

The Map of Love Study Guide

The Map of Love by Ahdaf Soueif

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Plot Summary

The *Map of Love* tells the story of an artistic and articulate Englishwoman, Anna, who visits Egypt as a balm for the wounds of widowhood. Egypt is a land she has heard much about and whose sights she has admired in museum paintings. Anna is too adventurous to be content with the staid tourism of the late 19th Century, and dresses in men's clothing to see the Pyramids and Mt. Sinai. On the latter trip, allies of a political protester recently jailed kidnap her. The wife of the protester, Layla, and Layla's attorney brother, Sharif, to whose home Anna is taken, are indignant for her sake, befriend her, and Sharif vows to help Anna reach her original goal.

In the desert of Sinai, where Anna dresses as an Arab man, and particularly in the garden at St. Catherine's Monastery, where Anna is an Arab woman, she and Sharif develop deep feelings for each other. He is silent upon their return, and Anna resolves to return to England. Layla points out her brother's mistake and he proposes marriage. They set aside the many problems this will create for each - Anna will be shunned by fellow Britons in Egypt, and Sharif will be suspected of British bias by his numerous political enemies - marry, and move into the old house with Sharif's mother Zeinab and hermitic father al-Baroudi, twenty years ago a rebel against the British.

Anna assimilates to Egyptian culture, learns Arabic, and is drawn into the nationalist movement as translator, intermediary with anti-colonialists in London, and finally spokesperson with foreign visitors. Sharif works hard to fight the British Occupation legally and legislatively. They have a daughter, Nur al-Hayyah - literally the light of their lives - and, ten years after their marriage, Sharif begins thinking about retiring to private life. He is thinking of this when unknown assailants open fire on his carriage. Sharif dies and Anna keeps her promise to take Nur to England. Contact is lost with her Egyptian in-laws.

This story emerges from research performed by Amal from a trunk load of journals and letters discovered in New York City by an American, Isabel Parkman. At a party she mentions the find to a prominent older musician, which is sent to his sister, Amal, in Cairo. Amal becomes engrossed in the characters, and Isabel falls in love with Amal's sister 'Omar. The anti-terrorist, anti-Islamist policies of Egypt's President Mubarak cause problems on the family lands, and revive Amal's late-1960s radicalism. 'Omar is deeply involved in Palestinian politics. Only after making love with Isabel does 'Omar realize he was her mother's lover in 1961 and thus could be her father. They have a son, Sharif.

Part of the treasures in the trunk is one panel of a tapestry depicting Isis, Osiris, and Horus, ancient Egyptian deities. Anna finishes weaving the panels just before Sharif is assassinated. One panel goes to Anna and Nur, and thus into Isabel's trunk. A second goes to Layla and reaches 'Omar through his and Amal's father, Ahmad. A third panel is never accounted for. Isabel discovers it in her camera bag when she returns to Cairo after a long visit to the U.S. She claims it was put there by a mysterious woman, Umm Aya, whom she claims to have met in al-Baroudi's old cell. Conservators of the museum that once was Anna and Sharif's old house deny anyone could have gotten inside the

cell and any knowledge of an Umm Aya. Amal cannot accept Isabel's explanation, but finds no other.

"A Beginning"

"A Beginning" Summary

In April 1997, while in Cairo, Amal al-Ghamrawi recalls a terrifying dream of standing in a house she last visited ten years ago. Now a museum, it once belonged to a great-uncle, Sharif al-Baroudi, and is where her father grew up. On the suggestion of Amal's brother, an American, Isabel Parkman, has brought over a leather trunk she found in New York. It had belonged to Isabel's great-grandmother, Anna Winterbourne, and Isabel, who knows no Arabic, is anxious to learn if it will illuminate her own life's history. While in Egypt, Isabel is documenting how Egyptians view the approaching millennium.

"A Beginning" Analysis

"A Beginning" establishes how two women late in the 20th Century become involved in the story of one's great-grandmother, contained in an ancient chest, filled with letters, journals, and memorabilia. Note that Amal expects the American Isabel to bring up the usual Western criticisms of Islam and is relieved she does not. Western stereotypes will often be discussed.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Amal dreams of meeting her great uncle Sharif in a house she knew before it became a museum. Declaring this the story of Anna and Isabel, Amal turns to Anna's troubled journal entry written in autumn, 1897. Anna tries to be a faithful and loving wife but can find no way to make Edward's lot happier. In her girlish days, two years ago, she expected life to be different. Amal commiserates. Anna misses her deceased parents. She has often heard her beloved father-in-law, Sir Charles, talk about overseas campaigns and the evils of imperialism. Anna confesses in her journal, depression and wicked feelings towards a husband who feels none of her turmoil.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Chapter 1 continues "A Beginning" by dipping into the chest. Amal is already drawn into the story and enamored of the man who will marry Anna. If anything, Amal will become over involved in the story.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Isabel begins revealing bits of her life's story. She met Isabel's famous brother, 'Omar, at a New York party and is attracted to him, despite the age difference and rumors he is involved with terrorists. Table conversation turns to the millennium, and Isabel announces she will go to Egypt, which already has 6,000 years of recorded history. 'Omar promises to think of people Amal should see while there. Amal looks 'Omar up in *Who's Who* and learns he is a musician and a writer. Isabel recalls how her father named her after the beautiful goddess Isis, and how her anxious mother, Jasmine, was forever mourning the loss of a son.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Isabel and 'Omar are introduced to each other and to the reader. Hints are given of mutual attraction and of 'Omar's fame and notoriety for his pro-Palestinian politics. Isabel has been to Egypt, but is now planning a trip to study reactions there to the millennium. Tidbits of Egyptian cultural trivia are offered - and many more are to follow.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Amal is obsessed by Anna's brown journal and wants to reconstruct Anna's London years (1898-99). When Anna's husband, Edward, returns from a dishonest war in Sudan not himself, she tries in vain to engage him, and for relief, visits the South Kensington Museum to admire Frederick Lewis' luminous Oriental paintings. Anna reproaches her self-pity while Edward is in the grip of evil, and contrasts her father's proud service in the conquest of Egypt. Sir Charles has denounced the Sudan Convention as the ruin of the Empire. Stories of continuing atrocities there suggest why Edward is losing mind and soul. Daily he grows weaker and more feverish until he dies.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Anna's journal depicts the horror of being slowly widowed by an extreme case of what would today be called post-traumatic stress syndrome. Her war hero father-in-law has grown intensely and vocally anti-war and anti-imperial, as is his high-placed circle of friends. Anna believes her husband began appreciating that viewpoint before he died. Edward will haunt her for some time.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

After the funeral, Anna is left profoundly empty and guilty about not loving Edward enough for him to stay home, and only in January 1900, allows Lady Caroline Burke to coax her to Rome. As she reads, Isabel reflects on women being conditioned to blame themselves. Amal's musing about the Cairo of her childhood is interrupted by Isabel's announcement her mother is dying. Amal remembers her father's stories about Jasmine's birth in Paris -- and now that baby is dying? Jasmine, who never got over the loss of a son and never allowed her daughter to relax around her, lives in an Alzheimer's home. Amal wants to advise Isabel, "What's done is done."

A Roman opera moves Anna to a delirium of grief but also suggests a door by which she can return to society. Amal recalls her own Victorian novel-like years, living with a husband and children. Anna's journal draws her back: Anna has healed to the point she is again wondering if a colorful, tranquil world like in the paintings can exist.

Chapter 4 Analysis

While the subject of Chapter 4 is Anna's grieving period, more important is how closely Amal is identifying with her and is opening to a virtual stranger, Isabel, the history of her own life.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Isabel tells Amal about a hurried meeting with 'Omar in a New York restaurant. He knows her from somewhere. Isabel is in love with him, as are many women. Isabel visits her mother to tell her about the famous, older, divorced man she has met, but nothing registers until, suddenly, Jasmine grows chatty about a sweet, radical young man she once had been involved with. Shocked, Isabel presses for details, but Jasmine's mind drifts away.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Chapter 5 sets up the embarrassing three-way relationship (Amal-'Omar-Jasmine) that will be resolved only late in the novel. The in-and-out state of an Alzheimer patient's mind helps conceal that truth and bring out the complex, frustrating mother-and-daughter relationship.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Anna writes Caroline about arriving in Alexandria. Anna is frustrated trying to explain to her maid, Emily, the oddity of Egypt's position, independent from the Ottoman Sultan, but still nominally part of his empire, while being ruled by the British Agency. Anna rents a fairly hideous suite, and young James Barrington is proving to be a helpful friend. Amal is glad Anna is writing letters and consults microfilm archives to recreate Anna's Egypt. Anna is happy in a "jolly place," and receiving Barrington's help, seeing and understanding the sights. Anna inaugurates a new journal, thinking about Edward having also been in Alexandria.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Chapter 6, rather unexpectedly, brings Anna to Alexandria, Egypt, and being helped by the British Agency to settle in for a bit of tourism. Amal is becoming an ever more competent and enthusiastic researcher. Note the colorful detail on the Greek Orthodox Patriarch's arrival. Greek and Coptic Christians were still numerous in Egypt in the early 20th century and relations with the majority Moslems were good.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Amal pictures Anna preparing to investigate Egypt. Isabel is considering making a film of Anna's life, but Amal wants to keep Anna to herself. Anna writes Sir Charles from Cairo, describing her reception by Lord Cromer and discussing Arabic newspapers critical of the occupation. Sir Charles' views are well known and respected in Egypt. Anna has made one foray into the exotic bazaar. Emily fears being abducted and sold into slavery. Amal cannot picture Emily's age, appearance, or aspirations.

Anna writes Caroline about sightseeing and local reactions to the Khedive's visit to England. Anna realizes the views of Sir Charles' circle are despised by the Agency. Amal muses about how hard it must be to take over a country, believing things can be done only your way. Americans in Egypt act that way currently. Anna finds it odd that Britons care nothing about local ways, and is determined to educate herself in order to form her own views of Egypt.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Anna is gradually getting her bearings. Amal pictures Anna, preparing for bed, as another tragic heroine, Anna Karenina. Tolstoy twice more appears in the novel without a hint of his significance to Anna and here, Amal seems to have no more than mutual noble deportment in mind. Barrington is said to speak only colloquial Arabic, which is a sign of inferior scholarship.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Amal has organized the papers chronologically on "Anna's table" under her bedroom window. Amal knows how the story ends and wants to find out what happens along the way. Amal thinks about her married life and uncertain future, now that she is alone. She remembers the trees torn down to modernize Egypt. Amal's friend Tahiyya comes to visit, carrying her fourth child and an ultrasound of the fifth, whom God has commanded to come.

Isabel tries to convince Amal to go to New York with her, but Amal is tired of traveling. Progress on the millennium is slow because the Egyptians - like Amal - are cautious about telling Americans what is on their minds. Both are orphans, Amal realizes, and have broken marriages. Isabel has a dead brother, while she, a missing one. Amal has sons who fail to phone, while Isabel is childless. Isabel, at twenty-five is getting started, while Amal, at thirty-five feels close to her end.

Amal remarks on how taken Tahiyya was with Isabel's Arabic, and explains to her how to look up roots in a dictionary; then you add prefixes and infixes according to a template to create related words. Anxious to get back to work, Amal gives Isabel an update. Barrington is helping Anna learn Arabic. Isabel announces Amal looks like her brother. Amal has been wondering when 'Omar will come up.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Chapter 8 sets Amal and Isabel down together to compare them, and to picture Amal in her Egyptian milieu. Amal retains more western views than she thinks or wants, but is at home among the Arabs. She gives Isabel an elementary Arabic lesson at precisely the point in Anna's tale that she is beginning to study the language. The banter with Tahiyya is a foretaste of the extensive use of untranslated dialog to come. Place a marker in the Glossary.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

In January 1901, Anna feels disembodied as England's monarchy changes. She has visited an ancient church where the Virgin Mary and Jesus are said to have been sheltered. Amal visited this church long ago and, like Anna, tested whether the Virgin's eyes would follow her around. Amal recalls the tour guide's explanation of the twelve marble columns, one of them black to represent Judas Iscariot. Picturing Anna as restless, Amal recalls King Akhen Atun and Queen Nefertiti, who proclaimed the worship of the one god, Atun, but were eliminated by the jealous priests of Anum-Ra.

Anna records Dean Butcher's explanation of how her favorite Egyptian church can share a name with the most famous pre-Islamic Arabic poetry: *Mu'allaqah* means "hung" and the church hangs on an ancient Roman gateway, while the prizewinning poetry was displayed on the Ka'ba. Amal thinks about other meanings of *'allq*. The chants and incense of *Mu'allaqah* are helping Anna feel part of the tract of time and giving her peace.

A young clergyman, Temple Gairdner, has plans to "reclaim" souls that belong to Christ. Mrs. Butcher foresees "mischief" and doubts Gairdner will succeed. Anna has met the pleasant young Khedive and is fascinated by the grill that separates Egyptian women from men in the ballroom. Males of various nationalities and sects can be distinguished by clothing. The Muslims keep to themselves and do not dance. Leaving the banquet, Anna catches glimpse of an Arab notable she is sure she has seen before. Anna assures Caroline her healing has begun.

Anna writes Sir Charles about homesickness and a picnic at the Great Pyramid. She sketches and listens silently while the men - and Mrs. Butcher -- debate British rule in Egypt and growing opposition in the native newspapers. Most feel the Egyptians are generations away from being competent to rule themselves and British rule is better than French or German. Preparing explanatory notes for Isabel, Amal thinks about how Britain crushed the revolt by 'Urabi Basha, who wanted a constitution. Amal cannot help but see reflected in the modern Middle East, Boyle's argument that the fellaheen care nothing for the political rights championed by the educated minority. Egyptians assure people like Isabel that trouble cannot occur in Egypt. Anna feels divinely called to Egypt, but not yet as though she is part of Egypt. Something still eludes her.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Chapter 9 uses Anna's letters (and Amal's study and reflections on them) to sketch the political, social, and religious strata in 19th-century Egypt. There is a veneer of Egyptian life Anna has touched, and she needs now to penetrate it. Notice the highly veiled reference to Anna seeing an Arab notable, she thinks she has seen in Rome; it is her

future husband and the scene will be reviewed several times later in the novel. Note also the first hints of Amal's passion for the plight of the Arabs at the end of the 20th century. Much will be made later of showing how western interference in the dying Ottoman Empire created the situations that fill the headlines today.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Amal is disappointed that Anna's green journal skips two months, but happy to realize she and Isabel are cousins. Anna's French son-in-law, not keen on her Egyptian connection, has severed ties to Amal's grandmother's line. Amal sees the project somehow "soothing the wounds" of the ancestors. Digging in the trunk, Amal finds a small blue book and, in Anna's broach, a key to open it. The missing months are chronicled there.

Anna is anxious to keep the Agency from knowing she disguised herself as an English gentleman to ride to the Mameluke tombs, when she and Sabir are forced into a closed carriage. Told she has been taken political hostage, Anna wonders if this is why Fate has brought her here - to give Egypt a constitution. Herded into what appears to be a granary, Anna tells Sabir to admit her identity, and she is shown to richly furnished quarters, suggesting the captors wish her no harm. Amal is surprised Anna is so intrepid, and muses she might have wanted something out-of-the-ordinary to happen. Amal can picture Sabir's misery at having allowed things to go so wrong and amazement at seeing Anna, begin writing. Anna's frightened captors send a messenger to ask for advice from the Basha or his sister. Amal opens her grandmother Layla's sixty-four-page gray-bound notebook and begins translating the Arabic for Isabel.

Layla is discomforted, seeing Lady Anna dressed as a man, lying on the diwan. To see various sights, Anna bandages her hair, rides like a man, and pretends to be mute. They are bound for St. Catherine's Monastery in search of authentic songs and stories. Layla fetches Anna a shawl, orders the captors to stay in her father's shrine, and lies down to sleep near Anna, praying for all.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Begin consulting the genealogical table at the front of the novel to keep track of the growing cast of characters, and keep looking up unfamiliar terms in the glossary. Amal discovers two new sources for the story: Anna's secret journal, about a trip into the Sinai she wants know one to know about, and Layla's Arabic-language diary for the same period. Thus, most events will now be viewed from two viewpoints and coordinated by Amal. Chapter 10 gives the first view inside the *haramlek*, the part of the house occupied and governed by women. Anna is where she wants to be: Behind the *mashrabiyya* (lattice-work). It has been helpful that Anna's letters are in italics; Layla's entries are also set off typographically, but less clearly.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Amal cannot sleep after a night out on the town with Isabel. She thinks about the train of events set off by her grandmother's first meeting with Anna. Layla and radical lawyer-husband Husni, have one son, Ahmad, who marries a Palestinian and brings his wife and son 'Omar, home to Egypt after Israeli independence strips them of their lands. 'Omar immigrates to New York, where he achieves fame as a musician. Amal is born in Egypt, lives with her mother during her widowhood, and goes abroad after her mother's death. Egypt draws her back, but she finds it changed. She enlists Isabel to search for bits of lost Cairo. At the Mu'allaqah, explanation of the black pillar has become politically correct, and they discover the hieroglyph for water carved into the baptismal font. They eat, shop, and join in celebrating a wedding they come upon.

Next afternoon, Amal returns to her research, but is interrupted by a visit from 'Am Abu el-Ma'ati, the manager of Amal's lands in Tawasi. He delivers village news, and then cautiously informs Amal the schools and clinic, established by her ancestors, have been closed by the government. Desperate to fight terrorism, the government has declared the teachers subversive and shut everything down. The countryside is boiling. Tawasi knows Amal's generosity and zeal for her ancestors' memory, and wants her to talk to the government for them. It has been a long time since Amal has faced a real-life problem. While everyone reveres her father, Amal has no contacts. She is loath to visit the ministry, where she once saw a friend, Mansur, blown up. Abu el-Ma'ati and Tahiyya will not take no for an answer. Amal figures Isabel is discreet and sensible enough to take along; she will introduce her as her brother's American fiancée.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Chapter 11 provides perhaps the fullest exposition of the family tree, before introducing the problems being experienced on Amal's ancestral land. The government is cracking down on family institutions that have existed for ninety years. Amal will be pulled into the fracas as an independent American woman, but needs local male "pull" as the story unfolds.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

In Upper Egypt, Amal resumes telling how their grandmothers meet. 'Omar has read Amal's research and figured out Isabel is a long-lost cousin. Amal tells him of a Pharaonic tapestry that matches one he has in his study. She asks him to bring it the next time he visits so they can compare them. Amal confesses she is lost in Anna's journals, a hundred years ago.

Amal's grandmother Layla rushes to her mother's house. Anna writes about awakening serenely, feeling she is in a favorite Oriental painting. Recalling her kidnapping, Anna jolts upright, but is still in the painting, for sleeping beside her is an Egyptian lady, framed in the *mashrabiyya*. Anna recalls tales in which abducted young men turn out to be women, and they become like sisters with their abductors. Anna feels again, not unreasonably, she is in safe hands.

In Layla's version, she awakens to see a beautiful golden-haired European woman in road-dirty, men's riding clothes, and apologetic about speaking no Arabic. In French they begin weaving a friendship, as Layla explains how Anna came to be abducted and how her brother will handle the hotheads who seized her. Layla finds Anna fearless and natural, and forgets she belongs to the nation that occupies Egypt, has banished her uncle, confined her father in his shrine for 18 years, and now holds her husband in jail. Anna's quick mind and sympathy for things Egyptian give them much to talk about. Layla feels Anna is sketching, in her mind, every story she hears about the family and by nightfall, has an overall picture. Layla, in turn, has learned about Anna's family and what attracts her to Egypt. Layla is most taken by Anna's deep violet eyes.

