



2010

Words in the Dust

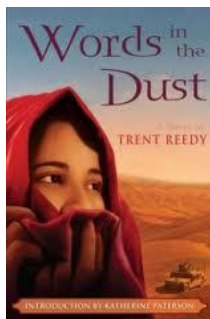
JilliAnne Jensen

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Reedy, Trent. *Words in the Dust*. Arthur A. Levine, 2011. ISBN 9780545261258. \$17.99. 266 p.

Reviewer: JillAnne Jensen

Reading level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction; Multicultural Fiction;

Subject: War in Afghanistan--Juvenile Fiction; Women's rights--Juvenile Fiction;

Identity--Juvenile Fiction; Books--Reviews;

Zulaikha, a young Afghani girl with a cleft palate, has no hope of living up to her name--“a brilliant beauty”--until the coming of American soldiers brings new opportunities with bittersweet results. On the same day of their arrival, Zulaikha meets a mysterious woman who offers to teach her to read and write, and she pursues these lessons despite her fear of being caught. When she learns that corrective surgery can make her as beautiful as her sister and more likely to be married, education no longer seems as important. However, when her sister’s marriage goes foul and results in her tragic death, Zulaikha begins to see the world through different eyes, and renews her education with a passion.

Reedy’s first novel, *Words in the Dust*, is inspired by an actual Afghani girl that Reedy met while serving in Afghanistan. Reedy gives a new perspective on the war in Afghanistan through the simple eyes of a child. A great supplement on any units involving the middle east or the war in Afghanistan, *Words in the Dust* will allow readers to get an inside look at life for Afghanis and the mixed feelings of hope and fear of the change that came with the presence of American troops in their lives. With a brief scene of violence, this book may not be for younger children.

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