

Yusef

wants to be a
doctor

Gill Winn



LEARN ENGLISH WITH STORIES

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Chapter 1

Yusef's Village Life

Yusef's parents were poor. His mother Yasmin and his father Ali worked hard. They were kind people. They lived in a village in Yemen and many people in the village liked them. It was difficult for a young man to get a good job in Yusef's country. His parents saved for years to have money for Yusef to go to Britain. Yusef was the oldest son. He had three brothers and two sisters. He was clever. Yusef wanted to be a doctor.

Yusef's father worked on the land. He had a few chicken and sheep. He also grew vegetables and fruit. It was difficult because the soil was poor and there was little rain.

When Yusef was young his father gave the village teacher fruit and sometimes a chicken and the teacher gave Yusef English lessons after school closed. Yusef liked to study. When he left school he helped his father on the land.

His parents wanted him to go to Britain to study because his mother's brother Uncle Hassan lived in Birmingham. When Yusef was twenty years old Yasmin wrote to her brother, she said, 'Yusef is clever and he wants to be a doctor.'

Uncle Hassan wrote back. He said, 'Yusef can study in

Birmingham. He will be welcome in our home. We don't have children and he will be like a son to Aunt Maryam and me. I have put his name down to study in a college in Birmingham. Take these papers to Sana'a to get a student visa. Yusef must do an English test for the college when he arrives. Don't worry about money Yasmin. We have saved and we are happy to pay for Yusef's education.' Yasmin's eyes filled with tears when she read the letter. 'Yusef you can go to Britain!' she said.

The next week Yusef's father took him to Sana'a, the capital city of Yemen. Yusef was excited. It was busy, with many people shopping and hurrying to work. Sana'a had lovely houses. Ali took Yusef to eat in a café. The manager Mohammed was Ali's friend.

'Why are you here in Sana'a? You are a long way from home?' Mohammed asked.

'We came to get a visa for Yusef to study in Britain,' said Ali proudly.

'You are going to Britain my boy! What are you going to study?' Mohammed asked Yusef.

'I am going to study medicine. I want to be a doctor.'

Mohammed laughed, 'You will be a rich young man and you will not come back to this country if you are a doctor.'

'No! When I'm a doctor I will come home to Yemen and

work in the villages.’

A few weeks later a letter arrived. It was the visa for Yusef. Ali gave his son a boat ticket and money. He said, ‘You must go to Britain next week my son.’

Yusef looked at his tired father. ‘I cannot go. I must help you father. The farm work is very hard.’

‘You must go,’ his father said firmly. ‘Your brothers want to leave school. They can help me. You go to Britain my son. Work hard. Your mother and I want you to go to College.’

Yusef travelled many days. On the boat his money was stolen. It was eleven o’clock at night when he arrived in Birmingham and he felt tired and cold and hungry. Everything in Britain was strange.

On the boat Yusef’s money was stolen. He ate biscuits and water for two days. Now it was late in the night and he felt cold and hungry.

Yusef stood in front of Birmingham New Street Station and he took Uncle Hassan’s letter out of his pocket. The letter said, ‘It’s easy to walk to my house from the station.’ Yusef looked at his map and he started walking. He walked for ten minutes and he arrived at his Uncle’s house. Yusef knocked the door. The door opened and the lights in the house made his eyes water. Uncle Hassan stood there.

‘Come in, come in my boy,’ he said. ‘We were waiting for

you.' Uncle smiled and hugged him. He put his hand on Yusef's shoulder. 'You must be tired and cold,' he said.

Uncle picked up Yusef's suitcase. Yusef followed him into the house. He saw five people. They all smiled. He saw Aunt Maryam. She beamed and hugged him. 'Welcome to Birmingham' she said. 'Welcome to our home. Our home is your home while you are in this country.'

Yusef wanted to look friendly but he felt strange. It was cold outside but the room was very warm. Aunt Maryam said, 'This is Mr and Mrs Smith, Alan their son and Jane their daughter. They are neighbours.' Everyone said hallo.

Yusef thought the room was moving... The room was going round and round... Suddenly, Yusef fainted!

Chapter 2

Yusef Feels Better

Yusef heard Uncle Hassan's voice, 'Are you feeling better now my boy? No, don't get up. You fainted and we carried you upstairs. Stay on the bed.'

'Where am I?' Yusef asked. Everything was strange. Was he dreaming?

'You are in your bedroom, in my house, in Birmingham.' Uncle spoke quietly. Yusef felt a little better. 'You must rest, Yusef but you must eat first,' Uncle said. 'Ah! I can hear Aunty Mariam coming upstairs.'

There was a knock on the door and Aunty walked into the room with a tray. She put the tray on the bed in front of Yusef. Uncle Hassan said, 'Your Aunty is a good cook you must eat everything Yusef. You are thin and you must eat.'

The food was very good. On the tray there was fresh bread, salta, shafut, vegetables and lamb. Uncle Hassan stayed in the room. He talked while Yusef ate the food. If Yusef stopped eating Uncle Hassan smiled and pointed to the plate and Yusef ate more. Soon he felt better.

