

Queen Of Chess

By

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Clubb of Quality Content!

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**These are some glimpse/ scenes for your interest and I am posting
them for free so you can read them and get idea of story.**

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MC

Dedication of "Malka e Bisaat"

To every woman whose feet have been shackled by this society,

To the woman whose wings this society has clipped,

To the one whose colors have been stolen,

Whose soul is wounded,

Whose eyes remain teary,

And whose heart has withered away...

This novel is dedicated to you.

MC

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Foreword

To the queen who fights her own battles:

You are the queen of this board.

You cannot lose, and no one can defeat you.

What you possess, no one else does.

Use it, and reign over this board with authority.

You are the Queen of the Board!

Scene 1:

Marriage is just a word—a seemingly pleasant one. It's woven with emotions, a collection of delicate feelings, and a joyful experience. But is it really? Just as all fingers aren't the same, marriages are not either. If fate grants someone a life partner who is a true *human*, they experience paradise on earth. But if destiny assigns them a *beast*, life becomes a living hell. And the worst hell of all is an *unsuccessful marriage*.

I once heard an insightful psychologist say, “Women can't even bear a slap; they immediately seek divorce.” Sadly, I couldn't ask her to elaborate further.

Gone are the days when women would work tirelessly—carrying a year-old baby on their hip, with another growing inside—while enduring kicks, slaps, insults, and taunts, all without complaint. Ever wonder why they never complained? Because they were dependent. They were uneducated. How could they speak up for themselves when they had no one to rely on? They knew that if they

dared to defy their husband, he would throw them out. And then who would support her and the children she carried with her? That's why she stayed silent. Education wasn't widespread back then.

As education became more accessible and women began to work, they learned about their rights. A woman raised with the same opportunities as a man—given the same education, attending expensive institutions—will not accept the man beating her. Imagine telling her, “He's your husband; he has the right to hit you.” Have you ever thought about putting your sister, daughter, or mother in that position?

When a woman works a 9-to-5 job just like a man, takes care of the household, gives birth to children, raises them, and still gets slapped by her husband—what solution is there for such a man?

I've already provided my answer to this question in my story, and I'll be waiting to hear your thoughts.



Scene 2:

"Just tell me what you want! You're 27 years old now, and I've already shown you five proposals, none of which you liked. Do you want to end up like Uzma, getting married at 35, having one child,

and losing all your charm?" Nasreen Begum started as soon as she sat down for breakfast.

Ramla Hassan, with her brown complexion, faint acne scars, and serious expression, looked up at her mother. This argument had been going on for five months. Nasreen Begum had brought five proposals, all of which Ramla rejected due to the boys' low income. One worked at a factory, another was a lab technician, one claimed to run an online business, another supposedly owned a garage (which, upon inquiry, turned out to have no assets), and the fifth was a school teacher. Ramla herself was a bank manager, and she knew that marrying someone with a low income would mean running the household alone. It wasn't just about managing the house—it was about compatibility. She felt it was her right to choose a life partner she genuinely wanted.

"I have no intention of ending up like Uzma. I'll agree only if you bring a suitable proposal," she responded calmly, glancing at her younger brother sitting nearby. Uzma was her cousin who had fallen for someone at her workplace, and what began as a crush evolved into love. She ended up giving him 200,000 PKR to settle in Dubai and eventually call for her. After two years, he sent her a picture of their baby girl and blocked her. Uzma mourned for four years, listening to sad songs, and finally married at 35.

"Do you have some secret relationship you're not telling us about?" Nasreen Begum snapped. She always got harsh when discussing Ramla's marriage. Despite her efforts, Ramla dropped the morsel from her hand back onto the plate.

"Please, Ammi, stop. Do you know what kind of women get involved in these 'relationships'? They're the ones who never let their lipstick fade. And me? I sometimes go four days without even brushing my hair because I don't have the time. I don't spend on myself, thinking instead about what the house needs, and still..." She couldn't continue. Her throat tightened, and her eyes welled with tears. Nasreen's words always hurt her deeply. She picked up her bag, draped her shawl, and left. She kept her tears in check, saving them for the night when she would release all her emotions into her pillow. It was her strength—or perhaps her weakness—that she never cried in front of anyone. It had been years since she allowed herself that vulnerability.

"Ammi, I've told you so many times not to pressure her or use such words. You know her nature well, yet you hurt her," Umar said with regret.

"Then explain to her. This is the right age for marriage!" Nasreen Begum insisted stubbornly. Umar pressed his lips together, abandoned his breakfast, and left for work.

Ramla, a 27-year-old bank manager, had a brother Umar, 18 months younger, working as a finance manager. They had grown up watching their parents fight, and 12 years ago, their mother was finally divorced. A divorced woman with two grown children became a hot topic for gossip. Her brothers disowned her, and the three of them had to fend for themselves. They spent ten years moving from one rented house to another before finally buying a modest home two years ago.

