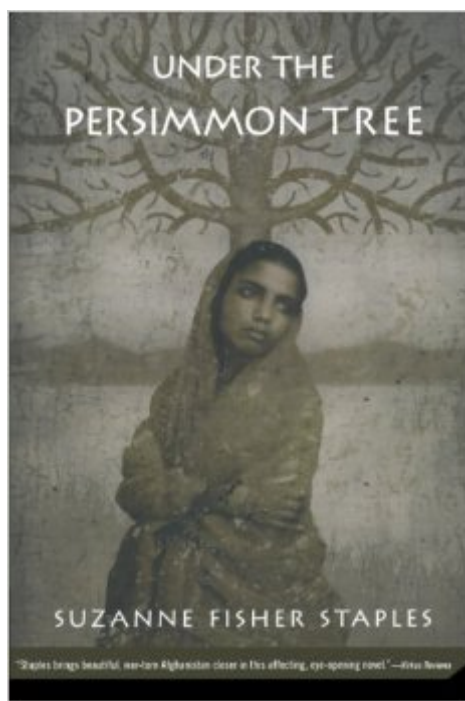


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# Under The Persimmon Tree



## Synopsis

Najmah, a young Afghan girl whose name means "star," suddenly finds herself alone when her father and older brother are conscripted by the Taliban and her mother and newborn brother are killed in an air raid. An American woman, Elaine, whose Islamic name is Nusrat, is also on her own. She waits out the war in Peshawar, Pakistan, teaching refugee children under the persimmon tree in her garden while her Afghan doctor husband runs a clinic in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan. Najmah's father had always assured her that the stars would take care of her, just as Nusrat's husband had promised that they would tell Nusrat where he was and that he was safe. As the two look to the skies for answers, their fates entwine. Najmah, seeking refuge and hoping to find her father and brother, begins the perilous journey through the mountains to cross the border into Pakistan. And Nusrat's persimmon-tree school awaits Najmah's arrival. Together, they both seek their way home. Known for her award-winning fiction set in South Asia, Suzanne Fisher Staples revisits that part of the world in this beautifully written, heartrending novel. *Under the Persimmon Tree* is a 2006 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1010L (What's this?)

Paperback: 281 pages

Publisher: Square Fish; Reprint edition (April 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312377762

ISBN-13: 978-0312377762

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.9 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (25 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #117,410 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Middle East](#) #68 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Military](#) #5025 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction](#)

Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## Customer Reviews

The year is 2001. Afghanistan is in the middle of a war between the Taliban and the US-backed Northern Alliance. The story follows two extraordinary people: Najmah and Nusrat. Najmah, whose

name means "star," has lost almost all of her family to the fighting. Her only remaining relative is an uncle, whose sole aim is to steal the land that her father wanted her so much to protect. Najmah has no choice, but to accompany a family of travelers, as they are the only people, it seems, that care about her. The other main character is a woman by the name of Nusrat, an American living in Peshawar, Pakistan. Her school for refugee children under her Persimmon Tree keeps her mind away from her husband, who is working in northern Afghanistan as a doctor. Through a perilous journey, Najmah comes to live with Nusrat, and their lives entwine, as Najmah studies under the persimmon tree with other children who have seen more hardship in their young lives than Nusrat has seen in her entire lifetime. This book was an amazing testament to those who must give up their lifestyle and possessions to warfare and hardship. "Under the Persimmon Tree" gives a face to all those who surrender all individuality to the western media, and are just masses of people in their eyes. I could not put the book down. I received the book on a Friday evening, and was done by Saturday morning. The way Suzanne Fisher Staples writes is both knowledgeable and empathetic. Her firsthand experience of the change of Afghanistan from a cultural center to a barren wasteland translates very clearly into the amazing and true-to-life storyline. Ms. Staples lived in Afghanistan from the time before the Soviet Invasion that changed the country forever to the time of the Taliban takeover.

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