



The Spelling Bee (A Vintage Short)

Alex Kotlowitz

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A selection from Alex Kotlowitz's masterpiece of immersive reportage *There Are No Children Here*, the harrowing coming-of-age story of two children in Chicago's Henry Horner Public Housing Complex. In "The Spelling Bee," as Pharoah returns to school, his dreams come up against the realities of his neighborhood.

Pharoah is small of stature, has a stutter, and frequently reads at night until his eyes hurt. He has his mother's open and generous smile, and his father's charm and keen intellect. As he enters fourth grade, he sets a solemn goal for himself: to become a spelling bee champion. Award-winning journalist Alex Kotlowitz follows Pharoah for two years, as he tries desperately to succeed at school while navigating the perils of his devastated neighborhood, a place marked by deep need and neglect, along with unrelenting violence. For Pharoah, spelling is just the beginning. This is a dramatic and groundbreaking portrait of poverty, the story of growing up in the other America.

An eBook short.

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