When their mother was divorced, she left with nothing—not even a spoon from her dowry. Back at her parents' house, her brothers' wives had already claimed everything. Out of pity, they gave her two cots and a couple of bedsheets. Their first rented house had a single room, a veranda, and a bathroom. Slowly, they moved to better houses, and their belongings increased over time. After ten years of hard work, they had finally bought a house—not just a structure but a home. But something was still missing. The house lacked the furniture and items that matched its grandeur, so they bought new furniture, appliances, and kitchenware. It was as if they had pieced together the shards of their broken lives to build this home.



Scene 3:

“Tayyab, come home on time today. The girl’s family is coming to see you,” Romana Begum said to Tayyab Murtaza during breakfast.

“Okay, Mom,” he nodded in agreement.

“Hmm... such obedience, huh?” Tayyab’s twin sister, Tayyaba Murtaza, teased him mischievously from the next chair, nudging him playfully.

“Be quiet. I’ll arrange something for you too,” Romana Begum shot her a mock glare and then set the breakfast tray, heading toward the room.

“I better leave before Mom gets a knife to my throat. Bye, bro!” Tayyaba grabbed her handbag and quickly crossed the threshold.

These were the residents of Murtaza House: 26-year-old Tayyab Murtaza, his twin sister Tayyaba, their mother Romana Begum, and their father, Murtaza Ahmad. Murtaza Ahmad had been ill and weak even before marriage due to breathing issues. He was against the idea of getting married, knowing he didn’t have much time, but gave in to his mother’s insistence. However, he didn’t hide

anything from Romana and disclosed his condition to her before marriage.

Coming from a modest background, Romana Begum faced no objections when the proposal came from a wealthy family. Murtaza Ahmad's wealth concealed his flaws, and when Romana came to know about his health, she raised no complaints. She married him and entered his home, where Murtaza turned out to be a loving and devoted life partner. Romana felt as if she were living in paradise.

In the fifteen years of their married life, she had experienced all kinds of blessings. But one day, disaster struck—Murtaza Ahmad suffered a stroke. Romana showed her love by taking care of him through it all, personally attending to every task without making him feel dependent. With continuous medical care, his arms and hands recovered somewhat, but he remained unable to walk. Romana handled everything gracefully, never letting him feel helpless.

Tayyab ran his own electronics business, while Tayyaba worked as a municipal officer. For the past two months, Romana Begum had been searching for a suitable match for Tayyab. Finally, she found a well-suited family and invited them for lunch today. Romana mentioned that if they liked Tayyab, she would finalize the engagement. They had only seen the girl's picture so far—her name was Malaika, an orphan living with her mother and paternal

uncle. She was exceptionally beautiful and innocent-looking. Romana herself wasn't fond of repeatedly meeting the girl and preferred to finalize things in one go.



Scene 4:

Dressed in a beautiful pink lawn outfit with light makeup, Ramla looked serious as she got ready. A night of distress and tears had resulted in two fresh pimples on her right cheek, which she didn't bother to hide. She wasn't fond of masking herself with layers of makeup.

When she heard the sound of a car stopping outside, she went to the window. Nasreen Begum stood at the door to receive the guests, with Umar behind her. As the door opened, the visitors began entering—one woman, then another, followed by a third, a boy, then another boy, a girl, another girl, a man, and a child.

Ramla looked at Umar in surprise.

“Are they here to meet the girl or have they brought the entire wedding party?” she asked, half-joking and half-commenting, making Umar dash outside.

Ramla's disinterest deepened. Shortly afterward, she was summoned. Draping her dupatta over her head, she headed to the kitchen, arranged the refreshments on the trolley, and took them to the guests.

One of the women immediately hugged her. Ramla awkwardly pulled away and tried to catch her breath. While enjoying the tea and snacks, the guests began questioning her.

"What is your educational background?" a boy asked at the woman's nudge.

"MBA," she replied with a forced smile.

"Oh, nice. From which university?" he asked further.

Ramla answered with the same smile.

"Which bank are you working at?" After asking about her CGPA, the boy continued with another question, testing her patience.

"Why don't you give me your number, and I'll send you my CV?" Ramla said with a smile, making the boy flustered.

"You have a good sense of humor," another boy chimed in, laughing awkwardly.

"What's on your face, dear?" Haseeb's mother, Alia Begum, cut in, ending the conversation.

“Yes, I noticed too, sister-in-law. These pimples make her look older. Our Haseeb, though, is quite youthful. Even at 30, he looks 25!” another woman laughed loudly.

After staying for about an hour and a half, the guests left.

That evening, a new argument began.

“Mom, I won’t marry into that family,” Ramla said firmly.

“Why? What’s your excuse now?” Nasreen Begum asked sharply. Ramla glanced at Umar, who sat silently.