Anna writes about the smiling woman on the opposite diwan. After playing dumb, Layla proves fluent in French and eager to put Anna at her ease. Not given to histrionics, Anna sits happily in one of her beloved paintings. She has the oddest sensation she has met Layla before. Between Anna's questions and Layla's natural bent to teach, they cover most of 18th and 19th Century Colonial History and Anna realizes how much she has to learn about Egypt. Anna's abductors are retaliating for the arrest of Layla's husband, during a peaceful demonstration. Layla dislikes the methods and is sure her husband and brother will agree. Anna thinks the procession that slowed their carriage as they approached the Abdin Palace might have been this demonstration.

Layla writes of her brother arriving angry but trying to be reasonable with the older of the abductors. Husni has been legally detained and can be freed by due process of law, not by breaking the law. Snatching a woman tourist is stupid enough; bringing her to his home without his knowledge is unimaginable. Abducting ordinary people is never an act of heroism. It is always wrong and always has repercussions - it allows the British to accuse them of fanaticism and sets back eighteen years worth of work.



Anna describes how Layla's brother, Sharif Basha, enters and they are introduced. Anna is certain she has seen him twice: at the Khedive's ball, and in Constanzi. Anna brushes away his apology and thanks him for fine treatment. Anna realizes how badly she looks and is happy, polite Oriental men give women no more than a quick glance. Sharif's tone makes clear he thinks Anna's adventure folly, and he intends to return her to her hotel and cooperate with whatever action she might take. Sharif and Layla both register surprise when Anna contradicts the plan: since no harm has come to them, she and Sabir will continue on to Sinai. Sharif feels obliged to accompany her personally, and Layla pinches Anna's arm to keep her from objecting as she shakes off her own surprise at her brother's plan. Sharif needs a day to attend to business, and then they will make up for lost time. Layla must return home to her son tonight and is glad to have met Anna. Alone on the divan, Anna is angry Sharif has dared to order her around, but figures Sir Charles would have acted the same way. She is concerned about Lord Cromer's reaction and the risk and inconvenience Sharif is taking. Sharif lends Anna a silk dressing gown for the night and arranges safe time in the bathroom. Anna tries to bring up her concerns about the trip, but Sharif brushes them stiffly aside. Anna bathes, heartily eats the food left for her, and lies down, wondering whether Sharif remembers seeing her too.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Bouncing between Layla and Anna's parallel accounts, we learn how they meet and become instant best friends, and how Anna is introduced to her future husband, Sharif. Thus far we know only Sharif is a wealthy and important man. We will see he is one of the top leaders of the nationalist movement. Note the Arab siblings' reaction to Anna's standing her ground - at one point Anna surprises even herself by her boldness.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Husni is released after three nights, as Sharif predicted, but is sad to leave his comrades in jail and miss the chance of setting forth his grievances in court. Husni believes everything can be solved by discussion. While knitting, Layla hears son Ahmad playing happily in the fountain with Anna. Layla is happy to have such a charming guest and sorry Anna will leave tomorrow. There is so much Anna wants to understand about Egypt that Layla could provide. It is not like Sharif to decide suddenly to journey across the desert with strangers - much less with an English woman. Perhaps the confirmed bachelor is attracted to Anna. She and their mother, Zeinab, have given up on him marrying again. Sharif's first marriage lasts six months and to Zeinab, it is the honorable thing for him to take the blame and return the large monetary gift. The bride and her family are relieved to be rid of the politically involved Baroudi family, and Sharif cannot see living with someone who does not share his zeal. Thereafter, Sharif prefers to remain alone, remembering his father's philandering. Since 1882, when Uncle Mustafa went into political exile and father began his retreat, Sharif has been head of the family. He also practices law, sits on the Council, pushing reform, and maintains a polite but distant relationship with the Khedive's court.

Sharif approaches the haramlek where Ahmad toddles between Anna and Layla and the boy runs to his uncle. Sharif speaks French to accommodate Anna, inviting his sister to accompany them. Anna is to travel in a litter. Both decline. Anna will travel as a Frenchman, "Armand Demange." Years later, reminiscing about how they fall in love, Sharif will recall not the Khedive's ball; where Anna was one of the half-naked European women (albeit better behaved than most), nor when she stood up to him in her ridiculous riding costume, but while she was playing with Ahmed, by the fountain. Sharif will also recall Anna's reaction to the name, which proves she remembers meeting in Italy. They will discuss her missing her old life and language, her old wedding ring and letters from Edward, which Sharif puts off reading until they grow old.

Anna writes Sir Charles about the Egyptian lady she has met, a descendent of one of the leaders of the Rebellion with which Sir Charles sympathizes. Layla's husband was briefly arrested but released with the help of his influential, patriotic, well-bred brother-in-law, Sharif. Through them, Anna is learning the "talking classes" of Egypt demand full self-government. She summarizes how the Khedive views the nationalists and mentions complicating factors like the debt and the Sultan in Constantinople. Anna is glad to have acquaintances that can help her better understand Egypt, and is amazed how Europeans huddle together. She is determined to master Arabic.



Chapter 13 Analysis

Chapter 13 brings to an end Part 1, "A Beginning," by filling in how Sharif happens to be unattached. By jumping forward to show Sharif and Anna reminiscing about events depicted in the present, we know they will be together and happy. Note that Sharif declines to read Anna's letters from her first husband until they reach old age together; this hints subtly that, that is not their destiny. Egypt's complex political landscape begins to be sketched.



"An End of a Beginning"

"An End of a Beginning" Summary

Anna and Sharif are bound for Sinai; Amal and Isabel are bound for Tawasi. Isabel considers how alike Amal and her brother 'Omar are, friendly and bemused, although Amal seems more reserved. During a rest stop, however, Amal breaks into conversation with a *fella* taking sugar cane to market. Isabel worries what she will do if anything happens to Amal - the newspapers say this is the heart of terrorist territory. At the first security barricade, Amal is warned ominously to take care of her brother's American fiancée, lest foreign blood be shed here. After a second barricade, the car overheats and they wait until a passer-by tows them into a ramshackle town. While the radiator is being repaired, Isabel nearly goes into heatstroke, and she cannot remember when she was as dependent as she is on suddenly adventurous Amal. The women are shaken, watching three bound, bloodied peasants being jammed into a kiosk by authorities.

Isabel feels she is in a movie about Mexico as they drive up to Amal's house. Isabel misses her father and forgets the arrestees while Amal happily shows her about. The house is crowded with pictures, including several watercolors signed "Anna." One depicts a bright courtyard with a child watching the fountain and a man, back to the viewer, pointing where something is to be planted - or buried. Another shows a man lying on a divan with a woman crouched on the floor beside him. Isabel tries to guess who are in the photographs. One shows her grandparents and father as a young man. Another, in Layla's old bedroom, which Amal assigns to Isabel, shows her Sharif as a young, black-bearded sheikh, the image Isabel most wants to see. Unpacking, Isabel finds a large green flag with white cross and crescent intertwined, in a drawer. Amal explains it is the 1919 flag of national unity. Neither Isabel nor Amal has brought up what they saw on the side of the road.

After sundown, village women arrive, like walking black tents carrying food. Laying aside their black wrappings indoors, they are a riot of color. Some have small children, whom they allow to wander. Isabel struggles to get the gist of what is being said. Some women are concerned with the clinic closed; they cannot get contraception. The teachers could be terrorists. No one in Tawasi has caused trouble. The Cairo government is big and is preempting terrorists by arrests and destruction of property. They doubt Amal can accomplish anything with the local police. They hope Isabel can get her government to cancel the subsidies that fuel inflation. Isabel blames the World Bank, but the women are adamant the biggest country in the world is responsible. Peasants break their backs for nothing and young people have no hope of living like human beings. Outside, Tawasi's children sing about being frightened but never shamed.

Isabel sits on Layla's bed in silence, studying Sharif's portrait: arrogant but sad, proud yet controlled, and holding back. She sees 'Omar in the portrait and yearns for him. She goes over in her mind the five times they have met. She fell in love the first time, asked



him about fundamentalism on the third, and on the fifth cooked dinner and showed him Anna's chest. Amal joins Isabel, who wonders why the walls hold no family portrait of her and her boys - for historical continuity. 'Omar looks more like his distant uncle than he does his father; they share an energy, an awareness of being more than they let on. Isabel is relieved to talk about 'Omar. They have not had sex, nor has 'Omar stated whether he shares Isabel's feelings, but she senses a chemistry, dismisses the age difference, and wants 'Omar badly. Amal suggests 'Omar wants to keep her from getting hurt, to which Isabel objects this would not occur to him if he loved her. Isabel has never felt this way before, even when she was married. 'Omar must have realized they are cousins. Amal thinks 'Omar fancies the idea of Isabel and his sister meeting and working together. Amal reverts to the age difference when Isabel begs sisterly help, and Isabel announces she will do something about 'Omar when she returns to America.

Amal returns from an unsuccessful mission to the chief of police and joins Isabel looking at her ancestors' portrait. Isabel asks what Ahmad would do in this situation and he advises she do the same. Amal fills Isabel in on some of the terrible things she has heard, about ordinary citizens being rounded up and women kinfolk of suspects being held hostage to affect surrenders. Some of the trouble is "sectarian" between Copts and Muslims, and the U.S. Congress has made things worse by calling for the "protection" of the Christian minority - a replay of British policy one hundred years earlier. Even the Coptic patriarch has asked the U.S. to butt out. 'Am Abu el-Ma'ati arrives with a delegation to report dangerous new clashes between armed fellaheen and police. Some landowners are willing to compromise on the new laws, but others are hard heads. Government plans to compensate the fellaheen are empty: they will receive barren desert land.

Amal and Isabel drive home to Cairo in companionable silence. Amal is conscious of her promise to follow up on her promise to help the village, but is more interested in following Anna into the Sinai. Isabel is ready to return to New York and see 'Omar. Isabel asks why the man who helped with their car refused payment; Amal explains he is too proud to be seen by a foreigner needing money - even though he obviously does.

"An End of a Beginning" Analysis

"An End of a Beginning" teasingly postpones following Anna and Sharif into the Sinai by describing a trip to the old homestead, embroiled with the current Egyptian government as deeply as it was one hundred years ago. We glimpse how contemporary Arab women behave and talk among themselves indoors. There is a hint Amal will contact an important figure in Tawasi for help once supplications in Cairo fail. Isabel's near-desperate love for 'Omar is clarified, and the women's budding friendship will soon be conducted long-distance.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Anna is happy reaching the Sinai desert, whose vastness no book can describe. She envies the men who sleep under the stars, while she occupies a tent. She scarcely trusts herself to write about Sharif. The first question discussed in the courtyard is how and where to start the journey. Layla explains the pros and cons of appearing as an Englishman, an Arab man, and an Egyptian woman on the train to Suez, and they decide the last is best. At Suez, Anna will transform into an Arab man. Layla brushes Anna's hair into a tight braid and explains various styles of wearing the male headgear (*kufiyya* and *'uqal*). Anna continues to feel guilty over inconveniencing Sharif and wishes Layla could come along. Layla tucks a silk dress into Anna's saddleback, in case she tires of men's dress. They embrace and assure one another they will meet again.

Anna dresses as an Arab man, and then covers herself head-to-toe like a female. At the train station, Mutlaq, seemingly with eyes in the back of his head, joins the protection. When important acquaintances do not recognize Anna, she decides the veil is liberating. They cross the canal, meet Sharif, and Anna transforms into a man, dressed identically to Sharif except for his two carbines. Anna learns to mount a camel and they set out in profound silence. At dusk, Anna understands how the Red Sea got its name, and feels a need to recognize such magnificence by praying for peace of mind and heart as the men perform their evening rituals.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Chapter 14 is given over entirely to detail on Arab costume and attitudes, described with Anna's wry perception.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Cairo is abuzz as new laws are debated and Amal is diverted from Anna in the desert by new contacts with old friends. Tareq 'Atiyya, her father's friend's son, declares Amal has not changed in twenty years. He is very successful, and more handsome than Amal remembers. When Amal brings up the problems in Tawasi, Tareq has his secretary ring up the governor, who is immediately not available. Amal and Tareq go to lunch, talk about the old days, her marriage and separation abroad, and his working to balance history and roots on his land.

Tareq intends to hire Israeli consultants to redesign the infrastructure. Amal is appalled at this betrayal of the Palestinian cause. Tareq objects the Palestinians are now doing business with Israelis, but Amal says they are gaining a foothold to control the entire Middle East. Tareq feels he, not the Israelis, derive advantage by using their technology, but Amal bitterly remembers the demonstrations they attended and is hurt and offended by his new attitude that economics determines everything. Back in the office, Tareq gets the school reopened, provided the teachers are approved. Amal will have to submit names for vetting.

Isabel wants to see the old house, which is now a museum. The feel and smell of the past wraps itself around Amal as they look at rooms where various events they now know about occurred, but are forbidden to enter Sheikh Haroun's shrine, now a proper mosque and padlocked. As they walk around the district, Isabel announces she will return to the U.S. next month, to see 'Omar and her mother. Isabel recalls Jasmine calling Anna a pattern for women in their family: marrying foreigners and living far from home.

Amal rejoins Anna and Sharif in the Sinai. Anna writes about an evening of revelry and wishes she could describe it to Sir Charles and Caroline. She will do so after returning to England. She has grown uneasy about wasting fourteen days of Sharif's time, although his expression betray no concern. Sharif seems distant, courteous but removed, and no true friendship can develop under such conditions. They accept hospitality from Sheikh Salim ibn Husayn and see 'Alawi weaving worthy of the South Kensington Museum. Anna is sorry only that she cannot mingle with the women. Amal quotes from Anna's copy of a Thomas Cook guidebook, demeaning the Bedouin as rude, ignorant, lazy, greedy, ragged, careless, but cheerfully content.

Anna wishes she had more time to see, think, and write. Every day brings vistas completely new: bare plains, oases, outcroppings of rock, the diverse bird life of the Red Sea, and then the 1,000-foot cliffs of the final approach to St. Catherine's. Two routes are possible, and Anna and Sharif select the, more spectacular but difficult one, *Nugb Hawa*. Much of the time they must travel single-file, but sometimes ride abreast, and speak privately. Anna declares she would not have gotten as much out of the trip had



she gone alone or in a group of Europeans. Sharif is surprised at Anna's willfulness, which she declares has always been there but never exercised so strongly before. Emerging from the canyons and rejoining the pack, Anna is struck with awe at the sight of Sinai, is convinced God spoke there to Moses, and expects to experience an epiphany herself. She prays for Edward's soul, wishing he had been a pilgrim rather than a mercenary. Perhaps he would be alive and at peace.

Anna describes the sanctuary. They have climbed *Jebel Moussa* at sunrise, listening to the muezzin's call to prayer. It is afternoon and the monks are at prayer. St. Catherine's dates from the 6th century, and its small courtyard mosque is a later addition. Throughout the ages the two houses of worship have taken turns sheltering the other from enemies. During the night, Anna tries on Layla's dress in her cell, and the steps out into the dark garden for air. Sharif emerges from the chapel, and they sit beside one another. Neither can sleep. Sharif has been looking at the bones of long-dead monks. He asks why Anna has come to Egypt - for the first time using her name. She explains being drawn by the light and color in paintings. He asks her whether it is better to take action and risk a fatal mistake or take no action and die anyway. Anna answers one must know oneself before that can be answered. Anna is surprised to hear herself declared wise, beautiful, and headstrong. Sharif blames the bones for his boldness. At the door, Sharif holds Anna's hands and brushes one with a kiss, wishing her good night. She does not sleep well.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Chapter 15 reverts to Anna and Sharif's Sinai story after showing Amal and Isabel together for a last time, touring the museum that was once the family home. We also see Amal recruit a prosperous, well-connected old friend to help re-open the school and clinic. The government's condition is psychologically impossible, so trouble still lies ahead in Tawasi. Sexual roles and attitudes are again examined in the trip to Sinai, beautiful word pictures are painted, and the story of St. Catherine's monastery is recounted showing Christians and Muslims can be friends, despite very different attitudes towards such things as dry bones.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Amal sleeps poorly the night she reads about St. Catherine's because she remembers meeting Irving in London and having her life changed -- but not improved. She can imagine being with Tareq, except he is married and thinking of doing business with the Israelis. She finds dealing with events one hundred years ago easier than those today.

To get Isabel into the Atelier 'am Ghazzali, Amal says her brother's fiancée is on a march to end the suffering of the women and children of Iraq. In the smoky room Amal's old professor, Ramzi Yusuf, is playing chess with Mahgoub al-Tilmisani. Deena al-'Ulama, teaches mathematics at Cairo University and volunteers for several causes, is correcting proofs. Yusuf wins and turns his attention on the visitors. Amal explains Isabel's millennium project, but Yusuf dismisses it, claiming both he is too old and everything will stay the same. Young people must struggle, he declares, or life has no meaning. They laugh about how a large irrigation project, Toshki, is supposed to solve all problems.

Arwa Salih, a leader of student movement in the early 1970's enters and is called over to them. Amal remembers how, after sit-ins failed, Arwa went mainstream. Arwa boldly predicts things will change because Israel will establish an empire under a Pax Americana. Deena, the tired militant, remarks that people already speak about Israeli brains and Arab hands. Mahgoub points beyond Palestine to Algeria, Lebanon, the Sudan, Libya and Iraq, but Deena interrupts to criticize Arabs for accepting the role of victim. Yusuf says history will view this as a continuum with Egypt's role in the dying Ottoman Empire; the Khedive's love of modernism, expressed in the Suez Canal project, left Egypt open to control by European investors. National debt mattered more than national movement in determining there would be an Occupation. Deena objects the British came at a particularly crucial time in Egyptian history and froze their development towards democracy, education, industrialization, and modernity. Ramzi interrupts to ask what Egypt has done in fifty-six years of independence. Arwa points across the border, where Israelis gained a boost from the Balfour Declaration, but would not have sat back and lamented their helplessness without it. Quiet, intense Mustafa al-Sharqawi declares Egyptians are slogan-spouting cowards, who sold out 'Urabi in 1919, and accepted army rule in 1952. Current Egyptian intellectuals talk to one another but do not connect with ordinary people. Amal objects they have television, but Mustafa sniffs they watch only soaps.

Amal changes the subject to the fundamentalists. Ramzi dismisses them, but Mahgoub observes they receive special treatment in Egypt's non-democracy. Sharqawi says they too have been hit hard and been driven underground, but refuse to go away. Arwa observes the fundamentalists tell people they need not accept being the dumping ground of the west and this appeals to jobless graduates. Mahgoub tells a jinni-in-the-bottle joke and the company orders dinner. They ask the waiter where Egypt will be in



the year 2000, and debate his clichy answer: "Under the protection of God." Do simple pieties fuel or oppose killings and bombings? The debate touches on Sadat's encouragement of fundamentalists as a deterrent to leftists and their arming and funding in Afghanistan. Deena answers Amal's question about whether fundamentalists could come to power in free elections: Yes, because they are well-organized, funded and have a ready-made publicity machine in every mosque; however, because they have no political program beyond "Islam is the solution," there would be chaos. Ramzi brings them back to history: Mahmoud Sami al-Baroudi over one hundred years ago had a seven-point program still valid and needed today. Fundamentalist will strike from the list free press and elections.

