

# The Kite Runner

By Khalid Hosseini

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"I knew your mother, did you know that? I knew her real good. I took her from behind by that creek over there." The soldiers laughed. One of them made a squealing sound. I told Hassan to keep walking. "What a tight little sugary cunt she had!"

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..."All I want you weaklings to do is hold him down. Can you manage that?" Wali and Kamal nodded. They looked relieved. Assef knelt behind Hassan, put his hands on Hassan's hips and lifted his bare buttocks. He kept one hand on Hassan's back and undid his own belt buckle with his free hand. ..unzipped his jeans. Dropped his underwear. He positioned himself behind Hassan. Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper. He moved his head slightly and I caught a glimpse of his face. Saw the resignation in it.

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My mind flashed to that winter day six years ago. Me peering around the corner in the alley. Kamal and Wali holding Hassan down. Assef's buttock muscles clenching and unclenching, his hips thrusting back and forth.

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"There is a Talib official," he muttered. "He visits once every month or two. He brings cash with him, not a lot, but better than nothing as all." His shifty eyes fell on me, rolled away. "Usually he takes a girl. But not always." "And you allow this?" Farid said behind me. He was going around the table, closing in on Zaman. "What choice do I have?" Zaman shot back. He pushed himself away from the desk. "You're the director here," Farid said. "Your job is to watch over these children." "There's nothing I can do to stop it." "You're selling children!" Farid barked.