'No, no Uncle,' he said. Uncle Hassan was pointing at the food. 'I cannot eat more. Aunty gave me too much food.'

Uncle Hassan stood up and called his wife.

‘The food was wonderful Aunty. Thank you. The shafut was delicious and the salta was like my mother makes it.’

Aunty smiled. ‘I’m glad you liked the food. I thought, I must make Yemen food for Yusef when he comes. When I came to Britain years ago I wanted Yemen food. Now I like lots of different food.’

Uncle Hassan said. ‘Mariam puts good yoghurt in the shafut and it tastes very nice. Aunty laughed and she took the tray downstairs.

Uncle Hassan picked up a brown paper bag on the table. ‘This will help you to relax,’ he said with a grin.

Yusef looked. ‘Qat!’ he said when he saw the green leaves. He was surprised. ‘Can you buy qat in Britain?’

‘Yes, I like a little qat on special days. Our people who go for holidays to Yemen always remember to bring some qat to Britain,’ laughed Uncle. He held the bag out for Yusef. ‘Take some it will help you to relax,’ he said. Yusef took some green leaves and he started chewing them. Uncle Hassan took some too. He said. ‘Tell me about my sister. Is Yasmin well?’

‘Yes. My mother works very hard for the family but she helps people in the village too. Father works on the land but it is a problem. There is not enough water.’

Uncle Hassan asked about Yusef’s brothers and sisters. Yusef talked about home. He felt better now. His eyes started

to close. Uncle Hassan noticed.

'You must be very tired Yusef,' he said. Uncle stood up. 'What will my sister say if you are ill when you live here in my house? You must eat and sleep a lot for the next few days. We will talk in the morning.'

When Uncle Hassan went downstairs Yusef looked around the room. Uncle said it was Yusef's room now. It was lovely. At home Yusef's two brothers shared his bedroom.

In this room there was a wardrobe for Yusef's clothes and a big table with a chair for him to study. The room had a television, radio, video and a big bookcase.

The bed was soft and comfortable. Yusef felt like a king! Soon he went to sleep but he slept with a big smile on his face.

Chapter 3

Going to College

Yusef liked Birmingham. His mother wrote a letter from home every week and he wrote back. Aunty Mariam and Uncle Hassan had lots of friends.

Uncle went with Yusef to the College. They gave Yusef a test. His English was good and he went to a class to study for exams. The teacher asked what he wanted to do after the exams. 'I want to study medicine. I want to be a doctor,' Yusef said. The teacher smiled 'You will have to work very hard if you want to be a doctor,' she told him.

'I will work hard,' Yusef said. 'I'm going to be a doctor.'

The teacher smiled again and she nodded, 'Perhaps, you will be... How old are you Yusef?'

'I'm nearly twenty-one,' he said.

The teachers were pleased with Yusef. He worked hard.

Every day when Yusef finished College he went home to his Uncle's house for food. Yusef worked in a local factory from six until nine o'clock. The factory was near Uncle's house. Yusef lifted boxes of soft drinks onto the lorries. It was hard work. The other men said the money was not good but Yusef thought he earned a lot of money. The men called him

Joe when he told them that Yusef was the same name as Joseph. The students at College called him Joe too. Joe was an English name and it was an easy name for his Birmingham friends.

Yusef wanted to give Uncle money for food but he didn't want it. Yusef sent money home to help his parents and he saved some for books.

When he finished work at the bottle factory he went back to his Uncle's house and he studied for two or three hours on his college work. Then he went to bed. On Saturday and Sunday too, Yusef worked in the factory. He started at 2 o'clock and finished at 7 pm.

Sometimes Aunty said, 'Go out, Yusef and have fun with your friends. You cannot work all the time.' But he didn't go out.

If he had a holiday Yusef went to the Smith's house. Alan their son was friendly. He asked Yusef to listen to music and he lent Yusef books. Yusef was always pleased when Alan's sister Jane came home. She laughed and talked about helping people. She liked animals and she loved her cat Snowy.

Jane was sixteen. She was not the same as her brother. Alan worked hard at school. Jane went out a lot. Mrs. Smith worried because Jane was not working in school. 'She is only

interested in politics and fighting for the world to be a better place,' Mrs. Smith said to Aunty Mariam and Yusef.

Yusef thought Jane was pretty because she smiled a lot. She had blue eyes and long blonde hair. One day she asked Yusef to go to a meeting about World Peace. 'The meeting is in the centre of Birmingham. There will be thousands of people there Joe,' Jane told him excitedly.

'I'm sorry. I want to come Jane but I must go to work.'

'Peace is more important than work Joe. If there is no peace the world will be blown up. Don't you care?' Jane said.

'I do care,' Yusef said quietly. 'Going to meetings is not the only way to help the world. I'm sorry Jane but I can't come.' Yusef didn't have time to go. He wanted to earn money to help his parents. When Yusef had time he had to work for his exams.

Jane was angry when Yusef said he could not go to the meeting. She shrugged and she turned away to watch the television. Yusef was worried. He liked Jane. Now she was angry with him.

Yusef didn't go to the meeting and Jane wasn't friendly now. If Yusef went to the Smith's house and Jane was home, she said 'Hallo' quickly and she went upstairs to her bedroom. Yusef was sorry. He liked to talk to Jane.

