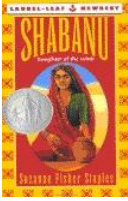


Passages

Reading Level 5



Title: Shabanu, Daughter of the Wind

Author: Suzanne Fisher Staples

Sample From The Book

"If God had blessed you with sons, we wouldn't have to break our fingers over wedding dresses," says Auntie as she sews the hem of the skirt. Her sons, ages three and five, play noisily nearby.

Mama ignores her and sets the silk aside, for Dadi will come soon from tending the camels, and he'll be hungry. She dips her tall, graceful frame through the doorway of our hut and comes out with a large wooden bowl. Squatting before the fire, she kneads water into wheat flour to make chapatis.

"I worry," Auntie goes on, her fingers flying over the yellow silk. "You'll spend your life's savings on two dowries and two weddings. And who will take care of you when you're old?"

Mama pulls at the dough and slaps it into disks. She whirls the flat bread onto the black pan over the fire.

"Mama and Dadi are happy," I say, sticking my chin out.

"What do you know?" Auntie asks, folding her pudgy arms over her bosom.

"You're nothing but a twig."

"They laugh and sing. Aren't you happy, Mama?" Mama smiles, and her eyes are merry in the glow of the fire. Auntie almost never laughs.

"Don't worry, little one," says Mama. "You and Phulan are better than seven sons." Auntie purses her lips and picks up her sewing again.



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