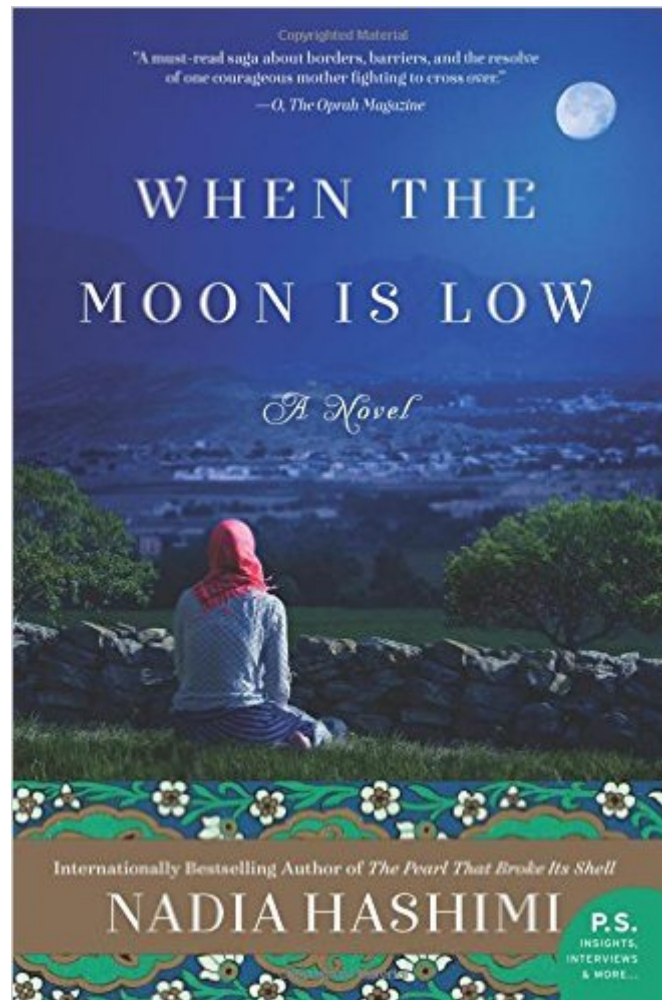


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# When The Moon Is Low: A Novel



## Synopsis

Mahmoud's passion for his wife Fereiba, a schoolteacher, is greater than any love she's ever known. But their happy, middle-class world—a life of education, work, and comfort—implodes when their country is engulfed in war, and the Taliban rises to power. Mahmoud, a civil engineer, becomes a target of the new fundamentalist regime and is murdered. Forced to flee Kabul with her three children, Fereiba has one hope to survive: she must find a way to cross Europe and reach her sister's family in England. With forged papers and help from kind strangers they meet along the way, Fereiba makes a dangerous crossing into Iran under cover of darkness. Exhausted and brokenhearted but undefeated, Fereiba manages to smuggle them as far as Greece. But in a busy market square, their fate takes a frightening turn when her teenage son, Saleem, becomes separated from the rest of the family. Faced with an impossible choice, Fereiba pushes on with her daughter and baby, while Saleem falls into the shadowy underground network of undocumented Afghans who haunt the streets of Europe's capitals. Across the continent Fereiba and Saleem struggle to reunite, and ultimately find a place where they can begin to reconstruct their lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A beautifully compelling novel about one family's struggle for survival as the Taliban rises to power in Afghanistan. The story is told from the alternating view points of Fereiba and her son Saleem. Fereiba's story starts when she is a young girl married off to a near stranger; a man who becomes her soulmate and love of her life. As a married woman with children and an educated teacher,

Fereiba's life is shattered as the Taliban and its fundamentalist regime, rises to power. Her husband is targeted and Fereiba and her children are forced to flee their home and country. As they attempt to reach England, they find themselves in dangerous territory going from Afghanistan to Turkey to Greece and so forth. When Fereiba is separated from Saleem and forced to travel on with her two youngest children, she wonders if she will see her son again. The story is compelling and heart wrenching. The struggle of these refugees is real and the utter despair they feel at their circumstances is palpable. I was fascinated up until the end when I was left with a very unsatisfactory conclusion that left the ending open to the reader's imagination, rather than giving us real closure. The ending was so abrupt and disappointing to me that I actually compared my electronic copy with the print copy, thinking that perhaps I was missing some pages. Nope. I wish I could just go with my initial impressions for this review, but the lack of a substantial ending left a bitter aftertaste. I received a complimentary copy for review. My opinions are my own.

