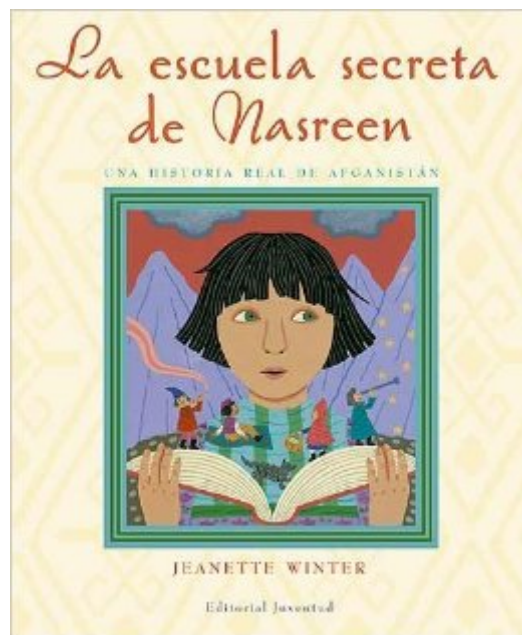


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Synopsis

This story begins with an author's note that succinctly explains the drastic changes that occurred when the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan in 1996. The focus is primarily on the regime's impact on women, who were no longer allowed to attend school or leave home without a male chaperone, and had to cover their heads and bodies with a burqa. After Nasreen's parents disappeared, the child neither spoke nor smiled. Her grandmother, the story's narrator, took her to a secret school, where she slowly discovered a world of art, literature, and history obscured by the harsh prohibitions of the Taliban. As she did in *The Librarian of Basra* (Harcourt, 2005), Winter manages to achieve that delicate balance that is respectful of the seriousness of the experience, yet presents it in a way that is appropriate for young children. Winter's acrylic paintings make effective use of color, with dramatic purples and grays, with clouds and shadows dominating the scenes in which the Taliban are featured, and light, hopeful pinks both framing and featured in the scenes at school. This is an important book that makes events in a faraway place immediate and real. It is a true testament to the remarkable, inspiring courage of individuals when placed in such dire circumstances.

Book Information

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