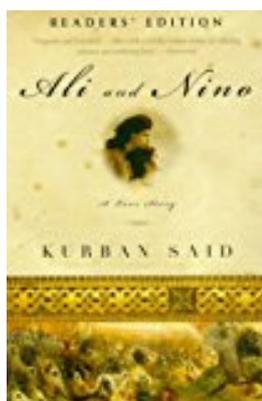


[PDF] Ali And Nino: A Love Story

Kurban Said, Jenia Graman - pdf download free book



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Author: Kurban Said, Jenia Graman
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Description:

As is true of all great literature, Kurban Said's *Ali and Nino* has timeless appeal. Set in the years surrounding the Russian Revolution and the rise of the Soviet Union, Said's tale of an Azerbaijani Muslim boy in love with a Georgian Christian girl is both tender and disturbingly prescient. The novel, first published in 1937, begins as Ali Khan Shirvanshir is finishing his last year of high school: We were a very mixed lot, we forty schoolboys who were having a Geography lesson one hot afternoon in the Imperial Russian Humanistic High School of Baku, Transcaucasia: thirty Mohammedans, four Armenians, two Poles, three Sectarians, and one Russian. The multi-ethnic Baku, it seems, stands at a crossroads between West and East, and, as the smug Russian professor informs his pupils, it is their responsibility to decide "whether our town should belong to progressive

Europe or to reactionary Asia." For Ali Khan Shirvanshir there is no doubt--he belongs to the East; his beloved Nino, however, is "a Christian, who eats with knife and fork, has laughing eyes and wears filmy silk stockings."

Far away, to the West, there are rumblings of war. When the Russian Revolution begins, Ali Khan chooses not to fight; the Czar's fate is of little interest to a Muslim living in far away Transcaucasia. But the young man senses that another, greater danger is gathering on his country's borders--an "invisible hand" trying to force his world into new ways, the ways of the West. He assures his worried father that, like his ancestors, he is willing to die in battle, but at a time of his own choosing. In the meantime, he courts Nino and eventually marries her in the teeth of scandal and opposition. This union of East and West is at times a difficult one as Ali Khan finds himself lured further and further into European ways. When Soviet troops invade, however, he must choose once and for all whether to stand for Asia or Europe.

One of the many pleasures *Ali and Nino* offers is Kurban Said's lovingly rendered evocations of Muslim culture. Another is his compassionate portrait of the protagonists' difficult but profound relationship. Modern readers coming to this novel in the wake of the fall of Communism, outbreaks of sectarian violence, and the rise of religious fundamentalism will find disturbing parallels in its cautionary chronicle of cultures colliding and a way of life brutally destroyed. In the end, however, it is not historical accuracy, but rather the charm and passion of the title characters that lifts Said's only novel into literature's highest ranks. --*Alix Wilber* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly First published in 1937 and issued in the U.S. by Random House in 1970, Said's romantic tale of young love and political upheaval in Central Asia calls for violins and handkerchiefs. Set mostly in Azerbaijan during WWI and the Russian Revolution, this captivating novel is a cinematic, at times melodramatic, mix of romance and wartime adventure. Its hero, narrator Ali Khan Shirvanshir, a Tartar and Shi'ite Muslim, flouts social convention by marrying his childhood friend, Nino Kipiani, a fair-skinned Georgian Christian. Ali rebels against a tradition-bound, male-chauvinist society typified by his father's pre-wedding advice: "Do not beat her when she is pregnant." When war erupts, Nino, ensconced in a villa in Tehran, keeps her pregnancy by Ali a secret as long as she can. Their marriage is a union of Western and Eastern sensibilities. Nino is unhappy in Persia, but Ali is reluctant to accompany her to Paris, where she flees with their infant daughter as Ali marches off to defend the short-lived Azerbaijani republic against the invading Red Army. Said (1905-1942) was born Lev Naussimbaum in Baku, the son of a German governess and a Jewish businessman. He combines starkly realistic depictions of war with colorful tableaux?wild dances, an oral poetry competition, desert camels, a meddlesome eunuch. A saga of war and love and the difficult marriage of Europe and Asia in the Caucasus, this is at heart a rousing, old-fashioned, tear-jerking love story.

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