Amal mentions her trip with Isabel to Minya and the shocking number of barricades and arrests of ordinary fellaheen. She is told the government is in a war against terrorism and the police are free to do anything. Deena points out landowners with connections are calling "terrorist" to get unwanted people off their land. She is documenting cases, but it is hard to get fellaheen to start legal actions. No one will give Amal a list of teachers' names because of centuries of distrust. Amal agrees with Ramzi one cannot escape one's history, but Deena objects: The problem is Egyptians are allowing others to *make* their history. Arwa observes in an era of two superpowers one could negotiate a path between them, but now there is no space for gaining power - and power makes history. Deena maintains Egyptians do have power, despite what they are told, and cannot afford to fight among themselves. Mahgoub believes the Islamists would be defeated in a true, free democracy, but Mustafa is sure Egyptians would tune out televised debates. Deena says the question is moot: The government has opted for a security solution and is determined to prove itself more Muslim than the Islamists. For all his faults, Nasser had an Idea that embodied the will of the people. Now there is no Idea. Radical Islamism alone is left after all other ideologies have failed. Capitalism only frustrates people who can afford nothing. Arwa approves of Isabel's comparison of the U.S. and the last years of the Roman Empire.

Deena suggests some actions: Speak out against sanctions on Iraq, put a time limit on the so-called peace process lest Israel further - irrevocably -- modify the landscape. What is happening to the Palestinians and Iraqis today will happen to Egyptians tomorrow if hypocritical "normalization" continues. Mahgoub raises the scepter of a cut-off of American aid, but Deena insists 70% of their foreign aid feeds directly back into the U.S. economy. Better to mobilize Egyptians themselves to set their economy straight. A phone call from Deena's son draws her away. Mahgoub addresses to Isabel his condemnation of U.S. foreign policy, and she does not argue. Ramzi waves his hand: In 2000 A.D. Egypt will still be Egypt, as it has been for millennia.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Chapter 16 fashions a debate among Egyptian intellectuals to raise the major problems of contemporary Egypt and the wider Middle East, and suggest the current situation stems directly from Anna and Sharif's day. Oddly, Isabel says nothing about what her

research has revealed. Presumably she is not keeping up with the torrent of Arabic being spoken.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Amal contemplates the advantage of history over real life: One can re-read the record, research contexts, and jump forward to learn the ending in ways the original participants were unable. Anna, writing on April 3, 1901, is concerned three days have passed since they returned to the Baroudi house and Layla greeted her as a sister, but she has heard nothing from Sharif. For her western friends, Anna has invented a story that omits the kidnapping. She feels funny once again, dressing as a Western woman.

Back at her hotel, Anna writes Sir Charles, appreciating modern conveniences but missing the simplicity of the desert. The Agency's uncaring pronouncements now annoy her. She reports meeting through Layla serious, well-educated young Nur al-Huda; her companion-tutor, the widowed Madame Richard; and Eugynie le Brun, wife of an Egyptian pasha and a recent convert to Islam. The guest of honor is an Alexandrian writer on the "woman question," Zeinab Fawwaz. Anna finds the evening enlightening, challenging as it does the usual view of the harem. Amal finds Anna charged and invigorated by Sinai and by meeting prominent Egyptian women.

By April 10, Anna has heard nothing from Sharif, but has enjoyed a musical evening at Barrington's where she reveals her new first-hand knowledge of the native character to put down the blowhards. Three days later, Anna reports to Caroline on an evening of theater, watched from the plush red Royal Harem box at the Cairo Opera House. She found being "exquisitely cocooned" delightful. Afterwards at supper with Mme. Rushdi, Anna is charmed by her elderly husband who approves of Anna's plans to learn Arabic and understand Egypt. Anna has twice been to Layla's beautiful house and has met her dignified, welcoming mother, Zeinab. The language barrier prevents conversation, but Anna admires how Zeinab plays with her grandson. Anna wonders whether one of her new Egyptian friends would find a visit to England charming.

In a journal entry dated April 20, which marks the beginning of the year 1319 A.H., Anna is frustrated. She knows Sharif is in Cairo, and rereading her journal convinces her they had become friends. Neither Layla nor her mother mentions Sharif. Layla's diary also describes the return from Sinai, first her own happiness at seeing Anna again, but then observing her brother's unusual and growing abstractness and restlessness. Sharif responds sharply when Layla mentions Hussein's happy marriage to a French woman, which is different. Layla prefers to judge people as individuals rather than representatives of nationalities. Sharif thanks his sister curtly.

Anna next writes to Caroline, reacting to news from England but claiming her recent impressions of Egypt are too vague to record on paper. Three days later, however, Anna is brimming with information for Caroline. Anna has attended Princess Nazli Fadhil's literary/political salon that also featured Oriental dancing. Anna is sure she is too plain to be invited back to the princess' palace, and is not upset by this. Next day, Anna updates



Sir Charles, who has said visitors from Egypt speak well of Anna. English acquaintances clearly disapprove of Anna's new Egyptian friends. Men ignore her comments and women are more tiring than they believe the harem to be. Anna confesses she understands much of what Sir Charles used to speak about and agrees the only honorable thing for Britain to do is leave Egypt. On April 30, Anna confides in her diary she is uncomfortable among Europeans, and Lord Cromer has refused to listen to her ideas on education. Layla's face grows hard when Anna mentions she tried to speak with Cromer, who only pretends to be serving Egypt. Anna tells her journal the joy she felt in Sinai is fading and she is beginning to think about returning to England. She loves Layla, Ahmad, and the Egyptian ladies she has met, but English society is unpleasant. She frustrates herself, looking for Sharif in the street and expecting a note. She can end this only by moving away.

The entry breaks off, Amal presumes, because a letter is delivered from Sharif, lamenting news through his sister that Anna intends to return to England and declaring succinctly that he loves her. He is old, does not know her at all, has never fantasized about marriage, and yet is overcome by her. Since their return he has avoided her with difficulty. Circumstances work against him and "dear, sweet Anna," but Sharif wants to be hers. It takes a while for joy to shake off Anna's disbelief. She orders Emily to stop packing for England.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Chapter 17 continues to show Anna blending into Egyptian society, and emphasizes her growing impatient with her smug, insulated countrymen. She is too struck with Sharif, however, to bear living in the Egypt without him, and Layla gets her brother to act just before it is too late.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Holding that fateful letter in her hand, Amal imagines Sharif at her current age: Tall, vigorous, dominating a room. She is half in love with her late great-uncle, about whom she has heard her father's stories, examined published accounts, and read his writings. In Layla's account, Amal pictures 'Omar; in Anna's telling, she sees an enigmatic, romantic hero. Amal's task is to weave the strands together to form a portrait of what he must have been.

Like his friend Sheikh Muhammad 'Abdu, Sharif has spent a lifetime holding himself in check, acquiring wisdom and diplomacy. They had dared much in the cause of Egyptian freedom, and seen comrades die on the battlefield and scaffold, and be exiled. They have learned caution and calculation. Seven weeks later, in the garden of St. Catherine's, Sharif is taken by surprise by Anna and cannot shake her. In the sugar cane fields, Sharif wonders whether Anna is moved like him by sunsets, men have watched for millennia. Sharif and his uncle intend to establish a school, supplementary to the *kuttab* (mosque school), offering boys and girls courses in arithmetic, history, and geography. This will prepare them for active citizenship. Sharif has thoughts on all the topics of the day - wine shops, moneylenders, cooperative banking, and what crops to plant - which he shares with people as he walks home from evening prayers. Sharif washes, changes, and rides out to dinner with Uncle Mustafa. Nephew Shukri al-'Asali, Sharif's boyhood friend, rides out to meet him.

Destined to be hanged by the Turks in 1915, Shukri speaks, at dinner, of their inability to stand up to the British and the Zionists. They care nothing that 650,000 Arabs - Christian and Muslim - have lived for centuries in the lands they propose to colonize. Twenty years of passport restrictions have made no difference and the Great Powers are now calling that "discrimination." Jews are coming from Russia, Romania, and Germany, and the U.S. is being pressured by influential people to support their cause. Shukri intends to go to Cairo and Alexandria to whip up public opinion and talk to the newspapers. The Jews have many ways to make life uncomfortable for the fellaheen. The British - meaning Cromer - must be won over. Zeinab forestalls further talk of politics by asking for news about the family.

After evening prayers Sharif rides into Cairo to the Club Muhammad 'Ali. Everyone of importance is there, including Harry Boyle, who has made it a habit to drop in briefly every few days. Sharif wants to talk with Prince Ahmad Fuad, whom he finds playing pool with Prince Yusuf Kamal, his emotional opposite. Sharif is pleased to be involved in three projects: A museum, a university, and an art school. All must be privately funded because Cromer claims no public money is available for culture or education. Sharif wonders if Anna is dining in the same place, at the same time as Cromer, perhaps being wooed by some European, forgetting him, returning to her own. The British will never leave of their own free will. They spend ?1 million a year on the Occupation, taking all



steps necessary to prevent an uprising. Cromer upholds due process of law, but gets around it through the Special Laws that govern confrontations between British and Natives. Sharif has defended such cases. Cromer favors ending the capitulations, which would put Egypt even more completely into his hands. Generations are being lost to British rule. Muslims and Copts have been taught to distrust one another.

Kamal interrupts Sharif's thoughts. He has a passion for art and is willing to fund the school if all else fails. "Where has it all gone?" is a favorite saying - meaning centuries of artifacts looted and sold off by the Ottomans. The prince says sadly that people are accusing him of heresy for encouraging representational art, and shows Sharif a letter warning him of the fires of hell that await idolaters and encouraging him to oppose the unjust and infidel occupier. Kamal fears the people could be incited to riot and he cannot afford to be seen as colluding with the British. Sharif is amused at his own idea of accusing the fundamentalists of conspiring with the British to hold Egypt back; fight for the principle faith is one thing and civil institutions another. Kamal thinks a broad debate is ill-timed. Sharif volunteers to talk with Sheikh Muhammad 'Abdu, and Kamal is sure a pronouncement from the Mufti will help.

On the ride home, Sharif's mind wanders again to what Anna is doing. She has lain in wait and taken his long-neglected heart prisoner. Sharif checks the mail, including an invitation to the opening of Mustafa Kamel's new school in Breem. He wonders why he cannot bring himself to like Kamel, a fiery, patriotic young rhetorician. Perhaps he is jealous? Perhaps he suspects Kamel's closeness to the Sultan and the French? At least Kamel has started a newspaper, which is more than Sharif can boast of in his forty-fifth year of life.

Pacing on his balcony, Sharif wishes his mother were there for advice about Anna. Mother does not want Sharif falling out with Cousin Shukri over politics as he did with his father. People had expected al-Baroudi to hide in the shrine a short while, but it has grown into decades, while fellow revolutionaries were hanged or exiled. Father claims to be proud of his exiled uncle and wishes he had followed him - but stays in his shrine. Sharif has often wished he were not son of that father. Sharif is certain Anna will not be like his first wife. Why must this smiling woman be English? What will it be like to leave home, knowing she will be there when he returns? What will she think about a country where you need a religious *fatwa* to open a school of fine art? She did, after all, come to Egypt on the strength of admiring a painting. Sharif wonders if this is simply lust. Sharif doubts if they had met overseas, they could have had just a brief affair; Anna is too serious and deep. Her husband was a fool to leave her to fight half a world away. Sharif wonders how he will feel about Anna having been with another man. It will not matter. They will have enough time left to make something of life together. Sharif gets little sleep that night.

Sharif sits with Ya'qub Artin and Isma'il Sabri in the former's library. Sharif confides during the trip he felt like Anna was "inventing" him and now he is inventing her. What will happen when she sees his non-romantic side: His doubts and despair? Can they ever know each other - or will life together be lonelier than life apart? Artin turns to prodding Sabri to publish his collected poetry. Critics claim Sabri's brief, modern style is



destroying the genre. Delivering to Sharif some verse he has just written, Sabri advises him to *carpe diem* and marry Anna. The three sing one of Sabri's old tunes, and Sharif asks if they support the art school. They do.

A week later, Sharif recalls his first meeting with Anna at the fountain, and then strides past it and into the dark confines of the shrine. His father looks like Tolstoy. Father utters only pious formulas. Sharif remembers how St. Catherine's room of skulls set him thinking about his legacy. What would life have been like without the Occupation? What has he done to get money for education from the Sultan, Khedive, and British? He might as well have sat like his father, senile and sheltered. There is still time - but time for what? God, or the devil has presented him an answer, for in the garden outside the room of skulls there was Anna. Sharif had been tempted to satisfy himself in her fair body, but her story and the way she told it touched his heart. Sharif now wonders how his mother must have wept, trying to draw her husband back. How could a father leave it to his son to discharge his responsibilities? Sharif says loudly he intends to marry, and the old man smiles pleasantly. The smile disappears when Sharif says it is to an English woman. Sharif leaves, taking his father's blessing for granted.

Sharif asks his mother what father thinks about all day. He recites the Qur'an, she says, and smiles when she visits. Mother advises Sharif to clear his heart towards his father, who has harmed himself more than anyone else. He treated her well for twenty-six years before the catastrophe, and taking to his cell is the least bad alternative. Sharif hates his father, Zeinab declares, because he himself feels shamed. If God can forgive, how can Sharif not? Sharif asks how Zeinab could bear the estrangement, and her eyes light up mischievously. As she turns the tables on his being so long alone, Sharif interrupts to ask help with problems regarding marriage. After declaring every problem has a solution, Zeinab finds much wrong with marrying an English woman. Sharif shares the concerns but Anna has entered his heart and refuses to leave. They have not yet spoken about this, and perhaps she will not have him. In the end, Zeinab puts all in God's hand and blesses Sharif to talk with Anna (since she has no male kin with whom to negotiate). Zeinab rejects the idea Anna might refuse him, since the whole world agrees Sharif is a fine man. Over coffee, Zeinab admits she has met Anna and learned much about her from Layla. She is beautiful and seems upright. She will have more problems marrying than he, because her entire world will change. Her people will be angry and shun her. She will not be able to use her own language. But, if she feels for Sharif as he does for her, she will throw her world away. In return, he must do everything for her. God will not forgive Sharif if he fails to treat Anna as a guest and stranger under his protection. Mabrouka, a former slave from Ethiopia, who has stayed with the family after abolition, is called in to read Sharif's coffee sediment. Mabrouka sees a bright, narrow road with a child at the end. Sharif cannot see it, and Mabrouka cannot see beyond the white light.

On May 1, Layla warns Sharif, Anna is going home to England. She has been waiting five weeks for word from him. As a woman, Layla knows Anna can bear no more, and as Sharif's sister, she knows what he thinks of her. Mother told Layla about their conversation and the concerns such a marriage raises. Layla believes Anna is above petty problems and they will bring each other love and blessings. Amal quotes briefly



from Layla's journal: Layla is certain it is the right thing to do; her marriage has been happy; she does not want to lose her new friend; she does not want her brother to die in bitter loneliness. Recollections of the scene at St. Catherine's resumes: Anna thinks Sharif likes her; Sharif has a hard time refraining from touching Anna. They embrace and kiss. He opens the locket Anna wears at her neck, containing a portrait of her mother. Obeying the Arab custom described in guidebooks, Anna unfastens the locket and gives it to Sharif. She wants to be with him always. Anna asks why he did not kiss her at St. Catherine's? He doubted she would let him and thought it unfair. It would have been different, he feels, had they met elsewhere. Sharif asks Anna to undo her buttons so he can look at her. Anna is certain fate has been throwing them together since Costanzi and the Abdin Palace. The kidnapping forced Sharif to pay attention to her, and all-knowing Mabrouka has seen it.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Chapter 18's narrative of events in April 1901, serves two purposes: First, it establishes Sharif's mindset, by following his schedule for several days before he writes Anna. Second, it mirrors the discussions in Chapter 16 among Amal's politically astute friends. Deena's thesis about Zionism is repeated, differing only stylistically to reflect the early 20th century. The narratives, presumably in Amal's voice, seem somehow disembodied, lacking any indication of what source the narrator might be using - except one snippet from Layla's journal, which is referenced.



"A Beginning of an End"

"A Beginning of an End" Summary

The day before she plans to leave for New York, Isabel returns with her camera to wander through Sharif's house, imagining daily life. She crosses another courtyard, enters a green-domed building, and is greeted by a familiar-looking woman in blue and white garments. The woman says they have been waiting for her. She ushers Isabel to the candle-lit tomb. Beneath a window stands a tall wooden loom and near it sits an old man, Sheikh 'Isa, wearing the costume of the religious. The woman in blue disappears, and the sheikh asks whether Isabel has come to marry him. Umm Aya, a plump woman dressed in working-class black and veil hugs their rare visitor, and Isabel smells orange blossom. She declares the cloth 'Isa is weaving holds many blessings, and when Isabel admires it, 'Isa says he can work only when his hands do not hurt. Isabel sees a mark in the center of each hand before the woman in blue hides them in her robe. She looks at 'Isa with melting tenderness. Isabel feels out of place, but Umm Aya quotes that those who enter by the door are welcome. Umm Aya unfurls the beautiful tapestry across Isabel's knees, and asks if Isabel will remain long in Egypt. She then blesses Amal's return to America to care for her ailing mother, but senses Isabel's mind is occupied with someone else. Isabel surprises herself by admitting she is, but does not know if he shares her feelings. It is certain he does, Umm Aya states, but something is keeping him from speaking to her. Isabel intends to speak to him this time. Umm Aya discounts talk and advises she instead dress and perfume herself and follow her womanly instinct. Sheikh 'Isa wishes God's blessing on her path and recompense for her patience. Isabel smells orange blossom as she leaves.

Amal has made up her mind: When Anna's story is finished, she will move to Tawasi and take up her responsibilities. Stopped at a stop light and looking at the statue of Nahdet Masr, Amal recalls the spirit 1967, when her generation sensed what defeat by Israel would mean to them, and of 1968, when Egyptian students filled the streets, confident young people would conquer the world. Nahdet Masr is a symbol of ancient and modern producing renaissance. If Amal can re-open her school, she will make it a center for teaching children the ancient stories. A young man looks at her from a police van and Amal is ashamed to be free to drive wherever she wants while he is caged like an animal. Amal had wept, telling her brother about the arrestees and the stories villagers have been telling her. It is an ugly world, 'Omar says; but it does not have to be she replies. Amal may not be able to do anything about the big issues that turn young men into terrorists, but she can learn and tell the old stories. Perhaps her son will visit and take an interest in the school and clinic, and later in Anna's story and his family's place in the tapestry of history.

"A Beginning of an End" Analysis

The third part of the novel follows Isabel back to the old homestead a last time before returning to America and Amal deciding to move to the village once work on Anna's story is complete. Clearly, Amal will return to the activist role she and her friends played in their younger days. Her social conscience has been pricked by injustice. Old Sheikh 'Isa is a Christ figure, complete with stigmata, and the woman in blue is (less clearly) the Virgin Mary. The loom on which 'Isa works prefigures the one Anna sets up outside her father-in-law's cell, producing the Pharaonic tapestry that will unite Isabel, Amal, and 'Omar together in the end.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

Anna records with amazement she is to be married and Sharif's old friend Sheikh Muhammad 'Abdu will perform the ceremony when he returns from Istanbul. At his mother's request, Anna comes to Zeinab's house and her normal European attire momentarily startles Sharif. He is formally attired, trouble-looking, graying in the temples - and the sight of him agitates Anna's heart. He babbles a bit before getting to the arrangements they must make for the marriage. Anna nearly faints, causing Sharif to fear his letter was not clear enough, but she tells him it is only surprise. She is happy and honored to accept his proposal. Relieved, Sharif caresses Anna's hair and face, but does not kiss her, as she is sure he will. He would marry her today if the sheikh were here - no one else would dare perform it. Layla understands the need for care in the arrangements, and the import of this action dawns on Anna. She cannot imagine those who matter to her will abandon her and she cares nothing Lord Cromer and the Agency. Sharif is impressed when Anna declares they can forego having the British recognize their Egyptian marriage. Zeinab kisses Anna tenderly and Mabrouka has to be restrained from ululation. Anna will meet Sharif's father only after they are married.

