



[Nasreen's Secret School](#) written & illustrated by Jeanette Winter

ISBN: 9781416994374 (Hardcover)

Beach Lane Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2009

*Age Range: 6-9 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 2-4 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Renowned picture book creator Jeanette Winter tells the story of a young girl in Afghanistan who attends a secret school for girls.

Young Nasreen has not spoken a word to anyone since her parents disappeared.

In despair, her grandmother risks everything to enroll Nasreen in a secret school for girls. Will a devoted teacher, a new friend, and the worlds she discovers in books be enough to draw Nasreen out of her shell of sadness?

Based on a true story from Afghanistan, this inspiring book will touch readers deeply as it affirms both the life-changing power of education and the healing power of love.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "Winter tells another powerful story, based on true events, of an individual activist whose singular courage brings social change...Winter artfully distills enormous concepts into spare, potent sentences that celebrate Herat's rich cultural, Islamic history...even as they detail the harrowing realities of Taliban rule. And in her signature style of deceptively simple compositions and rich, opaque colors, Winter's acrylic paintings give a palpable sense of both Nasreen's everyday terror and the expansive joy that she finds in learning." —[Booklist](#), **starred review**

"The personal nature of the story individualizes the conflict in Afghanistan...and the quiet, tightly focused approach helps make the situation accessible. The notion of school as a privilege revoked rather than a mandatory sentence may also elicit some thoughtful kid consideration." —*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

"Winter's precise acrylics tell this story in matter-of-fact images: Taliban soldiers coming down the mountain to the city of Herat, "where art and music and learning once flourished"; a girl called Nasreen sitting at home, silent since her parents disappeared, forbidden to attend school; the grandmother, who tells the story, taking her to a secret girls' school in a private home. The students' brightly colored headscarves stand in for their bravery and eagerness to learn." —[The New York Times Book Review](#)

Updated 1.23.24

Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing
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AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Amelia Bloomer List
- CBC/NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Book
- CCBC Choices (Cooperative Children's Book Council)
- Horace Mann Upstanders Book Award Honor
- Jane Addams Children's Book Award
- Parents' Choice Award
- Skipping Stones Honor Book

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Curriculum Guide](#)
- [Jeanette Winter Nonfiction Author Study Guide](#)
- [SimonKids Read Aloud video](#)
- [National Geographic Education Blog](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

[Comic Book Legal Defense Fund](#)

AUTHOR STATEMENT

“Children are smart and open to the world. They don’t ban books. Grown-ups ban books—and pass along their fear to children.”—Jeanette Winter

*A NOTE ON AGE RANGES

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book’s intended use.

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