Part 1

Chapter 1:

“the collective gasp of Jalil’s family sucked the air out of Herat”

“this is what it means to be a woman in this world”

“like a compass needle that points north, a man’s accusing finger always finds a woman, always”

Chapter 2:

“picked the name”

“name of her mother”

“the tuberose, was a lovely flower” “one of” his “favourite”

Chapter 3:

“his idea of penance” “he has servants” – chapter 2 repetition “could have hired labourers”

“what’s the sense schooling a girl like you? It’s like shining a spittoon.”

“Women like us. We endure” “there won’t be any shortage of things”

Chapter 4:

“Nomad jewellery”

Chapter 5:

“A man’s heart is wretched, wretched thing, Mariam. It isn’t like a mother’s room. It won’t bleed, it won’t stretch to make room for you”

“I’ll die if you go” – x2

She added a fourth column. A solitary, eleventh pebble”

“a face” “curtains fell shut” - The boundaries set up because Mariam is a harami are invisible rather than physical. As a result, Mariam believes, as she enters Herat, that they are easily surmountable.

“The rope dropping from a high branch. Nana dangling at the end of it”

Chapter 7:

The importance of Rasheed being able to “take care of” Mariam reflects a certain belief regarding gender relations, in which men are responsible for and have control over their wives—especially if the wife has little say in such an arranged marriage. These gender norms, however, clearly depend on the social status of the woman.

Jalil’s selfish response to his daughter is difficult to justify, given that he’s the one “doing” something to Mariam—even if his words suggest that he too is unhappy with the decision.

“you have a suitor”

“he will have no trouble providing for you”

“Jalil wouldn’t look at her”

“Forty-five”

“their chance to erase” “walking breathing embodiment of their shame”

“don’t do this to me”

“every time she breathed out, the surface fogged, and then she disappeared”

Chapter 8:

Rasheed is first described through sensory clues, which are unfamiliar, overpowering, and distasteful—just the way Rasheed’s personality will turn out to be.

“raspy voice … dry autumn leaves crushed underfoot”

Chapter 9:

“unfamiliar”

Chapter 10:

“I expect you to start behaving like a wife”

“you’re bleeding, hamshira!”

“a sky blue burqa”

“spoiling” there “honour and pride”

“a woman’s face is her husband’s business only”

Chapter 11:

“tight and heavy on her skull”

women “who wore nothing at all”

“an explanation presented itself. He was a man”

Chapter 13:

“Everywhere she looked, she saw bright colors: on the drab, gray concrete apartments…. It was as though a rainbow had melted into her eyes”

“Then there was blood and she was screaming”

“each snowflake was a sigh heaved by an aggrieved woman somewhere in the world”

Chapter 14:

Since Mariam is kept largely at home and isolated by Rasheed, her window serves as both a literal and figurative window out into the world—unlike women such as Fariba, who participate actively in society, Mariam remains confined.

Mariam has not grown any less fearful since Rasheed asked if she was afraid of him when they were first married—and for good reason. Instead of simply exerting his authority over her, he uses his physical advantage to physically hurt her and psychologically torture her.

Chapter 15:

“Mariam saw clearly how much a woman could tolerate when she was afraid”

“six more cycles of hopes raised then dashed”

“she had failed him” “she was a burden to him”

“forced the cold hard pebbles”

Part 2

Chapter 17:

“At least my father’s not a sissy”

“you just don’t know”

Chapter 18:

“He’d been lucky that time, losing only a leg, lucky that he’d survived at all”

“Khadim never bothered Leila again”

“a stranger with news”

Chapter 19:

“Babi’s face was white” “Mammy was screaming, screaming, and tearing at her hair”

“she took a seat along the wall across from Leila”

Chapter 21:

“one invader after another”

“But we’re like those walls up there. Battered, and nothing pretty to look at, but still standing”

“Mammy wasn’t going anywhere” “Babi would never leave without her”

Chapter 22:

“what would it be like to kiss him”

Chapter 23:

“As Hasina feared… she was made to marry the cousin who owned the auto shop”

“He’s a boy… what does he care about reputation?... The reputation of a girl, especially one as pretty as you, is a delicate thing,”

“you’re going to be somebody” “pick up a newspaper and find your picture on the front page”

“snarling men rolling on the ground”

“the Mujahideen, armed to the teeth but now lacking a common enemy, had found the enemy in each other”

Chapter 24:

The devout prayer of the Mujahideen is juxtaposed ironically with their love of violence.

“the rugs were folded, the guns loaded”

“he said a thing both lovely and terrible. “For you,” he said. “I’d kill with it for you, Laila”

“in the midst of all this killing and looting”

“They learned to walk with a milk bottle in one hand and a gun in the other.”

“He took over the teaching duties himself”

“collecting pieces of her daughter’s flesh in an apron”

“Giti’s decomposing foot, still in its nylon sock and purple sneaker”

“blown to pieces”

Chapter 25:

“Leila saw three drops of blood”

“the shame set in, and the guilt”

“the clock ticked… Like a judge’s gavel pounding again and again, condemning her”

“promised that he would come back”

Though Laila has been able to push aside her mother’s warnings, she is still affected by the social norms that consider sex before marriage a deeply shameful scandal—both shame and happiness mingle and coexist for her.

Chapter 26:

Laila’s feelings for Tariq are just as strong as her understanding of the shame associated with breaching cultural norms.

“his voice tremulous with supressed excitement. “We’re leaving.”

“less than three fingers from where Leila’s head had been”

“he was wearing a second-hand T-shirt with a picture of San Francisco’s red bridge on it”

“a giant roar” “A bloody chunk of something…. the tip of a red bridge”

Part 3

Chapter 27:

“Poor thing”

“a new blanket and pillow” “a bottle of pills”

Chapter 28:

“he fought valiantly”

Chapter 29:

“For years” “without speaking” “only broken by an accusatory grunt”

“Now he ate with a spoon. Used a napkin” “blatant lies”

“Why not?” “obediently”

“Dishonourable” “young unmarried women” “it’s bad for my reputation. And hers. And yours” “common”

“help around the house” “a sanctuary”

Chapter 30:

“traded in Mariam’s old wedding ring for it”

“yellow, toothy grin. “Eager”

“A part of Tariq still alive inside of her”

“The air choking with disapproval”

Chapter 31:

“If she were a car, she would be a Volga”

“you on the other hand, would be a Benz. A brand-new, first-class, shiny Benz”

“wear a Burqa. For your own protection”

Chapter 32: