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▲ *The Breadwinner*
(Deborah Ellis)

What do you think most Americans know about the Middle East?

What are your personal impressions or understanding of the Middle East?

Can you name any countries in the Middle East? If so, how many?

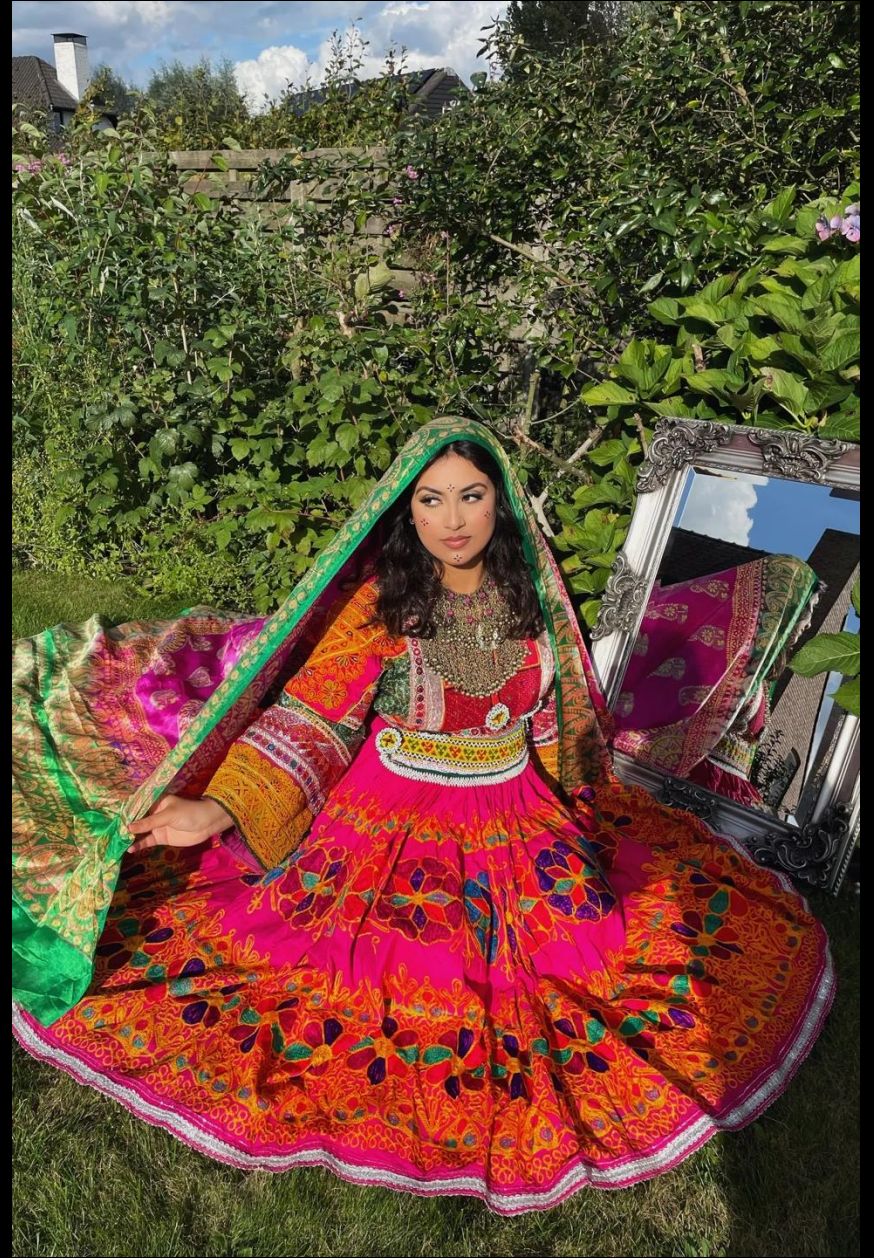
How familiar are you with Middle Eastern culture (its food, fashion, music, literature, or history)?

