game.

Your eyes hold it all, Memories, fear, summer, and fall.

Who can even think of love, When all life has returned is sorrow.

At the end I'm left all alone, Crying and freezing to the bone.

— Honisha Samnani





Did you know?
The tradition of decorating
Christmas trees began in Germany
in the 16th century.

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTMAS

December is incomplete without Christmas. Everybody around the world celebrates this day regardless of their religion as it is in essence a day of love and joy and above all, giving and receiving. Christmas originated from Christianity when people started to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, over the years however it has morphed into a global event that holds cultural and familial value. From decorating the streets and the houses with beautiful colorful lights to singing a variety of Christmas songs, all of it mixes well together to create a perfect atmosphere for this season.

On the other hand, Christmas is a lot more than food and decoration. It serves as a reminder to us all that being grateful, and together with family holds a lot of weight. Making charitable contributions such as giving money to the needy or donating one's time paints the true picture of the holiday.

In this world of divisions, Christmas unites everybody with a spirit of giving

— Arya Gupta.

ASHOKA HORIZON:



EXCELLENCE DAY 24



On 6th December, 2024, an Excellence Day was held at Gaikwad Hall, showcasing a stunning performance by the students of the Secondary section of Ashoka Universal School.

The show was marvelous spectacle of remarkable dances, songs and drama, and the cascade of swirling colour and lights had kept the audience enthralled.



The chief guest was Mr Rohit Mane who is an experienced and talented actor in the Marathi film industry. Mr Ashok Katariya himself was present to witness this event and to share his wisdom and thoughts.

The preparations had begun several months prior. Both the students and the teachers' team had gone the extra mile to ensure that it would be a flabbergastingly resounding success. Each dance seamlessly conveyed the essence of a different emotion, making the audience spellbound. The shimmery, gauzy costumes in their captivating colours were absolute nod to the an performances.

The story of the show follows a

little boy named Aaryan with big dreams, who, with unwavering support from his family members and friends embarks on a journey to fulfilling his life's aspirations. Although there are obstacles in his path, he overcomes them with vivacious resilience and passion, conveying pearls of



wisdom to the audience and resonating with them. The fluidity of the dances, the euphonious singing and the flawless acting of the students were truly commendable.

At the end, students displayed remarkable talent as well as resilience for balancing their passion for the performing arts as well as preparing for their upcoming assessment-II examinations, for both of which they have excelled in. We also cannot forget the tremendous efforts put in by the teachers, without whom this event would not have been possible. Their contribution was indispensable.

Hats off to each and every individual for all their whopping efforts which pieced together to form such a memorable day.

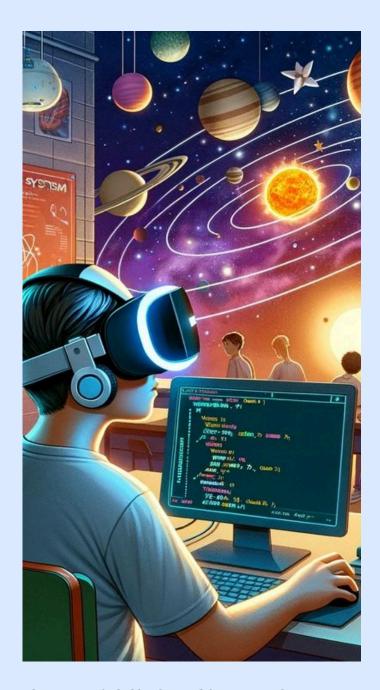
By Sarah Shaikh

Photography by Alisha Aneesh









NEW HORIZONS IN SCIENCE CAREERS:

Technology, Discovery, and Global Solutions

The world of science is changing fast, and with it, the types of careers available are becoming more exciting and diverse.

Science is no longer just about working in labs or universities; it's now at the heart of some of the most innovative and impactful work happening around the globe. Whether you're passionate about technology, the environment, health, or even space, there's a science career out there that's both rewarding and full of potential. Let's dive into what makes these new-age science careers so fascinating and why they might just be the perfect fit for you.

