



Words in the Dust

By Trent Reedy

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Winner of the Christopher Medal and a "heart-wrenching" Al Roker's Book Club selection on the Today Show.

Zulaikha hopes. She hopes for peace, now that the Taliban have been driven from Afghanistan; a good relationship with her hard stepmother; and one day even to go to school, or to have her cleft palate fixed. Zulaikha knows all will be provided for her--"Inshallah," God willing.

Then she meets Meena, who offers to teach her the Afghan poetry she taught her late mother. And the Americans come to her village, promising not just new opportunities and dangers, but surgery to fix her face. These changes could mean a whole new life for Zulaikha--but can she dare to hope they'll come true?

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 5-8-Zulaikha's life in Afghanistan is not easy. She is teased constantly for a facial deformity and although the Taliban is no longer in power, it has violently taken her mother from her, and the 13-year-old is left keeping house for a busy, traditional father and his bad-tempered wife. She is trapped by the confines of her culture as well as by her own fears, but things begin to change when she meets a mysterious woman who wants to work with her on her writing and teach her about poetry. When American soldiers roll into town and offer her the chance to fix her cleft palate, Zulaikha allows herself to wish for a better and different future. Reedy was inspired by a girl he met during his tour of duty in Afghanistan, and Zulaikha's character is based loosely on her experiences. Infused with poetry, and wrought with hardship, the story gives a bleak, but ultimately hopeful, portrayal of girlhood in Afghanistan. It is full of hard truths, painful lessons, beautiful human interaction, and the promise of possibility.-Sharon Senser McKellar, Oakland Public Library, CA (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From [Booklist](#)

Born with a cleft lip, Zulaikha struggles to feel worth in a society that values women by their marriage prospects: "What bride-price would Baba get for me? Maybe one Afghani?" Then, by chance, Zulaikha meets Meena, a former professor, who begins to teach her to read and write just as American soldiers arrive, bringing the chance for both more education and surgery to correct Zulaikha's birth defect. Reedy based his debut on real people and places he encountered while serving with the National Guard in Afghanistan, and the extensive detail about Afghani customs gives the story the feel of a docu-novel while also creating a vivid sense of place and memorable characters. Reedy skillfully avoids tidy resolutions: the grim fate of Zulaikha's sister, who is married to a much older man, offers a heartbreaking counterpoint to Zulaikha's exciting new possibilities. A glossary of Dari phrases, an extensive author's note, suggested-reading lists, and an introduction by Katherine Paterson complete this deeply moving view of a young girl caught between opportunity and tradition in contemporary Afghanistan. Grades 5-8. --Gillian Engberg

Review

"I love this story -- it leaves no doubt that hope and love speak the same language everywhere." -- Suzanne Fisher Staples, author of SHABANU: DAUGHTER OF THE WIND

"Both heart-wrenching and timely." -- KIRKUS REVIEWS

"A beautifully written novel that introduces young readers to a fascinating culture." -- PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

"Readers will readily find themselves rooting for Zulaikha in this simply told yet thoughtful story." -- THE BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lavinia Arthur:

Do you one among people who can't read pleasurable if the sentence chained inside the straightway, hold on guys this kind of aren't like that. This Words in the Dust book is readable simply by you who hate the straight word style. You will find the facts here are arrange for enjoyable reading through experience without leaving actually decrease the knowledge that want to deliver to you. The writer connected with Words in the Dust content conveys prospect easily to understand by a lot of people. The printed and e-book are not different in the articles but it just different such as it. So , do you still thinking Words in the Dust is not loveable to be your top listing reading book?

Jeffrey Brill:

Reading a reserve tends to be new life style with this era globalization. With reading through you can get a lot of information which will give you benefit in your life. Using book everyone in this world could share their idea. Guides can also inspire a lot of people. A great deal of author can inspire their own reader with their story or even their experience. Not only situation that share in the books. But also they write about the information about something that you need example of this. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach children, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors on this planet always try to improve their proficiency in writing, they also doing some analysis before they write for their book. One of them is this Words in the Dust.

Adeline Norris:

This Words in the Dust is great reserve for you because the content which is full of information for you who always deal with world and have to make decision every minute. This specific book reveal it data accurately using great organize word or we can say no rambling sentences inside it. So if you are read that hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only offers you straight forward sentences but tricky core information with splendid delivering sentences. Having Words in the Dust in your hand like getting the world in your arm, facts in it is not ridiculous a single. We can say that no reserve that offer you world with ten or fifteen moment right but this guide already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Heya Mr. and Mrs. busy do you still doubt this?

Bernice Bland:

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