Amal has to force herself back to the present, so completely has she become Anna's friend and sister. Isabel is gone, but has left all but her essential clothing behind. Amal needs to talk to 'Omar before Isabel gets to him. Amal does not know what to make of the story of the shrine. Isabel is a sensible romantic, not the kind given to UFOs. Isabel is upset when the caretaker insists by terms of the *waqf* the shrine is sealed and he has never heard of an Umm Aya.

Anna writes Sir Charles; happy to learn from him Urabi Pasha may be pardoned. Cairo social life offers nothing notable. Barrington is thinking of returning to England. Anna has no plans to return and is making good progress on her Arabic. Amal is certain Anna's English life and friends are receding in her mind, and while she worries about Sir Charles, she knows she can do nothing to relieve his grief - even if she were in England.

On May 17, Anna records she has removed Edward's wedding ring. She believes Edward would be happy for her re-marrying and relieved for himself. She pictures Edward, Caroline, Sir Charles, and her late mother's reactions to meeting Sharif. Layla tells her how Sharif chafes and frets without her. Sharif will let Anna go home to visit whenever she wants, although he will not be able to accompany her. Anna assures Layla there is no need to worry about her being homesick. They will visit England after Egypt is independent. Layla has told Anna about the arrangements. Once they are registered under Egyptian law, Cromer can do nothing to prevent it. The wedding itself will occur on the third day. Anna wants it to be fully Egyptian, to please Zeinab, who with her maids is sewing and embroidering. Through Layla, Anna asks Sharif if they can live with his mother. She wants to learn from Zeinab how to keep house the way Sharif likes,



and realizes how much this will mean to Zeinab. Anna imagines watching her children playing in the fountain with Layla's.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Chapter 19 is pure potential, describing the lead-up to Anna and Sharif's wedding and Isabel's departure for America. Amal describes how emotionally close she has grown to Anna.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Sheikh Muhammad 'Abdu needs time to think about recommending the art school. Just back from Istanbul, tired, and facing many demands, the Sheikh receives Sharif, Muhammad Rashid Rida, and Shukri, who is anxious to talk about the Sultan meeting with leading Zionists, who control a third of the world's money. The Sultan is frightened off by assurances the fellaheen will revolt if the land is sold out from under them. Shukri acknowledges Jews have always lived in Palestine, but now are coming in thousands, supported by a worldwide campaign to buy up real estate. Big absentee landowners sell readily. Jews shun Arabs, so why settle among them? These are times of change for the Arabs.

When Sharif and the sheikh are alone, Sharif talks of marriage. As 'Abdu's face lights with joy, Sharif adds "to an English lady." They must do it immediately because they cannot be safely seen together until then. Anna sets aside her secret blue journal and returns to the large, handsome green volume to record how no one stops Mabrouka's joy-cry as Anna signs her name. The Arabic and French contracts are in the trunk: Husni and Shukri sign as witnesses, May 23, 1901. Anna continues: her head muddled, she gives in to Sharif's better judgment on several points. The relatives are very happy. Sharif slips a broad gold band on Anna's finger, kisses her hand, and tells her only two days until they can be together. Her heart leaps. She has asked Emily to pack her things for a trip, ostensibly, to Alexandria and thence home to England. Tonight Anna must write Sir Charles.

On May 24, Sharif enters the Agency for the first time, and Anna notices the employees' consternation seeing them together. Cromer bows to Sharif but does not offer to shake hands, and addresses himself only to Anna, in English. Sharif declares in Arabic they are married and want only to have it recognized in Britain. No pleasantries are exchanged. Cromer asks if Anna realizes what she is doing and if Sir Charles knows of it. Cromer denounces 'Abdu for participating. Sharif states they want to register a marriage, not to hear opinions. Anna refuses to speak with Cromer in private and dismisses his claim of many tales of woe from such marriages. Sharif understands; he would not want his sister to marry an Englishman and would do all he could to prevent it. Cromer is sure Sharif must realize what a woman of rank and position stands to lose; if Anna loses position in British society, says Sharif, it is the Britons' fault and loss; she will be suitably received in Egyptian society. Cromer erupts, "What society?" Anna interrupts: they are married; if Britain will not recognize this, they will do without. After an out-of-room consultation, Cromer demands Sharif sign an agreement not to take another wife while married to Anna, which she declares insulting. Sharif declares this is all spelled out in the contract, which Cromer should study. They leave. Anna starts to apologize, but Sharif hushes her.



Anna's meeting with Emily is also dreadful. Anna asks her to deliver letters to Mrs. Butcher and James Barrington, and then gives her three days to think about her future. Layla and Zeinab are busy on Anna's "Henna Day," sparing her bridal markings on hands and feet but not a good scrubbing, plucking, pummeling, and polishing. A feast is prepared. Gifts and flowers flow in. Layla apologizes their apartments are rather bare, because Sharif thinks Anna will want to furnish them personally. Anna does. She will spend tonight in a small guestroom near Zeinab. Anna is soaringly happy, but does wish Caroline could have attended. Amal comments: Sharif has lost all doubts. Anna has performed magnificently with Cromer. Sharif pulls out the sapphires he will present to Anna tomorrow night.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Chapter 20 brings Sheikh Muhammad 'Abdu's homecoming from Constantinople to discuss further the growing Zionist movement (with Cousin Shukri as the foil) and to solemnize Sharif and Anna's marriage. The contractual nature of Muslim marriage is spelled out and the womenfolk's joyous preparation of the bride - sans only tattooing of hands and feet- is portrayed. The confrontation with Lord Cromer over British recognition brings out the strength of Anna's character and the hopeless prejudice of the colonial occupiers.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

'Omar tells Amal he is attracted to Cousin Isabel but feels too old to "take her on." Isabel is determined to make love. Amal avoids talk of Isabel's epiphany in the old house and announces she will move to Tawasi. 'Omar thinks this is crazy in August, but says he may be in Egypt later in the month. Amal does not ask why or whither, assuming his phone is bugged as an ex-member of the Palestine National Council (PNC).

Layla records Anna's wedding night. Anna sits still as long as she can, but when she begins circulating, people are charmed. Sharif's gems match her eyes precisely. Mabrouka burns incense and mutters incantations all day as Anna dresses. Men's and women's reception are separate, with the children moving between. Layla observes from upstairs the whole cabinet is present. A poets' corner develops. Political enemies avoid one another. Barrington and Mrs. Butcher attend. 'Abdu Efendi al-Hamuli sings, transporting the women with *tarab*. (Amal contemplates how to translate "tarab" for Isabel, and wonders what impression this strange Oriental music had on Anna). After midnight, drumming and ululation signals the groom coming for his bride, and Anna returns to her throne. As promised, Zeinab begins a stately dance and is joined by Husni's Palestinian mother. Anna realizes what a great honor these elderly ladies are rendering her. (Amal reflects her mother danced at neither her wedding nor 'Omar's.) This is the happiest night of Layla's life since marrying Cousin Husni six years earlier. Layla had known this would mean moving to France and leaving her mother alone in the old house; now Sharif is filling the house and his mother's life with happiness. Sharif stands, kisses his mother, and goes to the bedroom with Anna. Everyone in the room wishes them well.

Amal observes that the sound of celebration would not have been shut out of the bridal chamber and then records Anna's May 26 journal entry. She quotes Queen Victoria about the "most bewildering and gratifying night" she has passed, making her long-absent body present again. Before he leaves on business, Sharif introduces her to her gentle new father-in-law. Anna has mostly been left alone to sleep and wait for Sharif's return.

Isabel phones Amal to say her mother is failing fast. Isabel wishes she knew more about Jasmine's life. Amal observes people too often put off talking while they can. Isabel has seen 'Omar several times. Amal observes Isabel sounds a bit hyper, but Isabel objects she wants only for 'Omar to be in love with her. She knows it would be wonderful and cannot believe 'Omar does not realize this. Isabel switches to the Hidden Sheikh, making Amal feel guilty about offering another diversion from Jasmine's dying. Isabel's laundry bag smells of orange blossoms. Amal warns against telling 'Omar the story, because he will know she is crazy and run away. Amal advises Isabel to concentrate on her mother and her work.



Amal meets Tareq for dinner. Over drinks, he declares she has grown more beautiful and laments they had not married. He tries to avoid talking about the Israelis, but Amal is relentless: "the personal is the political." She intends to go to Tawasi, look after the land, and reactivate the health unit and school. Since she cannot gather names for the government, she will teach personally. Tareq offers young men from his farm to help. He will guarantee them to the government and cover their salaries. Amal is put off at having anyone control her life, but accepts. Tareq declares he believes in justice, and Amal refrains from mentioning justice for the Palestinians, Isabel's orange blossoms, and her own marriage.

As Amal and Tahiyya are readying the guestroom, they hear news of fresh violence in southern Lebanon, reminding Tahiyya of happier days there with her father in 1963. Isabel calls to tell Amal she has just seen 'Omar off at the airport and that her mother had been lucid yesterday -- but in French. In Jasmine's mind it is 1940, she is sixteen, and her mother Nur is desperate to get her safely to England. Nur refuses to leave her husband Jean-Marie. Jasmine's recollections shift and she is in London, wondering how Jonathan Cabot is coping with her pregnancy and desire to induce labor. In present-day 1997, Amal is spooked to realize the baby under discussion is she, and Jasmine is concerned she can no longer feel the baby kicking. Jasmine drifts off and awakens in 1944, to meet Jonathan, a diplomat on Eisenhower's staff in London. She argues with Nur about this frank, hopeful, energetic man. The 1997 nurse asks if Isabel wants her mother sedated and Isabel does not; the 1944 Jasmine loves Jonathan for the bareness of his loft, which is good for dancing. Even in the other lover's arms, Jasmine never forgets Jonathan. Jasmine sobs over Valentine. When Jasmine dies, Isabel calls 'Omar to meet. He comforts her like a beautiful, forlorn, parentless child. They make love, and then, as Isabel sleeps, 'Omar finishes packing. In the morning they talk about Jasmine.

Amal writes 'Omar is surely at a conference on national unity in Ramallah. She knows he hates watching the Resistance turn into an Authority doing the Israelis' dirty work. Amal worries about her brother's outspokenness as she hears on the radio that Washington is criticizing the conference as a platform for Islamists. Every day the newspapers picture suffering people, any one of whom could be her mother. Why must children have their violent path set so early? Amal is glad her boys are free. She remembers the songs of 1968 when Ramallah was freshly lost.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Chapter 21 concludes the story of Anna and Sharif's wedding, and, since both Anna and Layla's journal entries are discrete and Amal offers no editorial comments, the long epigram preceding the chapter must suffice to fill in the erotic detail. It presents the views of a 15th-century imam on love. This subject comes up twice more in the chapter: Amal is desperate for 'Omar to love her and achieves at least physical love, but only as consolation for her mother's death. On the last day of her life, Jasmine relives a love affair in London in 1944.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Amal's life is reduced to waiting. She ponders Anna's brief entry about Emily returning to England: Is Anna disappointed or relieved? Anna's next entry states Zeinab has assigned young Hasna as her personal maid and wonders if she will one day be as intimate with her as Zeinab is with Mabrouka. Next, Sharif and Anna agree to postpone their honeymoon. Mustafa Kamel has published an article on Urabi Pasha whose tone angers Sharif, although Sharif sees no good coming from the return. Anna's life has settled into a happy pattern. She has learned much from Zeinab and they are growing close, and she is glad to have brought joy into Zeinab's life. Layla guides Anna on social occasions so she will reflect well on Sharif. Anna is shopping to furnish the apartment and is happy for the first time in her own body.

One week later, Anna writes in a hurried, distraught hand about an argument she has had with Sharif sparked by her withdrawing money from her own bank account to buy items she wants. Anna is surprised no one has warned her that this reflects badly on him as a provider and she feels ashamed. Layla too reflects on this incident, and Amal understand how it would provoke whispering in the Agency about Sharif's miserliness and/or Anna's secrecy. Layla records Anna's instant decision to return the money until Layla convinces her this will only make matters worse. Anna's journal condemns her own wickedness in doubting Sharif's goodness towards her. She donates the withdrawn funds to a charity. Anna records how the quarreling has kept Sharif from working. They must be patient with each other's different ways, he says.

Anna writes of Sharif's concerns for her happiness far from London, sexually segregated, and unwelcome among Europeans. Sharif has bought English-style trees to plant, since they cannot walk in public parks together. Anna insists she has everything she wants and needs: To rest in the arms and feel the heartbeat of this man she did not know four months earlier.

Anna describes the progress she is making in Arabic, thanks to daily visits with her father-in-law. He is frail, uncertain, and sad. Sharif is courteous when visiting him but impatient and judgmental. They are very different personalities - like Sir Charles and Edward. Sir Charles writes, but not frequently. Since his first letter congratulating Anna on her marriage, he has avoided the subject of her new life, and she writes mostly about Arabic, gardening, and politics. Caroline writes sometimes, curious about Anna's life, but Anna is strangely unwilling to disclose much about the haramlek. She will be happy to show Caroline everything in person. Mrs. Butcher will be Anna's only ongoing English acquaintance in Egypt once Barrington goes home. Anna is involved in a start-up French/Arabic women's magazine that will cover far more than the narrow "Question of Women." Sharif wants Anna to have a part in planning the School of Fine Art, and Anna is curious to revisit Alexandria now that she understands more.



Amal describes how 'Omar still walks too fast, just like when they were children on the beach in Alexandria. He is venting about Arafat's obsession with his own credibility and use of torture more brutal than the Israelis. 'Omar agrees without Hamas the Israelis have no incentive to negotiate. Participants appreciated 'Omar's talk and asked intelligent questions, but he cannot approve of fundamentalists of any stripe. 'Omar picks up a black stone, gives it to his sister, and tells her he informed Arafat this is his first and last convention. His American passport will allow him to visit Jerusalem to see his mother's old house. Hate mail is part of 'Omar's life and his New York house has been letter-bombed twice.

In Abu Qir, a shabby remnant of their grandfather's vacation home, Amal tries to get 'Omar to talk about Isabel. He reveals he and Jasmine had been lovers - making it impossible for him to be with Isabel. Jasmine had been older than 'Omar in 1962, but it had not mattered. 'Omar realizes the truth only in the morning, after he and Isabel had made love and is horrified. The tryst had been brief and dramatic; he falls in love with a beautiful woman who reminds him of his mother; they are together twice before she breaks it off irrevocably, despite his letters of begging. Earlier, things Isabel had said about her mother sounded vaguely familiar to 'Omar - particularly the dead brother. He has, of course, said nothing about this to Isabel. Amal declares this surprising, but not terrible or disastrous. When 'Omar lays out a solid argument for his being Isabel's biological father, a pall falls over the conversation. Amal is certain she would have sensed. Isabel is too unlike him. 'Omar hopes so, then apologizes for forgetting her tapestry. Driving home Amal considers telling 'Omar about Tareq when he asks about the state of her love life, but says she is done with such things. 'Omar cannot be Isabel's father because there are already too many coincidences in their all being thrown together.

Chapter 22 Analysis

Chapter 22 shows Anna learning to fit into an Egyptian family and wider society, but concentrates on 'Omar's curious situation - perhaps lover Isabel's biological father as well as her lover. Some details of Palestinian Authority self-government after the Oslo Agreements are as 'Omar fulminates about a unity meeting he has attended.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

Sharif and Isma'il Sabri attend a celebration in Wisa Wasif's salamlek marking his son's return from Europe. Anna is upstairs with the women. Sharif declares it preposterous they should need a testimonial from Muhammad 'Abdu to set up a school. The document declares modern art outside the traditional Islamic condemnation because its purpose differs from the idolatry of old. At least they have the Mufti's endorsement, Sabri declares. They switch topics to 'Urabi Pasha, who has given a positive interview about the British in Egypt. Sharif is sorry to see 'Urabi gone senile and foolish. Dr. Milton Bey introduces himself to Sharif, but speaks too little French for them to converse. Sharif wonders whether he will be called a friend of the British for greeting this physician who is doing good for the Egyptians. Qasim Amin and Prince Muhammad Ibrahim join them and talk turns to their success in defeating a new tax in the Council. The General Assembly will take it up next year, and Mustafa Kamel must keep the question alive in *al-Liwa*.

Sharif is restless as he gives a carriage driver his address. "Near Beit el-Ingeliziyya?" -- the house of the Englishwoman - the driver inquires. Sharif corrects him roughly, "House of Baroudi." Theirs is a well-known story. Anna is as much a curiosity as a giraffe. Sharif enters Anna's room, where her tranquil spirit always breathes into his own. He goes downstairs to the library to examine drafts of various projects and the text of the Khedive's disgraceful recent speech. It has taken weeks to move everything over from Hilmiyya, which is now closed. Sharif had resisted taking over his father's favorite room, but everyone agreed he should.

Sharif crosses two courtyards to reach the shrine. He watches his father sleep, thinking how soon they will carry him to the family tomb. He recalls adoring his handsome father as a child and throughout school trying to make him proud. Sharif had been proud of his father in the army and 'Urabi movement. The Egyptian patriots of those days were poor politicians and the full weight of the British Empire came down on them. A snippet of Anna's journal describes how the presence of 'Urabi darkens Sharif's mood.

Layla writes about how Anna lives with them in gentleness and mercy. She is so unlike the British stereotype they forget, except when she wonders at things they take for granted. This forces them to look anew at the world and be fascinated again. An amazing love has grown between the spouses, but Sharif cannot be happy personally while Egypt is unhappy. Sharif works constantly and impatiently for change, and Anna begins helping him by translating from British newspapers and using her connections in England.

Anna describes a Ramadan dinner attended by the leaders of Egyptian public opinion. They agree to hold common public opinions on the occupation, foreign debt, and modernizing Egypt, but on nothing more detailed. Amal recreates the scene: Layla asks



whether Anna understands what the men are discussing - a new book, *'Al-Mar'ah al-Jadidah*. Anna understands the Arabic ("The New Woman"), and Layla asks her what it would mean if the first word were changed to read *'al-Mir'aah*? They discuss how woman and mirror are related, seeing with eyes and heart. The author is banned from the palace for advocating making the veil optional and educating girls along with boys. Mabrouka is shocked at the thought. The veil, Layla explains, is Turkish rather than Arab or Egyptian and the fellaheen do not wear it currently. Mabrouka allows them to have their custom, but declares in the city it is shameful to go about unveiled. The author does not advocate abolishing the veil, simply making it optional, says Layla, and the Mufti agrees. Zeinab feels it is time young women make up their own minds. Sharif has gathered the principles in the debate. Passing through the heavy curtain and opening the thick glass panes behind the latticework of the mashrabiyya so they can hear, Zeinab, Layla, and Anna listen in. Anna writes it is hauntingly like an opera box or an Italian confessional.

