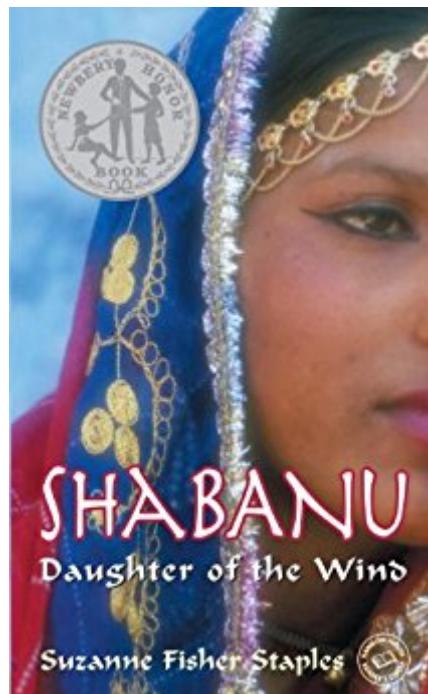


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# Shabanu (Readers Circle)



## Synopsis

The Newbery Honor winner about a heroic Pakistani girl that The Boston Globe called “Remarkable . . . a riveting tour de force.” Life is both sweet and cruel to strong-willed young Shabanu, whose home is the windswept Cholistan Desert of Pakistan. The second daughter in a family with no sons, she’s been allowed freedoms forbidden to most Muslim girls. But when a tragic encounter with a wealthy and powerful landowner ruins the marriage plans of her older sister, Shabanu is called upon to sacrifice everything she’s dreamed of. Should she do what is necessary to uphold her family’s honor—or listen to the stirrings of her own heart? A New York Times Notable Book “Staples has accomplished a small miracle in her touching and powerful story.” • The New York Times From the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Despite this book being labeled as YA, it didn't necessarily feel like it. It contains mature content and

sophisticated themes and, overall, is very well written so I think this would be enjoyed by adult readers in addition to its younger intended audience. The narrative of the story is from a young eleven year old girl's perspective who matures over a period of one to two years. I wouldn't say this is a feel good read but there are many feel good moments in it and there is a lot of love between family and friends. The setting and interactions in the story are extremely vivid and the story flows naturally. The author provides excellent foreshadowing and metaphor, as well. Being from a Western culture that either completely ignores or completely demonizes the country, religion, and people that this story is about I appreciated that nearly every character was depicted in a three-dimensional and humanizing way. Things are not clear cut and we see most of the characters struggle between their personal desires, their obligation to tradition, and the very real practicality of doing what's needed to survive within their circumstances. There's a lot of nuance here that I rarely see in fiction and very much appreciated. Shabanu is an extremely strong and vivid character and I loved seeing the story through her perspective. There is a notable difference in her maturity from the beginning of the book to the end and, regardless of what happens to her, her spirit remains strong. Admittedly, the feminist in me hated the circumstances that Shabanu endures. However, this story paints a realistic depiction of what actually occurs in this Pakistani culture. The book is fiction but it's not inaccurate fiction. The book is definitely an eye-opener, makes one think and appreciate cultural differences in both Shabanu's and my own. Definitely recommend.

The book was supposed to be in great shape, but that was not the case. The cover only had a little piece left and it fell apart as we held it in our hands. The worst quality book we have ever purchased on . We thought the story was good, more was expected from the ending than the girls in our book club got out of it. You kept waiting so you could get to a climax or something but it just never happened. Brought out some good conversation about different cultures.

I picked this Newbery Honor Book up and was immediately drawn into the story of Shabanu, a young girl growing up in a desert tribal family in Pakistan. Shabanu loves the freedom she enjoys helping her father take care of the camel herd. The nomadic lifestyle of the desert people of this region is a fascinating look at another culture. However, Shabanu's freedom ends when she nears her thirteenth year and becomes a young woman. Her life becomes much more rigidly controlled, and will be changed forever by events that occur shortly before the marriage of her sister. However, her free spirit and her intelligence cannot be held down. This story continues in "Haveli" and "The House of Djinn". I recommend all three books for a fictional account that is based on actual

interviews that the author had with women in this region.

I purchased this book for 8th graders, but think that maybe the tenth grader is better suited. A lot explanation had to be done for the dynamics of the father/daughter relationship and why mother had little to no voice outside of the home. The camel's intercourse went over some of their heads. Once I clarified these points, they arrived at the desired conclusion that the cultures are completely different from ours here. They were willing to research the inequality of genders thereafter. What a great activity, sharing our research on expectations and desires of women of all ages!

I loved this book. It makes you see camels in a different light. They are gentle and dependable creatures. It is meant for a young reader, but I am 69 and loved it. I learned a lot about desert nomads and how they live. (Can you take a bath with one cup of water?) It has a love story, plus interest in the culture. The best thing is that there are 2 other books continuing the story of the young girl and her family. Can't wait to read the next ones!

This is a great book that I read many years ago and just read it again. This edition was purchased for my niece and I hope she enjoys the window to another culture as much as I did.

I am so weary of reviews where the main point seems to be "this book does not reflect MY(or my friend's) experience in this country/region/time, so it must be a bad book" - as if every person living in Pakistan (or the Ozarks or pick-any-year) has the exact same life. The author lived in the region where Shabanu takes place for more than 10 years and interviewed numerous women there before writing her book. OF COURSE her book does not reflect every person or group of people in Pakistan and OF COURSE it doesn't describe every Muslim experience. However, that doesn't mean it isn't worth reading. Every book we read should add to our understanding of the world in a small way and this one does. I believe Suzanne Fisher Staples' strength is in her prose; her ability to make the reader see and feel the place, the time, the experience of the characters in her story and that is true in this book as well. For example, you practically want to reach for a glass of water as you read about the constant struggle Shabanu and her family have in making sure they have enough water for their family and their camels to survive. I am somewhat shocked, however, that this book was a Newbery Honor book. The Newbery is given for children's literature for elementary grades, and even has this book listed as "12 and up" (although I would say it's more appropriate for 14 and up).

Wow, Suzanne Fisher has captured the spirit of the desert. Very authentic tale that captured me from the beginning and left me wanting for more at the end. I am so happy that there are 2 more sequels to this tale. Extremely captivating and well written.

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