“Mom, their family is huge. All the uncles and aunts live together. I have no experience living in a joint family, and my temperament isn’t suited for it. I don’t think I’ll be able to adjust. My habits are different,” she explained patiently, but Nasreen Begum lost her temper.

“Tell me honestly, Ramla, what’s going on in your heart? Who are you waiting for, rejecting every proposal that comes your way?” she asked irritably.

“Mom, I’m the one getting married, so I have the right to express my opinion. Instead of complaining to you later about issues, I’m trying to be cautious now,” Ramla replied in a soft tone, attempting to calm her mother.

“I don’t care, Ramla. I’m saying yes to these people,” Nasreen Begum declared bluntly.

Ramla gave her mother an annoyed look, slammed her cup on the table, and stormed off to her room.



Scene 4:

“Mom, I never agreed to this match from the beginning. They belong to the elite class—they own a company, have a vast business. We are not their equals. This class difference will ruin our relationship.” Tayyab objected immediately.

“I told you after meeting the girl, Tayyab. Malaika isn’t like other girls from her class. You can trust me on that.” Romana Begum tried to reassure him, confident there were no issues with the proposal.

“But what if Asfand is like the boys from that class? I don’t want to engage in a *watta satta* (exchange marriage). These types of arrangements are fragile and rarely work out.” Tayyab was still agitated.

“Just maintain balance between the two roles—be a brother where needed and a husband where appropriate. Leave the rest to Allah.” Murtaza Sahib advised, indicating his approval of the match.

“Still, I think you should reconsider. This doesn’t feel right to me.” Tayyab wanted to suggest asking Tayyaba’s opinion but stopped short, deciding to handle it himself.

“Why don’t you meet Asfand yourself and see how you feel? Nothing is finalized yet.” Romana Begum suggested.

“Fine, but if I find Asfand unsuitable for Tayyaba, you must reject both proposals.” He declared firmly.

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“Why reject them? What’s wrong with Asfand that you’d refuse? And if you reject him, what fault lies with Malaika?” Romana Begum was visibly annoyed.

“Mom, Malaika isn’t my wife or fiancée yet. If we don’t like their boy, why would we maintain relations with them? That’s why I didn’t want a **watta satta** arrangement in the first place.” Tayyab remained steadfast in his stance.

“Alright, but don’t make any decisions until you meet Asfand.” Romana Begum concluded as Tayyab rose to head toward Tayyaba’s room.



Scene 5:

Asfand handed him a cup of tea, but before Tayyab could take a sip, the door burst open with a loud bang. He instinctively turned around, and Asfand’s face turned pale. Recovering quickly, Asfand rushed towards the door.

"That receptionist of yours will drive me mad one day! I told her countless times not to stop me at the door. Every time, it's the same excuse: 'Sir is in a meeting.' As if I don't know what meetings you're busy with!" The young man at the door, with bloodshot eyes and disheveled hair, appeared drunk.

"Waqas, I'm with a guest. I'll talk to you later." Asfand tried to push him out of the room. Tayyab, meanwhile, was watching the scene with surprise.

"You carry on with your hospitality. Just transfer two lakhs to me." Waqas demanded rudely.

"Alright, I'll do it. Now go." Asfand muttered a curse under his breath and ushered him out. Once Waqas left, Asfand turned back to Tayyab with an apologetic expression.

"Sorry, that was my cousin. He's spoiled because of all the pampering." Asfand explained with a sheepish smile. Tayyab nodded and put the cup down, his appetite gone. After a bit more small talk, Tayyab stood up to leave. Once he was gone, Asfand slumped into his chair with a long sigh.

"Ah, Dad... I'm exhausted." Just then, Mirza Hameed entered from an adjoining room.

"It's okay, my son. He's convinced now. Just pray that Waqas doesn't cause any trouble." Mirza Hameed patted Asfand affectionately. *Clubb of Quality Content!*

"And why are you spending so much money on him anyway?" he scolded lightly.

"Dad, he's my friend. I can't cut ties with him for anyone's sake. I still don't understand what you see in this marriage." Asfand said in frustration, feeling that marriage was a cage for someone as free-spirited as him.

"Look, Asfand, you're my only son. I can't marry you off to just any elite-class girl. Elite girls don't know how to maintain homes. That's why I want you to marry a middle-class girl. They make good homes, know how to compromise, and adapt." His father explained gently.

"Tomorrow, Insha'Allah, we'll visit them and fix the wedding date. Until then, just hold yourself together." He stroked Asfand's head lovingly.

"Okay, Dad. Don't worry. I'll manage." Asfand grabbed his keys and phone and left the office.



Scene 6:

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"I never imagined life could be this beautiful," Umair said, holding Maryam's hand as they strolled in the hotel garden. Maryam smiled, looking at his face. They were in Swat for their honeymoon, three weeks into their marriage.

"They say the early days of marriage are the best. Later, there's no time to enjoy. My routine starts again on Monday." Umair sighed dramatically.

