



## The Turtle of Oman: A Novel

By Naomi Shihab Nye

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**The Turtle of Oman: A Novel** By Naomi Shihab Nye

This accessible, exquisite novel shines with gentle humor and explores themes of moving, family, nature, and immigration. It tells the story of Aref Al-Amri, who must say good-bye to everything and everyone he loves in his hometown of Muscat, Oman, as his family prepares to move to Ann Arbor, Michigan. This is acclaimed poet and National Book Award Finalist Naomi Shihab Nye's first novel set in the Middle East since her acclaimed *Habibi*.

Aref Al-Amri does not want to leave Oman. He does not want to leave his elementary school, his friends, or his beloved grandfather, Siddi. He does not want to live in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where his parents will go to graduate school. His mother is desperate for him to pack his suitcase, but he refuses. Finally, she calls Siddi for help. But rather than pack, Aref and Siddi go on a series of adventures. They visit the camp of a thousand stars deep in the desert, they sleep on Siddi's roof, they fish in the Gulf of Oman and dream about going to India, and they travel to the nature reserve to watch the sea turtles. At each stop, Siddi finds a small stone that he later slips into Aref's suitcase—mementos of home.

Naomi Shihab Nye's warmth, attention to detail, and belief in the power of empathy and connection shines from every page. Features black-and-white spot art and decorations by Betsy Peterschmidt.

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## **The Turtle of Oman: A Novel** By Naomi Shihab Nye **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### From School Library Journal

Gr 3–6—In the last week before his family leaves Oman for a three-year stint in Michigan, Aref has a hard time saying good-bye to his beloved home, particularly his grandfather, Sidi. Readers are never told Aref's exact age; he is clearly articulate, yet excerpts from his notebook show his writing has not transitioned to cursive. Friends come to say goodbye; the suitcase must be packed; and Sidi takes Aref for an overnight camping trip, fishing on the Indian Ocean and memorably, to visit a nesting ground for many kinds of turtles. The language is fresh and lyrical at times, with vivid descriptions of daily life and Aref's obvious anxiety about leaving. Not much happens in the way of plot, but the excellence of the portrayal of the setting and the emotional state of a young boy subject to the loving whims of his parents are vividly captured. "When you drove out in the country, you felt closer to the earth than you felt in the city. You had better thoughts in the country. Your thoughts made falcon moves, dipping and rippling, swooping back into your brain to land." The omniscient narration thus brings a larger context than Aref alone could share. Simply told, yet richly rewarding.—Carol A. Edwards, Denver Public Library, CO

#### Review

"Nye's story about the special bond between a boy and his grandfather and their mutual love for their country is somehow both quiet and exhilarating." (Horn Book (starred review))

"A warm and humorous peek at the profound and mundane details of moving from one country to another—a perfect pick for kids on the move." (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))

"Magical . . . Will deeply touch young readers who have also moved between countries—and it will enlighten their new friends." (Booklist)

"Nye's elegant but accessible tale—a love letter to Oman, a touching portrayal of a boy and his grandfather, and a poignant look at how we experience change—is deeply moving." (Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books)

#### From the Back Cover

Here are some things Aref loves about his home.

1. *Mish-Mish, his cat*
2. *The dunes in the desert*
3. *His friends Diram and Sulima*
4. *Fresh apricots*
5. *Crispy fish served in baskets*
6. *His grandfather, Sidi*
7. *His excellent rock collection*
8. *The turtles of Oman*

Aref does not want to move to Michigan. He's sure the kids there won't like him. Also, he has everything he needs right where he is! But Sidi has another point of view. Sidi says Aref will go and come back. Just like a falcon or the turtles of Oman, he'll travel far and make his way home to Muscat.

So Aref sets out to say good-bye to everything he loves. Good-bye to Mish-Mish, Diram, Sulima, dunes, Sidi . . . But how can he stand it?

## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

#### Dennis Scott:

What do you regarding book? It is not important together with you? Or just adding material when you need something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your time? Or are you busy particular person? If you don't have spare time to try and do others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have free time? What did you do? Every person has many questions above. They should answer that question simply because just their can do this. It said that about e-book. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is appropriate. Because start from on pre-school until university need this The Turtle of Oman: A Novel to read.

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#### Heather Bly:

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#### Ron Taylor:

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