**Part 3 & 4 Reading Schedule & Log**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | A-level standard | C-level standard | What I read |
| Dec. 3 | Finish Chapter 30 | You may skip p. 197. Read the summary. | You may skip p. 194-197. Read the summary. |  |
| Dec. 5 | Finish Chapter 35 |  | You may skip p. 204–210 and p. 225–229. Read the summaries. |  |
| Dec. 9 | Finish Chapter 39 | You may skip p. 253. Read the summary. | You may skip p. 250–260. Read the summary. |  |
| Dec. 11 | Finish Chapter 42 |  | You may skip p. 261–268. Read the summary. |  |
| Dec. 15 | Finish Chapter 46 | You may skip p. 310-311. Read the summary. | You may skip p. 292–306. Read the summary. |  |
| Dec. 17 | Finish Chapter 49 |  | You may skip p. 333–338.Read the summary. |  |
| Dec. 19 | Finish Chapter 51 |  |  |  |

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**A-Level Summaries**

[summaries if you choose to skip parts of the book with more “adult” content]

**Summary of page 197**

Laila finally agrees to marry Rasheed so he will think the baby she is pregnant with (Tariq’s) is his. It’s been 6 weeks. They go through the ceremony very similar to the one with Mariam. They have their wedding night and Laila endures it. Rasheed says he thinks he loves her. When she is sure he is asleep, she takes a knife she has hidden under the bed and pricks her finger and lets it bleed on the sheets so Rasheed will think it’s her first time. He could have her killed for not being a virgin.

**Summary of page 253**

One afternoon, Laila—who has realized she is pregnant—lies on the floor with a rusty bicycle spoke and considers giving herself a rudimentary home abortion. She fears she could never love Rasheed’s child. In the end she doesn’t go through with it, realizing there has been enough killing already, the child is innocent, and that it's Rasheed with whom she's angry.

**Summary of page 310-311**

After Laila smashed a vase on Rasheed’s head, he turns on her and begins strangling her. Realizing Rasheed has murder in mind, Mariam runs out to the toolshed, grabs a shovel, and returns to whack Rasheed over the head with it. Stunned, Rasheed looks up at Mariam, an evil smirk forming on his face. Mariam knows she has no choice but to kill him. She raises the shovel and brings it down on Rasheed with all her might.

**C-Level Summaries**

[summaries if you choose to skip parts of the book because of time or commitment level]

**Summary of pages 194–197**

Laila finally agrees to marry Rasheed because she realizes that the constant nausea she feels is because she is pregnant. It’s been 6 weeks, so Laila rushes the ceremony because she knows if she and Rasheed do not consummate the marriage soon, Rasheed will figure out that Tariq is the baby's father. While Laila had every intention of fleeing Kabul prior to discovering her pregnancy, she knows the only way to support the child is to marry Rasheed. When Rasheed brings Laila a wedding band, she is horrified to learn that he purchased it by selling Mariam's old band. Laila feels incredibly guilty for her choices and cannot look Mariam in the face during the wedding ceremony. Laila endures the wedding night and Rasheed says he thinks he loves her. When she is sure he is asleep, she takes a knife she has hidden under the bed and pricks her finger and lets it bleed on the sheets so Rasheed will think it’s her first time. He could have her killed for not being a virgin.

**Summary of pages 204–210**

Rasheed reacts to the news of Laila's pregnancy with a cruel joy; he cannot help but point out that he'll have a child and Mariam never will. Laila is stunned by Rasheed's cruelty. Later, Mariam warns Laila that her pregnancy changes nothing between the two of them, and that Mariam will never be her servant. As winter arrives, Rasheed takes Laila out to visit his shoe shop, which is nicer than she'd imagined it. Rasheed asks Laila if she and Mariam have been getting along. Laila lies and says they have although in reality they have just had their first fight. Laila realizes they are both so frustrated over their lives with Rasheed.

**Summary of pages 225–229**

Laila and Mariam share in household tasks and the care for Aziza, who has grown very fond of Mariam. The violence increases so much that Rasheed is forced to stay home from work for several days. Mariam and Laila long for him to go back to work as they're riddled with anxiety when he's around. A few days later, Mariam tells Laila about the events leading up to her marriage to Rasheed. Laila absorbs the older woman's story and then tells her own story of her relationship with Tariq — and her plans to flee from Rasheed. She asks Mariam to join her. Mariam is terrified but thrilled by the idea of escape.