Was patiently waiting for the release of this book as her first novel I couldn't put it down. This started out with a bang for me and fizzled out a little about 3/4 of the way through. I did skip through towards the end and finally finished only to be left shaking my head. I would give it 3 1/2 stars and not a complete wast of my time but certainly not a favorite.

If you enjoy the writing of Khaled Hosseini, I think you will also appreciate both of Nadia Hashimi's novels. I loved *When The Moon Is Low*. It is an emotional journey about love of family, freedom and country. It explores the limits of personal strength and determination as well as the bonds between parent and child. I did not want it to end. My only criticism is one that I am finding in many books lately. SPOILER AHEAD By the end of the book you are hoping for the emotional payoff which does not really come because the conclusion of the story is left to the reader's imagination rather than played out. That said, and questionable title aside, this was a very enjoyable book, one I highly recommend.

The story was remarkable. Remarkable! But the ending was TERRIBLE!! What a cop out. You spend the whole story waiting for the ending that is a huge part of the story and it never happens. Nadia. What were you thinking?

The book gives a terrifying description of the experiences of many refugees from Afghanistan and other persecuted nations. As I read the book I was very grateful to live in the US where we do not

face this type of rejection and fear for life itself. The writing is excellent and I enjoyed reading in the first person with various characters' viewpoints.

There are narratives that strike your heart by using the shock factor-by using scenes that disturb you, or haunt you, or invoke feelings of an all-around uncomfortable nature. Those are the books that are praised as being the most realistic, the ones that closest mirror the horrors in the world. But should it take scenes of rape, and torture, and senseless violence to really appreciate the enormity, and importance, of the content in a novel? I didn't need it, and I sure as hell didn't think *When the Moon is Low* read as anything less than spectacular without it. It didn't begin as a story of struggle, nor has there been many other times where I've fallen in love with a main character so quickly. Fereiba's upbringing brought to mind, and heart, a Cinderella-esque tone-with less of the wicked, and more of the unfortunate. No, *When the Moon is Low* was not initially a story about finding refuge, it began as a story about a young girl attempting to find herself. I was so intensely captivated by the stokes Hashimi painted, the emotions that coursed through my own veins because each character expressed their own so genuinely. When the backdrop became one of a newly Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, and the story veered off path drastically, I feared that I would become witness to unimaginable acts of violence and terror. I'll admit, I thought Hashimi would now begin using her carefully crafted words to paint a more grim picture, one that would have me putting the book down to clear the images from my head. But, alas, my fears were unwarranted, because *When the Moon is Low* was a consistent focus on it's characters, and their personal journey to escape an iron fist. There was no need for graphic details to feel every ounce of hopelessness, and triumph, and pain. I congratulate Hashimi a MILLION times over for being able to express that so effortlessly, and despite the content, so beautifully. Books like that are needed, I understand that. Graphically disturbing books. I understand that our world would become an even larger beacon for ignorance without books, documentaries, and news updates that depict the gruesome, and unfortunate, realities happening this very second. But I also understand that we need to celebrate books like *When the Moon is Low*. We need to also bare witness to the individual stories, the ones that might not have been different from our own, before they were torn into unrecognizable shreds. It's what keeps us human. It's what had me pouring my entire soul into Fereiba's, and then Saleem's, quest for peace, for normalcy. I urge you to read this book. I urge you to pick it up and leave all expectations at the title page. Go into it not with the need to be shocked to your core, but with a heart that's willing to empathize, encourage, and root with all of your being for people you're going to find within it. Recommended for Fans of: Cultural fiction, Historical fiction, familial values, The

## Secret Daughter by Shilpi Somaya Gowda. When the Moon Is Low: A Novel

A must read. The struggle of the Afghanistan people is well portrayed in this beautifully written book. A family's journey to freedom is long and arduous. I love the writing of Nadia Hashimi. Her voice is clear and concise. The ending comes with no guarantees which is the lesson learned many times over.

Excellent book and well written but the ending left you hanging and didn't provide any closure. This book could have been over the top but the ending was very disappointing.

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