Chapter 4

Jane Needs Help

One day in February, it was very cold. Yusef came home from College at five o'clock. The traffic was busy. It was dark and the rain made the road wet and slippery. Yusef saw a white cat running out of Jane's house. Jane ran after the cat shouting 'Snowy!' Suddenly, the cat ran into the road.

A lorry was coming! The driver braked and there was a loud screech. The cat was on the road but it did not move. Jane stood still as if she was paralysed.

'Stay there,' Yusef shouted to Jane, 'I will get the cat.' The cat was on the road, it was very still and there was blood everywhere. Yusef took his jacket off and put the cat in it. He carried the cat carefully to the pavement.

'Can you get a box?' Yusef asked. 'We mustn't move the cat very much in case his bones are broken.' Jane nodded. She looked pale and she ran into the house. She came back with a box in a minute.

'Shall we carry Snowy into the house, Joe?' Jane said and she looked up at Yusef with a worried face.

Yusef saw her blue eyes were full of tears. He said, 'I think we must take Snowy to an animal doctor.'

'Oh yes, there is a vet in Clare Road.'

'I will carry the box,' Yusef said.

The Vet's surgery was full of people and animals. The girl behind the counter said, 'Sit down and wait.'

'I'm sorry but I don't think we can wait. The animal is bleeding very badly - look!' Yusef lifted the top of the box and showed the girl the bleeding cat.

'Oh yes,' she said, 'Come with me. I'll tell the vet.'

The vet was a kind man. He handled the cat gently. He told Yusef and Jane that the cat must have an operation.

'You take the young lady home young man. She can telephone tonight at 9 o'clock to see how the cat is.'

'Thank you very much sir,' Yusef said politely. 'Come Jane. I think you need a cup of tea.' He opened the door and stood back for Jane to go through first.

When they got to Jane's house Yusef said goodbye. 'Thanks Joe,' Jane said. 'You helped Snowy tonight.'

Yusef smiled. 'I'm glad,' he said. 'But I must go now Jane, I'm late for work.'

When Yusef came home from College a few days later Aunty Mariam opened the door. She was smiling. 'Come and see what is here for you, Yusef,' she said.

Yusef went into the kitchen. On the table was a big box with a card. On the card it said,

'We are sorry the cat spoiled your jacket.

Snowy is getting better. Thank you for your help Joe.

From the Smith family and Snowy.'

In the parcel was a warm new jacket. The jacket was much better than Yusef's thin, old jacket. His mother had mended his old jacket many times. There was a long dark scarf and leather gloves too. Yusef was amazed.

'Why have they sent this?' he asked his Aunty.

'They want to thank-you', she said. 'They are very grateful to you. Try the jacket on,' Aunty said excitedly.

Yusef shook his head slowly. 'It's too much, Aunty,' Yusef said. 'I cannot accept it.'

'Of course you must accept it,' Aunty said firmly. 'You will upset the Smith family if you give the jacket back. Try it on.' She held the jacket for Yusef. He put it on slowly. He looked good in it. Aunty Mariam smiled. 'You look very handsome in good clothes Yusef,' she said.

'I think I must give the jacket back,' Yusef said.

'You cannot do that Yusef. They are neighbours. I do not want you to upset them. Do you want to upset them?'

'No, no...Aunty....but...'

'You go and thank them Yusef. If you are happy, the Smith family will be pleased. Go now!' Aunty pushed him out of the

door.

Yusef knocked on the Smith's door. He was glad Mr. Smith came to the door. Yusef started to speak. 'I want to thank you...' he said, but Mr. Smith put out his hand to shake Yusef's hand. 'No! We must thank you Joe! Come in!'

Mrs. Smith, Alan and Jane were sitting in the room. They smiled when Yusef walked in. They made him sit down and Mrs. Smith got Yusef a cup of tea. She asked if he wanted food. They were all very kind and friendly. Yusef was sorry when it was time to go to work.



Jane held Snowy in her arms and she stroked her. She walked to the door when Yusef left the house. Jane was still holding her cat. 'Snowy is my best friend Yusef. When she ran into the road I couldn't move. Jane stopped talking. She remembered how Snowy was nearly killed.

Yusef put out his hand to stroke Snowy. 'She looks nearly well again now,' he said.

Jane smiled. 'You were right Joe! There are many ways to help people, not just going to meetings.'

Yusef nodded, 'I understand meetings are important too. It's good some people care what is happening to other people in the world.' Jane smiled and Yusef felt happy as he went out of the house.

Chapter 5

Examinations

Yusef worked hard every day. He took exams at the end of the year and passed. The second year he studied more exams. One day he went for an interview to the University Hospital in Birmingham. The doctors asked him a lot of difficult questions. One doctor said, 'What do you want to do when you qualify as a doctor Yusef?'

'I don't want to work in the hospital. I want to work with people and families,' Yusef said. The doctor smiled.

'Good,' he said. 'We need people to be G.P.s. Too many medical students want to work in the hospital. A G.P. is an interesting job.'

'I want to go back to my country to work when I am a doctor,' Yusef said. 'My country needs doctors.'