One of the most significant drivers of this change is technology. The field of data science, for instance, has become essential across numerous sectors. According to a report by the World Economic Forum (WEF), data science is one of the fastest-growing fields, with demand for data scientists projected to grow by 28% by 2026.

This surge is fueled by the need for experts who can interpret and analyze large datasets to guide decision-making processes in industries like healthcare, finance, and environmental science. In healthcare, data science has proven invaluable for predicting disease outbreaks and tailoring treatments to individual patients, as evidenced by studies showing improved patient outcomes through personalized medicine.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are also transforming scientific research and application. A McKinsey Global Institute report estimates that AI could potentially deliver \$13 trillion in additional global economic activity by 2030. In bioinformatics, AI algorithms are used to analyze genetic data, leading to breakthroughs in understanding diseases and developing new drugs. Research published in journals like Nature and The Lancet has demonstrated the efficiency of AI in identifying patterns within complex datasets, accelerating drug discovery, and improving diagnostic accuracy.

Interdisciplinary approaches are a key feature of modern science careers, and synthetic biology is a great example of this. It combines biology, engineering, and computer science to find creative solutions to big global problems. One example is using genetically modified organisms to clean up pollution or produce eco-friendly fuels. A study in Nature Communications showed how engineered microbes can help remove pollutants from the environment, offering a practical and scalable solution to environmental issues. This research highlights how bringing together different areas of science can help solve complex problems in new and effective ways.

Environmental science careers are also evolving, with environmental informatics playing a critical role in addressing climate change and biodiversity Researchers use data analytics to model environmental and predict scenarios. changes future The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports frequently cite the importance of data-driven models in informing climate policy and mitigation strategies. These models are crucial for developing adaptive management plans that help governments and organizations respond to environmental changes effectively.

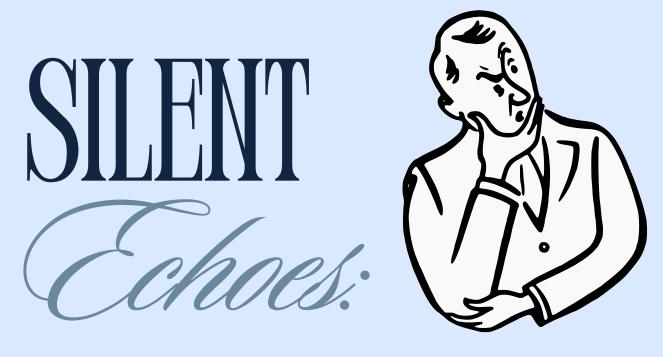
Science careers today are increasingly linked to solving real-world problems. Public health, for example, has seen a surge in demand for epidemiologists and health data analysts. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of these roles, with studies published in journals like The New England Journal of Medicine highlighting how

data-driven approaches were critical in tracking the spread of the virus and informing public health responses. Similarly, climate scientists and renewable energy engineers are essential in developing sustainable energy solutions, as evidenced by the International Energy Agency (IEA) reports showing significant reductions in carbon emissions through the adoption of renewable technologies.

Looking to the future, the potential for new careers in science is vast. Space exploration is likely to give rise to roles in astro-mining and habitat design, supported by evidence from organizations like NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA), which are investing heavily in space technology. Neurotechnology is another emerging field, with research in journals such as Neuron and Nature Neuroscience demonstrating the potential of brain-computer interfaces to revolutionize human-computer interaction and enhance cognitive functions.

In conclusion, the landscape of science careers is becoming increasingly vibrant and varied, driven by technological advancements, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the need to address global challenges. With so many new fields emerging and endless possibilities for innovation, there's never been a more exciting time to get involved. Whether you're dreaming of exploring space, solving environmental challenges, or using technology to make life better, there's a place for you in the world of science. So, if you're curious, creative, and ready to make a difference, the world of science is waiting for you to jump in and start your journey!





