



Shooting Kabul (The Kabul Chronicles)

By N. H. Senzai

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In the summer of 2001, twelve year old Fadi's parents make the difficult decision to illegally leave Afghanistan and move the family to the United States. When their underground transport arrives at the rendezvous point, chaos ensues, and Fadi is left dragging his younger sister Mariam through the crush of people. But Mariam accidentally lets go of his hand and becomes lost in the crowd, just as Fadi is snatched up into the truck. With Taliban soldiers closing in, the truck speeds away, leaving Mariam behind.

Adjusting to life in the United States isn't easy for Fadi's family and as the events of September 11th unfold the prospects of locating Mariam in a war torn Afghanistan seem slim. When a photography competition with a grand prize trip to India is announced, Fadi sees his chance to return to Afghanistan and find his sister. But can one photo really bring Mariam home? Based in part on the Ms. Senzai's husband's own experience fleeing his home in Soviet controlled Afghanistan in the 1970s, Shooting Kabul is a powerful story of hope, love, and perseverance.

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Shooting Kabul (The Kabul Chronicles) By N. H. Senzai Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #28032 in Books
- Brand: Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman Books
- Published on: 2011-07-12
- Released on: 2011-07-12
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.63" h x .90" w x 5.13" l, .42 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 288 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 5–8—In July 2001, as 11-year-old Fadi and his family hastily board a truck to begin their escape from Afghanistan, six-year-old Mariam lets go of her brother's hand and is tragically left behind. Their arrival in San Francisco is bittersweet as they are all too concerned about Mariam to appreciate their newfound safety and freedom. Fadi struggles with integrating himself into American middle school culture, eventually finding solace in the photography club. Still, he is most concerned with the part he played in losing Mariam and getting her back. A photography contest with the prize of a trip to India seems to be his best means of finding a way back to Afghanistan to help in the search for his sister. This is a sweet story of family unity, and readers will learn about Afghani Pukhtun culture. Occasionally Senzai relies too heavily on telling when showing would be more effective. Also, at times the dialogue seems inauthentic because it contains more historical detail than would be likely among people of the same background. The relevance of occasional references to E. L. Konigsburg's *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (S & S, 1970), which Fadi is reading, is never truly clear. That said, this is a worthwhile book about the immigrant experience in general, and Afghani culture specifically. Fadi is a likable hero who learns from his mistakes, and whose talent allows him to make a unique contribution to finding his sister, for the inevitable happy ending.—Kristin Anderson, Columbus Metropolitan Library System, OH

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From Booklist

Beginning in the months before 9/11, this sensitive, timely debut follows an Afghan family's emigration to San Francisco. After receiving a PhD in the U.S. and returning to Kabul to help rebuild the country, Fadi's father has grown disillusioned with the Taliban ("These are not true Muslims"), and he pays human traffickers to smuggle his family into Pakistan. During the terrifying flight, Fadi's six-year-old sister, Mariam, is lost. After fruitless, life-risking searches, the grief-stricken family tries to begin anew in California, while overseas efforts to find Mariam continue. Conversations often feel purposeful as Senzai educates readers about U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, Afghan cultural diversity, and the Qur'an's fundamental messages of peace. But she writes with powerful, realistic detail about Fadi's family's experiences, particularly the prejudice Fadi finds at school after planes hit the Twin Towers and the guilt he suffers over Mariam's disappearance. An abrupt but satisfying contrivance brings this illuminating docu-novel to a joyful conclusion, and young readers may well want to move on to the appended resources to learn more. Grades 4–7. --Gillian Engberg

Review

"The hero of SHOOTING KABUL starts life in the United States as a foreigner, but by the end of the book, young readers will be cheering for Fadi as a good friend." —Mitali Perkins, author of "Secret Keeper"

"Senzai has captured a moment in recent history with enormous grace, skill and emotion. A powerful read." Ahmed Rashid, "New York Times" Bestselling author of "Taliban"

"Senzai has brought a whole new world to life for young readers. It is a world they won't soon forget." —Reza Aslan, author of "No god but God"

"Fadi's world is one of strong familial ties, Islam, and a vibrant, strong immigrant community. For all of Fadi's differences from his Fremont, California classmates, he will still seem very familiar to many middle schoolers. The novel allows readers a view of a different culture and provides background for events that still

plague us today."--"Steven Kral, VOYA, August 2010"

"Senzai has brought a whole new world to life for young readers. It is a world they won't soon forget."--Reza Aslan, author of "No god but God"

"In N.H. Senzai's debut novel, worlds collide and a little sister is lost. Can her big brother find her from half a world away? At the same time, how can he find himself and restore his honor in a land that is both foreign and home? Turn the pages. Find out." --Kathi Appelt, author of "The Underneath", a 2009 Newbery Honor book

"The hero of SHOOTING KABUL starts life in the United States as a foreigner, but by the end of the book, young readers will be cheering for Fadi as a good friend." --Mitali Perkins, author of "Secret Keeper"

"an ambitious story with much to offer: a likable protagonist in Fadi, an original and engaging plot and a lens through which readers will learn much about the current conflict."--"Kirkus"

"Bay Area writer N.H. Senzai, who based her first novel in part on her husband's family's escape from Soviet-controlled Afghanistan in 1979, has a warm, engaging style that belies the subject matter. She keeps the story firmly through Fadi's eyes. He is a middle-schooler, plucky but not precocious, struggling to adjust to his new life in America, stricken by guilt about his sister, worried about his ailing mother, but still a boy."--"Sandip Roy, San Francisco Chronicle, July 01 2010".

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kathy Natal:

Now a day people who Living in the era everywhere everything reachable by match the internet and the resources in it can be true or not call for people to be aware of each information they get. How individuals to be smart in having any information nowadays? Of course the solution is reading a book. Reading a book can help folks out of this uncertainty Information specifically this Shooting Kabul (The Kabul Chronicles) book because this book offers you rich facts and knowledge. Of course the details in this book hundred pct guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

Edwin Courville:

Shooting Kabul (The Kabul Chronicles) can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort to place every word into joy arrangement in writing Shooting Kabul (The Kabul Chronicles) yet doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can drawn you into fresh stage of crucial imagining.

Richard Horgan:

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