

## Quotes

All I wanted to do was to stand up on the soil of a land where rockets did not land on my house in the middle of the night and hold my arms wide and say, 'Here I am. My name is Najaf Mazari. Do you have a use for me in this country?' p. 2

What a country I come from! Strangers to the idea of queue-jumping, and on top of that, babies are born without anything in writing to prove that they exist! P. 3

Like almost every Afghani, I have witnessed a number of explosions in my lifetime, always unwillingly. Afghanistan has been a type of explosion laboratory over the past three decades. P. 7

I have had the opportunity all my life – not that I ever desired it – to gaze at the impact of explosions on buildings, machinery, bridges, streets, the country side itself and on human beings. P. 8

We were not a family of political firebrands; we were suspicious of all the grand claims of salvation made by the government, by the Russians, by the mujahedin. For us, salvation meant a place where we could worship and work. P. 10

Gorg Ali...had an instinctive distrust of fiery speeches, as if he could see that the passion and anger in the arguments of one political party simply aroused the same sort of passion and anger in another party. P. 11

In Afghanistan at that time, feeling secure was never a long term thing...p. 11

I thought of many times in the past when both brothers were still alive. I wondered what my fate was to be in this land of Afghanistan, where war succeeded war. P. 17

To place your fate in the hands of other people is never a happy situation. P. 19

I am glad I am being fed, yes, but it sometimes seems to me that the authorities who control the camp think that people who don't have white skin live entirely on rice. P. 24

There is always trouble when the amounts are not exactly the same. Because there are people here from five different countries, arguments grow into tiny wars...p. 24

Then there are the unnecessary things, like 'political part' and 'gun and 'bomb.' Isn't it strange that the unnecessary things are the most dangerous? P. 27

...the worst fights are about your country...p. 29

But the officials and the guards don't understand that when you live behind big fences, each day makes you more desperate. Anger and sorrow build up and build up, and good sense begins to starve to death. P. 29

I think that all of our waiting and our need for patience is caused by people who would not be patient and would not wait. P. 32

For hardship has been a big part of the pattern of life in my violent homeland for not hundreds, but thousands of years. P. 34

For such men, individual honour and the honour of their tribe is so deeply rooted in their hearts that there is nothing on earth that they would not do to preserve it...p. 36

Even if people who have nothing to hide and intend to tell the whole truth to the case officer become nervous when they enter the interview room...It is not that people mean to lie to case officers; it is just that the truth is sometimes so complicated...p. 46

Australia needs more Afghans. We work hard all day long...we don't complain very often. Why should we? In Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul and Kandahar, people shoot you. Here, nobody shoots you. P. 52

Even though the Talibs would one day take away the music and smash the instruments and beat the musicians, it was not possible for them to kill the love of music in the people. p. 61

Woomera looked 'sinister,'...like a place where dreadful scientific experiments might be carried out...It shocked us all...Australia was a modern country. P. 69

You start to think, 'Have I lost something that used to be part of me? Has part of me become sick and died while the rest of my body is still living?' p. 71

Just imagine the situation: You've been in Woomera for three months. You haven't had one hour in all that time, even in your sleep, when you have stopped worrying. P. 74

...you have nothing to do and you feel as if you have no power and the days drag on and on...p. 75

I would never feel any joy in what I did; I would never make something beautiful and wish to praise God for the skill he had put in my hands...p. 85

Peace was restored. And yet, I resented deeply those two blows to my head. Was it not possible for my brother to simply ask me for an explanation without boxing my ears? P. 94

Main Camp is a place of tension...it is a place of tears. P. 99

This man's heart has been torn into pieces, but because everyone has seen broken hearts before and there's nothing unique about such pain, he has to mutilate himself to show us all what it feels like. P. 102

What I am thinking is this: Australians, would it have been such a tragedy if you had accepted this man's story? P. 102

[Gorg Ali] was the sort of human being who holds things together, and the opposite of the sort who wrenches things apart. P. 105

He didn't trust fighting as a way of building...p. 106

When the mujahedin won their final victory, that was when the real trouble would start. P. 115

But in the human heart, such passions rage that the lightning and thunder and torrents of the storm would themselves stand back in awe. P. 120

For Afghans, warfare had become a disaster so common that it was useless to think of it as something that could be avoided; it was more like earthquakes and floods and plague – catastrophes that you had to live with because they could not be controlled. P. 129

I was, in truth, still full of the fear of that night when the rocket landed. As I looked about me, how could I say that another rocket would not seek out this house...p. 133

When you are a cripple, you notice for the first time how many people are not...p. 134

All that I hoped for was that they would leave me and my family alone...p. 150

For neither side took any interest in the views of the young men and boys they were attempting to recruit. P. 151

They did not want us in order to make us pilots of jet planes. They wanted us to stand and fight and kill other boys until finally one of the boys killed us. P. 153

By the time of my early teenage years, war had become the main industry of Afghanistan – the main industry and the biggest employer...p. 153

We knew that in many parts of Afghanistan, people were packing up all they owned and heading east to find safety in Pakistan...p. 168

Neither side had any plan except to fight until the death. By fighting until the death, they meant the death of everyone...p. 168

I thought only about rugmaking and avoiding both sides in the new war of mujahedin against mujahedin...p. 171

It became obvious that the new warriors were fanatics, without any concern for anything other than fighting and worship. P 171-172

Those who honour others gods than mine – peace to them, forever. P. 172

I cannot live in a comfortable way beside men who wish to cut the throats of those they find fault with in the way they worship. P. 172

Old people know how to despair, but young men know how to hate. P. 174

But you do not want to live in a country ruled by people who never have any doubts. P. 175

I'm sure that everyone thought as I did: when they come, we will deal with it. Meanwhile, we acted as if the day when the Taliban would return was a long way off. P. 177

It was necessary for me to recall that lesson very soon after – necessary to remember that life is more and better than the dread it can cause you. P. 182

Everything is ordered [in Dandenong]...There are no policemen, no soldiers. The people obey the colours of the lights. I like it. P. 185

She pays me 12 dollars an hour...but she demands I work 12 hours a day...p. 187

What has happened? Have all the business people of the Middle East who have a secret desire to own slaves come to live in Australia? P. 190

If I am to do some justice to the decision of the Canberra Australians to let me stay in Australia, then okay, let me pay my share. P. 190

There, on their knees, were five other men of my age, all with their hands bound, all of them Hazara. The expressions on their faces were those that you see on the faces of all men who have lost any say in whether they live or die: blank, but with terror seething behind the darkness. P. 199

People facing death are alone in the world, even when 40 of them are caged together. P. 200

All of us within listened to the screams with our heads bowed. Some men vomited where they stood. Others let their urine flow without shame. P. 201

The money they raised used up every tiny piece of cash they could find, and left their houses bare of things to sell. P. 220

The [people smugglers] told us little...What I noticed was that they cared for us in the group very, very little. They didn't even look at us as if we were people who breathed and thought and had feelings. We were cargo, like sacks of wheat. P. 230

I had every reason to feel dread, but instead my heart was lifted up and filled with hope. P. 233

This is a land that I have learnt to love...This is a the land where the most generous people I will ever know smiled at me and said, 'He can we help you...' p. 250

But the Americans and the Australians and other Western countries with soldiers in Afghanistan do not really understand what 'a long time' means...The Taliban fighters think that ten years is nothing...p. 251

I was one of many new citizens at the ceremony...I was not asked to tell the world that Australia is the best country on earth...I was not asked to say that I loved the Prime Minister. I was asked only to obey the laws of Australia. P. 252