



Saving Kabul Corner (The Kabul Chronicles)

By N. H. Senzai

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From Afghanistan to America, family matters most in this “empowering mystery” (*Publishers Weekly*), a companion to *Shooting Kabul*, which *Kirkus Reviews* called a “story with much to offer.”

A rough and tumble tomboy, twelve-year-old Ariana couldn't be more different from her cousin Laila, who just arrived from Afghanistan with her family. Laila is a proper, ladylike Afghan girl, one who can cook, sew, sing, and who is well versed in Pukhtun culture and manners. Arianna hates her. Laila not only invades Ariana's bedroom in their cramped Fremont townhouse, but she also becomes close with Mariam Nurzai, Ariana's best friend.

Then a rival Afghan grocery store opens near Ariana's family store, reigniting a decades-old feud tracing back to Afghanistan. The cousins, Mariam, and their newfound frenemy, Waleed Ghilzai, must ban together to help the families find a lasting peace before it destroys both businesses and everything their parents have worked for.

“Senzai successfully weaves the dynamics of Afghan culture, history and political wranglings into a classically American mystery story (*Kirkus Reviews*).”

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Saving Kabul Corner (The Kabul Chronicles) By N. H. Senzai Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 4–6—Twelve-year-old Ariana is California tomboy who dreams of having a room of her own. When her polite, pretty, perfect cousin Laila arrives from Afghanistan and steals Ariana's best friend and her personal space, she is less than thrilled. To make matters worse, the family store, Kabul Corner, is vandalized and business is going terribly. When a rival Afghan grocery opens up nearby and a decades-old feud between the two stores is reignited, Ariana must learn to get along with her cousin and her family's enemy in order to solve the mystery of who is sabotaging their livelihoods. While this title is not quite as fast paced as Senzai's *Shooting Kabul* (S & S, 2010), the mystery coupled with Ariana's struggles in middle school will keep readers interested. Several characters from *Shooting Kabul* return, but this companion title can be enjoyed on its own. Ariana's voice is relatable and her feelings of unsureness and frustration will be familiar to readers. While all of the main characters share an immigrant experience to some degree, the different struggles that each character faces makes for a more nuanced and compelling read. It is refreshing to see such a vastly multicultural cast in children's literature, and no character is portrayed as stereotypical or overly generalized. The glossary of terms in the back is also a nice touch. Recommended for any fan of multicultural literature or realistic fiction.—Ellen Norton, White Oak Library District, Crest Hill, IL

From [Booklist](#)

Despite a bevy of parallel plots and some improbably neat resolutions, middle-grade readers should enjoy this multicultural suburban mystery. Twelve-year-old Ariana's happy life starts to go awry when her cousin Laila arrives from Afghanistan, full of cultural charm, perfect manners, and a bilingual fluency that makes adults coo and Ariana cringe—and even sweeps away Ariana's best friend. To make matters worse, the cute new boy in school is from a rival family of Ariana's: his father opens up a new Afghani grocery store in the same strip mall, and just like that an old feud between the families is resurrected. When both stores are vandalized, the children unite, and with some clever sleuthing they unravel the mystery and put the feud to rest. Adolescent misconceptions, Taliban kidnapping, and local Fremont politics swirl together to interrupt any notions readers may have about sleepy suburban life. A touch of romance provides a satisfying fairy-tale ending. Grades 4-7. --Amina Chaudhri

Review

SAVING KABUL CORNER

Author: N.H. Senzai

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Publisher: *Paula Wiseman/Simon & Schuster*

Pages: 288

Price (Hardcover): \$16.99

Publication Date: February 4, 2014

ISBN (Hardcover): 978-1-4424-8494-8

Category: Fiction

The arrival of a rival Afghani food market at the same California shopping plaza as the Shinwari family's already established store brings with it the threat of an awakened family feud.

Eleven-year-old Ariana Shinwari feels klutzy and inadequate next to her almost-12-year-old perfect cousin,

Laila, who has moved in with Ariana's family after fleeing the Taliban in Afghanistan, leaving her father, a translator for the American Army, behind. And now it looks like Ariana's best friend, Mariam, who also fled Afghanistan with her family, has all of her classes with Laila. But when strange things start to happen at both Kabul Corner and the upstart Pamir Market, schoolgirl conflicts give way to collaboration among Ariana, Laila, Mariam and Wali, the son of the new store's owner. Senzai successfully weaves the dynamics of Afghan culture, history and political wranglings into a classically American mystery story, unraveling who and what are really at the heart of the conflict between the two Afghani grocery stores. Readers will appreciate that young people solve all of the questions at hand and ultimately bring the two families together.

An engaging mystery—that it's about Afghani families struggling and surviving in America is a plus.
(*Fiction*. 8-12) (*Kirkus Reviews*)

In a companion to 2010's *Shooting Kabul* that stands solidly on its own, Senzai explores the lives of Afghan immigrants in California. Eleven-year-old Ariana's family runs Kabul Corner, an Afghan grocery store in Fremont; the arrival of another Afghan grocery to their strip mall threatens their livelihood. Believably chaotic family dynamics heighten the tension in a crowded home filled with cousins and grandparents. Ariana is strong-willed and loyal, and her longings for a new home and a room of her own, along with her jealousy of her cousin Laila (newly arrived from Afghanistan), are relatable. As the rivalry between the stores escalates (with dangerous consequences), Ariana and her friends involve a classmate from the other store's family to investigate the mystery. Readers who wondered what happened to Mariam, who was separated from her family in Afghanistan in *Shooting Kabul*, will be gratified to learn the answer in this empowering mystery. Senzai skillfully contextualizes the details of Afghan American life and the violence in Afghanistan that hangs over everyone. Ages 8–12. Agent: Michael Bourret, Dystel & Goderich Literary Management. (Feb.) (*Publishers Weekly*)

Senzai, N. H. *Saving Kabul Corner*. Wiseman/Simon, 2014 [288p] ISBN 978-1-4424-8494-8 \$16.99
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 4-6 At twelve, Ariana can't cook traditional Afghan meals, she moves more like a galloping horse than a dignified lady, and she inevitably makes a mess when stocking the pistachio bins at her family's grocery store, the titular Kabul Corner. Unfortunately, her cousin Laila flips pancakes like a pro, veritably glides when she walks, and never spills anything. Worst of all, Ariana must share everything with Laila, who has recently arrived from Afghanistan: her cramped California bedroom, her sixth-grade class, and even her best friend. When a series of accidents rocks Kabul Corner and a neighboring store, Ariana suspects that someone is trying to scare away the plaza's tenants. She finds an ally in Laila, and soon the girls and their friends are on the case to save Kabul Corner. In her second novel, Senzai ambitiously explores family dynamics and preteen preoccupations alongside immigration, Middle East politics, and even disabilities (Ariana has a mild sensory processing disorder). Though explanations of weightier issues verge on the conspicuous, the book maintains a fairly light touch when helping young readers understand Ariana and her family's culture, keeping these details in the background and wisely allowing the mystery plot to take center stage. Thoughtfully written, with just the right amount of hint-dropping to get readers guessing, this engaging story features immigrants, minorities, and complex political issues while credibly treating the thoughts and feelings of a twelve-year old girl and the bonds of family. This is one for any preteen interested in the broader world, or just navigating the one at home. AA (*Bulletin*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Richard Capps:

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Kathleen King:

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Robert Mayo:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with pals is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try point that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition details. Even you love Saving Kabul Corner (The Kabul Chronicles), you are able to enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Keith Reese:

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