

# TWO

In this chapter, titled "Two," the story centers on Parvana's challenging day as she navigates the responsibilities thrust upon her in a war-torn Afghanistan. The chapter opens with the family's usual routine; Parvana's mother and sister, Nooria, are cleaning while their father takes a rest after a long day. Parvana, tasked with fetching water, feels her resentment towards her family obligations. She recognizes the burden of having to make numerous trips to the water tap and is frustrated, particularly with Nooria, who does not have to contribute in the same way.

As she treks to the water tap, Parvana muses on her family dynamics, noting the limitations imposed on women by the Taliban. They have been forced to stay indoors, leading to a monotonous routine filled with cleaning and chores, which Parvana despises. Despite her anger, she manages to fill the tank with water, allowing her a moment of respite where she admires her sister Maryam's artistic talent, envisioning a brighter future as artists.

Their conversation shifts to household chores, where Parvana's discontent toward cleaning intensifies, especially upon seeing precious items being set aside for sale, including her treasured shalwar kameez. This conflict highlights the dire circumstances they are living under, as decisions about selling personal belongings are being made out of necessity.

Father, despite the family's struggles, attempts to instill a sense of pride and resilience, recounting tales of Afghan history and courageous figures. However, this moment of familial bonding is shattered when Taliban soldiers burst into their home. The atmosphere quickly turns from a light-hearted exchange to chaos as the family is thrust into fear. The soldiers aggressively confront Father about his education and opinions, culminating in a brutal scuffle where he is taken away against his will.

Parvana, feeling powerless, tries to defend her family, showing her growing courage but ultimately suffers under the soldiers' violence. After they leave, the family is left devastated, particularly mourning Father's absence. Parvana's real struggle begins here, marked by a poignant blend of familial love and an oppressive societal structure that threatens their existence. The chapter ends with a sense of helplessness, compelling the reader to empathize deeply with Parvana and her family in their plight.