"Yeah, same here. I have to go back to work, too. I can't afford more leave." Maryam said as they made their way back inside the hotel.

"What do you mean your shift?" Umair asked, puzzled, as he unlocked the door with the key card.

"Ain't I going to the hospital?" Maryam informed him while removing her scarf. He still stood in the middle of the room, his face wearing an expression of confusion.

"So, you'll start going to the hospital again?" His question made Maryam pause as she applied lotion to her hands.

"What do you mean by 'again'? I already had my job before," she replied, looking at him with puzzlement.

"But now you're married," Umair added.

"So...?" she asked, confusion deepening on her face.

"I mean, what's the need for you to continue your job now? And you never told me before marriage that you'd continue working," he said, sitting on the bed to take off his shoes.

"What do you mean by 'need'? I didn't need to work before marriage either. You know I'm not doing this job out of necessity but out of passion. And what was the need to tell you? It's not like you were a stranger. You knew how much I loved this profession.

And I didn't earn my degree after all that hard work just to put it away on a shelf after marriage." Maryam's voice was firm, but Umair's expressions were unsettling her. He was her cousin, and she had never thought her job would be an issue for him.

"Things were different back then. You don't lack anything now, so why continue working?" He moved closer, placing his hands on her shoulders.

"So, you think I became a doctor just to earn money? What's gotten into you, Umair? These days, uneducated people are making more money than educated ones. I didn't work this hard for money; I became a doctor because it was my passion." She gently removed his hands from her shoulders.

"But I don't want you to work anymore. And that's final." He ignored her gesture and spoke firmly.

"But why, Umair? What's the problem with my job? It's not like I'm doing something unethical. So what's the real issue?" Maryam's face reflected confusion.

"It's not your job that's the problem. The problem is *you* working. Look, one day we'll have children. How will you manage everything? I can't leave my kids with a nanny," he tried to explain

gently. "And besides, I want to see you by my side every moment of my life." He placed a hand lovingly on her cheek.

"Umair, I didn't work so hard to earn my medical degree just to spend my days cooking and doing house chores. In my eyes, the most ignorant people are those who possess knowledge but don't use it. My family and I made countless sacrifices to help me become a doctor, and I can't let all that effort go to waste. And besides, it's not like we have kids yet. When the time comes, I'll manage." She spoke with resolve and started to move away.

"So, you won't listen to me?" Umair grabbed her arm.

"You're not making any sense, so—" Before she could complete her sentence, he let go of her arm and stormed out of the room. Maryam shook her head, not in the mood to chase after him.

She was sitting on the bed when her phone rang. Seeing *Maliha Calling* on the screen, she answered.

"Assalamu Alaikum! How are you, Api?" Maryam tried to sound cheerful, but Maliha, being her older sister, sensed her irritation.

"Wa Alaikum Assalam! I'm fine, but what's wrong with you?" Maliha asked, and Maryam told her everything.

"Listen, why don't you talk to Uncle? He'll help knock some sense into him," Maliha suggested.

"No, he's my husband. If I have to make him understand, I'll do it myself. I don't need someone else to intervene. And honestly, it's better he left the room—if he'd stayed, we would've just kept arguing." Maryam shook her head in refusal. After exchanging a few more words, Maliha ended the call.

Maryam leaned against the bed's headboard, her thoughts consumed with Umair. He had stormed out in slippers despite the cold, leaving his phone behind.

Grabbing a shawl, she stepped out of the room to look for him. She was certain he hadn't left the hotel, as the car keys were still in the room.

"Umair," she called out softly when she spotted him sitting on a bench in the garden. She walked over and sat beside him. He remained silent. "Come inside, Umair. It's cold out here," she said gently, placing a hand on his shoulder, but he didn't respond.

"Umair," she whispered, resting her head on his shoulder.

"If you won't listen to me, what difference does my presence or absence make?" he muttered in a hurt voice. Maryam's heart sank.

He was her husband, and they had only been married a short time, yet she had managed to upset him.

"Okay, fine. We'll do as you say, just come inside now." She held his arm gently, and he turned toward her, his eyes brightening. "I love you, Maryam," he said, kissing her forehead, and in that moment, Maryam's heart melted.

Looking at the moving lips of the girl in the white coat before her, Maryam's thoughts drifted back to the past. After returning from their honeymoon, she had taken an extra week off, thinking she could convince Umair during that time. But then, she found out she was pregnant. Her mother-in-law was ecstatic, and Umair had declared, "In this condition, you shouldn't be working." And with that one sentence, all of Maryam's and her father's efforts and investment were dismissed.

"Mrs. Umair, are you listening?" The child specialist's waving hand brought her back to the present.

"Sorry... I was just lost in thought. Could you repeat that, please? I'm sorry," she said, embarrassed.