When Yusef went home he talked to Uncle about his interview. He told Uncle Hassan what he said to the doctors when they asked him questions.

Uncle shook his head. 'It wasn't good to tell the doctors you want to go back to Yemen. If they think you are not staying in Britain perhaps they will not train you.'

'No Uncle, they know I'm paying for the course. I said you

were helping me with money. One of the students told me the University is glad to have money from foreign students who pay for training.'

Uncle nodded. 'Yes, it's a lot of money,' he agreed.

'Are you sure you can help me Uncle? I have only saved a little money myself.'

'Yes, I can help you. We saved money because we were going to buy a house. Now Aunty and I do not want to move. We like living here. I pay rent to my friend Sagal. He will let us stay here until we die if we want to.'

'When I'm a doctor I will pay you back Uncle.'

'No!' Uncle said. 'I'm not giving you a loan. We are giving you a present. We want to pay for your training. You can use your money to buy books and clothes.'

'You're very generous. I don't know what to say.'

'If you are a good doctor Yusef, your parents, Aunty and I will be proud of you.'

A letter came the next week. It said that Yusef could train at the hospital if he passed his exams with A's.

Yusef worked very hard. He passed his exams at the end of the year and he went to the University Hospital Birmingham to study medicine.

Yusef wrote to his mother and father. He said, 'One day, when I'm a doctor I want to return to Yemen. I will help the

poor people in our villages. There are not enough doctors in our country.'

Yasmin was very happy when she read his letter. She talked to her husband about it. Ali said, 'Perhaps Yusef will stay in Britain when he is a doctor. It will be a good life for him in Britain.' Yusef's father looked sad.

Yasmin shook her head, 'I think Yusef will come home when he is a doctor. He always wanted to work in the villages with the sick.' She put Yusef's letter in a safe place and prayed to Allah, 'Help Yusef to do what you want.'

Jane was working hard now because she wanted to go to Birmingham University. Yusef was busy too. He was a first year medical student and he didn't go to the Smith house very much because he didn't have free time.

One day Jane's mother told Yusef, 'Jane works hard because you work hard Joe. Jane wants to be like you. She wants to pass her exams and she wants to be a doctor too.'

One evening there was a knock on the front door. Yusef was working in his bedroom. Aunty called him, 'Come downstairs Yusef you have a visitor.' Yusef went downstairs.

Jane was standing by the door with her school books. 'Can you help me with some mathematics Joe?' she asked Yusef with a shy smile. 'It's difficult for me.'

Yusef took the books. 'Let me see,' he said. 'Where can I

help Jane with her mathematics?’ Yusef asked Aunty politely.

‘Go and sit by the kitchen table,’ Aunty said quickly. Yusef and Jane sat in the kitchen. Aunty sat in the kitchen too. Yusef helped Jane to understand the mathematics.

‘You are a very good teacher Joe,’ Jane said. ‘My teacher at school shouts all the time and I cannot think.’

‘You learn quickly,’ Yusef said. ‘You can be good at mathematics if you work hard. Come and see me if the work is difficult Jane. I’m glad to help.’

‘Thank you very much. Do you like training to be a doctor?’ she asked. ‘I think I want to be a doctor.’

‘I like the work and I want to be a doctor very much. I think you can be a doctor too Jane. I think you have a very kind heart and a clever brain.’

Jane got up and she went to the door. She smiled and waved at Yusef as she walked next door to her house.

Chapter 6

Yusef Meets Aunty's Friends

One day Aunty Mariam asked Yusef to go with her to meet Nadia, the daughter of her friend. It was Monday and Yusef wasn't in College because there was a holiday. But Yusef did not want to visit Aunty's friends.

'I was going to meet my friend Abdul today,' he said.

'Yusef, I want you to come with us to meet Nadia. You meet Abdul every week. Nadia is a lovely young woman. You will like her. Uncle Hassan and I like her parents. We think her father would like his daughter to marry a doctor.'

'But I'm not ready to marry Aunty and I'm not a doctor. I must study for four more years.'

'It doesn't matter. If Nadia and her father like you she will wait and you will have a good muslim girl to marry,' Aunty beamed.

'No, Aunty,' Yusef said firmly. 'I'm not ready for a wife. I don't want to meet Nadia today.' The smile went away from Aunty's face. She looked upset. Yusef sighed, 'Aunty, I don't want to meet a girl who wants to marry.'

'Please Yusef! Come to meet Nadia. You can talk to her. No-one will speak about marriage today.'

Yusef didn't answer.

Aunty was cross. Her voice sounded angry. 'You come with me to the Smith's house. You're always happy to talk to Jane.' She sighed. 'I only want you to visit Nadia. You will like her I'm sure.'

Uncle Hassan was reading the paper. He put his paper down on the table and he spoke to Yusef, 'If you don't want to come with us we will go without you. But, I think you will like Nadia. She is an interesting young woman and her parents Fatima and Sagal are good friends to Aunty and me.'

Yusef felt unhappy. He didn't want to upset Aunty and Uncle. They were kind and generous to him.

'Ok! I will come... but we must not talk of marriage.'