ISOLATION AND INSECURITIES

Isolation refers to the state of being separated from others, either physically, emotionally, or socially. It can occur intentionally, as a choice to seek solitude, or unintentionally, when someone finds themselves cut off from social interactions or support systems.

The Harmful Impact of Isolation

Isolation being completely alone can have a profound impact on both our mental and physical health. It's more than just loneliness; it erodes our emotional well-being over time.

I've seen this firsthand with older adults struggling with loneliness and peers who find it hard to form meaningful connections. Fear of rejection often triggers insecurity and anxiety, which can create a cycle of self-doubt and isolation. This constant worry about judgment intensifies social anxiety, making it harder to engage with others. Research shows that those who are isolated experience higher levels of

of anxiety and may even struggle with low self-esteem.

The effects are not only emotional but can also physically change our brains. Chronic loneliness has been linked to a shrinking hippocampus, a part of the brain responsible for emotional regulation and empathy. This can lead to further difficulties in connecting with others. Studies also suggest that prolonged isolation weakens the immune system, making us more susceptible to illness.

The harm of isolation is deep and wide reaching. It's crucial that we work to strengthen our social bonds and create supportive communities, ensuring everyone feels valued and included. From my own experience, I know how vital it is to nurture these connections to protect our mental and physical health.

From my experience I want to share a perspective of being isolated and how your



insecurities and anxiety hang on with it.

Imagine being in a room packed with people, at a fancy gala or a bustling party. You're surrounded by laughter and conversation, but it's like you're not even there. It's that feeling of being invisible, of existing without truly being seen or heard.

Imagine an endless void of darkness, filled with faces that look right through you. You're yearning for connection, for a touch of recognition, a hint that you matter. It's a soul-crushing loneliness, a desperate longing for a spark of human connection.

My thoughts on insecurities:

The Mirror's Reflection: Imagine standing before a mirror, yet unable to find a single trace of worth in your reflection. In this moment, you are consumed by insecurity, seeing only flaws and imperfections, instead of the person you truly are.

The Anxiety of Sharing: A thousand thoughts race through your mind before sharing a simple photo. The fear of judgment, the need for validation, and the pressure to conform paralyze your every action, leaving you second-guessing your very existence.

Apologizing for Authenticity: You find yourself apologizing, not for your actions, but for the



essence of who you are. It's as though being yourself — truly, unapologetically yourself — has somehow become a fault to be regretted, a mistake to be corrected.

Surrendering Control: In the silence of your insecurities, you slowly begin to surrender control over your own fate. You allow others' opinions, expectations, and judgments to define you, losing sight of your own voice and worth in the process.

Anxiety

Imagine you have so much to say, but your mouth feels locked. No matter how hard you try, the words stay trapped inside, and you can't seem to make yourself heard. It's frustrating, like you're screaming in silence, and the world just can't see or understand you.

Crying for no reason can feel overwhelming and confusing. It's like the tears come out of nowhere, and you don't even know why they're there.

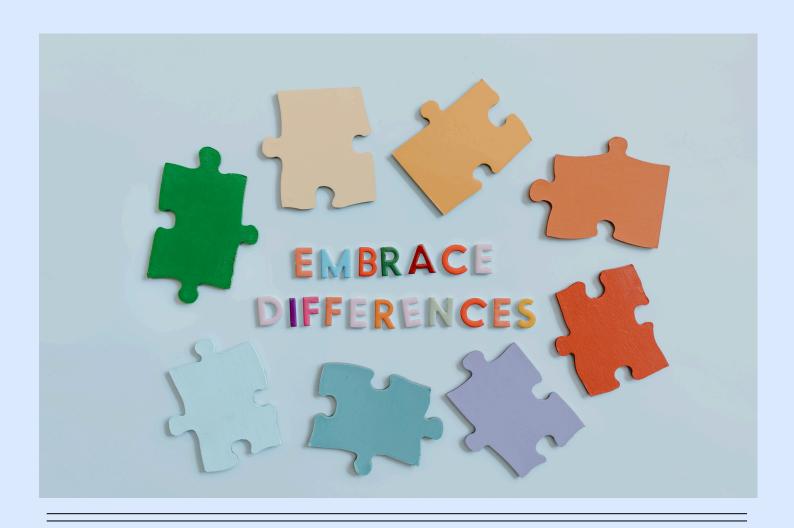
How can one embrace equality and avoid social isolation with others and yourself?