"It's okay. I was saying that Minha has received the injection. Since it's a vaccine, it will cause some pain, so apply ice to the area. She might also develop a fever, so give her this syrup if needed."

The doctor handed over the prescription, which her father, Moeed, took.

"Thank you, doctor!" He folded the paper and placed it in his pocket, signaling to Maryam to get up. She adjusted the sleeping Minha against her shoulder and stood.

"It's unbelievable how irresponsible Umair is! He should be ashamed that he couldn't even be present for his three-month-old daughter's vaccination. If he takes leave, he should stay home!" Moeed's face was red with anger as he spoke.

"You know how it is, Abu. He rarely gets time off, so he goes to meet his friends," Maryam said sheepishly. Umair was in the army. Moeed glanced at her—her rough skin, unkempt hair, shabby appearance, and slippers on her feet. She was not the same Maryam from five years ago. That Maryam had been the most beautiful girl in the family, with a glowing face and silky hair.

"Friends are more important than his children? If I hadn't found you, who knows how long you would have waited in the sun for a rickshaw with the baby." His voice was filled with displeasure. Maryam had nothing to say in response.

"Where's Saad?" he asked, noticing her silence.

"With Auntie. He insisted on coming with me, but I had to leave him with her," Maryam explained, and her father nodded.

"Let's not dwell on it, Abu. Come inside, and I'll make you some tea," she said in a conciliatory tone as the car pulled into the driveway. Umair's behavior wasn't new; every time he came home, he spent the whole day outside, and sometimes even stayed out all night.

"No, I need to go back to the office. Take care of yourself and Minha. Look at yourself—you need to eat properly. While worrying about everyone else, don't forget to take care of yourself too," he said gently, kissing Minha's head.

Maryam's eyes welled up. Her father was the only person who truly understood her—both inside and out, the one person who knew her pain and struggles. And he was also the person she had hurt five years ago.

"Okay, Abu. Allah Hafiz." Holding Minha close and grabbing her handbag, she opened the door and stepped out. As soon as she went inside, Moeed started the car with an expressionless face and drove away.



Scene 6:

“Meet her, my fiancée. We’re here for wedding shopping,” Asfand said, taking Tayyaba’s hand and pulling her closer. At his introduction, the other man looked surprised, then grinned and threw out a crude congratulation.

“Wow! When did your taste change?” The woman gestured toward Tayyaba with a teasing smile, and all three laughed loudly. Tayyaba felt instantly out of place.

“Let me introduce you. This is Liza, and this is Ahmed, a married couple and my old university friends. And this,” Asfand gestured toward her, “is Tayyaba.” Ahmed extended his hand for a handshake, which Tayyaba ignored, responding only with “Wa Alaikum Assalam.”

“Your fiancée is too rude,” Liza pouted, clearly displeased with Tayyaba’s reaction.

“No, she’s just very shy,” Asfand corrected with a glance at Tayyaba.

“Oh, shy girls are something else, aren’t they?” Ahmed remarked with a sly grin, prompting more laughter from the group. Tayyaba found both the couple and their humor unpleasant.

“We’re shopping too. Why don’t we keep each other company?” Liza suggested. Asfand eagerly accepted, and the trio entered a nearby store. Reluctantly, Tayyaba followed.

“How does this look, Ahmed?” Liza held up a deep-red, Indian-style lehenga for his opinion.

“It’ll look amazing on you. Perfect choice, darling,” Ahmed leaned in flirtatiously. Tayyaba turned her gaze away in embarrassment.

“Oh, you naughty boy! Behave, darling,” Liza playfully scolded before turning to Asfand. “What do you think, Asfand?” she asked, now holding the lehenga up to Tayyaba for comparison.

“It’s nice,” Asfand commented after a quick glance at Tayyaba.

“Should we go for it, then?” Liza asked, turning back to them.

“I don’t like it. Let’s look at something else,” Tayyaba interjected suddenly, drawing their attention.

“Why not? It’s beautiful,” Liza said, slightly annoyed.

“Yes, it is. But I’ve never worn anything like this before,” Tayyaba replied, hinting at the backless design.

“Oh, come on! Weddings are all about trying new things for the first time,” Ahmed said with a mischievous grin, making Liza burst into laughter. And that’s when Tayyaba’s patience snapped.

“Just shut up, mister!” she snapped, her voice sharp. Liza and Ahmed stopped laughing, stunned by her outburst. Even Asfand looked at her in surprise.

“Relax, honey. He was just joking,” Liza said sweetly, trying to smooth things over.

“There’s no joke between me and him,” Tayyaba shot back sternly, pointing at Ahmed, then stormed out of the shop. The trio stood frozen in disbelief before Asfand snapped out of it and ran after her.

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Scene 7:

Before entering the apartment, she turned off her phone to stop Umair from calling repeatedly. After placing Minha’s milk in the fridge, she noticed used dishes on the kitchen counter. It puzzled her because she hadn’t been there for days, and if Umair had come by, he would’ve told her. The fridge also contained several food items. Unable to ask Umair about it, she pushed the thought aside and decided to take a shower.

