

*And The Mountains Echoed*

Khaled Hosseini

Riverhead Books

Fiction - Drama

402 Pages

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*And the Mountains Echoed: A Riveting Journey of Intertwining Plots*

By Jordan S.

The outstanding novel, *And the Mountains Echoed*, another huge success for Khaled Hosseini shares a deep, compelling story about a family who struggles through poverty and are forced to make choices in order to survive. The family, which lives in an Afghan village, sells their three year old daughter, Pari, to a rich family the Wahdatis. This crucial event affects Pari's older brother Abdullah, and becomes the inciting incident to Hosseini's intense novel. While the plot builds slowly at first, the reader experiences a turn of events which Hosseini fans will clearly recognize.

*And the Mountains Echoed* centers on the family the Ayub's which includes a father, named Baba, a step-mom, Parwana, a ten year old son named Abdullah, and a three year old daughter named Pari. Ever since Pari was born, Abdullah and Pari shared an unusually deep, inseparable relationship: "He loved the fact that he was the one to help her with her first step, to gasp at her first utter word. This was his purpose, he believed, the reason God had made him, so he would be there to take care of Pari when He took away their mother." However, the poor family is soon forced to endure a number of challenges which leads to major emotional conflicts

later in the novel. During these conflicts, the novel includes several perspectives of different people who are all connected to the family in some way.

The title, *And the Mountains Echoed*, comes from the poem *The Nurse's Song*, by William Blake. The last line of the poem stated "and the hills echoed." Hosseini changed the title to *And the Mountains Echoed* because of Afghanistan's topography. The mountains are also the setting of a few pivotal points in the novel. According to an interview with Hosseini, just as the mountains would echo back a shout, the acts committed before the mountains also emitted an echo. These echoes would send ripple effects throughout the family, impacting their lives forever.

*And the Mountains Echoed* had numerous strengths which make it extremely enticing to read. One major strength of the novel is the author's way of exemplifying the powerful family bonds and the complex interrelationships which are layered and dynamic. In addition, the vivid, exacting detail and language of the book proved to be a strength, giving the reader great imagery such as that on the last page: "...They are lying in a patch of tall grass in the shade of an apple tree ablaze with flowers. The grass is warm against in their backs and the sun on their faces, flickering through the riot of blossoms above..." To complement the detail, the novel also pivots on many quick turning points which have a lasting effect on the characters and make one eager to continue reading. Although this novel was outstanding, one weakness is that the constantly changing scenarios from chapter to chapter make the novel a little confusing at some points. As a result, it can take a while in the beginning of each chapter to figure out the setting, situation, and characters involved.

Khaled Hosseini, the author of *And the Mountains Echoed*, has written three novels, all taking place in Afghanistan where he was born and raised. Hosseini was able to sell over seven

million copies in the United States alone. Although his second book, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, was not nearly as popular as *The Kite Runner*, it still became largely popular in the United States. Compared to the chronological presentation of *The Kite Runner*, the style in which the characters' lives are revealed differs in *And the Mountains Echoed*. New characters and storylines are introduced on a chapter by chapter basis and then merge as the novel progresses.

Overall, high school students will definitely want to read the novel *And the Mountains Echoed*. I absolutely recommend it for those who would enjoy a novel which is not chronological, switching from one character's perspective to another. This novel mixes exciting and intriguing conflicts between characters and emotional turning points that instantly shift the mentality of the reader. However, by the end of the novel, the book will blow away anyone reading it, as all the stories that have been shared with the reader connect. Due to my experience reading *And the Mountains Echoed* as well as *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini's books deserve their *New York Times Bestseller* status. While this novel is not a light read, it is best for those who enjoy connecting differing historical events, dealing with complex character relationships, and metaphorical situations throughout the novel.