The men debate unity among Syrians, Lebanese, and Egyptians as the Ottoman Empire dies. The Sultan cannot stop Zionist immigration to Palestine, and while the Empire has historically welcomed Jews since the fall of al-Andalus, since the Fifth Zionist Congress, things have changed. They debate Jewish political solidarity, but Mustafa Kamel pulls them back to more immediate concerns: The capitulations and special laws. Cromer's new taxes must be fought or Egyptian investors will go bankrupt. Mustafa Kamel demands they stay close to the Sublime Porte and France, and petition the U.S. to take an interest in liberty and democracy in Egypt.

Layla nudges Anna as Qasim Amin brings up the question of women. It can be ignored only at of great risk, for there can be no renaissance while half the population lives in the Middle Ages. Ignorant mothers cannot raise enlightened children or support their husbands' ambitions. Layla makes a face when Sharif suggests leaving the veil alone and concentrating on education. To what end will women be educated, one asks: To work? To have the right to divorce? To change the laws on inheritance? Anna sees Sheikh 'Abdu restrain Sharif from rising. Anna records Sharif later explains the laws should change - tomorrow, if it were up to him. Sharif is happiest in Tawasi because there, when he makes a decision, it becomes a fact. He hates submitting to the will of others. Sharif was happy in Rome, and Anna can picture them together there, but knows this cannot be. Sharif's vocation is Egypt.

Anna closes out 1901 writing Sir Charles about how she is beginning to understand the complexity of things in Egypt and her husband's difficult situation. Had the British not intervened in 1881 - as she remembers Sir Charles often saying - the weakened Khedive would not have been able to withstand the will of the people, and democracy and modernization would have occurred. Now everyone wants the British out, but they are divided over how quickly. Other disputed questions include secular education, disappearance of the veil, and allying with the Muslim Sultan when an Ottoman Empire in decline. Some prefer joining a vigorous Arab Caliphate; others want Egypt to stand by its history and become an independent, diverse, secular state. Sharif feels, had the British not intervened, Egypt would stand on its feet today, with natural ties to Arab nations. But British oppression is felt at every turn, and "Traitor!" is thrown everywhere.



Next Anna congratulates Barrington on his appointment, adding that despite few contacts outside the family, she is happy she being married. She is learning Arabic, sketching, and painting, and has a new passion - weaving, which is not like reading and writing, where one must cut oneself off the world. Anna's first entry for 1902 discusses the various Arabic words for "love," and says this shows how many things she learned in the year past.

Chapter 23 Analysis

Chapter 23 is given to discussing the political situation in Egypt at the turn of the 20th Century, caught between declining Ottoman Turkey and the British occupiers. Education takes a back seat emotionally to the question of the veil, and its many facets are brought out in both the women's quarters and the men's debates. Egypt has a difficult time fitting into both Pan-Islamism and Pan-Arabism - a situation little changed when the setting shifts to Amal and Isabel's era.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Mid-September 1997 sees trouble all over the Middle East and elsewhere in the world, as Amal knows because her visiting brother cannot last two hours without a news update. 'Omar is restless at the beach, so they return to Cairo. He buys her a computer so she can connect to the Internet. Amal tells him Tareq will help her reopen the school but withholds Tareq's plans for his own land. Isabel is in New York, clearing up her mother's estate, and guilty to be tying up space in Amal's apartment. Amal hears in 'Omar's voice a pitch of sexual tenderness towards Isabel, but no willingness to commit. Amal shows 'Omar Anna's papers, green flag, and tapestry depicting Osiris with the Arabic word "*al-mayyit*" ("The Dead") embroidered above.

Anna's next entry is May 10, 1905, describing how pregnancy has made her a happy invalid. Sharif needs the joy of this birth to balance the Entente. Layla too writes Zeinab is surrounding Anna with tenderness, and France and Britain, by declaring the "Entente Cordiale," have given each other free hands in Morocco and Egypt. Cromer has been touring the provinces, leading Sharif to remain in Cairo to avoid having to entertain him in Tawasi. Everyone's greatest concern is Anna's lack of mother or sister when she gives birth.

After writing Barrington about the fuss being made over her and five-year-old Ahmad's gift for music and curiosity about the baby, Anna tells him about the Entente. It has turned the Khedive greedy and vindictive. Cromer is setting up a nepotistic succession, but at least has quashed the al-'Arish project. (Knowing nothing about this, Amal recruits her son to gather the facts. In 1902, Herzl suggests Cyprus and al-'Arish as possible Jewish homelands, offering the added benefits of guarding the Suez Canal and thwarting the Turks. Cyprus is abandoned first, followed by al-'Arish when a feasibility study predicts too much water will have to be diverted from the Nile.) Anna describes various projects she is involved in and says Sharif has quit the Legislative Council and is working to form a Graduate Club as a precursor to a university. The new museum is wonderful and many educated Egyptians think their past is being stolen as surely as their present is by the British and Americans. Anna reassures Barrington Sharif has hired Sabir to work in the office.

Anna records she is well attended, with Zeinab suggesting exercises reputed to make birth-giving easier, and Mabrouka incensing and murmuring incantations. Anna describes the commode-like birthing chair and the bed where she will sleep for 40 days before she can rejoin her husband. Anna is sure Zeinab and Layla will take fine care of her. Muhammad 'Abdu's condition is worsening. The notables in Palestine are said to be under house arrest. Anna feels her baby is in the balance against the ills of the world.

Anna writes Sir Charles, she is near her due date and more blunt than usual. She is grateful to be alive, but greedy that he, her dear, loving father and guide, visit her. The



Entente has freed Britain of any concern about being opposed in Egypt. Some point to how British public opinion has taken up the Irish Question, but Anna sees no one in England willing to do this for Egypt. Egyptians lack both platform and speakers capable of using apt phrases and images, and striking the right notes to touch English hearts. On the other hand, Egypt has no English settlers, so the Army of Occupation can simply depart. Egyptians will welcome British financial expertise once Britain is a friend rather than an imposed Guardian. Anna begs Sir Charles to help a land "where God is unceasingly manifest." Anna longs to place her child in his arms.

Layla records Anna's delivery of a daughter, Nur al-Hayah, three weeks before Muhammad 'Abdu's death. Thus the beautiful baby, with fair skin and violet eyes, like her mother and dark hair like her father, becomes Sharif's solace. In October, Anna writes she is content with her baby on the cushion beside her. Anna melts at the thought of Sharif's touch and scent, and she begs to be kissed.

Anna writes Caroline, asking her to consider herself adorable Nur's godmother, as she would be had circumstances been different. Anna also wants family news from Caroline. Anna had not thought motherhood could be so wonderful. Sharif wants her to teach Nur English. They converse in French, although her Arabic is now quite usable.

Days later, Anna writes Barrington about Gairdner winning a convert, but losing him again when it turns out he accepted Christianity only to get even with his wife during a spat. Gairdner is depressed a few days, but now redoubles his labors. Sharif has urged Anna to celebrate Christmas in the English church, but Christmas is not a time to stage acts of defiance. Anna has made a brandy-free Christmas cake and gotten a tree. Anna is working on a 6'x 8' tapestry as a contribution to the Egyptian renaissance. The size of her loom requires it be produced as three panels: Isis, Osiris, and between them the infant, Horus. Sharif is selecting a verse from the Qur'an to stitch above. Nur watches her work from her basket, and Ahmed and Baroudi Bey help with the thread. Anna wishes Caroline could see them. She is afraid Sir Charles is growing too old to travel. In a journal entry for January 1906, Anna says Sharif has decided to plant trees and build a fountain for Nur. Anna dreams of father and daughter.

Chapter 24 Analysis

Chapter 24 interweaves Anna's pregnancy with the political situation in Egypt that is also growing larger. Egyptians have become "us" in Anna's writings. Anna sees hope of building sentiment in England for the Egyptian cause - as the Irish Question has become a subject of public debate -- and mentions it to friends at home. Baby Nur becomes part of the picture as Anna weaves outside her father-in-law's door, working on a mural of the divine Egyptian family of Isis, Osiris, and Horus. One panel of this work, we know, has been found in Anna's trunk and a matching panel is in 'Omar's possession (although they have not yet been compared). The third panel will show up later, tied to the mysterious Umm Aya in "A Beginning of an End."



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

Amal finds her dreams a jumble: Nur in the courtyard of the old Baroudi house, her own children in their bedroom in England, and a beautiful large house she has never seen while awake. The pillars are peeling and the garden overgrown, but Amal knows her mother sleeps inside and Amal feels no longer homesick. Her brother will recognize this place when he sees it and be pleased. When Amal awakes, she remembers only the frescoes of Pompeii. 'Omar has left and Isabel is not soon returning. Most of Amal's friends are gone for the summer, so she packs up her computer, manuscript, Osiris panel, and the unexplored materials, and sets off for Tawasi.

Amal stops at the Mugama' Building, to research Anna's composition and perhaps get a hint where the third panel is. A guard tells her the museum is closed because a bombing has killed some tourists. Amal runs across the square to the crime scene but is stopped by a policeman. She remembers Mansur's murder. Amal heads towards Tawasi, knowing the barricades will be bad and the grieving eight families do not yet know what has befallen them. Amal longs to be far from this - together with Anna.

Anna writes Sir Charles about the inevitability of world war. Egyptians side with Turkey out of revulsion at the British. Out to prove who is master in Egypt, Cromer closes the law school and appoints a terrible master for the Ministry of Education. Politics overshadows everything. Only her father-in-law escapes its shadow. Nur is taking her first steps and is loved by all, including Cousin Shukri, visiting from Nazareth, and six-year-old Ahmad, who has appointed himself her guardian and tutor. Nur reserves her greatest affection for her father. Anna has stuck to the English practice of established bedtime for Nur, rather than the Egyptian mode (advocated daily by Zeinab and Mabrouka) of letting children stay up until they drop.

In Tawasi, Amal remembers details of her elder son's childhood, how at each stage she thought it the most enchanting yet. Amal can picture Nur by the fountain, figuring out which of the many things to play with first. Her father sits on the edge, watching over her and looking up to Anna's latticed window. Amal decides to stay with Anna's story rather than go to school, since Tareq's men are doing a fine job there. Amal has asked subtly about changes on Tareq's land, but no one knows anything. She figures she should call or write him a thank-you.

Anna thanks Barrington for sending papers and congratulates him on turning down a diplomatic posting to Syria as a protest against British foreign policy. War has been averted, making moot the question of whether the Egyptian army should fight the Turks or mutiny. Cromer wants to double the size of the army and has taken to promenading as a show of force. Anna's family would love to spend more time in Tawasi, but her father-in-law will not leave the shrine and she also does not want to take Nur away from her grandmother and Ahmad. Anna is working on Isis' feet. They are planting a magical



garden for Nur. Anna sends a watercolor of Nur and Ahmad, with Shukri in the background. Shukri is concerned, following Muhammad 'Abdu's death, but hears promising news from Jerusalem about the new governor. Shukri is reading an illegal book about the Arabs that Anna recommends Barrington obtain. Mabrouka's orphaned great-nephew has joined the household. They are thinking about a trip to Italy in September. If they also go to Paris, she will prevail on Sir Charles to meet them there.

Amal thinks how Nur's "magical garden" is still trying to flower in what has become a slum. Anna's journal describes Sharif digging in rhythm with the gardener's son when Anna comes out, white-faced with fright, bearing papers just in from London. Barrington includes a cover letter to the purported English translation of an Arab plan to revolt in August. Sharif maintains there is no uprising and asks Anna to translate the documents. Barrington's says Cromer uses this to back up his request for more troops. The other letter, from its opening words, is stylistic and factual nonsense. The Egyptians lack the organization to revolt. Sharif will have someone translate it back into Arabic. He assures Anna he has too much to lose to be involved in anything like this without telling her. Still, Anna is afraid people can do things behind his back for which the British will blame him. Besides the British, the Khedive, the Turks, the Islamists, and radical nationalists dislike him. His marriage makes him suspect of playing a double game.

As he renders the first line into Arabic, Ya'qub Artin asks if this is joke. The men determine what originals must have been intended behind various clumsy English phrases. Sharif cannot help but laugh - particularly when camels are mentioned, for he knows they must be present to give the letter a proper ring in England. It is rubbish, the work of an ignorant Englishman who imagines he knows how Arabs think, and Sharif suspects Foreign Secretary Boyle, aiming to prove Cromer needs more troops. Sharif says they must get the letter printed in London without revealing how they got it, in order to initiate a discussion of the larger problem of Egypt, even though it is too esoteric and subtle for the general public to understand. Anna assures her journal no faction of the nationalist movement is planning an uprising. It will be a quiet summer.

'Am Abu el-Ma'ati visits Amal every few days, and details two young women, Khadra and Rayyasa, to keep house. Abu el-Ma'ati tells Amal the little he remembers about her grandmother from when he was a boy. They discuss land reforms, and Abu el-Ma'ati declares the land is given to them in trust. Amal asks about Israeli agricultural service said to be getting special concessions from the government. Abu el-Ma'ati will never work with them, because the world is full of other sources of technology. Amal wishes people could hear him in Cairo.

Hasna introduces to Anna a kinsman who reports a battle over pigeon shooting in Denshwai, between British troops and the fellaheen. They wait for Sharif to hear the story. Shukri is leaving tomorrow and insists they visit his family soon; Anna wants to see Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem. Layla has begun collecting articles about the Zionist settlers and asks Anna to furnish information from English sources. Next day, Anna writes about newspaper accounts of the trouble in Denshwai, where two hundred fifty are bound over to the Special Court. Four days later, Anna adds detail: Pigeons are an essential part of the people's livelihood, but officers decide to practice their sport.



Sheikh Mahfouz asks they obey the law about shooting within two hundred meters of any house, but the British deploy closer. Flames erupt in the granary and the fellaheen blame British gunfire. British counterclaims that the fellaheen pre-planned attack is ludicrous. Ummu Muhammad is shot and, thinking her dead, the villagers attack with sticks, trying to disarm the British; five more are gunned down. When it turns out the woman is not dead, the village elders intervene and protect the officers. Captain Bull, running for back-up, suffers sunstroke, is carried to the shade by Sayyid Ahmad Sa'd, whom the reinforcements beat to death, believing him to have caused Bull's condition. Sharif volunteers to defend the case, but is rejected. Cromer has left on annual leave, after having tested the gallows. Findlay will act in his stead. Sharif is shocked the Egyptian members of the court are participating. A week later, Anna records the sentences, to be carried out in the village: Hanging, imprisonment, and lashing.

Amal describes the reaction when, on June 28, 1906, the barbaric sentences are carried out. The scene has been recorded for *al-Liwa*. Sharif will send an investigator to Denshwai to get a full account to publish in England, to make sure the incident comes before Parliament and brings Cromer down. The Foreign Office is embarrassed and the Irish will support them. The British have carted off the corpses and refused them burial, so Sharif bravely opens his home in Hilmiyya for the four customary mourning days. He allows Qur'an, reading and condolences, but not demonstrations. On June 29, Anna describes these events. As a Briton, she has wept for shame, but Sharif tells her the guilty judges are Egyptian, while those trying to help are British. Sharif holds her close and says he needs them to be together completely that night. His face is etched with worry lines. Amal describes the peaceful mourning.

Chapter 25 Analysis

With neither 'Omar nor Isabel to keep her company, Amal is drawn to Anna's day. Baby Nur brings back memories of Amal's own children, and mention of the garden to be built for her remind Amal of how decrepit it has grown over a century. This magic garden combined with the terrorist bombing of a tourist bus form the backdrop for the story of the legal atrocity carried out at Denshwai, and shows Sharif and Anna in the thick of the struggle for independence, with Sharif increasingly intent on using Anna's overseas connections.



Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

Isabel phones Amal in Tawasi to announce she is three-months pregnant and madly happy. 'Omar is concerned over his age, and Amal is giving him plenty of space. Amal imagines how trapped her brother must be feeling and concerned how his grown children will react. He cannot have broken the news about Jasmine, Amal is sure. 'Omar will not appreciate the thought of being father and grandfather in one, so Amal convinces herself anew he is not Isabel's father. Isabel cannot make plans to return to Egypt and asks Amal to come to her.

Amal tells Isabel she is near the end of the story. Cromer has resigned and four official political parties have been allowed to form. Anna's journal speaks: Sharif has joined no party. The Party of the Nation would be the most natural, but unaffiliated, he can write without restriction to a single journal. Sharif and Artin have nearly finished a charter for the National University, and the Denshwai prisoners are soon to be pardoned. Zeinab always says, "Enough of politics," and Anna agrees. She sometimes thinks of life in London, particularly at Christmastime. She would buy presents at Harrods for Sharif and Zeinab and have lunch with Layla.

Layla reflects on Anna's positive presence; some things perhaps happen because she is here. When the university opens in 1908, Anna teaches classes for women on Fridays, and jokes the harem has made a workingwoman of her. She is translating to and from English for Sharif, and her writing style makes his powerful arguments effective in English. Husni and Sharif in 1908 establish four trade unions, and the Turkish revolution gives hope for real change until Britain vetoes Egyptian representation in the Turkish Parliament. "*Vive l'indypendence!*" begins to be heard everywhere. Zeinab is like a hen with a brood of chicks, al-Baroudi watches Anna weave; and all assume Ahmad and Nur will one day marry -- although Mabrouka cautions "the knowledge of what's hidden is with God alone."

Wailing startles Amal back to the present. 'Am Abu el-Ma'ti's daughter explains: He and seventeen village men have been rounded-up because 50-100 tourists have been murdered in Luxor. Amal forces herself to drive to town, where she is stopped by armed soldiers, but rejects the explanation it is "forbidden" to go further. When she threatens to call the governor on her mobile phone, they let her go to the station on foot. The police chief, looking harassed, sits with two men in civilian clothes. One, with pale eyes, looks Amal up and down and does the talking; Amal suspects he is army intelligence. Tawasi is on her land, Amal explains, and the peaceful fellaheen are her responsibility. Everyone is suspect, Pale Eyes says, and will be flushed out. Turning to the chief, Amal demands what they have done to arouse suspicion and how long they will be held. She wills him to meet her eyes. Why not release the elderly sheikhs? That will calm the village. Pale Eyes declares no one will leave before tomorrow's interrogation. Amal is



livid as she drives away, knowing what will happen tonight, and has to force herself not to imagine anything worse than beatings.

Amal phones Tareq at 10 P.M., and breaks into tears. She demands he call the governor tonight, not tomorrow. The police will be too busy to bother with these small fry, Tareq says. Amal sends word to the village that Cairo has been contacted and urges calm. Amal cannot sleep or work. Anna's world seems a world away - or does it? She gathers information from the Internet and phone calls on events in Luxor and similar police raids. She emails her brother and 'Omar phones to comfort her. Amal complains they will not listen to her; 'Omar says he has no connections, having spent his whole life abroad. 'Omar says he has told Amal about Jasmine, and it has made her see how old he is. Isabel has convinced herself they are destined to be together - like he got it wrong the first time around, was in too much of a hurry. 'Omar's laugh returns. Amal does not ask whether he believes he is Isabel's father. 'Omar suggests Amal fly to America. Wandering the empty house, Amal ends up in Isabel's room, looking at Sharif's portrait. She talks to his image, longing to be in his arms.

At 11 A.M., Tareq appears at Amal's door and invites her along to the police center. Having received the governor's message, the haggard chief says the men will be released soon. Waiting, he and Amal count seventeen, bloodied and bowed men loaded into the van to Tawasi. Amal weeps on Tareq's chest as they drive home, and he strokes her hair. They are home, she says, but have been beaten, and people from other villages are still being held. Tareq kisses Amal on her face, but they are interrupted by Khadra and Rayissa. Leaving, Tareq advises Amal she cannot hide in Tawasi forever. Khadra observes Tareq has his eye on Amal, who objects she is old and he is married. Khadra has explains how Tareq's present wife will not be harmed.