Embracing equality and avoiding social isolation requires a combination of self-acceptance, empathy, and openness.

Start by recognizing your inherent worth, accepting both your strengths and imperfections, and challenging negative self-talk. Celebrate differences by engaging with diverse people and listening with empathy, fostering a deeper understanding of others' experiences. Practice inclusivity by making others feel welcome and advocating for fairness in your community. Challenge societal biases by educating yourself and standing up against injustice. Build meaningful connections by reaching out and sharing your authentic self, while nurturing inner peace through mindfulness and surrounding yourself with supportive people. By doing so, you can foster equality, create genuine relationships, and avoid both social isolation and internal disconnection.

Let's celebrate our differences and embrace equality for once.

— Meer Shaikh



DID YOU KNOW? I The Roman Statue



of civilization's shadow gleaming towers, there lurks darkness that has walked hand in hand with human progress—a darkness that whispers of crimes so profound they shake the veru *foundation* collective of our conscience.

The Rome Statute stands as humanity's answer to these whispers, a beacon of justice in a world where shadows still dance at the edges of our moral boundaries. Like an ancient scroll unfurled in the halls of justice, it defines the unspeakable: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression.

Genocide—the word itself carries the weight of countless tears and silenced voices. The Rome Statute speaks of it in measured tones, yet behind each carefully crafted clause lies an ocean of human suffering. It is the systematic

destruction of a people, their culture, their very existence, perpetrated with the cold precision of calculated malice. The statute defines it as acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. Like a poisoned dagger thrust into the heart of humanity, it manifests through killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction, imposing measures to prevent births, and forcibly transferring children.

Like a poisoned wind that sweeps across lands







ancient and new, ethnic cleansing stands as a spectre of systematic elimination. Though it dwells in the shadows of international law, unnamed and uncodified, its presence leaves scars across the tapestry of human history. A UN Commission defines it as "rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the area" —words that barely capture the horror they describe. The methods speak of civilization's darkest impulses: murder, torture, arbitrary detention, forcible removal, and the deliberate destruction of homes and sacred places.

Crimes against humanity weave a darker pattern still—a tapestry of systematic attacks against civilian populations, where the threads of murder, extermination, and enslavement create a picture of calculated cruelty. These are not mere moments of violence, but orchestrated campaigns of terror where imprisonment mingles with torture, where forced disappearances leave holes in the fabric of families, and where persecution spreads its tendrils through communities like a creeping vine.

War crimes—the dark harvest of conflict's fields—stand as testament to humanity's capacity for betrayal of its own principles. The Rome Statute speaks of these violations not as mere breaches of military discipline, but as wounds inflicted upon the very soul of civilized warfare. Like poisoned arrows that pierce not just flesh but the very heart of human dignity, these crimes transform the theatre of war into a stage for humanity's darkest performances.

Yet these are not merely historical spectres that we can safely confine to dusty tomes. In the mirrors of our modern world, their reflections still dance with terrifying vitality. Even now, as technology advances and civilization reach ever higher, the basement of human nature still harbours these ancient evils. The International Criminal Court stands as an angel fightingagainst this darkness, but it faces its own battles against the tide of impunity. The world's response to these crimes must be more than mere words carved in legal stone. The Rome Statute created not just a court, but a promise—a promise that humanity would no longer turn a blind eye to its own capacity for evil. Yet this promise remains challenged by the shadows of sovereignty, the whispers of political convenience, and the cold calculations of power.

