**The Reluctant Fundamentalist**

**Chapter-by-chapter summary**

**Chapter 1**

The main character, Changez, who is a Pakistani university lecturer, is having a conversation with an American at the Lahore café, in the district of Old Anarkali. He reponds to a question about Princeton begins by telling about his life from the time he left Lahore to go to university in America. Also, the main character declares himself a "lover of America", noticing the bearing of the American and his mission to find a cup of excellent tea in Lahore.

Changez starts telling he was a brilliant student and got a job at a small but prestigious valuation company, the Underwood Samson Company, led by Jim who hires him and recognizes the hunger in Changez.

In addition, Changez comes from a no longer wealthy, but still important, respectable family.

**Chapter 2**

Still in the café, Changez observes attractive girls, referring to an American girl he loved, Erica.

He met Erica in Greece, on university holidays. she was regal and a very popular girl: she likes him and his anachronistic ways, his ‘strong sense of home’ (that is a part out of her reach).

He likes her, who tells him about Chris, her boyfriend who died, and her dream is to become a novelist.

The protagonist is a little bothered by free spending of money by young Americans and the way they were disrespectful to their elders and poorers.

Returning to the present, the American is unnaturally aware of bearded customers, he has a high-tech mobile phone and sends a short text.

**Chapter 3**

It is spring in Lahore, soothing effect on ill at ease American who glances about a lot, like predator or prey, and the gates of the old Anarkali district had being locked.

Lahore is an ancient city, similar to Manhattan: during his trip, it was a bit like ‘coming home’ for Changez: many speakers of Urdu driving cabs and running cafes, immediately a New Yorker, never an American.

The protagonist tells his interlocutor that he is very fond of New York, he loved his job with his office on the 41st floor, like another world - so powerful, so privileged and explained that Underwood Samson was a meritocracy and had young ‘guns’ trained, almost like an army, and working for it, teams trained by Sherman in the arts of economic fundamentalism: how to make as much money as possible and as quickly and directly as possible.

In America, the protagonist makes friends with Wainwright, another outsider, and together they try to speak the "lingo" of the dominant culture.

**Chapter 4**

Exploring Manhattan with Erica, comfortable in cosmopolitan NY, on subway, galleries and gatherings with her, he found Erica’s family live in impressive penthouse apartment and feels a bit at home. During his meeting, Erica’s father annoys Changez with stereotypical views on Pakistan.

After that, Erica and Changez had a picnic lunch in Central Park and Erica describes the effect of Chris’s death on her.

**Chapter 5**

Got back in the present, the protagonist and the American observe bats flying over their head. During his life, Changez goes to Phillipines for a valuation job of music company and he is surprised and upset to find even an outpost of America’s empire is richer than Pakistan's.

Local workers look up to rich young Americans and the main character starts to assume the same attitude and language, feels sense of power that he decides people’s future.

However unsettled by taxi driver who shows hostility, Changez play acting as one of them. In the meanwhile, he exchanges sporadic emails with Erica.

Jim visits and complimenst Changez on work, strong qualities: this reminds Changez of longings for his family’s past life, a nostalgia that paralyses some of his family.

During his work in the Phillipines, the World Trade Centre collapses by a terrorist attack; Changez sees this on tv and ‘smiles’. While sharing this attitude, he notices on American's face his evident disgust.

**Chapter 6**

Post 9/11 and New York in mourning, he sees Erica and she looks older, haunted by Chris' nightmare and has exacerbated her grief; she takes Changez to events with her but she is distant with people. He tries to make Erica be the woman he met once, but his attempt at love making fails: "she can’t get wet" and tells him more about Chris.

**Chapter 7**

America gripped by a growing and self righteous rage after the terrorist attack: Pakistani cab drivers being assaulted, mosques being raided and muslims disappear, Changez' family is unsettled in Pakistan.

Changez continues to focus on his job, doing a valuation in New Jersey that involved job cuts and he begins to see first hand the ramifications of job loss on people’s lives. Jim encourages him to ‘focus on the fundamentals’, but Changez is focusing on that Afghanistan is a friend and neighbour and fellow Muslim nation so he is questioning his loyalties. He watches the bombing of Afghanistan and he felt confused for the first time.

The protagonist tried harder to get in contact with Erica and, when he finally sees her, she was a pale, nervous creature, who is struggling with her ghost of Chris; uncomfortable encounter for them both ultimately.

**Chapter 8**

Changez visits Erica and she is in worse shape ever; her mother tells him she doesn’t need a boyfriend but a friend. She lies on her bed, dazed and sleepy, stuck with his masterpiece. He can’t help her as she recedes into her Chris' world.

In the meantime, Changez was worried and angered by America’s "dangerous nostalgia" and her "determination to look back".

At the Underwood Samson nothing is perturbed by sorrows and continues to power forward in pursuit of business fundamentals.in addition, he was almost attacked by Arab-haters and Changez is aggressive in his response.

**Chapter 9**

Changez feels himself different, rather than his country, and he was more like an unsympathetic American, but gradually understands the different beauty of his family house and homeland.

Things aren't too good in Pakistan and Changez felt powerless, angry at the weakness of his country, and he felt like he was abandoning his family.

Once again, he tried to get in touch with Erica, but it has taken him awhile. She is at a clinic on the Hudson. Changez is angry and preoccupied about everything: job, America, Erica, Pakistan; Jim suggested he might like to shave off the beard for pragmatic reasons, also mentions a big job in Chile.

**Chapter 10**

Changez was no longer excited about the first class travel to Chile and regrets going at all.

He met Juan Bautista, the chief of the publishing company they are valuing. He has an immediate impact on Changez and exposes him to concepts about equality and art.

Changez can’t concentrate on the job, worried about Pakistan and obsessed with websites about it. His superior cautions him but Changez can’t focus and in the end he gives up and is sent back, in disgrace, to New York.

**Chapter 11**

On the plane back he thinks about America’s foreign policy and interventions in other country’s, he is now looking throught he eyes of an ex-janissary and is far more critical of US traditional activities and attitudes.

He gets the sack from his job but Jim is quite kind about it. Changez travels back to his apartment with box of belongings on the subway, different experience now: no longer so cosmipolitan, now more menacing. He felt confused and troubled and a bit lost with complexity of his conflicting emotions.

He went to the clinic to visit Erica but she has disappeared, left a pile of clothes on a headland above the river.

**Chapter 12**

Changez leaves America and returns to Pakistan, working as a university lecturer. He seems to be increasingly opposed to American actions and he is surrounded by energetic young students who are interested in Pakistan’s future. He gets involved in demonstrations and meetings, receives official warnings, interviewed by international media, feels like Kurtz waiting for the assassin. At the end, Changez accompanies the American back to his hotel, but they were followed by a bunch of threatening people, so the American reaches for his jacket and the protagonist sees a glint of metal, suggesting his business card.