

Habibi

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An award-winning novel about identity, family, and friendship from renowned writer and editor Naomi Shihab Nye.

The day after Liyana got her first real kiss, her life changed forever. Not because of the kiss, but because it was the day her father announced that the family was moving from St. Louis all the way to Palestine. Though her father grew up there, Liyana knows very little about her family's Arab heritage. Her grandmother and the rest of her relatives who live in the West Bank are strangers and speak a language she can't understand. It isn't until she meets Omer that her homesickness fades. But Omer is Jewish, and their friendship is silently forbidden in this land. How can they make their families understand? And how can Liyana ever learn to call this place home?

Naomi Shihab Nye is an award-winning writer and editor whose work has appeared widely. She edited the ALA Notable international poetry collection, *This Same Sky*, and *The Tree Is Older Than You Are: Poems and Paintings from Mexico*, as well as *The Space Between Our Footsteps: Poems and Paintings from the Middle East*. Her books of poems include *Fuel*, *Red Suitcase*, and *Words Under the Words*. A Guggenheim fellow, she is also the author of the young adult novel *Habibi*, which was named an ALA Notable Book, a Best Book for Young Adults, and winner of the Jane Addams Children's Book Award as well as the Book Publishers of Texas award from the Texas Institute of Letters. Naomi lives in San Antonio, Texas, with her husband, Michael, and their son, Madison. Grade 5-9. An important first novel from a distinguished anthologist and poet. When Liyana's doctor father, a native Palestinian, decides to move his contemporary Arab-American family back to Jerusalem from St. Louis, 14-year-old Liyana is unenthusiastic. Arriving in Jerusalem, the girl and her family are gathered in by their colorful, warmhearted Palestinian relatives and immersed in a culture where only tourists wear shorts and there is a prohibition against boy/girl relationships. When Liyana falls in love with Omer, a Jewish boy, she challenges family, culture, and tradition, but her homesickness fades. Constantly lurking in the background of the novel is violence between Palestinian and Jew. It builds from minor bureaucratic annoyances and humiliations, to the surprisingly shocking destruction of grandmother's bathroom by Israeli soldiers, to a bomb set off in a Jewish marketplace by Palestinians. It exacts a reprisal in which Liyana's friend is shot and her father jailed. Nye introduces readers to unforgettable characters. The setting is both sensory and tangible: from the grandmother's village to a Bedouin camp. Above all, there is Jerusalem itself, where ancient tensions seep out of cracks and Liyana explores the streets practicing her Arabic vocabulary. Though the story begins at a leisurely pace, readers will be engaged by the characters, the romance, and the foreshadowed danger. Poetically imaged and leavened with humor, the story renders layered and complex history understandable through character and incident. *Habibi* succeeds in making the hope for peace compellingly personal and concrete...as long as individual citizens like Liyana's grandmother Sitti can say, "I never lost my peace inside."?Kate McClelland, Perrot Memorial Library, Greenwich, CT Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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