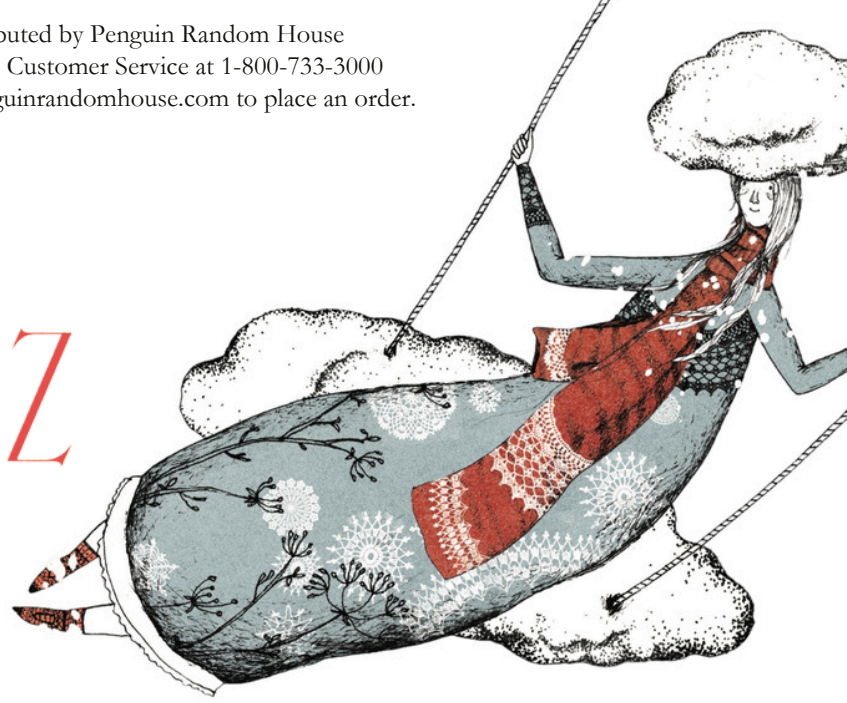


AMU NOWRUZ and his VIOLETS



Hadi Mohammadi ♦ ILLUSTRATED BY Nooshin Safakhoo

TRANSLATED FROM THE PERSIAN BY Sara Khalili

Educator's guide



About the book

Naneh Sarma lives in a spikey snow castle in the land of Winter. She loves her home (the icy air, the wintersweet flowers) yet longs for someone to talk to. In the far-off land of Spring lives Amu Nowruz, spring's herald, who sows the meadows with the seeds that fill his enormous knapsack. Can Amu Nowruz be the person Naneh Sarma has been waiting for? In a compassionate, gentle tale, we follow Naneh Sarma as she ventures from her icy home in search of a friend. Based on the Iranian folktale of Amu Nowruz and Naneh Sarma, this tale of the Persian New Year, rejoices in the changing seasons, and the budding promise of friendship.

What is the Persian New year?

In the story, Amu Nowruz has a special name: Nowruz, meaning “new day” in Persian, is the name for the Persian New Year! For those who celebrate, this is one of the most important festivals of the year—it marks the turning of winter into spring and the beginning of the new year.



Active Reading

Discussion points:

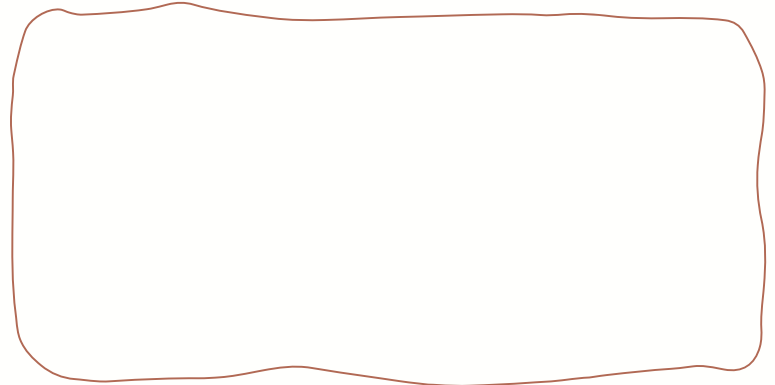
1. Describe Naneh Sarma's wintry home: what kind of colors, textures, and details make up her beloved landscape?
2. Naneh Sarma is drawn differently (and dynamically!) on each page—she sits, sleeps, even tumbles—can you think of a few more verbs to describe her movements in the story?
3. How does Naneh Sarma spread winter through the land? How does Amu Nowruz usher in spring?
4. How does the world of the book transform as Naneh Sarma ventures to the land of Spring? Be sure to describe the different colors, shapes, and patterns of the leaves, flowers, and creatures depicted.
5. At the end of the story, friendship blossoms between Naneh Sarma and Amu Nowruz. Describe, in your own words, how Amu Nowruz helps Naneh Sarma feel a little less lonely.



Reflective Reading

Discussion points:

1. Both Amu Nowruz and Naneh Sarma find joy in their everyday surroundings. Think of some adjectives to describe the world around you—include sight, sound, smell, and other sensory details.
2. How would you cheer up a friend who was lonely? What would you say or do to comfort them?
3. The characters in the story have important responsibilities—they usher in the seasons around them! Can you think of something you're responsible for in your school, home, or community? Can you talk about how a friend or grown-up might help you reach a goal, or about what it's like to share responsibility with a buddy?
4. Pretend you live in the land of Autumn: name all the ways you'd prepare for the new season. Bonus: draw a picture of your new Autumn outfit in the space below.



Transform Nanah Sarma's wintry world into a bustling spring landscape using all your favorite colors. What sort of tree or flower would you plant in the space below Nanah Sarma's feet?



The Persian New Year celebrates the coming of spring — celebrants exchange gifts, pray, dance, and feast in honor of the new season. Draw a picture of a tradition or favorite activity of yours that celebrates the spring season. Beneath the picture, write about what kinds of feelings you have when the seasons change.