Niharika Khedekar

Shyam Benegal: The Pioneer of Parallel Cinema

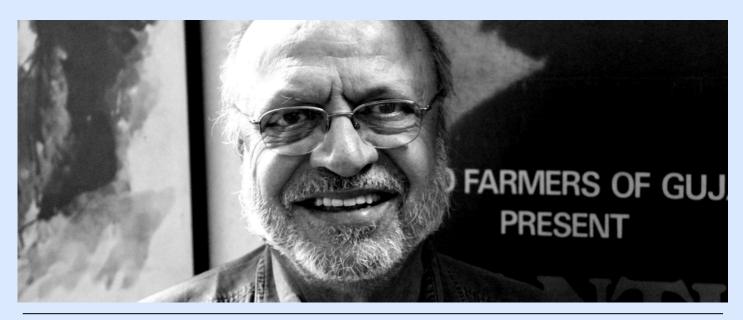
Often hailed as the pioneer of parallel cinema, Shyam Benegal stands as one of the most significant filmmakers of post-1970s India. Born in Hyderabad on December 14, 1934, he was more than a storyteller, he was a chronicler of societal truths, a voice for the marginalized, and an artist who reshaped the Indian cinemas.

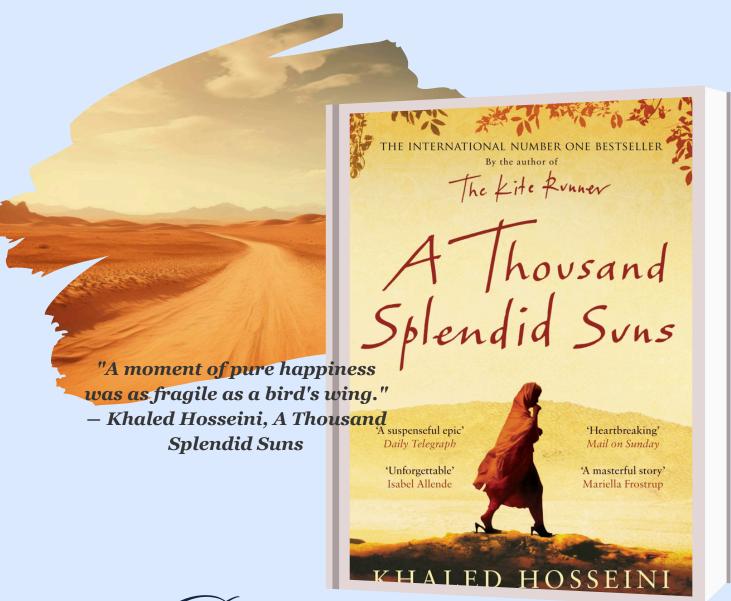
His films, such as Ankur, Manthan and Bhumika, were more than cinematic experiences; they were cultural commentaries that reflected the socio-cultural realities of their times. **Among** Shyam Benegal's contributions to Indian storytelling, one of his most iconic achievements was the 53-episode television series Bharat Ek Khoj (1988). Based on Jawaharlal Nehru's seminal book, The Discovery of India, this series remains one of ambitious the most and significant undertakings in Indian television history.

Shyam Benegal's career is filled with accolades that highlight his significant contributions to Indian cinema and storytelling. He received eighteen National Film Awards for his groundbreaking films. Honored with the Padma Shri in 1976 and the Padma Bhushan in 1991, Benegal's influence extended beyond cinema, shaping India's cultural narrative. In 2005, he was bestowed with the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the highest honor in Indian cinema. Through his groundbreaking hardwork, Shyam Bengal shaped the India's very own cinemas and gave a greater outlook for cinemas and story telling.

His legacy continues to inspire, shaping the present and future of Indian storytelling. Rest in peace, Shyam Benegal. Your contributions will remain timeless.