In the bathroom, Maryam heard the door and froze. Her heart raced—someone had entered the apartment, and her children were alone outside. She could hear footsteps and voices in the room. Quickly throwing on her clothes, she grabbed her scarf and rushed out.

What she saw made the ground slip from under her feet. She stood frozen, her eyes wide, struggling to believe the scene before her.

Her world had shattered. She was now utterly broken.



Scene 8:

This is the tragedy of our society.

Our girls often witness traumas from a young age—memories that stay with them forever. Before marriage, we ensure that our daughters are physically healthy, but we never bother to check their mental well-being. Unfortunately, mental illnesses and their treatment are not yet normalized in Pakistan. Many girls live their entire lives in trauma—first at their own home and then at their in-laws’—because for us, dowry and family reputation are more important. "Oh, they gave an impressive dowry, and their

daughter was married off on time—such an obedient child!" But no one cares if that child's mental health is in ruins.

Once married, the girl is expected to take care of not just her husband but his entire family—his sisters, brothers, and parents. And still, the husband isn't satisfied. A few months into the marriage, the pressure to have children begins. Neither the husband nor the wife has any idea about parenting. The girl is drowning in her traumas, while the husband is busy with his job.

When the child is born and starts growing up, the mother, now overwhelmed with frustration, finds an outlet for all the anger she has absorbed from her in-laws and husband. If it's a son, he might eventually leave home to escape his mother's nagging. But if it's a daughter, she will have no choice but to endure it all.

In such a scenario, girls either throw themselves into the outside world like boys do, or they live their lives perpetually scared. And thus, the same traumatic cycle is set in motion again.



Scene 9:

Her husband, with whom she had spent five years of her life, was standing in front of her, holding another girl in his arms. Yes, it was Umair, standing so close to that girl, his hand resting on her

waist. The girl was running her hand over his military-style haircut, and he smiled as he kissed her hand.



Scene 10:

“Maryam, my child, what’s done is done. Umair wants to speak with you. It’s better to resolve this through dialogue,” Saeed Sahab’s voice was laced with sweetness. Maryam finally raised her gaze and looked directly at Umair. He looked the same—arrogant as ever—but something within her had changed. The sight of him no longer stirred anything in her heart.

“I’m here. Let him say whatever he wants. In fact, I have something to say to him. It’s high time we settle this,” she said coldly. Umair faltered, taken aback by the unfamiliar detachment in her voice.

“When did you marry her?” Maryam asked, looking directly into his eyes.

“Almost a year and a half ago,” he stammered.

“And how long have you known her?” Everyone in the lounge listened in silence.

“About two years,” he replied, lowering his gaze, though without a trace of shame.

“Just one last question,” Maryam asked with remarkable restraint.

“I fulfilled your every need—physical, emotional, material. I gave birth to your children. So what was it that drove you to seek other women?” Her voice was heavy, but her eyes remained dry. Today, she wasn’t going to cry.

“Maryam, my child—”

“No, Uncle, this is between us. Let us speak,” she interrupted firmly.

“Answer me. Give me a single, honest reason, and I’ll leave with you right now.” She looked at him with unwavering resolve.

“I had many needs. My job kept me away from you, and I needed someone to fulfill them,” he said, as if his words were justification enough.

“What kind of needs required another woman to fulfill them?” She asked, her tone dripping with sarcasm.

“You’re not a child. I would come home only every six months,” he shouted, standing up abruptly.

“Do you remember? On our honeymoon, you asked me to leave my job because you wanted me by your side always. I can count the moments you truly gave me after our wedding. You were with me, yet never really there. I can tell you exactly how many nights you spent with me in these five years. You had needs, and for them, you married someone else. But what about my needs?” she shouted back, her voice filled with anguish.

“Shut your filthy mouth! Are you all listening to her? How shameless she is!” Umair barked in rage.

“Bravo, Umair! You have affairs and marry again to fulfill your needs, but when I ask about my needs, I’m shameless?” Maryam clapped sarcastically, her voice dripping with disdain.

“I knew soon after our marriage that you were having affairs. But I stayed silent, not so you could bring someone else into my life and expect me to accept it quietly.” Tears now streamed down her face.

“You’re one of those men who can’t stand to see a woman succeed. You wanted a wife only to manage your home and bear your children—a mute wife who would turn a blind eye to everything. But if you think I’ll ever come under your control again,

you're mistaken. I endured everything, but this... this is the limit. And this game—this game ends now, on my terms.” With those words, she met his gaze for the last time and walked away.

Umair watched her go for a moment before storming out himself.



Scene 11:

Men have the right to marry more than once; both religious law and civil law permit it. However, many men only follow the part of the teaching that suits them. If a man marries to provide support to a woman in need or to protect someone in an unfortunate situation, the wife should accept it.