Where is Afghanistan located?

What do you imagine Afghanistan looks like as a country?







It's hard to imagine what life is like for Afghans.

- The crisis in Afghanistan.
- Afghans are suffering from hunger and hardship.
- Displaced, hungry, and terrified Afghans.



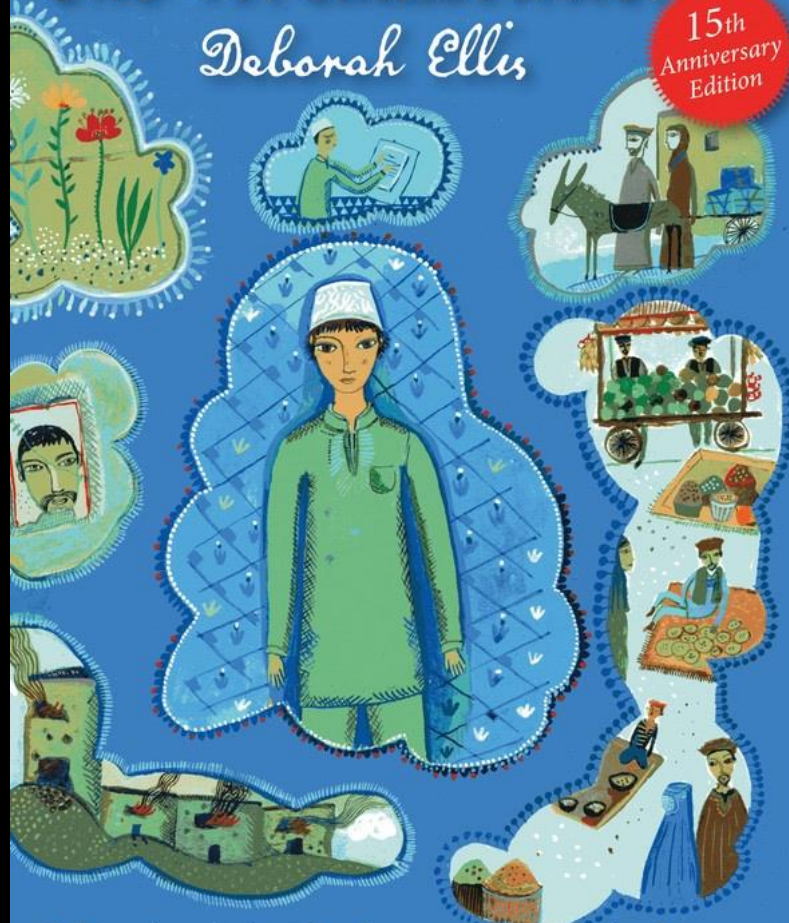
COMMENDED BY Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai



