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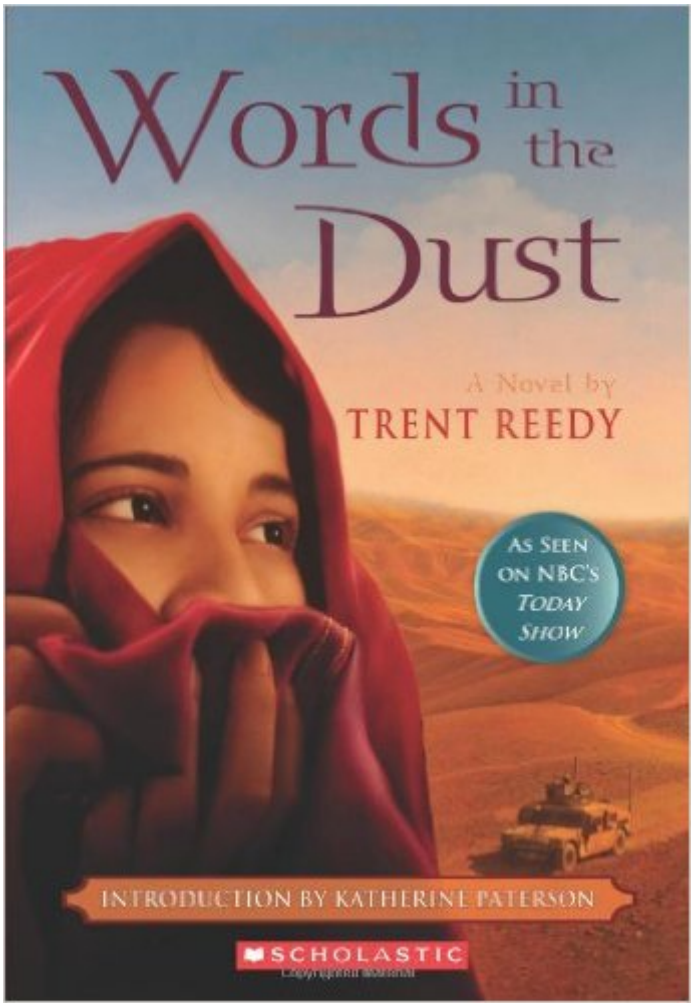
Words In The Dust



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Synopsis

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?

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 670 (What's this?)
Paperback: 272 pages
Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books; Reprint edition (September 24, 2013)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0545261260
ISBN-13: 978-0545261265
Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 5.2 x 7.8 inches
Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (60 customer reviews)
Best Sellers Rank: #87,342 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Religions > Islam #32 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Middle East #699 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Girls & Women
Age Range: 10 - 14 years
Grade Level: 5 - 9

Customer Reviews

A children's book, written by a soldier about an Afghani girl, set in the recent past. That's a toughie. There are a lot of easier books out there to review too. Why aren't I writing one about the adorable little girl who wants to be Little Miss Apple Pie or the one about the cute dog that wants to find its home? Well, sometimes you have to step out of your comfort zone, which I suspect is what author Trent Reedy wanted to do here. With an Introduction by Katherine Paterson and enough backmatter to sink a small dinghy, Reedy takes a chance on confronting the state of the people of Afghanistan

without coming off as imperialist, judgmental, or a know-it-all. For the most part he succeeds, and the result is a book that carries a lot more complexity in its 272 pages than the first 120 or so would initially suggest. Bear with it then. There's a lot to chew on here.Zulaikha would stand out in any crowd. It's not her fault, but born with jutting teeth and a cleft upper lip she finds herself on the receiving end of the taunts of the local boys, and sometimes even her own little brother. Then everything in her life seems to happen at once. She's spotted by an American soldier, who with his fellows manages to convince their captain to have Zulaikha flown to a hospital for free surgery. At the same time she makes the acquaintance of a friend of her dead mother, a former professor who begins to teach her girl how to read. Top it all off with the upcoming surprise marriage of Zeynab, Zulaikha's older sister, and things seem to be going well. Unfortunately, hopes have a way of becoming dashed, and in the midst of all this is a girl who must determine what it is she wants and what it is the people she cares about need.

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