But if a man marries solely for love, that's not support—it's selfishness disguised as religious duty. How many men marry widows or destitute women? The second wife is almost always younger and more beautiful. This is betrayal—using religion to justify lust while neglecting one's existing responsibilities. If a wife confessed to loving another man, would the husband forgive her?



Scene 12:

As soon as the ceremonies ended, the guests returned to their homes. After changing, Tayiba checked her phone. It had died earlier in the hall due to low battery. She quickly put it on charge, and as soon as it hit 20%, she started using it. The missed calls from a particular number made her heart race. She didn't know what news awaited her. With trembling hands, she opened WhatsApp and found multiple photos, videos, and links from the same number. At the end was a 35-second voice note. With shaky fingers, she played it. In the silence of the room, a deep male voice echoed, draining the life out of her. She collapsed to the floor, her heart pounding, tears streaming from her eyes, and the world spinning around her.



Scene 13:

“I'm here to take Saad. You can stay wherever you want, but my son will come with me,” Umair announced arrogantly, skipping any greetings. Maryam felt a shock run through her, but she had faith that Moiz wouldn't let her children go. Moiz, however, seemed calm, as if he had expected this moment.

“Why only your son? You seem to have forgotten that you have two children,” Moiz said coldly, rising from the sofa. “By all means, take both of them. That will make my daughter’s decision easier.” He gently lifted Minha from Maryam’s lap and placed her in Umair’s arms. Maryam stared in disbelief at her father.

“Saad, didn’t I tell you? You’ll be going with your Papa, and this will be like an outing for you. Remember?” Moiz had already explained everything to the child, who nodded innocently.

“Here’s their luggage. And don’t forget about their school. You do know what grade they’re in and which school they attend, right?” Moiz’s cold tone was laced with sarcasm, and Umair hesitated, unsure of what to do. He had only planned to take Saad, but now he was expected to take Minha too.

“Abu, my children...” Maryam, frozen in place, suddenly sprang to life as Umair turned to leave. She cried out, but Saniya Begum quickly held her back.

“Abu, don’t do this to me! They are my children. How will I live without them?” Maryam’s voice was filled with anguish. Saad slipped free from Umair’s hand and ran to his mother.

“Come on, Saad,” Umair said, pulling him away as he wiped his mother’s tears. Maryam stood there, tears streaming down her face, watching her children leave.

“Abu, what have you done?” Moiz’s son, Muaz, asked in disbelief.

“I just want to see what kind of father he is. Maryam, I don’t want my decision to ruin these children’s lives. They shouldn’t have to live without their father’s presence. I am your father, and I only want what’s best for you,” Moiz said, comforting Maryam. “You don’t want to live with Umair, and I won’t force you to, but you have two children. I must consider them too before making any decisions.”

“We all know the kind of husband he was, but I need to find out if he has any feelings as a father or if they’ve also been consumed by selfishness,” Moiz explained gently. But Maryam’s mind was only focused on her children; she could think of nothing else.



Scene 14:

Her heart, her lips, her entire body trembled. She couldn’t process what had just happened—what she had done. After a few deep breaths, she calmed her trembling hands and pulled out her phone from her clutch. With shaking fingers, she dialed Tayyab’s number. After a few moments, his voice came through.

“Hello? Tayyaba, is everything okay?” There was concern in his voice. Tayyaba’s heart swelled with emotion.

“Hello? Tayyaba, are you there?” Tayyab sounded more worried now.

“Tayyab...” she whispered, her voice shaky, tears streaming down her face.

“Tayyaba, what’s wrong? Are you okay? Why are you crying?” he asked, panic creeping into his voice.

“Tayyab... I killed him... He’s dead... Please come get me... Please, right now...” She broke into sobs, her voice cracking with fear and desperation.

“Tayyaba, don’t worry. I’m coming. Just stay there—I’ll be right there,” Tayyab assured her, already on his way out.

Tayyaba kept the phone pressed to her ear, finding strength in Tayyab’s voice from the other end.



Scene 15:

"So, what’s this issue with Moid and his daughter?" Brigadier Ajmal asked directly, picking up his teacup. Umair, who was about to reach for his cup, paused.

"He's my uncle and also my father-in-law. How do you know him, Sir?" Umair asked casually.

"I know him well. But leave that—tell me, why did you feel the need for a second marriage? These days, managing even one wife is a challenge, and your income doesn't exactly allow for two." Ajmal's tone was calm, not interrogative. Umair took a deep breath, gathering the courage for what he was about to say.

"Sir... When times are tough, anything can happen. Everyone blamed me for the second marriage, but only I know the truth. And I also know that if I reveal that truth, it will ruin her reputation. No matter what, she's the mother of my children," Umair said, adopting a sorrowful and mysterious tone.

"What exactly did she do?" Ajmal asked, sitting up straight with curiosity.