The Breadwinner

Deborah Ellis

15th Anniversary Edition



First Book in The Breadwinner Series

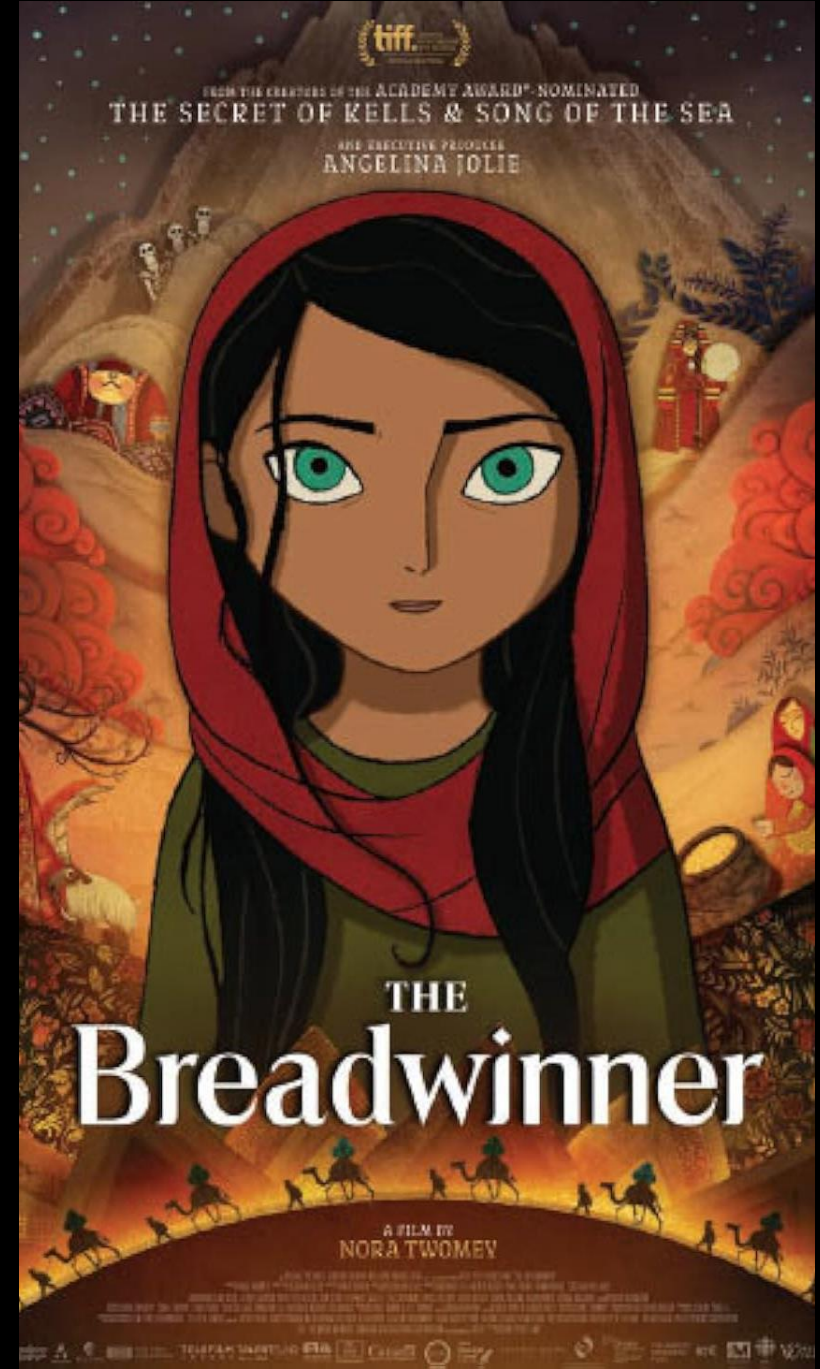
THE Breadwinner

A graphic novel



Based on the original book by Deborah Ellis

Adapted from the feature film directed by Nora Twomey





- Child Labor
- Gender Roles
- Cultural, Historical, and Social Context
- Practical Ideas for the Classroom

Child Labor in *The Breadwinner*: A Harsh Reality

- Unequal treatment of children in Afghanistan: Limited access to work for girls; boys are given more opportunities.
- Basic literacy as a means of survival: Parvana's struggle to use her literacy to secure work.
- Labor as a reflection of broader socio-economic issues: Child labor as a response to a lack of opportunities in the country.

Child Labor

Yes, she's capable
but she's not allowed.

- “I can read that letter as well as father can,” whispered Parvana into the folds of her chador. “Well, almost.” (C1)
- “I could do that,” Parvana whispered. She’d like to be able to run around in the market, to know its winding streets as well as she knew the four walls of her home.” (C1)

Questions to Consider

- What types of work do children take on in *The Breadwinner*?
- How does the novel portray the lack of opportunities for children in Afghanistan?
- How does the portrayal of child labor highlight the social inequities in Afghanistan?



Child Labor vs. Working Children

Children have always worked, but not all work is categorized as child labor.

- What kind of work is considered child labor?
- How do we define work that benefits the child versus work that exploits them?

What Defines Child Labor?