**Summary of pages 250–260**

Laila is relieved her father is not alive to see the Taliban's total destruction of all artistic and cultural artifacts that do not adhere to its strict interpretation of Islam. Rasheed is not bothered by the changes, but simply grows a beard and visits a mosque. Rasheed even attends weekend punishment sessions at Ghazi Stadium and drinks a soda while watching thieves get their hands cut off and women accused of adultery beaten to death. One night, Rasheed tells Laila that he could at any time turn her or Aziza in to the Taliban and there'd be nothing she could do to defend herself. While Laila tries to ignore him, inside she knows he's right. One afternoon, Laila—who has realized she is pregnant—lies on the floor with a rusty bicycle spoke and considers giving herself a rudimentary home abortion. She fears she could never love Rasheed’s child. In the end she doesn’t go through with it, realizing there has been enough killing already, the child is innocent, and that it's Rasheed with whom she's angry.

When Laila goes into labor, the Taliban officials guarding the door of the nearest hospital say it no longer serves women. There is only one hospital for women, Rabia Balkhi, which has almost no resources. At Rabi Balkhi, they wait most of the day. Finally, when they're brought to a dirty delivery room, the female doctor working informs Mariam and Laila that the baby is breeched and they'll need to perform a caesarian. Mariam is horrified to hear that Laila will have to undergo the operation without anesthesia. The kind-hearted doctor removes her burqa to perform the surgery, having one of the nurses stand guard while she does so.

**Summary of pages 261–268**

Drought persists throughout Afghanistan. The Kabul River is dry, and farmers and villagers regularly abandon their homes to try to find a better life in the city. Mariam is now 40 years old, her missing teeth and rough skin attest to a life of beatings and hard work. Zalmai, Laila's young son, is well-behaved and loving when he’s alone with Laila. With Rasheed, however, Zalmai is a different boy, taking on his father's temper and poutiness. Rasheed spoils Zalmai with gifts they can't afford, including a TV and VCR, both items forbidden by the Taliban but which Rasheed procures on the black market. Money is tight and one evening Rasheed suggests to Laila that Aziza become a street beggar. Laila refuses and Rasheed slaps her across the face. Laila punches him back and experiences a fleeting sensation of victory before Rasheed holds her against the wall with his gun down her throat.

**Summary of pages 292–306**

Mariam plays with Zalmai while Tariq and Laila visit downstairs. Mariam realizes that a man she saw at the Hotel the day she called Jalil was Abdul Sharif. Mariam figures out that years ago Rasheed must have paid Sharif to make up the story about Tariq's death in order to prevent Laila from leaving.

Laila tells Tariq that she was led to believe he was dead. Tariq describes for Laila the beautiful place he currently lives, Murree, Pakistan. Tariq tells Lailia that he and his parents had made it to Pakistan and were living in Nasir Bagh, a refugee camp. Conditions at the camp were poor and after the first winter, Tariq's father had died and his mother was sick. Tariq searched for work but had trouble gaining employment because of his missing leg. Finally, he took a job delivering a fur coat. The police stopped him and the coat's seams burst with hashish when the cops tore it apart. Tariq spent seven years in prison, but the connections he made in prison led him to his current employer, a hotel owner named Sayeed. He works as a janitor and lives in a little shack some distance away with his goat. Laila is relieved to realize he's not married. Tariq tells her he'd written her dozens and dozens of letters while he was imprisoned. She tells him that he has a daughter, Aziza, and Tariq says he'd like to meet her. Tariq also says that he wants to be with Laila. Flustered and overwhelmed, Laila is unable to give him an answer at that moment, though she insists he come back the next day so they can visit Aziza.

Interspersed through this conversation, the plot shifts forward to that night at dinner, when Zalmai tell Rasheed that his mother had a male visitor and that she had let the other man see her face.

**Summary of pages 333–338**

Shifting into present tense, Tariq, Laila, and her children are in Muree, Pakistan. Laila and Tariq marry on the day of their arrival to Pakistan. Eventually, Laila tells Aziza that Tariq is her biological father and Aziza is relieved and overjoyed. Zalmai adjusts more slowly. He rejects Tariq's kindnesses and asks for Rasheed. Laila hates lying to him, but she does so again and again, telling Zalmai that his father has left and may never return. It begins to feel like they are a normal family with a normal life, but Laila how much they've all gone through to get here. Aziza still has nightmares at night and Laila dreams often of Mariam.