"How can I tell you, Sir?" Umair responded helplessly. "Let's just say she didn't have a good character. But despite everything, I'm still willing to accept her—after all, she is the mother of my children." He used the same excuse men of his kind often use.



Scene 16:

The biggest cause of failed marriages and domestic discord is family interference in the lives of the husband and wife or married children, whether it's a son or daughter. Either don't get them married, or if you do, let them make their own decisions. How long will you keep holding their hands and controlling their lives? If you wanted to keep your son close, you shouldn't have married him off. Now that he's married, if he sits with his wife or talks to her, why object? Let them set their own rules for their home and life.



Scene 17:

"Yeah, I didn't tell you. It's my choice. What will you do about it?" Haseeb puffed out his chest and stood defiantly in front of her. "And you're not some young, delicate girl who gets scared in my absence. You're a grown woman, Ramla—this childish behavior doesn't suit you!" His words hit her like a dagger in the chest.

"Why should I always stay silent, Haseeb? I shared my secrets with you, and you spread them around, and still, I kept quiet. I've endured endless taunts because of you. From the very beginning, your family and your mother have caused problems between us!" she shouted. "And let me tell you one thing—your mother will

never let this marriage work!" Ramla looked him straight in the eye, her breathing heavy with rage.

"My mother won't ruin this marriage—*your* mother will. Following her path, you'll destroy your own home," Haseeb sneered, shoving her shoulder as he spoke. Just moments ago, Aliya Begum had advised him to keep Ramla under control—and even suggested that if necessary, he should "teach her a lesson."

"Don't disrespect me, Haseeb!" Ramla's patience had finally run out. She roared in frustration.

"Watch your tongue!" Haseeb raised his hand instinctively. Ramla recoiled in fear, stumbling backward and falling onto the bed. Although his hand didn't actually hit her, the emotional pain felt just as real.



Scene 18:

If a man has to do his own chores despite having a wife, the woman loses her charm in his eyes. Similarly, if a woman has to shoulder financial responsibilities in the presence of a husband, the man loses his appeal too. In Ramla's eyes, Haseeb was slowly but surely losing his charm.

Nature has defined the roles of men and women, along with their responsibilities. If we try to alter these roles, we must remember that interfering with the natural order always leads to harm.



Scene 18:

"What do you think? Is getting Khula that easy? You probably don't know men well enough. When a man becomes stubborn, he never lets go of the woman he is connected to. Even if he does, he leaves her in such a way that she becomes unworthy of any other man. The box on the divorce papers, where the reason for the divorce goes, is where he trashes the woman's character to the extent that she shies away from facing another man." He hissed venomously through the phone.

"Don't forget that until I sign the character certificate, your character will remain questionable in the eyes of the world. Just think about what will happen when the municipal officer hears about Tayba Murtaza's past from her husband. Tayba Murtaza, known by half of Lahore, fled her husband's house on her wedding night. Ah! Just think about your brother's condition." He said this last part with a mocking tone.

Tayba was still speechless. What could she say? There was nothing left to say. Tears streamed down her cheeks in a continuous flow.



Scene 19:

"Hello! Asfand..." she spoke impatiently.

"Oh wow! Today my dear wife seems to have been waiting for my call," he said, mocking her impatience. "So, tell me what you have decided?"

"I'm willing to go with you, Asfand! But please don't do anything." Taybah knew how heavy-hearted she was to say this.

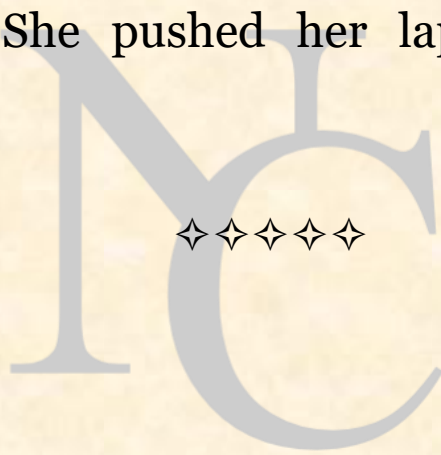
"Very good! I expected nothing less from you. Look, you have all the qualities of a good wife.

"If you say so, I can come to your house today." She said, trying to hold back tears that were barely contained.

"No, not that soon. I'm returning now; I'll come straight to you. Just be ready. You know what kind of preparation I'm talking about." He spoke meaningfully, and Taybah squeezed her eyes shut, tears streamed down her cheeks.

Wiping her face with a tissue, she turned to her laptop when someone burst in, opening the door to her office. Taybah looked up with surprise to see the person in front of her. Dressed in a stiff white cotton suit, with a black jacket over it, a red-and-white clean-shaven face, and thick black mustaches, that person had not only entered her office but had also pulled a chair to sit down with a flourish.

"Who are you?" She pushed her laptop aside and spoke seriously.



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