



A House Without Windows: A Novel

Nadia Hashimi

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A vivid, unforgettable story of an unlikely sisterhood—an emotionally powerful and haunting tale of friendship that illuminates the plight of women in a traditional culture—from the author of the bestselling *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* and *When the Moon Is Low*.

For two decades, Zeba was a loving wife, a patient mother, and a peaceful villager. But her quiet life is shattered when her husband, Kamal, is found brutally murdered with a hatchet in the courtyard of their home. Nearly catatonic with shock, Zeba is unable to account for her whereabouts at the time of his death. Her children swear their mother could not have committed such a heinous act. Kamal's family is sure she did, and demands justice.

Barely escaping a vengeful mob, Zeba is arrested and jailed. As Zeba awaits trial, she meets a group of women whose own misfortunes have also led them to these bleak cells: thirty-year-old Nafisa, imprisoned to protect her from an honor killing; twenty-five-year-old Latifa, who ran away from home with her teenage sister but now stays in the prison because it is safe shelter; and nineteen-year-old Mezhgan, pregnant and unmarried, waiting for her lover's family to ask for her hand in marriage. Is Zeba a cold-blooded killer, these young women wonder, or has she been imprisoned, as they have been, for breaking some social rule? For these women, the prison is both a haven and a punishment. Removed from the harsh and unforgiving world outside, they form a lively and indelible sisterhood.

Into this closed world comes Yusuf, Zeba's Afghan-born, American-raised lawyer, whose commitment to human rights and desire to help his motherland have brought him back. With the fate of this seemingly ordinary housewife in his hands, Yusuf discovers that, like Afghanistan itself, his client may not be at all what he imagines.

A moving look at the lives of modern Afghan women, *A House Without Windows* is astonishing, frightening, and triumphant.

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