The categorization of work as “child labor” depends on several factors:

- The age of the child
- The type of work and its hours
- The conditions under which the work is performed
- The objectives set by individual countries

Balancing Systemic Issues with Children's Essential Contributions



- “I feel like I’m working for something now,” she told Shauzia one day as they walked around looking for customers. “I’m working to get my family back.” “I’m working for something, too,” Shauzia said. “I’m working to get away from Afghanistan.” (C15)

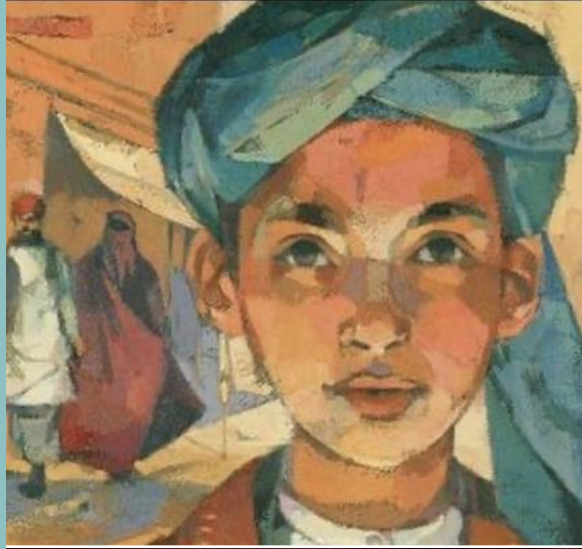
Challenging the Binary Framework of Child Labor



Global North
Lancaster Cotton Mills, 1908 by Lewis W. Hine.



Global South
The Carpet Industry in Nepal, 2011.



Gender Segregation and Oppression Under Taliban Rule

- **Gender Segregation and Restrictions** under the Taliban.
- **Parvana's Resilience** in challenging gender roles, such as grocery shopping.
- **Gender Roles and Empowerment:** Even basic acts become symbolic of defiance and personal growth.

Gender Roles and Solidarity in Ellis' Writing

- **Women as Active Agents**

Reflect on moments in the novel where female characters take active roles in their lives, despite the oppressive regime. Can you identify any examples where women resist passivity and show strength or agency?

- **Solidarity Among Women**

Discuss how female characters in the novel support one another. Are there specific examples of solidarity between women that help them survive or resist the Taliban's restrictions? What does their solidarity look like, and how does it impact the characters' ability to persevere?

- **Reframing the Narrative of Oppression**

How does the novel challenge the typical narrative of Afghan women as solely oppressed? Do you see moments in the book where women are not just victims, but active agents who take control of their own futures? How does the novel present women as resilient, defying stereotypical representations of Afghan women in the media?

Early Expectations of Marriage

- "She was small for her eleven years." (C1)
- A Talib glaring at her...
"You must be covered up! Who is your father? Who is your husband?" (C5)
- Mrs. Weera: "In some parts of the country, girls your age are getting married and having babies." (C13)