-Gaurisri Tiwari





BOOK Review

Name of the book: 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' by Khaled Hosseini "A Thousand Splendid Suns" by Khaled Hosseini is a poignant and compelling novel that delves into the lives of two Afghan women, Mariam and Laila, whose paths intersect amid the turbulence of Afghanistan's recent history. Spanning several decades, the narrative provides a vivid portrayal of the sociopolitical upheavals in the country, including the Soviet invasion, civil war, and the oppressive rule of the Taliban.

Mariam, born out of wedlock, endures a childhood marked by shame and hardship. Her life takes a drastic turn when she is



"One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs, or the thousand splendid suns that hide behind her walls."

- Khaled Hosseini, A Thousand Splendid Suns

forced into marriage with Rasheed, a domineering and abusive man. Laila, a generation younger, enjoys a relatively privileged upbringing in Kabul until a tragic event leads her to become Rasheed's second wife. Despite initial tensions, Mariam and Laila develop a deep bond, united by their shared suffering and resilience.

Hosseini's storytelling is both evocative and heart-wrenching, capturing the strength and endurance of women in the face of systemic oppression. The novel sheds light on the harsh realities Afghan women have faced, particularly under patriarchal despotism, where their dependence on male figures is agonizingly evident.

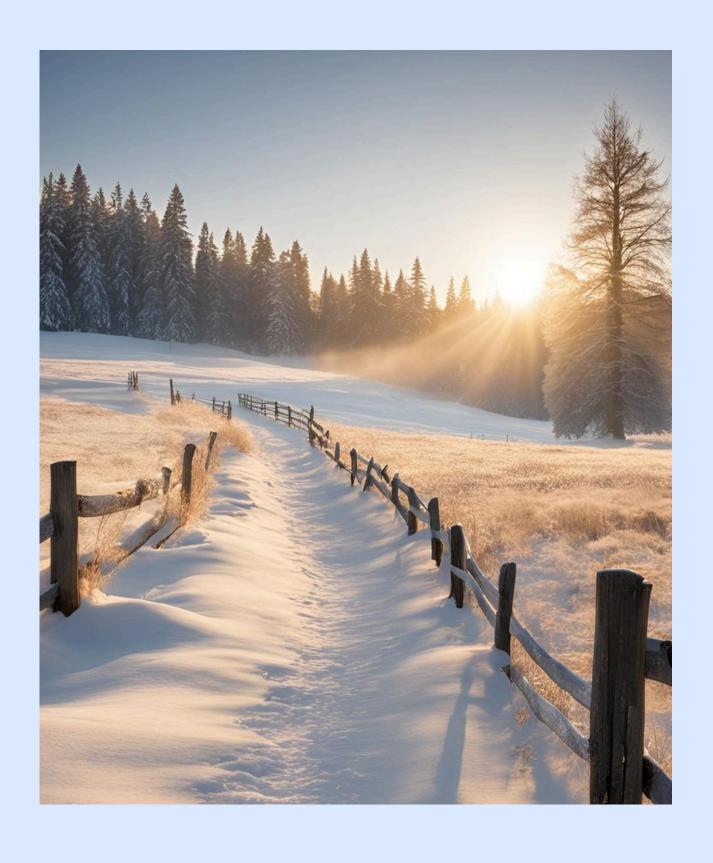
Critics have lauded the novel for emotional depth and portrayal of complex relationships. The Guardian notes that Hosseini "is skilled at telling a certain kind of story, in which events that may seem unbearable—violence, misery, and abuse—are made readable." Publishers Weekly describes it as "a powerful, harrowing

depiction of Afghanistan."

In summary, "A Thousand Splendid Suns" is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, offering a profound exploration of love, friendship, and sacrifice against the backdrop of a nation's turmoil. It is a highly recommended read for those seeking to understand the personal impacts of Afghanistan's history through the eyes of its women.

Rating: 4.7/5.

Karthikeyan Iyar



"A READER LIVES A THOUSAND LIVES BEFORE HE DIES. THE MAN WHO NEVER READS LIVES ONLY ONE."

— GEORGE R.R. MARTIN