Amal goes to sleep dreaming of holding and kissing Sharif, thanking him for not being her father. She awakes, embarrassed and sad to be alone. Tareq is only a few kilometers away, but she wants Sharif, not him. Amal forces herself to return to Anna's papers, and finds her writing in October 1909, about visiting a new bridge at Bulaq; it is Amal's favorite and is currently being torn down. All of Cairo is turning out there, and everywhere one hears patriotic cries. The British have reissued decrees muzzling the press and banning demonstrations. Anna's classes at the university are suspended, and Sharif has written an article about draconian measures, which Anna has sent to Barrington. She hopes Sir Charles will take it up with friends in Parliament. The notables have met at their house to oppose plans to extend the Suez Canal Lease. They have hosted an American who is writing a book about Jews in Palestine and Egypt, and Sharif has introduces him to local Jewish notables. Several recent appointments suggest liberalization of Ottoman policy towards Jewish settlers, and Sharif is convinced Jews are bound to be pitted against Christians and Muslims. Sharif has decided to break taboo and let Anna speak with foreign visitors for the Egyptian cause. Sabir is Sharif's eyes and ears.

After sunset prayers, Amal walks across the fields to 'Am Abu el-Ma'ati's house. Washed, shaved, and dressed in his religious garb, he advises her against filing lawsuits; leave it to God. What the government did is wrong, there are no guarantees it



will not happen again, and one can either let it go or risk a vendetta. Governments terrorize people. Amal sees proof on the television news on her way out, and knows there are young men swearing vengeance. The phone rings as Amal reaches her door and she superstitiously answers before the third ring. It is Am Madani announcing Tahiyya has given birth to a girl, named Hanan.

Chapter 26 Analysis

Chapter 26 examines the tense political situation in both arenas. After Cromer, political parties form, but British machinations continue. In 1997, another terrorist bombing forces the Egyptian government to react as Cromer's troops did in Denshawi - with terrorism. Amal is drawn into the contemporary situation, and, needing muscle, calls on old friend Tareq. Romance is teased, but Amal is in love with Anna's Sharif. Anna too, is being drawn into the nationalist movement by her cautious husband. She is now capable of speaking for the cause. Isabel is pregnant and knows about 'Omar's affair with her mother.



Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

Anna describes the sad news that Prime Minister Ghali is dead at the hand of al-Wardani, who is sure to hang for the murder. Wardani insists he acted alone for the good of Egypt to remove a traitor. Wardani, a Copt, never mentions religion, but is being set up as a martyr. Sharif is sad two excellent men are lost. Layla describes the aftermath: Ghali's successor invites Sharif to join the cabinet, but he refuses until the occupation ends. Husni fears Sharif's independence is exposing him to danger. Sharif is working ceaselessly to rally the Assembly against extending the Canal lease. Governor Gorst wants out of Egypt but can find no replacement. People are optimistic as ex-President Theodore Roosevelt visits Egypt.

Anna writes Sir Charles, about Roosevelt's offensive speech, declaring religious fanaticism will prevent Egyptian self-government for generations. People have learned the hard lesson that the west will never allow the east equality, which only serves to drive them back to the golden age of the Caliphate and into the arms of the Turks. Grey favors in Egypt, the kind of detentions and deportations practiced in India. Sharif is calling on the Assembly publicly to protest the new coercion law and perhaps enlist the Khedive. They will summer on the coast so Sharif can rest and spend time with Nur. Ten-year-old Ahmad has memorized the Qur'an and has a clear genius for piano. Throughout this story, Amal has had trouble picturing her father in the child Anna and Layla describe, but now recalls him reciting passages; however, she never saw him touch the piano. Amal wonders how the young Ahmad in the portrait sees his life turning out. Anna's journal resumes: Sharif has extracted a promise that if he dies before Nur is grown, Anna will take her to England, because life in Egypt will be too hard without him to smooth her path.

In 'Omar's empty Connecticut house, pregnant Isabel looks at seven love letters from 'Omar to Jasmine, and she phones Amal to talk about them. They implore Jasmine not to break off their affair. It is spooky to be here with these letters Jasmine keeps for thirty-five years as proof of his love. Isabel changes the subject to bad news from Tawasi: 'Arwa Salih has killed herself.

Anna writes Abu Qir in August 1910. They are children again, cut off from the world, playing cards, and reading. She is halfway through the third panel of her tapestry, but has left the loom in Tawasi because the thought of removing it troubled al-Baroudi. Anna's heart aches exquisitely with love for her husband's body.

Tareq appears on Amal's doorstep to talk her out of wasting her life hiding in Tawasi and she hopes happiness at seeing him does not show. They discuss American diplomatic missteps in Egypt and Iraq. Amal's school is working, and she will remain until she finishes her grandmother's story. Tareq invites her on a week-long trip to Greece. His eyes are gentle as she refuses vehemently. He has missed her and wants to be friends.



Anna reports to Sir Charles on their return from Abu Qir. Life there reminds her of the Sinai. She thinks of Sir Charles often, wishing he would visit. Amal meditates on how often Anna has wished to gather together under one roof everyone she loves, and reflects on her own years in England. She wonders if Anna's Egyptian life can be real unless it is linked to her earlier life. Anna never hints about this, but Amal thinks it must cast a pall. Perhaps this is why she adopts Egypt's cause so fervently. Anna next writes Barrington to recommend a recent book on Egypt; they intend to translate it into Arabic to remind Egyptians, not all Britons are their enemies. Cousin Shukri is trying to keep 2,400 prime acres from being sold to the Zionists by a Syrian Christian; his house has been raided by the police. Anna is thankful she has never experienced a police raid, probably because Sharif has not joined the party most frequently raided, and is meticulous about keeping his activities lawful. Rereading her letter, Anna remarks how far she has come in a decade and wonders how much one's life is governed by the lives and past actions of others. Amal pictures Mabrouka asking rhetorically about the use of constant writing.

Layla reflects about events worldwide. Russia's defeat by Japan in 1905 proves an Oriental nation can repulse a European one, but also unleashes one hundred thousand Jews on Palestine. Half remain, demanding land. The aggressive new Zionist leadership is pursuing a policy of immigration, colonization, and education. Layla's relatives in Palestine fight every land transfer, but the Turks need money. They have quelled an anti-Zionist rebellion in the Hauran. Shukri has published how settlers receive money at 1% interest on condition they never sell or rent their land to a Muslim or Christian. The Jews have their own schools, flag, and postal service, and do not become Ottoman citizens. They have armed themselves and are teaching their children martial arts. Arab villagers are fearful and the notables disturbed.

Chapter 27 Analysis

Chapter 27 advances the political situation to 1910, showing how Zionism is becoming an ever-greater problem and Sharif, Anna, and Layla are involved in polemics against it. The ultimately successful plan of the younger generation of Zionists is laid out succinctly. Christians and Muslims are developing bonds of oppression vis-a-vis the Jews. Isabel is pregnant and comfortable with 'Omar's state of mind. She has entered the computer age and emails Anna, introducing yet another typeface.



Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

Ten years older than when the story begins, the Arab notables gather in Cairo and call for Arab unity against a west that appears to have carved them up. Shukri is more nervous and angrier than Sharif. The Zionists nearly have the beleaguered Turkish government in their pocket. Killings are commonplace throughout the Arab lands and will grow more frequent if the Europeans go to war among themselves. They are in a race to subjugate the world: France by brute strength, Italy by terror, Britain by double-dealing, and the Zionists by stealth. Egypt can only absorb people and events. Sharif looks at Nur's grown trees and wants to protect her. Her cousins are already preparing for lives of battle, not of their own making. Anna tries to console Sharif with all he has accomplished.

Layla wishes the occupation had not occurred, that their lives might not have been dominated by politics. Egypt has not been allowed to grow up. People distrust one another and are pushed to fanaticism or despair. In Palestine, Zionists will accomplish what colonialists could not: Seize land from the inhabitants. Sharif has been battling thirty years, by every legal means against this, with Anna at his side, trying to influence foreign visitors. After Mustafa Kemal's death, Sharif's is the only voice addressing the powerful west. This year, Layla is beginning to see Sharif's emotions distancing him from his work.

Amal pictures Sharif looking up to the haramlek, where Anna writes. He wants to spend more time with her in Tawasi, where he is fortunate to own land he can leave to Nur and her children. Sharif visits his feeble father, who seems to want to talk. Finally, al-Baroudi declares 'Urabi is no traitor; he was betrayed by De Lesseps; and while God forgets nothing, he has mercy. Zeinab hurries in to see why they are not sleeping. Al-Baroudi asks his wife not to leave him tonight. En route to Anna, Sharif notices her loom is empty. The tapestry is being mounted for display, and she asks to paint Sharif's portrait. Surprisingly, he agrees to sit, in Nur's garden while she plays. Amal pictures Hasna telling Nur not to suck her thumb, lest no one want to marry her. Mabrouka asks God to write down happiness for Nur wherever she goes.

Anna writes with joy about Sharif turning to her for comfort. She loves him more now than in the beginning. His recent mood is puzzling, however. He seems to have lost heart, no longer seizing opportunities to place Egypt's cause before the public. He wants to rest in Tawasi or travel abroad, but Anna cannot imagine him as a private gentleman. She does not want to think about him relinquishing the essential purpose of his life.

The headlines on Amal's computer all touch on Middle Eastern crises, but Isabel e-mails she is cleared to travel and will arrive with her adorable son Sharif on July 17. 'Omar is touring and hopes to come to Cairo. He has some fabric for Isabel to bring to Amal.



'Omar too e-mails, saying all is well, the baby is fantastic, Isabel is a devoted mother, his children are delighted with the baby, and he is relieved. Amal learns 'Am el-Ma'ati is ill and pays a visit.

Anna describes to Barrington a dinner they hold for the educated Jewish Dr. Ginsberg. It marks the first time Layla dines in mixed company in Egypt, and holding the dinner is a risk. Ginsberg and Sharif plan to write articles summarizing the current political situation from their respective points of view, and hope Blunt will contribute a third article for a book. Sharif is speaking privately of retiring to private life, but Anna is doubtful. Events have grown too large.

Amal and Isabel sit on the veranda like old friends or sisters. Baby Sharif is being watched over by old Sheikh Sharif's portrait. Anna has just attended 'Am Abu el-Ma'ati's funeral. They talk about Jasmine's death and weep over the passing of parents. Amal relates Anna's story so far. 'Omar has not yet declared his love for Isabel, but takes instantly to the baby, whose delivery he cannot bear to watch. Amal and Isabel pack up and drive to Cairo. Isabel wants 'Omar to know she appreciates his work and has created a web page about his political activities.

Sharif pens his self-evident views on the two attractions the East holds for Europe: 1) materiel, markets, and jobs; and 2) the legacy of scripture, history, and fable. Europeans arrive to find a reality they do not expect and have a choice: 1) ignore things, 2) change things, or 3) understand things. The last two are harmless, while the first carries untold harm. Zionism (distinct from Judaism) embodies ignoring the natives. The romantic "White Man's Burden," in play in Egypt for thirty years, embodies the second approach. Europeans act differently abroad and view natives according to established prejudices. Egyptians, belonging to the mother of civilization before becoming part of the lands of Islam and later the Turks, worship the technological wizardry of Europe and give them opportunity to control their lands. Sharif predicts how colonialists will react to his ideas (if they read them) and calls on the people of the world to unite in conscience. (Isabel, holding her baby, lauds the power, speed, and freedom from control offered by the Internet.)

Seeing Anna rereading *War and Peace*, Sharif wishes life, like literature, were redoable. If it were, Sharif would walk up to Anna at the Costanzi and predict they will fall in love. When Anna laughs it is impossible they might not have had this life together, Sharif responds, "Amen." Anna asks if this is an Arabic word, for since childhood she has wondered what it means. Sharif explains it comes from the verb for "believe" and means you confirm your belief in what someone has said and want to secure it.

Chapter 28 Analysis

Chapter 28 advances the early-century context ten years with little change in the international situation. Zionism is the notables' chief problem, and Sharif is tiring of the struggle. Middle Eastern crises, stemming from Anna's day, dominate contemporary news as well, but take no time and little effort to disseminate via the Internet.



Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

'Omar is conducting in the ruined National Library in Sarajevo. Amal has copied Sharif's article for 'Omar and will suggest he republish it with emendations. Amal has slowed her research, not wanting to reach the end. Isabel has delivered 'Omar's panel and is convinced this is another sign. Amal reads Isabel an article she found about the earth's population in the year 2000 - the U.S. will control most of the wealth and over half the world will live in poverty and illiteracy. Isabel has also brought Amal a 1965 book, *Boyle of Cairo*, written by his widow.

Anna admonishes Sir Charles for not telling her he is unwell. Sharif insists she see him when they tour Europe. It will be the first real Christmas for Nur, who is beautiful and vivacious like her aunt Layla, but like Sharif when she grows thoughtful.

One of Tahiyya's children points to Anna's panels hanging from Amal's bookcase and identifies Isis and Osiris. Why are they displayed so far apart, since they are married? And why is a third panel missing: The one showing their child? Its superscription would complete Sharif's verse. Tahiyya objects these characters are infidels, but Amal objects: All know God. Tareq phones and is pleased to hear Amal happy, and wants to talk with her when things calm down. She is not the one who is not free, Amal states. They can talk later, but it will come to nothing. It is more difficult to finish the project with Isabel and the baby in the house - or perhaps Amal just does not want to reach the end.

Isabel and the baby go visiting and Amal leafs through Clara Boyle's memoir. She is brought short by a phrase: "How can one arrive at the planet Souad?" She plunges into Anna's paper to find her 1906 letter and curses mankind's inability to transcend time. Clara declares only Cromer knows about her husband's authorship of a typescript composed in picturesque English filled with double meaning, and capturing the Arab spirit. The quoted text and Anna's transcription match precisely. Amal wants to rush back in time to show Sharif he was right and imagines Anna incandescent, learning the truth. Isabel returns and wants to take a picture of Amal and the sleeping baby. She opens her bag, smells orange blossom, and finds an embroidered Horus under the inscription "*al-hayy min*" - the words that complete Sharif's quotation.

Sharif talks with Isma'il Sabri over piles of photographs. Sharif approves of adding Pharaonic history to the curriculum. Ya'qub Artin enters, waving a newspaper reporting Balkan unrest, meaning more massacres by Turks and more money borrowed from Europe. Sharif insists the coming big war will not be the Egyptians', but Isma'il insists they will suffer nonetheless. Sharif will take his family to relaxing and educational Luxor, then Italy, France, and Palestine to pray at al-Aqsa. They may even go to England so Anna can have the pleasure of showing him and Nur her homeland. It is time for them to quit hiding in Hilmiyya. Sharif tells Sabir he is going home and together they enter a hired carriage. He is ready for quiet, whether Anna believes it or not. What if he were to



take her back to Sinai? Would she have been happier with a different life? She seems happy. Thinking about all Anna is to him, Sharif urges the driver to go faster.

While Amal is watching news about another crisis between Iraq and the U.S., Isabel announces she knows how the tapestry got into her bag. Amal's heart sinks and anger rises as Isabel explains Umm Aya, the woman in the mosque, put it there. Isabel sets down her open bag somewhere and forgets it; Umm Aya brings it to her, smiles, and hugs her. The bag's zipper is now closed. The bag is heavy, so she notices nothing, and never opens it again. It has sat here for months. Amal denies putting the tapestry inside, and they sit in silence.

In her last entry, dated December 30, 1913, Layla describes how they are bathing Nur and playing the usual bedtime games when Anna senses something and issues a long, frightening scream. Sharif is carried in, with Anna hanging from him. Blood pools around the divan. Nur escapes from Layla's arms and asks her father if she can kiss the hurt away. Anna sends for a doctor and attends to Sharif's wounds. He orders Layla to summon their mother, put Nur to bed, and tend to Sabir's shoulder wound; Sabir had thrown himself over Sharif when the shots rang out. Sharif tells Layla "the dogs" have finally done it. Ahmad stays at his uncle's side and the women clench each other and pray outside as Dr. Milton extracts three bullets. When Sharif regains consciousness, he says the words a gallant brother tells one's sister, then speaks to Anna, who kneels beside him. Amal imagines the dialog. Sharif wants Anna to live her life, bravely, for Nur's sake. She must remember her promise. Anna begs him to try to live. Layla's journal describes Zeinab praying for her dying son.

Amal pictures dawn breaking on a house of mourning women. Layla observes she thinks of Sharif always, asks questions of him, and sees him in the turn of Ahmad's head. The boy mourns for his uncle and takes badly his separation from Nur. Anna writes often about Nur but not about herself. She is painting and caring for Sir Charles. Layla's father is in his shrine, and they do not know whether he comprehends what has happened; sometimes he sits at Anna's loom. Zeinab is quiet. Mabrouka, who ages over night, rolls up Anna's three panels, gives one to Layla for Ahmad and his children, and another to Anna for Nur. Layla does not know what happened with the third. Sabir is heartbroken and guilty. Husni is tender. They have not found a murderer - the Copts, Muslims, British agents, the Khedive, or even Kitchener. Sharif's last orders were not to allow his death to be politicized. Husni sees war coming and it will be Egypt's last chance to end the occupation. He urges Layla to start a new magazine and get Anna to write from England.

Chapter 29 Analysis

Loose ends are tied up. Layla's journal says it is a mystery in 1913, where the third of Anna's Pharaonic panels goes after Sharif's death, and it is still a mystery when it shows up in Isabel's camera bag. Isabel is certain the phantom Umm Aya put it there, and for some reason this angers Amal. There is no other explanation. Sharif is shot as he focuses on a different life for his family, free from politics. He dies asking that his



death not be politicized, which is wishful thinking. Religious fanatics top the list of Layla's suspects. How the family two branches separated is now clear: Anna and Nur obey Sharif and return to England. Ahmad, Amal's father, stays in Egypt and is the symbol of the tragedy - torn away from the love of his still-short life.



"An End"

"An End" Summary

Amal has known the ending of the story all along, has loved Sharif as mother, sister, and wife, and now mourns him with fresh grief. Wishing there to be more materials in Anna's trunk is pointless, so Amal organizes everything, but cannot stow it away. She visits the family mausoleum and has a *surah* of the Qur'an chanted for Sharif.

Amal feeds and changes baby Sharif, and then dances his feet on the table against Anna's treasures. Amal tells him a statuette belongs to his cousin and assures him he has a large, loving family he knows nothing about yet. The baby grabs for the black oval pebble and Amal explains his daddy, her brother, gave her that. He is brave, handsome, and makes wonderful music. She puts little Sharif to bed beside his mother. The newspapers are full of brutality about which one can do nothing. They have heard nothing from 'Omar since Sarajevo. Amal wonders whether he will visit long enough to read the story and meet the characters. Amal has wept over Layla's last pages. There is no indication of what happens to Anna and Nur. How does Nur meet her Frenchman? Do she and Ahmad ever meet again? Does the war finish it all? Will 'Omar want to see the silent old Baroudi house? Isabel will want to take him there.

Looking at Anna's tapestry, still in three separate panels, but hung as one, Amal still wonders how and whence the Horus panel appears. Isabel could have found it in the trunk before bringing it to her or among her mother's effects, but seemed genuinely surprised to see it. They have not told 'Omar about the find. Amal worries about how little Isabel knows him and how she has never experienced his kind of public life. Amal cannot wait to see 'Omar with his new son.