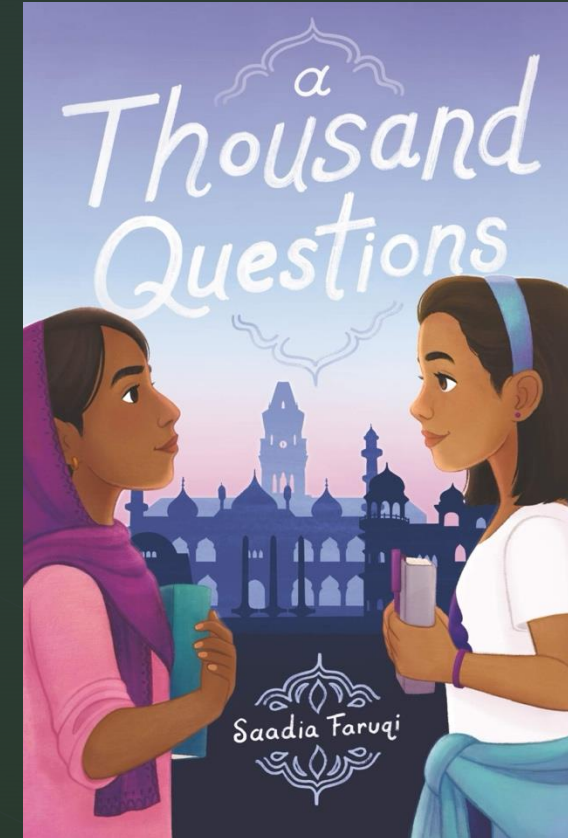
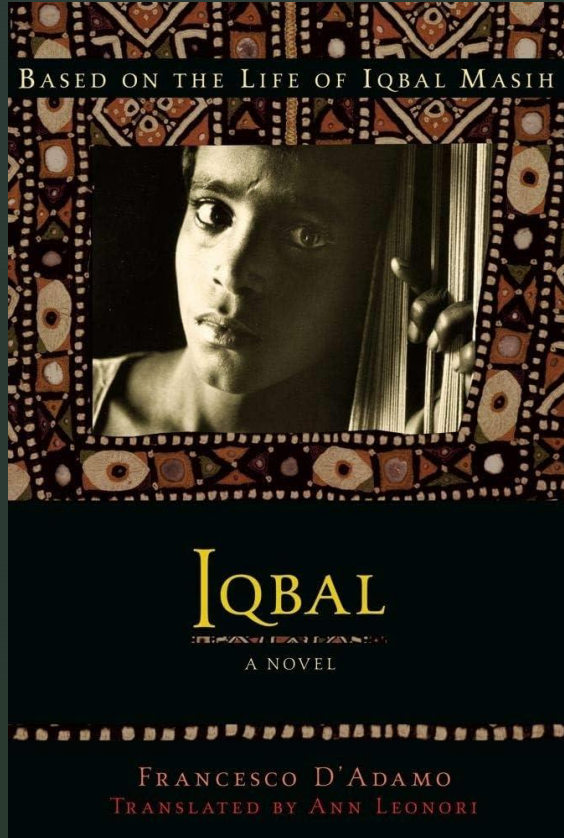
Legal vs. Social Realities

- In 2000, the legal minimum age for marriage in Afghanistan was 16 (or 15 with parental or judicial consent).
- Under Taliban rule (1996–2001), child marriages were widespread, and legal age restrictions were weakly enforced.