Uncle Hassan smiled and he stood up. 'I have parked the car down the road. I'll drive the car to Sagal's house. I think you will like our friends Yusef.'

Yusef sat in the back of the car. He wasn't very happy. He didn't want to meet Nadia or her parents and he didn't want Aunty to find a wife for him.

Uncle drove Aunty Mariam and Yusef to a very expensive detached house in North Birmingham. Nadia's father was a very rich man who owned three garages. Her parents were friendly to Yusef. Uncle Hassan liked Sagal a lot. Sagal's family came from Yemen to Birmingham many years ago.

Sagal was brought up in Birmingham but he often went to Yemen and he had a house there. Sagal talked to Yusef about Yemen and he asked a lot of questions. Sagal understood about village life in Yemen.

Aunty and Uncle chatted with Nadia's parents about friends in the mosque. Aunty asked Nadia's mother if Nadia was ill and her mother said Nadia was out.

'Nadia will come home soon. You must stay to meet her Mariam. You know Nadia likes you,' Fatima said. 'She will be upset if you do not wait and I want her to meet Yusef.'

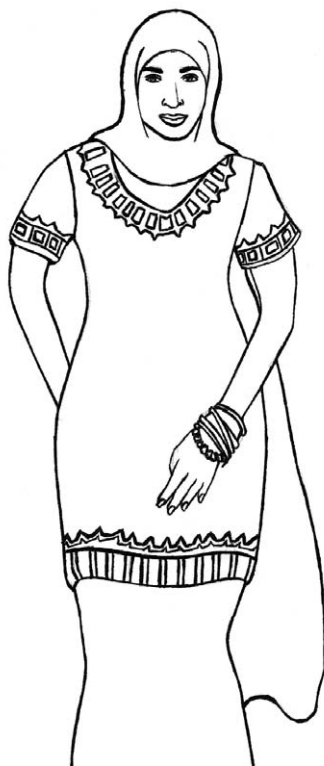
Yusef was bored. He wanted to go back to the house to study. Half an hour later, the door opened suddenly and an attractive young woman came in.

Nadia was slim. She wore a beautiful dress in very soft material. It was an expensive dress but in the traditional style of Yemen. To Yusef she looked like a film star.

Aunty stood up and she hugged the young woman. 'Nadia you are more beautiful every time I see you. Come and meet my nephew Yusef. He wants to be a doctor,' she said proudly. Nadia smiled politely but she didn't speak to Yusef. Her mother said, 'It's a lovely sunny afternoon. Take Yusef to see the garden Nadia.'

Reluctantly, the girl got up and Yusef followed her into the garden. They walked to the garden bench and sat down.

Yusef tried to be friendly but Nadia did not speak much. She only said 'yes' or 'no'. She didn't smile.



After ten minutes Yusef said, 'I don't think you like me Nadia. Do you want to go back into the house?'

The girl looked worried. 'I think my parents want us to marry,' she said. 'I don't want to marry. I'm too young. I'm only seventeen. If I marry I want to choose my husband.'

Yusef laughed loudly. Nadia giggled and she looked shy. 'You are not angry?' she asked with surprise.

'No Nadia. I'm not angry. I don't want to marry.'

Nadia frowned. 'Don't you like me?' she said.

Yusef laughed again. 'You are very beautiful. When you came into the room I thought you were a film star. But I'm not ready to marry and if I marry I want to choose my wife.'

Nadia smiled. 'You are nice Yusef. Aunty said I would like you and she is right. But I'm not ready to marry. I want to go to College but my father does not want me to go.'

'I think education is good for women,' Yusef said.

The girl smiled sadly, 'My father thinks it's not necessary for a woman. Mother understands because she wanted to study when she was young.' Nadia smiled, 'I'm sorry I was rude,' she said.

'Don't worry about it. Can we be friends?'

Nadia smiled. 'Yes, of course,' she said. They walked back into the house.

Chapter 7

Nadia's Family

The table was full of good food. Yusef spoke more about his family in Yemen and everyone laughed a lot. When the family were eating the meal they talked about education. Nadia's father said, 'Your Uncle said you had 'A's for your exams Yusef. You have worked hard.'

'I must work hard if I want to be a doctor. I think education is very important,' Yusef said politely.

'For men, yes,' Nadia's father said.

'For women too,' Yusef said firmly. 'If I marry, I want to have a wife with a good education. We can talk and understand each other better if my wife goes to College.' Nadia's father looked surprised. He didn't answer Yusef.

Yusef was pleased when Uncle agreed. 'Yes, I think Yusef is right Sagal. In this modern world we must educate women and men, we need men and women to be nurses, doctors, scientists and teachers.'

'Perhaps you're right,' Sagal said slowly.

Yusef winked at Nadia when her father was not looking at them. She giggled a little and she smiled back.

In the car on the way home Aunty talked to Yusef. 'Did you

enjoy the afternoon? Do you like Nadia?’

Uncle Hassan said, ‘Stop asking Yusef questions.’

Yusef laughed. ‘It’s ok... I was happy to meet your friends Aunty. Nadia is very nice but she is not ready to marry. She said she wants to go to College.’