Amal pictures Anna in the sunshine, weaving as Baroudi looks on; Sharif observing them and feeling touched; Anna removing her finished tapestry; hands drawing a sheet over Sharif's body; and panels being wrapped in cloth by Mabrouka, blind with tears and muttering phrases about life and death. When the baby cries, Amal jumps from the sofa, fearing for her brother. Amal comforts the baby as his mother sleeps soundly.

"An End" Analysis

Amal is treated as a character rather than the narrator as she struggles to tear herself away from the story. The third panel of the tapestry is still a mystery. 'Omar, a public man loved and hated, brother and new father, is on Amal's agitated mind.



Characters

Anna Winterbourne (1872-1933)

The blond-haired, violet-eyed, caring, intelligent, determined, and artistic heroine of the early layer of the novel, Anna is an English woman married to a veteran, tormented by post-traumatic stress. Anna is widowed, mourns appropriately, and travels to Egypt to see the scenes her favorite painters captured on canvas and her beloved father-in-law, Sir Charles. Anna holds Sir Charles in the highest regard, and corresponds with him frequently throughout the novel. Anna is not content with the usual sightseeing tours, and several times ventures incognito into the desert, first to the Pyramids, and next to Mt. Sinai. Disguised as an Englishman, Anna is kidnapped by Egyptian nationalists seeking leverage to free a jailed companion. They take her to the home of the eminent attorney and politician Sharif al-Baroudi, where it is discovered Anna is a woman. Sharif's sister Layla cares for Anna and they become friends. Sharif feels obliged to help Anna see St. Catherine's, disguises her, and accompanies her into the wilderness. Along the way - and particularly in the monastery garden - they fall in love. Anna is on the verge of returning to England in frustration when Sharif fails to contact her again, but Layla convinces her brother to propose marriage. When they marry, British society in Cairo shuns her, and Anna cleaves to her Egyptian family and the nationalist cause. She takes up weaving and produces a three-panel tapestry drawn from the ancient Egyptian mythology. As her knowledge of Arabic improves, her talents as translator and explicator of the national cause are well-used. Anna bears one child, Nur, whom she takes back to England in obedience to her husband's wishes, after his assassination. Anna continues writing and painting in England, but nothing is retained of her long life after World War I.

Sharif Basha al-Baroudi (1856-1911)

The husband of Anna Winterbourne, sister of Layla, son of al-Baroudi and Zeinab, and the doting father of Nur, Sharif practices law in Cairo, sits on the Council (pushing reform), and maintains a polite but distant relationship with the Khedive's court. Sharif's first marriage at age 21 ends in six months because the wife does not share Sharif's political zeal. With Uncle Mustafa, Sharif builds a small school on family land in Tawasi, which he supports financially with a trust. By the time the novel begins, Sharif has outgrown the youthful fanaticism and willingness to use violence he shared with Sheikh Muhammad 'Abdu. He is cautious, calculating, wise, and diplomatic, having learned to hold himself in check. He still resents his father's cloistered life after having helped the failed uprising nearly twenty years ago. Sharif is summoned home by his sister Layla to deal with a botched political kidnapping by followers of his brother-in-law Husni. Their English hostage turns out to be a woman, Anna. Sharif feels an obligation to help her achieve her original goal of visiting St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai, and takes her incognito into the desert. Along the way - and particularly in the monastery's garden - the two fall in love. Sharif is so concerned over the sacrifice Anna will have to make if



they marry that he waits almost too long to ask her. Layla sets him straight. Sharif is a leader among the nationalists for another decade, allying with no particular party. He has enemies in all camps. As he begins to think about retiring from the run-around of public life in order to dedicate his time to Anna and their beloved daughter, Nur, Sharif is gunned down by unknown assailants.

Layla al-Baroudi (1874-1937)

The sister of Sharif al-Baroudi and sister-in-law and best friend of Anna Winterbourne, Layla is a charming woman, married five years to her maternal cousin, a lawyer named Husni al-Ghamrawi. She is the mother of Ahmad, who is a one-year-old as the story begins. The couple has lived a year in Paris, where Layla worked hard at mastering the language. Layla is home the night her jailed husband's associates kidnap Anna, thinking her to be a useful male hostage, and she grows instantly fond of her. Layla prevents her brother Sharif from letting Anna return to England in frustration at his inattention, and introduces Anna to upper Egyptian society before and after the marriage. Layla keeps a journal, which is found in the same chest as Anna's letters and journals, and it provides a second viewpoint on most of the events in the novel.

Amal al-Ghamrawi (b. 1952)

The novel's narrator, Amal is an Egyptian living in Cairo when her long-lost cousin Isabel Parkman delivers to her a trunk full of English and Arabic journals, letters, and memorabilia. Amal cares for her mother Maryam for twenty-two years after her father's death and brother's emigration to the U.S. Maryam dies just as Amal finishes university, freeing the moderately radical Amal to go abroad. She lives for over twenty years in England with an unnamed husband and children, translating occasionally, and chafing at the day-to-day chores of motherhood that she will later look back on in self-envy. After she and her husband separate, Amal answers the call of the ancestral house in Tawasi and memories of Cairo (she has sold the house in Hilmiyya years ago), but reality falls short of childhood memories. Brother 'Omar meets Isabel, hears about the trunk, and advises her to take it to Amal. Amal is drawn into the century-old history, falling in platonic love with all the characters except Sharif, for whom she lusts. Amal spends much of her time mentally in the early 20th century, but the Egyptian government's response to terrorism snaps her back to the present, as peasants on her land are rounded up in a preemptive crack-down. She calls on an old friend to intercede with the governor, and then fights off his romantic advances; Amal declines to break up his marriage. Amal tries to hold off ending the story and is sad to see the characters go away to unknown fates. She maintains to the end that on a visit to the old home, currently a museum, she was given the missing panel of Anna's tapestry by a phantom woman, Umm Aya.



Isabel Cabot Parkman (b. 1962)

The shy, streaky blonde, diffident heroine of the later layer of the novel, Isabel is named by her beloved father Jonathan after the Egyptian goddess "Isis the Beautiful." Isabel does a junior year abroad in Egypt, but settles into marriage with the rather unsociable and stifling Irving Parkman. Recently liberated through divorce, Isabel finds an old trunk in New York, which contains English and Arabic letters, journals, and memorabilia. She mentions it at a party to the famous musician 'Omar al-Ghamrawi, who suggests she turn it over to his sister Amal, in Cairo, for investigation and explanation. Isabel is instantly attracted to the old man, before she learns from Amal's research they are distant cousins. Isabel begins studying Arabic during her stay with Amal in Cairo, but has to break off and return to New York to attend to her dying mother Jasmine. Under the influence of the Anna story, Isabel is sad she never learned much about Jasmine's past before Alzheimer's closed the opportunity forever. On most visits to the nursing home, Jasmine sits uncomprehending and barely communicating. On her last day of life, however, Jasmine reveals in fragments to her daughter that she had a brief affair with a wonderful man. In time, Isabel, Amal, and 'Omar will piece together that 'Omar was that lover and only DNA testing can determine for sure if Isabel is 'Omar's biological daughter. They opt not to take the test. Isabel becomes pregnant, and gives birth to a son, whom they name Sharif, and takes him to visit Amal in Cairo. She has reconciled herself to an imperfect relationship with the traveling 'Omar.

'Omar A. al-Ghamrawi (b. 1942)

Amal's handsome fifty-five-year-old brother, 'Omar is a Jerusalem born; Cornell University educated pianist and touring conductor and author of three books on Palestinian issues. From their first meeting, he is also the object of Isabel Parkman's attentions. 'Omar tells Isabel he considers himself Egyptian, Palestinian, and American, gets back to Egypt too infrequently. 'Omar is born in West Jerusalem and sent to the U.S. in 1956 to study music. His career advances meteorically. 'Omar married, had children, and divorced in 1967 when he and his wife both discovered he is an Arab. 'Omar is rumored to have fought in Amman in 1970, and is a member of the Palestine National Congress until the PNC reaches agreements with Israel. Now, he warns about the danger of the Oslo Agreements and condemns Arafat's policies. A brief affair with Jasmine Cabot makes it possible that 'Omar is the father of Isabel Parkman, who falls madly in love with him, while he is merely attracted to her. They opt not to undergo DNA testing. 'Omar fathers baby Sharif, whom he instantly loves, but from whom he is separated by music touring.

Sheikh Muhammad 'Abdu

Sharif's fierce-eyed, well-groomed, long-time friend, 'Abdu has become the Mufti and Grand Imam of Egypt, a regular traveler to Constantinople -- and under surveillance by the Sultan's secret police. He alone has the prestige to bear the inevitable controversy of presiding as Sharif and Anna sign their wedding contract, and to justify opening an art



school on the grounds the purpose of modern art is different from the idolatry of old. 'Abdu travels frequently to Constantinople for consultation with the Sultan, and there learns detail about the growing Zionist movement. 'Abdu's declining health concerns everyone, and he dies three weeks after Anna gives birth to daughter, Nur al-Hayah. This death marks the beginning of Sharif's disengagement from public life.

Ya'qub Artin

A friend of Sharif, Artin is a Christian and rather tongue-in-cheek about the Muslim culture wars. Artin turns to prodding Isma'il Sabri to publish his collected poetry and pledges support for Sharif's art school.

Jalila al-'Asali

Layla's Palestinian-born mother-in-law Jalila al-'Asali joins Zeinab in dancing at Sharif and Anna's wedding.

Shukri Bey al-'Asali

Sharif's sunny-dispositioned nephew, boyhood friend, and attendant at his 1901 wedding, Shukri will be hanged by the Turks in 1915 for taking part in the Arab Revolution, but at this point he is working to forestall a Zionist take-over of Palestine. In 1910, he is trying to keep 2,400 prime acres from being sold to the Zionists by a Syrian Christian; Shukri's house has been raided by the police.

Tareq 'Atiyya

Amal's tall, broad-shouldered, handsome friend from Tawasi and university days, Tareq is now a very successful in businessman. Their fathers were friends. Amal turns to Tareq for help with the problems she is experiencing in Tawasi, and obtains the villagers' freedom after they are rounded up and beaten by police. Tareq wants to marry Amal, which is his right under Muslim law, but Amal is unwilling.

James Barrington

The gentle, non-confrontational Third Secretary of the Agency in Cairo, Barrington meets Anna Winterbourne in Alexandria and is present on Anna's trip to the Great Pyramid. He takes good care of his manservant, Sabir, whom he lends to Anna for incognito trips into the desert. Barrington accepts Anna's invitation to her wedding and attends. Barrington returns to England, takes up journalism, and to his credit turns down a diplomatic appointment to Syria. Copies of Anna's letters to Barrington are a major source of Amal's research.



al-Baroudi (1835-1914)

Sharif and Layla's mystical father, al-Baroudi collaborates with 'Urabi Pasha in the short-lived, 1882 Egyptian uprising, and rather than face execution or exile like his fellow warriors, takes refuge in the tomb of a Muslim saint. He is pardoned on condition he no longer deal in politics, but remains in seclusion for twenty years, abandoning responsibility for his wife and son. Sharif never forgives his father, but continues to honor him. Al-Baroudi takes a liking to Anna, helps her study Arabic, and holds her yarn as she weaves outside his doorway.

Mahmoud Sami Basha al-Baroudi

'Urabi Pasha's prime minister, Mahmoud is exiled with 'Urabi but allowed to return home eighteen months before the story begins, blind and in general ill-health and eschewing politics in favor of editing his extensive poetry. Mahmoud is Layla's uncle.

Lady Caroline Bourke

Anna Winterbourne's sole confidant in London during Edward's decline, Caroline convinces Anna to accompany her to Rome. Anna and Caroline correspond regularly during Anna's years in Egypt, and copies of her outgoing letters are a major source for Amal's research. Anna asks Caroline to be Nur's honorary godmother.

Harry Boyle

The large, ruddy, crumpled Oriental Secretary at the Agency in Cairo, Harry Boyle is present on Anna's trip to the Great Pyramid, where he preaches the party line: The fellaheen have never been as well governed or economically well off as now under the British. He is contemptuous of the "talking classes" in Egyptian society, the "professional malcontents." Anna and Sharif suspect Boyle is the author of a letter reputed to be a summons to nationalist rebellion, and Amal is able to confirm this after reading Mrs. Boyle's memoirs.

Dean and Lady Anne Butcher

A kind, open-minded British couple that befriends Anna Winterbourne in Cairo, the Butchers help her learn Arabic, explain Egyptian culture, and serve as her chaperone. Mrs. Butcher is invited to Anna's wedding and attends.

Jasmine Cabot (1924-1997)

Isabel Parkman's violet-eyed, mother Jasmine Cabot's obsession over son Valentine, lost at age 14, spoils relations with her daughter. After father Jonathan dies, Isabel can



no longer cope with Jasmine's Alzheimer's, and puts her into a facility. There, proud Jasmine, alternately angry and sad, chops her hair and the staff trims it so she looks like a new-hatched chick. Jasmine is fidgety. On the last day of her life, Jasmine relives scenes from her life during the 1940s and reveals - without naming names - having an affair in London in 1944 with 'Omar al-Ghamrawi, making it possible that he, rather than Jonathan, is Isabel's father.

Jean-Marie Chirol (1885-1958)

Isabel Parkman's French grandfather, Jean-Marie Chirol marries Nur and forces her to break contact with her Egyptian family.

Lord Cromer

?1 million a year on the occupation, taking upholding due process of law, but getting around it through the special laws that govern confrontations between Britons and Natives. He favors ending the capitulations, which would put Egypt even more completely into his hands. The Lord tries rudely to dissuade Anna from marrying Sharif. His underlings' handling of an incident at Denshwai leads to Cromer's bitter retirement from Egypt.

Emily

Anna Winterbourne's maid, who accompanies her from Britain to Egypt, is indifferent to the rich cultural experience, and returns to England after Anna's marriage to Sharif.

Princess Nazli Fadhil

The hostess of an occasional literary/political salon that Anna once attends through Mme. Rushdi's intercessions. The princess embarrassingly suggests one of her Western guests marry Anna before a handsome nationalist does so. Anna is sure she is too plain to be invited back to the princess' palace, and is not upset by this.

Zeinab Fawwaz

Zeinab Fawwaz is an Alexandrian writer about the "woman question" whom Anna meets through Layla.



Rev. Temple Gairdner

Rev. Temple Gairdner is a zealous young clergyman in Anna's day determined to convert Muslims to Christianity at any cost.

Ahmad al-Ghamrawi (1900-1965)

Layla and Husni's son and Amal's father, Ahmad is an adorable one-year-old when the story begins and a sad preadolescent when it ends, torn away from his beloved cousin Nur, whom everyone expects to be his wife some day. Widowed Anna, however, takes Nur to England. Ahmad receives a military education, serves in the Cavalry Division, and marries Maryam al-Khalidi in Jerusalem in 1935. A son, 'Omar, is born in there in 1942. Ahmad leads a volunteer battalion in Palestine, and brings his family to Egypt after Israeli independence in 1948. They settle on ancestral lands in Tawasi, where daughter Amal is born. Ahmad adds a basic-services clinic to the Tawasi school. Ahmad finds 'Omar's anchoring his life in New York strange.

Husni al-Ghamrawi (1870-1930)

Layla's maternal cousin and husband, Husni is a radical, French-trained lawyer. He adds an adult class to the family school in Tawasi, to teach the fellaheen to read and write. His jailing by the British when he and colleagues protest the use of strikebreakers inspires a plot to hold hostage an Englishman; the kidnappers seize Anna, disguised in male clothing, which brings together her, Layla, and Sharif. Husni believes anything can be resolved by discussion. He is one of the witnesses at Sharif and Anna's wedding.

Mustafa Bey al-Ghamrawi

Amal's great-grandfather, Mustafa is a firm believer in education. He puts up money in 1906 to fund a national university for Egypt and, with nephew Sharif, establishes a small school on family land in Tawasi.

Nur al-Hayah al-Ghamrawi (1905-1959)

Sharif and Anna's daughter - literally in Arabic the light of their lives - Nur grows up under the constant care of her older cousin Ahmad, pampered and loved by parents and extended family. All assume she and Ahmad will some day marry, but Nur is taken to England after her father's assassination. Nothing is known of her after World War I.

Zeinab al-Ghamrawi (1842-1915)

Sharif and Layla's dignified, good-looking mother Zeinab al-Ghamrawi is from an ancient and distinguished family in Minya, Upper Egypt. Zeinab points out to her son all



the difficulties he will encounter marrying Anna, but accepts her into the family affectionately, and dances at her wedding.

'Abdu Efendi al-Hamuli

The renowned singer 'Abdu Efendi al-Hamuli makes Sharif and Anna's wedding memorable.

Hasna

The young servant Hasna is assigned by Zeinab to her new daughter-in-law Anna.

Nur al-Huda

A twenty-two-year-old, serious, well-educated lady whom Anna meets through Layla, Nur is sad to have had to reconcile with her husband after years apart.

Sheikh 'Isa

A kindly, elderly Christ figure, 'Isa is attended by a mysterious woman in blue (a Virgin Mary figure) and Umm Aya. Amal meets them in the supposedly locked tomb while revisiting the Ghamrawi museum/home. 'Isa produces beautiful tapestries on his loom whenever the stigmata in his hands are not hurting.

Prince Yusuf Kamal

An art aficionado, Kamal's favorite saying is, "Where has it all gone?" Prince Kamal is willing to fund Sharif's art school if all else fails. Kamal fears the people could be incited to riot by charges of idolatry and he cannot afford to be seen as colluding with the British.

Mustafa Kamel

A fiery young Egyptian rhetorician, Kamel has founded a newspaper, *al-Liwa*, and is opening a school. Sharif wonders whether it is jealousy or political differences (Kamel is close to the Sultan and the French) that keep him from getting along with Kamel. Kamel's death by cancer is a loss to the nationalist movement.

Maryam al-Khalidi (1914-1974)

Amal's Palestinian mother, Maryam marries Ahmad in 1935 and bears son 'Omar in 1935. She is one of 30,000 Arabs who lose their land to the Israelis in 1948, but is



brought to Egypt, where she bears Amal. Maryam wants to return to the idyllic Palestine of her youth and often embarrasses her daughter by breaking into nostalgic sobs. Amal wishes she had listened more carefully to her mother during the twenty-two years they spend together and that Maryam had left her something to read, to help her understand. Maryam dies just as Amal finishes university.

'Am Abu el-Ma'ati

The aging but still fit, religiously-attired manager of Amal's lands in Tawasi, Abu el-Ma'ati visits Amal in Cairo four times a year, bringing news, accounts, and her share of the produce of her land. He is among the villagers rounded up by police after a terrorist bombing at Luxor, and Amal helps obtain his freedom. He dies peacefully the day Isabel returns to Egypt with her new baby.

Mabrouka

The former Ghamrawi family Ethiopian slave, twice-married but childless, who chooses to stay on after abolition, Mabrouka reads fortunes and predicts a baby for Sharif. Mabrouka spreads incense and incantations before the wedding and before the birth of baby Nur. She is outspoken in opposing abandonment of the veil. At Sharif's death, Mabrouka is incoherent in grief, wraps each panel of Anna's tapestry and entrusts one each to the descendents of Nur and Ahmad. Where the third goes is forever a mystery.

Sheikh Rashid Rida

Sheikh Rashid Rida is a traditionally attired, pan-Arabist intellectual, from Syria who attends Sharif's discussion of a controversial book about women's rights.

