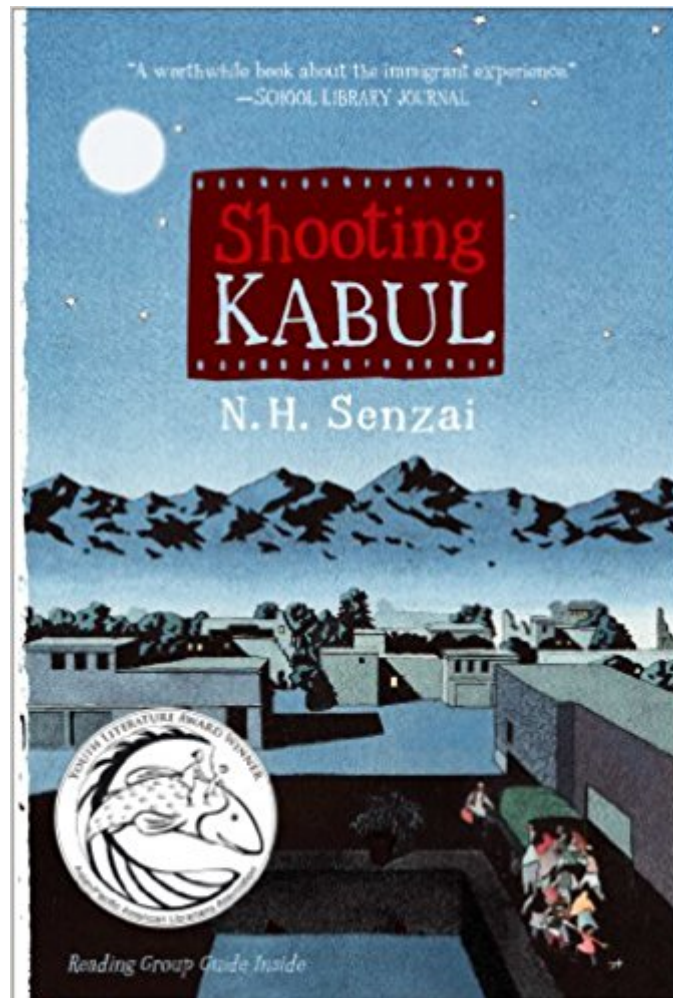




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Shooting Kabul (The Kabul Chronicles)



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 800 (What's this?)

Series: The Kabul Chronicles

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman Books; Reprint edition (July 12, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1442401958

ISBN-13: 978-1442401952

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.9 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 80 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #18,586 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #9 in Books > Children's Books

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Grade 5 • 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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 --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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 --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

To be honest, I struggled with this book from the beginning. After a couple of chapters, I finally

started to realize my struggle with the text. There are moments of flashbacks embedded into the story that I wasn't realizing at first. That, coupled with the cultural terms and vocabulary kept me at bay. Once I got that figured out, the story began to flow more easily for me. While reading it for my own pleasure, I also couldn't help but wonder if this would be an appropriate selected to include in my 5th grade classroom for my students to read. After I became fully involved with the book and attached to Fadi, the main character, I knew that the challenges I felt could be easily resolved by providing my students with a little heads-up as to what to expect. In the end, this was a beautiful story which again opened my eyes to the fact that there are people on this earth who lump everyone of a particular culture into the same pot. It reminded me a great deal of my conversations with my daughter when she was stationed overseas during a deployment with the US Army. She made it perfectly clear to me that it was important to not blame the negative doings of some people in a particular culture on the entire culture itself. I will definitely be purchasing this book to add to my classroom library. It'll be a great addition to my historical fiction genre - especially one where my students can learn a lesson on accepting people of all cultures and beliefs.

Story of a family who escaped the Taliban era in Afghanistan and their transition to American society. Interesting cultural topics. Photography is the subject of "shooting" Kabul and America, also.

I assigned this book to be read in my modern world history class. The students were engrossed by the story and it sparked great compassionate discussion as we discussed the refugee situation in the world today. Highly recommend!

What a wonderful story! The main character was well developed and the story itself gave me a great deal of insight into the plight of Middle Easterner and Greater Middle Easterner Americans and immigrants. It is so easy to stereotype and judge people according to their race and the actions of some within their group. Fadi is a very sweet and thoughtful character. Through his thoughts and actions the reader comes to empathize, understand and care deeply for him and his family. The final outcome was a bit coincidental and slick, but I didn't care. I was so satisfied that Mariam was back where she belonged and the family could then move on. I loved the double use of shooting in the title. I always tell my students that they shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but we also talk about how important it is to think about your audience as a writer and of course the same is true for the production of the book. The cover, the title, the first line, the first paragraph, the first page... These

are all important to your audience. Wonderful book that I will be sure to buy for my school library.

I was unfamiliar with this novel, but was helping some students who had this as required reading. Could not put this down and it was clarifying on the the Afghanistan conflict. High recommend!

Thus was a very good book. But like the author said, there were some points in the book when I felt to much emotion and thought was evoked. I liked the contrast of Fadi's thoughts to reality, and the plot was beautifully crafted. Another wonderful novel by a very skilled writer.

I like how the pictures help him solve his terrible life problem that no one should have to deal with. It also gives a great view of the US embassy's in the Middle East.

My son hears the news on the radio, but this put a personal note to the troubles in Afghanistan. This was a good story, although sometimes it could have gone in depth more (for me). For my son it was perfect. He asked questions and really learned from it. He did a report on it for school because he found it so intriguing.

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