Uncle Hassan said, ‘Yes, but Nadia asked her father to let her go to College and he said “No” I think her father listened to you with respect Yusef and perhaps, he will let Nadia go to college now. Perhaps he can see modern young men are happy for woman to have an education.’

The next day when Yusef came home from his work, Aunty Mariam had good news. She said Nadia’s mother telephoned that morning and she said ‘Nadia spoke to her father on Monday. Nadia told her father she wanted to go to College very much and Sagal said, “She can go”. Nadia is very pleased. She is going to study to be a teacher.’

Yusef laughed. ‘I am happy for Nadia. I hope we helped her father to see it is good for women to go to College.’

‘I think it’s good for women to have an education in the modern world,’ Aunty Mariam said.

‘Yes, my mother is clever Aunty I think she wanted an education. She didn’t go to school but my father taught her to read and write. Now, mother reads every day and she can write letters to me.’

‘Yasmin was always clever,’ Uncle Hassan said. ‘I remember my sister when she was a little girl. She liked to play with dolls. The dolls were sick and Yasmin was the doctor. She said when she was a little girl, ‘Why can’t I be a doctor, Hassan?’” Uncle shook his head. ‘It wasn’t possible when she was a girl. Very few women went to school in our village. There wasn’t enough money for boys to go to College and people did not send girls to school.’

Chapter 8

Yusef Loves His Work

Yusef liked studying at the University Hospital, Birmingham. Every year he passed his exams.

Jane passed her school exams and she went to study medicine too. Yusef and Jane were good friends. Sometimes Yusef helped Jane with the work. They often went to the hospital cafe together for a cup of coffee or something to eat.

Sometimes Jane and Yusef went to a restaurant in the city centre with other medical student friends. Yusef's friend Abdul always went with them. Abdul was older than Yusef and he qualified as a doctor three years ago. He was now working as a G.P. in Solihull. Abdul was a good friend of Yusef and Jane. His parents lived in Egypt.

One day Abdul came to the hospital when Jane was sitting in the hospital café with Yusef. Yusef waved. 'Come and sit down Abdul. Where have you been? I haven't seen you for a few weeks.'

Abdul smiled. 'I can only stay a few minutes Yusef. I've come to take Jane to town. Abdul looked at Jane, 'Have you told Yusef our news?' he asked.

Jane shook her head. 'No, I wanted to tell Joe when you were here.'

Yusef was puzzled. ‘What is this news?’

‘Abdul and I are going to marry.’ Jane said. ‘Will you come to our wedding Yusef?’

Yusef was surprised. He laughed. ‘You have kept the news secret,’ he said. ‘But I’m very happy for you. Two of the nicest people I know and they are going to marry.’

Abdul said, ‘We are going to marry in June. Will you come?’

‘Of course, I will come.’ Yusef grinned.

Abdul stood up. ‘We must go Jane. We don’t want the shops to close.’

Jane stood up. She whispered to Yusef. ‘We are going to buy an engagement ring.’

That night Aunty said. ‘Did you know Jane is getting married to Abdul, Yusef?’ She stared hard at Yusef. Aunty thought maybe Yusef wanted to marry Jane himself.

‘Yes, I’m very happy they are getting married, Abdul is my good friend,’ Yusef said with a laugh. He knew what Aunty worried about. He liked Jane. She was a good friend but he didn’t want to marry her.

Chapter 9

Nadia is a Teacher

Yusef lived in Birmingham for seven years. Once he went home to Yemen for a holiday. His family were so happy to see him. His parents were very proud of him. His father asked him if he wanted to live in Birmingham.

‘No, I shall work there for a little while, then I must come home. Yemen needs doctors.’ Yusef said.

Yusef was now a qualified doctor. Yusef told the senior doctor he worked for that he wanted to go home to Yemen. His boss didn’t want Yusef to go. Yusef was a good doctor. He asked him to work in the hospital for one more year.

‘I will stay for one more year,’ Yusef told Uncle. ‘I want to say thank-you to the hospital for training me.’ Uncle nodded. ‘But next year I’m going home to work in the villages in Yemen,’ Yusef said.

Yusef sometimes thought about Nadia. Aunty went a lot to Nadia’s house and when she came home she talked about her. Nadia had passed her exams in College. She studied for three years and she was now teaching in a school in Birmingham. She loved teaching children.

Aunty sometimes talked about Nadia to Uncle Hassan. Nadia liked Aunty Mariam and she told her funny stories

about the children in her class.

One night Yusef was reading the newspaper in the room with Auntie and Uncle, when Auntie Mariam said to Uncle Hassan in a loud voice. 'I was in Nadia's house today and there was a very nice young man there. He is a teacher. His name is David. I think Nadia likes him very much.'

Yusef didn't speak. He frowned a little. He stood up and went out to the kitchen. A few minutes later Uncle Hassan followed him. 'Are you well Yusef?'

'Yes, of course Uncle.'

'You looked ill when Auntie talked about Nadia. I thought you were going to faint.'

Yusef sighed. 'Uncle, I hoped Nadia might marry me.'

Uncle Hassan smiled. 'Why not? Ask Nadia how she feels.'