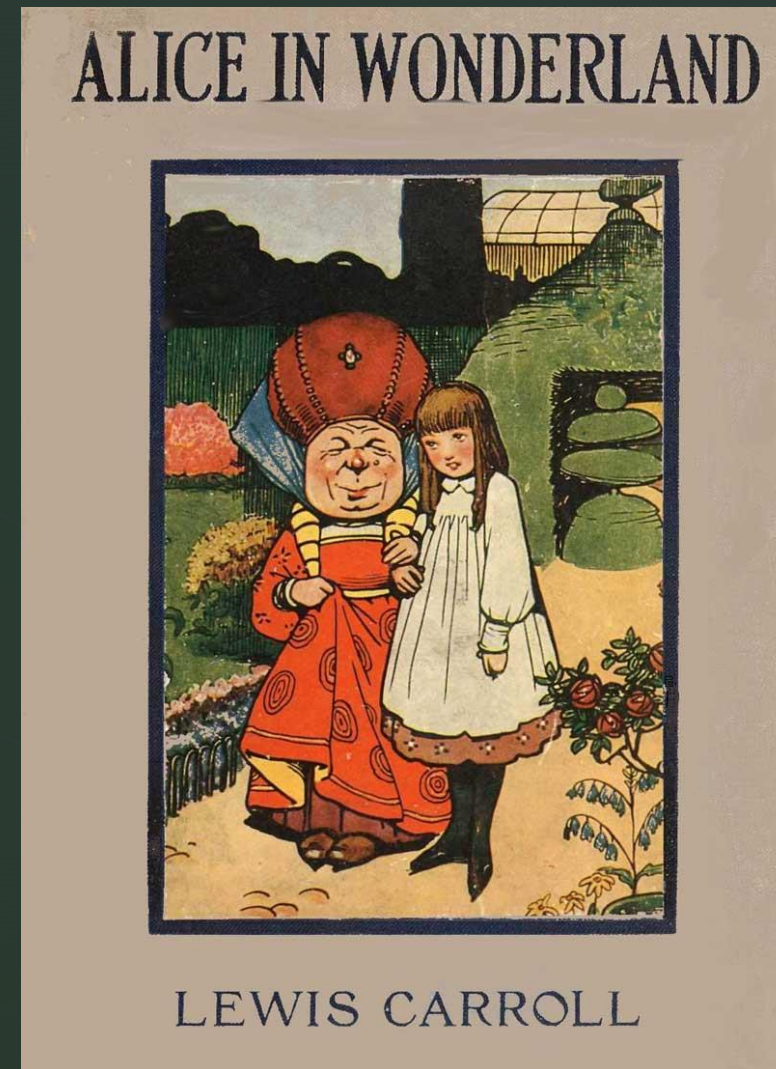
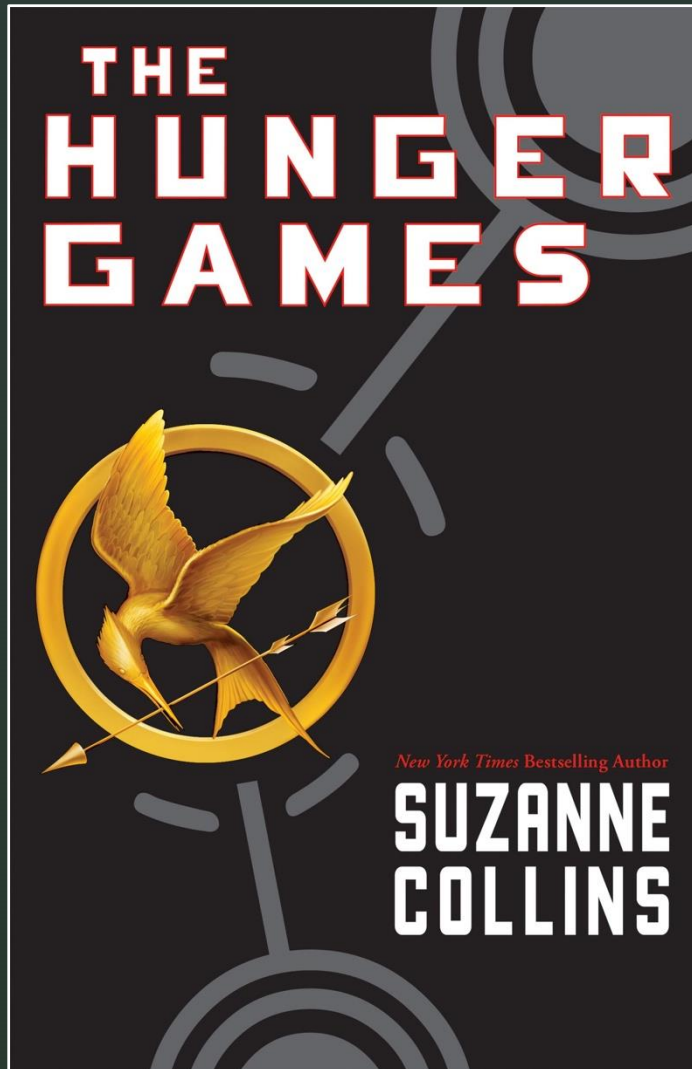
Marriage as a Pathway to Education or Escape

