



*emma milton*

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*collaterals*

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An intense midday furnace, full forty degrees in the shade; yet Yasmin and her two young children shiver uncontrollably as they huddle together underneath a thick mound of dark heavy blankets. She gently reassures the cowering siblings as best she possibly can; the melancholy mother knows this makeshift shield will do little to soften the blow, when roof collapses and walls implode, yet her bed has been made and now she must lie. Despite overwhelming desperation she should try to be grateful, for they are apparently chosen ones, 'The Collaterals', whose broken bodies will pave the way for precious peace. Soon they might join the hundreds of thousands; beloved family, dearest friends and deeply respected neighbours. Her wonderful late husband, the kind devoted father, has already gone before. Unknown forerunners of formulated freedom, democratically decided and carefully costed by a distant first world with everything in hand. Although her unfortunate children are not to benefit from the gifted education, Yasmin understands that with places strictly limited, numbers must be thinned. Those more fortunate will learn the best brand of browser to seek salvation, headiest handset for helpless cries, and which tantalising trainers when time comes to run. Refined capitalistic-enlightenment; efficiently evaluating the inadequate returns of pointless underdeveloped lives, while simply dying to follow the officially sanctioned order. But first there is a necessary war to be lost and Yasmin must play her sacrificial part; patiently waiting for the intelligent foreign weapons to go about their righteous business of unnaturally-inspired, well-oiled selection.

Day half gone, this promises to be by far her longest night.

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