'Oh, no. I'm silly to think about Nadia. I want to go back to Yemen and work with the poor. Nadia has a good life in Birmingham. She cannot live in a poor village in my country.'

'Ask her my boy. Talk to her. You don't know what she thinks,' Uncle Hassan said. He smiled and patted Yusef on the back. 'A lot of young woman would like to marry a handsome, good man like you.'

'No Uncle. I think I must forget her.'

Uncle Hassan shrugged his shoulders. 'If you don't ask Nadia you will not know what she thinks of you.'

The next day Yusef drove his car to Victoria Road in Birmingham. He parked his car near the school where Nadia worked. The children were going home. He thought perhaps he could talk to Nadia. He waited in his car, he saw Nadia coming out of school carrying a heavy bag.

Yusef started to get out of the car but he stopped when he saw another teacher running after Nadia. Nadia stopped to speak. The young man took Nadia's heavy bag and he opened his car door for Nadia to sit in the front seat next to him. Yusef followed the car. The young man was taking Nadia home from school. The car stopped near Nadia's house. Yusef stopped his car away from the house and he watched. Nadia got out of the car and waved good-bye. Perhaps the young man was David?

The next sunny Sunday afternoon while Yusef was reading a book Aunty said, 'We're going to see Nadia's family today Yusef. Do you want to come?'

Yusef didn't speak. He wanted to see Nadia before he went back to his country to say goodbye but he thought, 'Perhaps she is with David'.

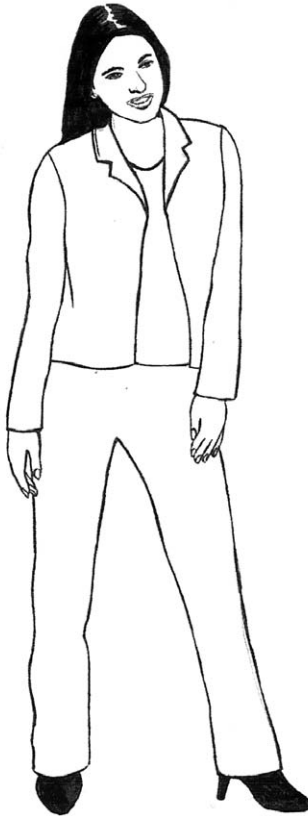
'Come with us Yusef - you will be going home in a few months,' Uncle Hassan said.

Yusef got up quickly. 'Very well. I will come to say goodbye,' he said.

Chapter 10

Yusef Meets Nadia Again

When they arrived at Nadia's house, Yusef was disappointed Nadia was not home. Her mother said she was visiting friends and she was coming home soon.



Nadia was surprised to see visitors when she came home. She was not a schoolgirl but a working woman now.

She wore dainty black high heel shoes with a pale blue trouser suit. She looked modern and smart. Nadia smiled and she looked very happy. Her long black hair was thick and silky.

Nadia's mother asked the visitors to stay and eat.

Nadia's mother went to the kitchen to cook. Sagal and Uncle Hassan talked about politics. Aunty Mariam went to the kitchen to help her friend prepare the food.

Yusef put down the newspaper he was reading when Nadia came in to the room. He felt a little shy with Nadia now but she was friendly. She was a confident young woman and more beautiful than when Yusef saw her years ago.

'Congratulations Yusef. Aunty says you are now a doctor.'

'Thank-you Nadia and she told me you have passed your exams and you are a teacher?'

'Yes. I love teaching,' Nadia said.

Sagal and Uncle started to talk about cars to each other.

'I saw you coming out of school last Tuesday,' Yusef said.

Nadia looked surprised. 'I didn't see you Yusef. Why didn't you speak to me?' she asked.

'You went in a car with a young man.'

Nadia laughed. 'Oh! I expect David gave me a lift. He is very nice. He's a teacher in the school where I work.'

Yusef said quietly, 'Aunty said David is a special friend.'

She said you like him very much.'

Nadia looked at Yusef. 'He is nice, but he is just a friend, not special.' She smiled and then she looked away quickly because Yusef was looking straight into her eyes.

Yusef felt his heart thumping. He was thinking. 'Is it possible Nadia really likes me?'

Aunty Mariam came into the room. She said, 'Fatima says you must all come and have food.' They went to the next room where Nadia's mother was putting out the food for them. Nadia and Yusef finished their food quickly but the older people talked a lot. Nadia's mother said, 'It is boring to listen to old people. You go and show Yusef the work of your school class Nadia.'

Nadia and Yusef got up and went to the sitting room. Nadia said. 'Do you want to see the drawings of the children Yusef? They are very funny. The children are six years old. They can only write a little.'

'Yes please. I want to see them.' Yusef told her.

Yusef laughed when he saw the funny pictures of houses, cars, brothers and sisters. Suddenly, Nadia tried to take away some of the pictures.

'Don't look at those pictures,' she said. 'They're not interesting.' She tried to take the pictures from Yusef.

Yusef lifted the pictures high to stop Nadia taking them

and he read out loud, 'My teacher is beautiful'. There was a funny picture of Nadia in her blue suit. Nadia laughed shyly. 'Can I have the pictures now?'