- Shauzia: “I’m starting to grow.” Her voice dropped almost to a whisper. “My shape is changing. If it changes too much, I’ll turn back into a girl, and then I’ll be stuck here. You don’t think I’ll grow too fast, do you? Maybe I should leave before the spring. I don’t want things to pop out of me all of a sudden.” (C12)
- Nooria: “I will be going back to school... The Taliban aren’t in that part of Afghanistan. Girls can still go to school there.” (C13)

(1) Pairing *The Breadwinner* with Other Books



(2) Using Familiar Texts to Bridge Conversations



(3) Creative Pairing Activities for Deeper Engagement

- Exploring Female Identities Beyond Appearance
- Analyzing and Designing Book Covers
- Cover Design Challenge

LAST NIGHT AT THE TELEGRAPH CLUB

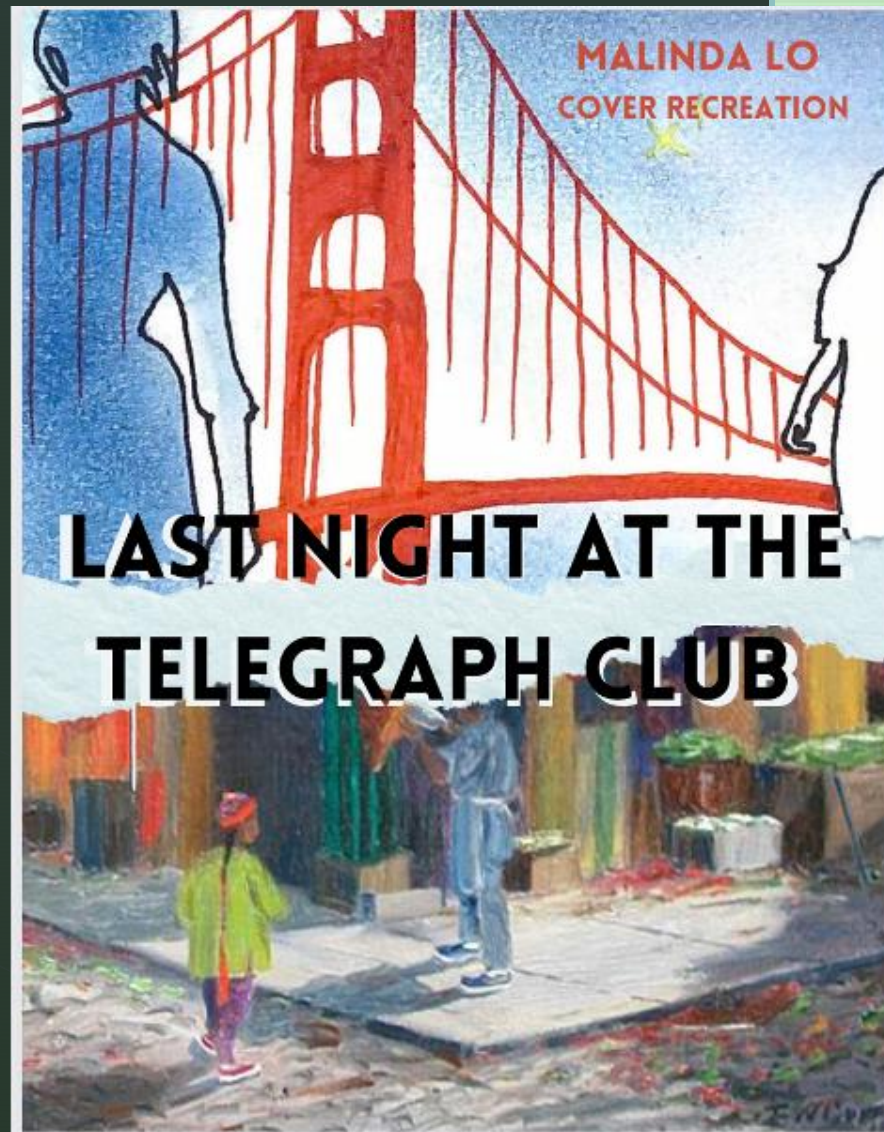


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COVER RECREATION

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