Eugynie le Brun (Mme. Hussein Rushdi)

The interesting wife of a courteous, elderly Egyptian pasha, whom Anna meets through Layla, Mme. Rushdi is rumored to have converted to Islam. She speaks Arabic and Turkish and adds to Anna's expanding familiarity with Egyptian society.

Sabir

James Barrington's delicately featured, gentle, Nubian manservant, whom he assigns to take care of Anna Winterbourne during her trek into the Sinai. Sabir has a wife and children the Westerners know nothing about. After Barrington's return to England, Sabir works for several families before Sharif hires him to work in his office. Sabir proves able and loyal, taking a bullet in the shoulder in an attempt to shield Sharif from assassins. He feels guilty for his failure.



Isma'il Sabri

A friend of Sharif, Sabri is an avant-garde poet, departing from Arab traditions of Arabic in the former's library. Sabri advises Sharif to marry Anna

Arwa Salih

Amal's old acquaintance, a leader of student movement in the early 1970s, whom she and Isabel meet in the Atelier 'am Ghazzali, Arwa speaks boldly of a coming Pax Americana with Israel having hegemony in the Middle East. In 1998, 'Arwa Salih kills herself by leaping from a building.

Tahiyya

The wife of Madani, the doorman in Isabel Parkman's building in Cairo, Tahiyya is also Isabel's friend, who sends her children to check whether Isabel needs anything. She names her fifth child Hanan.

Deena al-'Ulama

A tired ex-militant, currently teaching mathematics at Cairo University and volunteering for several causes, whom Amal and Isabel meet in the Atelier 'am Ghazzali, Deena blames Arabs for accepting the role of victim.

Umm Aya

A plump woman dressed in black, Umm Aya cares for Sheikh 'Isa in the supposedly locked tomb at the Ghamrawi museum/home. She foretells Amal's marriage and return to Egypt. Amal is convinced Umm Aya put the third panel of Anna's tapestry in her camera bag.

'Urabi Pasha

The leader of the short-lived 1882 Egyptian uprising, 'Urabi is exiled in Ceylon when the story begins. In 1901, Anna writes to Sir Charles about how positive a step it will be for the British to pardon him, as the Duke of Cornwall is urging. 'Urabi embarrasses himself and the national movement by statements made after his release and is generally shunned.



Sir Charles Winterbourne

Anna Winterbourne's father-in-law, Sir Charles is a hero of the conquest of Egypt, who has turned into a radical opponent of Britain's overseas empire. His words inspire Anna to visit Egypt, and she and Sir Charles correspond regularly during her years in Egypt. She often pleads with him to put the Egyptian cause before his friends in Parliament. Copies of Anna's outgoing letters are a major source for Amal's research.

Captain Edward Winterbourne (d. 1899)

Anna Winterbourne's late husband, whose noble mind and spirit are destroyed by participating in the brutal and unjust conquest of Sudan, Edward dies early in the novel.

Dr. Ramzi Yusuf

Amal's old professor, whom she and Isabel meet in the Atelier 'am Ghazzali, Yusuf, who appears quite taken by Isabel, claims he is too old to worry about the millennium and Egypt will always be Egypt.



Objects/Places

Shepherd's Hotel

Shepherd's Hotel is on the border between old and new Cairo. Anna Winterbourne sets up residence with her maid Emily there.

Mu'allaqah

Mu'allaqah is the ancient church south of Cairo, where the Virgin Mary and Jesus are said to have been sheltered. Anna and Amal both visit it one hundred years apart.

Hilmiyya

The fashionable district in Cairo where Sharif al-Ghamrawi lives until his marriage to Anna is called Hilmiyya.

Tawasi

The Tawasi village in Minya, Egypt, is where the Ghamrawis have their ancestral lands. Amal fights the bureaucracy to keep the family's schools and clinic from being closed down in the government's fight against terrorism.

The Khedive

The term for Egypt's dynastic ruler, the Khedive is autonomous from but still somehow responsible to the Ottoman Sultan in Constantinople, and, under the occupation, is also controlled by the British Governor. Hopes that the position may evolve into a constitutional monarchy after the Entente is signed. Various individuals fill the position in the course of the novel.

Denshwai

In the Egyptian village Denshwai, British pigeon-hunters provoked a riot that resulted in two hundred fifty arrests of neighbors.

Teatro Costanzi

Teatro Costanzi is the theater in Rome where Sharif first sees Anna, still in mourning.



St. Catherine's Monastery

St. Catherine's Monastery is an ancient Greek Orthodox institution built at the foot of Mt. Sinai, known in Arabic as *Jubul Musa* - Moses' Mountain. Within its precincts is a mosque. For centuries, depending on who is in power, Muslims have defended Christians at Mt. Sinai or Christians Muslims. Sharif is much struck by the monastic tradition of preserving the dried skulls of deceased brothers.

Atelier 'am Ghazzali

Atelier 'am Ghazzali is a smoky restaurant/bar in Cairo to which Amal brings Isabel and where intellectuals debate the future of Egypt and the Middle East.



Themes

Colonialism

The Map of Love examines the British colonial administration of Egypt while it is going on in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries and at the poisoned legacy it leaves behind when finally it departs. One sees how opportunistic Britain found the sorry state of Turkey and quasi-independent Egypt too good an opportunity to pass up and garrisoned troops there from the 1880's. They bleed the Egyptians dry trying next to subdue the Sudan, directly to the south. We hear about the Suez Canal and the draconian colonial measures being taken in India, but the link between two is not brought out. Britain must hold and control Egypt and the Canal in order to hold onto the Gem of its Empire. Anna's first father-in-law and his friends in Parliament want Britain to get out of the colonial business for purely moral reasons. Anna's husband and his nationalist friends agree colonialism is immoral, but also want practically to be able to allocate resources to set up democracy and education, which they believe were inevitable before the occupation and are inevitable afterwards. Egyptians will welcome friendship but not mastery. In the late twentieth-century passages, one sees the legacy of Britain's 1956 pullout from Egypt. Nasser held the country together with the Idea of the Aswan Dam, but after that Egypt has not been able to find a way to renaissance. The religious factionalism largely engendered by the British is making the Egyptian Government use British tactics to head off and destroy terrorism, and U.S. foreign aid is being used to keep Cairo in line. Timeless Egypt continues to bear the "White Man's Burden."

Zionism

The Map of Love deals at length with a movement originating in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century dedicated to creating a homeland for the Jews of the Diaspora. Mention is made in passing of the major leaders of Zionism, several proposed settlement sites, major events like the Balfour Declaration, the guerilla war against the British that led to Israeli Independence in 1948, and the War of 1967, in which Israel occupied Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip. Zionism is primarily dealt with academically, in formal discussions by Sharif and his friends while Zionism is still getting under way, and in the 1990's by Amal and her friends, when the seeds have grown into trees. In both cases, the dialog is allocated carefully to represent all Arab points of view except the radical "drive them into the sea." Note it acknowledges that prior to Zionism, Jews had lived a peace in the region.

Sharif and his notable friends discuss the inevitability of the Sultan improving his cash flow by selling the land out from under the Arab peasantry. Zionists control much money and are organizing internationally to use it effectively. In the field, the Palestinians do what they can to keep absentee landowners from selling out, knowing the sales are structured to be irreversible. Unlike colonialism, which only exploits people, Zionism



proposes radically to remove Muslim and Christian Arabs whose families have lived there for millennia.

In the 1990's, Amal's academic friends discuss from the viewpoint of fifty years of Israeli independence how the early Zionists prevailed, the legacy of hatred, hopelessness, and extremism this has left on the Palestinians - and by other disaffected Muslim fundamentalists. After the Oslo Accords and the end of the first *intifada*, Israeli technocrats are offering their services to supposedly backward neighbors, some of whom see no harm in taking them up on the handsome offer, while others see it as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause and buying into Zionist imperialism. The U.S. has succeeded Britain as the blind and prejudiced puller of international strings.

Muslim Culture

The Map of Love provides detailed depictions of Muslim culture at the turn of the 20th and 21st Centuries. Amal, who grows up in Egypt in the 1960's sees the substance and effect of technological changes in Cairo over the last thirty years, but still is comfortable in the continuum of language and hospitality, which are thoroughly Muslim. Islamic fundamentalism has become a hot topic, but fundamentalists take refuge behind pious slogans rather than digging deeply to solve problems like the economy and education. Once socialism is eliminated as a political threat, fundamentalism loses its value to the Cairo leadership, and now its adherents are being persecuted.

Reading journals and letters from one hundred years earlier, Amal can readily picture and interpret the Muslim society in which Anna lives: Segregated sexually, male-dominated, and formally pious. The British are trying to foment trouble with Coptic Christians, but the rule is sectarian peace. We see positively pictured the times of prayer, the Ramadan fast, marriage and mourning customs, and the day-to-day embedding of God in the Arabic language. Anna does not convert to Islam - and indeed is encouraged to celebrate Christmas -- but understands from within the rhythms of Muslim life. She appreciates the veil and the haramlek, and is amused by Englishwomen who look down on both. At the same time, the winds of change are confronted, as the Egyptian notables debate a revolutionary book, *The New Woman*, advocating abandonment of the veil and universal education for boys and girls, and the need to obtain the Mufti's blessing to open a school of fine arts. After trying Western-style ideologies, the fundamentalists of the late 20th Century would like to return to these days.



Style

Point of View

The Map of Love has no single point of view. Over all it is a third-person narrative by the character Amal, describing her collaboration with a distant cousin, Isabel Parkman, in discovering the story of Isabel's great grandmother Anna. Sometimes, an omniscient but impersonal narrator steps in and Amal is reduced to being one of the characters, while at other times it is clear Amal herself is speaking or writing. Much of the text consists of first-person quotations from Anna's letters and various journals, which are interspersed with Amal struggling to picture Anna's situation. There are also extensive excerpts from a diary kept by Anna's cousin and sister-in-law, Layla, providing an alternative third-person perspective on Anna's unfolding story. To this are added third-person narratives of Isabel's contacts with Amal, through correspondence, phone calls, e-mail, and in-person. Amal so closely identifies with her literary friends that she shifts and shuffles sources and intersperses comments and speculations.

Setting

The Map of Love is set in Egypt, primarily in Cairo, in two separate time frames, a century apart: April 1997-August 15, 1998, and October 1898-December 30, 1913. Distant cousins at the close of the 20th Century study the contents of a trunk that belonged to one's great grandmother, and come to understand what life was like in an ancient land being ground down by British colonial rule. The homes of the Egyptian notables are well depicted, as are a few exotic locales, like the Pyramids and Mt. Sinai. The early story is filtered through the perspective of the explorers of the trunk, who know the end of the story as they work in a modern Cairo apartment and other locals we read about one hundred years earlier. Much has changed but much more stays the same, because pre-World War I western policy determined generations living later would have to deal with religious intolerance, terrorism, and repeated open wars over territory. In particular, the impact of the Zionist movement, as it develops and as it turns out, is depicted and vigorously debated.

Language and Meaning

The Map of Love is rich tapestry of language, ranging from proper way in which upper-class Britons spoke and wrote early in the twentieth century to the forms and idioms in use by educated Britons and Americans at the end of the 20th Century. Because all of the 19th Century characters except the colonial masters speak Arabic, Arabic words and phrases pepper the text. Fortunately, in each of the historical epochs described, one significant character knows virtually no Arabic, and this requires many things be translated and/or explained. A ten-page glossary is appended to the novel, and it will almost always be worth the time to look up unfamiliar words. Doubtless, some readers



will find the liberal use of Arabic distracting and even annoying early on, but eventually, as Anna and Isabel immerse themselves in the language, explanations of how three-letter roots are modified to cover a universe of related concepts justifies the use, and by repetition, one begins to feel how God fills every aspect of Arab life.

Structure

The Map of Love consists of four parts: "A Beginning," which continues in chapters 1-13, to introduce the major characters and establishes that Amal at the end of the 20th Century is studying records from her early-20th Century Egyptian family in order to interpret the story to her distant American cousin, Isabel; the early story, focused on Anna and Sharif, hints they will be married. "An End of a Beginning," followed by chapters 14-18, which proceeds from the trip to Sinai to Sharif's decision to propose marriage - just as Anna is about to give up hope and return to England. "A Beginning of an End," followed by chapters 19-29, covers Anna and Sharif's wedding and married life together in an era of political strife that busies them both; it is little different than the violence of the late-20th Century Middle East, and the cause-and-effect relationship of the eras is brought out. Finally, "An End" ties up the strings on the late 20th Century characters. Each chapter is preceded on a separate page by a quotation from history, poetry, or literature.



Quotes

"And there was the grief, the questioning, the regrets. For months the journal in the brown leather binding is a medley of statements of fact, of fragments, exclamations - "If only he had died contented...If only he had died at peace..." Chapter 4, pg. 38.

"I think of the table by the window as 'Anna's table' and it is covered with her papers. I've arranged them chronologically as much as I could; the undated sheets I've compared to dated ones and matched the paper. They stand in twelve piles, one for each year - some years are more substantial than others. The journals stand alone. I have tried not to read through them, to read only one year at a time. But then I know how the story ends. I don't think that matters. We always know how the story ends. What we don't know is what happens along the way." Chapter 8, pg. 74.

"A, I, q: to become attached, to cling, also to become pregnant, to conceive; and it its emphatic form, 'a, ll, q: to hang, to suspend, but also to comment." Chapter 9, pg. 90.

"It is that happy stretch of time when the lovers set to chronicling their passion. When no glance, no tone of voice is so fleeting but it shines with significance. When each moment, each perception is brought out with care, unfolded like a precious gem from its layers of the softest tissue paper and laid in front of the beloved - turned this way and that, examined, considered. And so they sit, and touch, and talk, and breathe, and so they string their moments into a glorious chain, and throw it round each other's necks, garland each other with it. Invisible to all others, it shines for them, a beacon across a crowded room, across an ocean, across time." Chapter 13, pg. 153.

"'Oh, Isabel,' he said, and shook his head. In his voice there was a note almost of regret. But his hand was still tangled in her hair and he pulled her head back so she had to look up at him as he said, 'I'm old enough to be your father.' "'I know,' she'd said, 'It doesn't matter.' "'Yes, it does,' he said. His hand had caressed her cheek for a moment; his thumb had brushed over her lip. He murmured, 'Take care,' and walked out of the door, leaving her with the ache." Chapter 14, pg. 180.

"Oh how I wish it were possible to go without sleep entirely, or that the hours of each day would be doubled, that I might have time to see and to feel all there is to see and feel, and then still have time to reflect on it, to let the impressions wind their way through my mind, settling here and there in small, shining pools, or merging with other thoughts and progressing towards some great conclusion! And then again, I would have time to write it all down, to record it all, for in that act, I have found my thoughts clarify themselves and what starts as an hysterical burbling of impressions resolves into a view, an image as lucid and present as a painting." Chapter 15, pg. 210.

" 'Bravo!' Mahgoub cries. 'Arwa goes to the bottom line.' "'Do you really think so?' Isabel seems astonished, but then we have never talked about this; I judged our friendship too fragile. "'Yes. That's what they're working for - and they have America behind them. A



pax Americana, and within it an Israeli dominance over the area that they like to call the Middle East." Chapter 16, pg. 222.

"Looking up from Anna's journal I am, for a moment, surprised to find myself in my own bedroom, her trunk standing neatly by the wall, my bed, the sheet folded back, waiting for me to ease myself in. I had been so utterly in the scene, in the hall of the old house, in my great-grandmother's haramlek. My heart had beaten in time with Anna's; my lips had wanted her lover's kiss. I shake myself free and get up to walk in the flat, to stand on the balcony, to look down at the street and bring myself back to the present. Who else has read this journal? And when they read it, did they too feel that it spoke to them? For the sense of Anna speaking to me - writing it down for me - is so powerful that I find myself speaking to her in my head. At night, in my dreams, I sit with her and we speak as friends and sisters." Chapter 19, pg. 306.

"And all his doubts and questionings have disappeared. She is no longer 'Lady Anna, the Englishwoman'. She is Lady Anna, his wife. 'Anna Hanim, Haram Sharif Basha al-Baroudi.' He smiles to himself as he soaks in the bath, as wrapped in a loose white toweling robe he walks around the house he will leave tomorrow, after so many years. It is strange to feel so happy, so calmly happy. Even in that wretched meeting with Cromer he had not found in his heart to hate the man. Ah, but how Cromer had hated him! He also hated having to sit there with the marriage contract in front of him. Sharif Basha grins. And she had been magnificent - not one word of English, not one concession. At every turn she had delighted him." Chapter 20, pg. 324.

"How do I translate 'tarab'? How do I, without sounding weird or exotic, describe to Isabel that particular emotional, spiritual, even physical condition into which one enters when the soul is penetrated by good Oriental music? A condition so specific that it has a root all to itself: T/r/b. Anyone can be a singer - a 'mughanni' - but to be a 'mutrib' takes an extra quality. 'Abdu Efendi al-Hamuli's recognized title was 'the Mutrib of Kings and Princes', and that night, in the old house in Touloum, his gift kindled joy and sorrow in the hearts of his audience. What did Anna make of this strange music? My guess is that she opened her heart to it as she did to everything in her new strange life." Chapter 21, pg. 332.

"'We should learn from them,' Rashid Rida says. 'Even though we do not like what they are doing, we should learn from them. They have determination and they work together.'

"'They too are divided.' Her husband speaks and Anna moves slightly to get a better view of him. 'Some of the younger ones have broken off and formed a new group, the Democratic Zionist Faction. Then there are the rabbis who are against Judaism becoming political and the wise men who say, 'But there are Arabs living on the land' - '

"'The rabbis and the wise men are a minority,' Anton al-Jmayyil says. "'And what is new in that?' Muhammad 'Abdu smiles." Chapter 23, pg. 379.

"Nur is on her father's knee. She has pulled his gold watch out of his pocket and is staring at it thoughtfully. Thoughtfully he regards his daughter. In the silence Layla looks



up from her book and reads her brother's mind. "May He preserve you for her, ya Abeih, and you see her a bride. You'll deliver her with your own hand to Ahmad." He pays attention. 'How do we know they are for each other?' he asks his sister with a smile. 'Might they not meet other people and prefer them?' "You can see they already adore each other," Layla says. 'They can't bear to be separated for a day. When they - ' "Bass ya Sett Layla," Mabrouka cuts in. 'The knowledge of what's hidden is with God alone.' "And where have you popped up from all of a sudden?" Layla asks." Chapter 26, pg. 436.

" 'Sharif Basha? You have been silent all evening?' he prods his old friend.

"Ya'qub Basha is right,' Sharif Basha says. 'It is all arranged - since the Entente.' "France takes Morocco and the Italians' price is Libya, 'Ya'qub Artin says. 'Germany and Russia will divide up Persia. Britain has the biggest prize in Egypt, but she is also arming the Arabs in Sinai - ' "And we will go to the Zionists,' Shukri Bey says bitterly. "You may not.' Ya'qub Artin picks up a chestnut with his silver tongs, examines it and lays it down carefully on its other side. 'You just won'ta battle against them in Parliament.'" Chapter 28, pgs. 470-471.



Topics for Discussion

What does 'Omar contribute to the novel?

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What does Ahmad contribute to the novel?

How is St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai used in the novel?

Why are Sharif and his colleagues fearful of Zionism?

Why are Amal and her colleagues fearful of Israel?

How are Britain, France, and the U.S. characterized as international forces?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of haramlek and veil?

Why do you think Anna never converts to Islam?

Sharif and the notables talk about British stereotypes about Arabs. Has this novel changed any of your preconceptions and/or prejudices? Explain.

Would removing the Arabic words and phrases improve or detract from the novel?