'Please, let me see them,' Yusef said with a smile. She nodded. Yusef read the words on the pictures. One child wrote, 'My teacher is kind.' Another child wrote 'I love my teacher.' Yusef smiled at Nadia and he said, 'They are lucky to have such a good teacher.'

'I am sure people are blessed to have a doctor like you Yusef. Everyone says you are clever and very kind.'

'Thank-you.' Suddenly they were both very quiet.

Nadia spoke first, 'You are going back to your country soon Aunty told me.'

'Yes. All my life I wanted to be a doctor to help the poor. Many people in the villages never see a doctor Nadia. The hospital is in a town far away.'

'You are lucky. I would love to work with the poor,' she said.

Yusef was surprised. 'Do you want to live in another country?' he asked her.

'Maybe,' Nadia said.

Yusef didn't know what to say. Was it possible Nadia might marry him? His friend Abdul told him that Nadia was so lovely lots of men wanted to marry her. Nadia was kind to Yusef but she was kind to everyone. All the children loved

her. What about David? Aunty said Nadia liked David a lot.

Yusef felt shy and he could not speak.

Nadia was waiting for Yusef to speak but he felt too nervous. Suddenly, she stood up. 'Oh well... I'm going upstairs Yusef. I have work to do for tomorrow. Will you give me the pictures the children made?' She held out her hand for the pictures.

Chapter 11

What Will Nadia Say?

Yusef took Nadia's hand but he did not give Nadia the pictures. 'Please sit down,' he said.

Nadia took her hand away but she sat down next to him.

He said quickly, 'Will you marry me Nadia if your parents agree?'

Now Nadia wasn't able to speak. Her eyes filled with tears.

When she did not speak Yusef thought she wanted to say 'no'.. He said quickly, 'Don't worry Nadia. I should not have asked you.'

Nadia shook her head. 'It's all right,' she laughed. 'I want to marry you. I thought you would never ask me. I prayed every day to marry you Yusef after the first time you came to my house. Allah has answered my prayers.'

They heard Aunty and Uncle coming. Nadia stood up. She felt shy. 'My parents are coming I must go upstairs,' she said. Nadia was glad to go out of the room.

Nadia's father Sagal sat next to Yusef.

'Can I talk to you privately for a few minutes sir?' Yusef asked Sagal quietly. Nadia's father got up.

'Come to the next room Yusef,' he said. When they both sat

down in the room Yusef said quickly, 'I want to marry Nadia.'

Her father laughed. 'I was waiting for you to speak to me Yusef. Yes, you can marry my daughter.' He stood up and he shook Yusef's hand. 'I don't want my daughter to go away to another country but my wife said you are the only man Nadia will marry Yusef or she will be a teacher all her life and never marry.'

'I must go back to Yemen to work as a doctor but I think Nadia wants to come,' Yusef told Sagal.

Nadia's father laughed. 'I'm glad you will go to Yemen. I know people in the villages need doctors. I have a house in Sana'a. My wife and I can come to visit you and you must bring Nadia and our grandchildren to see us in Birmingham.'

When her father called her, Nadia came downstairs shyly. Her father said, 'Are you sure you want to go with this man to the Yemen? It's a long way from Birmingham.'

'I will go with Yusef to any country,' Nadia said. Her father nodded and her mother cried. Everyone laughed and hugged everyone else. Later, Aunty, Uncle and Yusef went home.

Yusef touched Nadia's hand when he left the house and he whispered, 'I will telephone tomorrow. We can talk about our wedding and about the future. I hope you are happy to have a small wedding.'

‘Yes,’ Nadia agreed. ‘I think it is awful to spend a lot of money on weddings. We will need money for our work in Yemen.’

Her eyes were shining. ‘I will ask father if I can have the wedding money for our work in Yemen.’

That night Yusef telephoned his parents. The first thing he said was. ‘I have wonderful news...’



Some unusual words explained

- Salta - popular Yemen food
- Shafut - popular food of Yemen made with yoghurt
- G.P. - G.P. is short for General Practitioner - a doctor who works in the community
- Vet - Vet is short for Veterinary Surgeon (an animal doctor)

People in the book

- Yusef - a student from Yemen
- Yasmin - Yusef's mother
- Ali - Yusef's father
- Mohammed - Ali's friend, a cafe manager
- Hassan - Yusef's uncle
- Mariam - Yusef's aunty
- Alan Smith - the neighbours' son
- Jane Smith - the neighbours' daughter
- Abdul - Yusef's friend, he is a G.P.
- Sagal - Uncle Hassan's friend
- Fatima - Sagal's wife, Aunty Mariam's friend
- Nadia - daughter of Hassan & Fatima

YUSEF

by Gill Winn

Illustrations: Sam Osborne

Yusef came from Yemen to study in Britain. He wants to be a doctor. He lives with his Aunt and Uncle in Birmingham.

His fathers friend says, "You will be a rich young man and you will not come back to Yemen if you are a doctor."

Aunty Miriam thinks Yusef like Jane too much...

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Long Spider Press (Established 1981)
ISBN 0-9507529-2-4 © Gill Winn 2004

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ISBN 0-9507529-2-4



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