

# THIRTEEN

In this chapter, Parvana and her sister Nooria discuss Nooria's upcoming wedding and potential move to Mazar-e-Sharif, where girls can still go to school and live more freely under the Taliban's regime. Parvana is initially incredulous about Nooria's intentions, as she believes Nooria hardly knows the groom, who is a neighbor from childhood. Nooria expresses her strong desire to escape Kabul's oppressive environment, explaining that she is eager to pursue her education, find work, and lead a meaningful life. She resents being confined to her current life, filled with care for younger siblings and futile school lessons.

The family discusses their plans for the wedding, during which they will travel to Mazar. Parvana is vehemently opposed to this plan, fearing for her father's well-being if they are not there when he potentially returns from prison. However, Mother reassures her, stating that Mrs. Weera will remain behind to watch over Parvana and inform her father of their whereabouts. Despite her protests and anger—exasperatedly stamped feet included—Parvana must ultimately stay behind, as Mother explains the practical reasons for this decision.

After a few days filled with conflict and anxious feelings, the family prepares to leave. Parvana feels conflicted about being left in Kabul: while she is relieved that she can stay in her home, she is upset about missing out on the family trip. In the weeks that follow, Parvana has mixed feelings of freedom and loneliness. She enjoys having more time to read and learn with Mrs. Weera's support but misses the family dynamic.

While selling items in the market, Parvana has an encounter with rain during which she seeks shelter in a bombed-out building. The chapter closes with Parvana falling asleep in the darkened space, only to awaken to hear a woman crying, leaving readers in suspense about the woman's identity and situation amidst the ongoing turmoil surrounding them.