

NOMAD DIARIES

A Novel by Yasmeeen Maxamuud

Coming fall 2009

The story is brilliantly constructed, describing as it does the unbearable stresses a Somali refugee family faces in its struggle to remake itself in melting-pot America.

*Said S. Samatar Ph.D.
Professor of history, Rutgers University
Editor of Horn-of-Africa journal*

A must-read first-and-only novel by and for the post-civil war generation of Somalis coming of age in the United States, *Nomad Diaries* is a treasure chest—a Pandora's box of drama, trauma, and elation bubbling just beneath the quizzical refugee grin, and Yasmeeen Maxamud is a master narrator of the entwined intergenerational fates of Somalis who fled catastrophe for a Pyrrhic dream.

*Jesse Mills Ph.D.
Professor of Ethnic Studies,
University of San Diego*

Perhaps it takes the voice of a Somali woman writer such as Yasmeeen Maxamuud – a critical, strong, indignant voice – to cut through nuance, ambiguity, and silence to address certain ugly realities that characterize Somali society at this junction of history:

*Lidwien Kapteijns,
Wellesley College*

Nomad Diaries is a captivating narrative that recounts the horrors of the Somali civil war and the onerous, often dehumanizing burden of trying to construct a second life in a new culture where one is not understood.

*Doug Rutledge, Ph.D.
Writer
Somali Documentary Project*

Nomad Diaries

In the pages of *Nomad Diaries*, you will meet refugee families who had to construct a new life in a foreign land not of their choosing. To forge ahead with life, they attempt to preserve cultural values while learning a brand new way of life. But learning and adapting to a new way of life does not come easy. Coping mechanism swing into place while acquiring a new language and new ways of doing things. While the relatives these refugees left behind and the destruction that continues are never far from their mind, there is a sliver of hope in a new dawn. *Nomad Dairies* will make you cry, laugh and it may even force you to think. Meet some of the characters of this intriguing and timely story:

Nadifo Cafi finds herself in the midst of an American life she much detests in snow ridden Minneapolis of all places. She is a new immigrant from war torn Somalia. Her immigration to America is nothing she had expected. Unable to free herself from the longing of her former life of luxury and abundance, Nadifo finds American life complex. She stumbles through as she learns English for the first time, doing homework and figuring out the American way of life. Her husband of thirty five years Cartan seems to be engulfed with self indulgence and pity which Nadifo has no place in their new life.



Henna, Nadifo's youngest daughter is consumed with a past she only wishes to shake off her present American life. Her life in America starts with a bang. But being a young Somali woman her choices are not in harmony with culture and tradition. Every life choice she makes seems contradictory to what is expected. She finds bliss in marriage but soon finds it stifling. She would finally settle for the life she had always sought, but would it be a life of ecstasy or a mistake with dire consequences?



Idil is a rebellious first generation Somali American. She is thrown into a culture she much detests and a family whom she loathes. She is happy being a simple 16 year old American girl. Instead her grandmother Nadifo forces her to speak a language which arrives at her ears sounding odd. A traditional head scarf is thrown on her head forcefully. She rejects it all, opting for her guitar, skateboard and freestyle rap. Her best friend Josh is a white American boy whom the entire community frowns upon.

Amy is a drop dead gorgeous American and an ESL teacher. When she is not guzzling uppers or

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downers to fight anxiety and other abbreviated diseases popular only with her like and when she is not reading self help books and magazines which dictate how to look, feel and function, she volunteers her time to teach English to Nadifo and other immigrant women. Amy looks into the lives of these simple refugees to find answers to her own life.

Ceebla is beautiful, poised, pious and educated. Her love for Somali culture makes her deal with cruel loud women who are constantly intruding into her private life. She longs to settle down with a good man, but her luck seems unreachable. When she finally meets the man of her dreams, together they attempt to defy the pressures of family members who wish to see their vows in shambles. But a life altering accident would challenge everything she has worked hard for.



Warsan grew up in the elite lane of Somali life. She remembers vacations in Geneva, boarding schools in Paris and London and having everything she ever desired. She is the eldest daughter of Nadifo and Cartan. But the Somali civil war took with it the life she has been accustomed to. Warsan finds herself in a marriage that is less than desirable. Her three kids and husband would eventually pay the price for her leap into a vague life they know nothing about.

Shirwac is a polite young man who is confused about the basic make up of his life. He is sweet and obedient, but the more he delves into his past, the more sad he becomes. He would eventually take a leap of faith and associate with a family who are drastically different from his own. Through this new family he would discover an America he had only seen on TV.

Brenda Gayle is simply misunderstood. She works in the social services office which serves Somali refugee families. She is direct, and sometimes comes across as arrogant and rude. No one would ever imagine she could have anything in common with the refugees she serves. When she stumbles on Nadifo years later, the two women discover each other in a way that would seem impossible only a few years earlier. This slice of Somali Diaspora springs to life strong willed women, rebellious teens and the aroma of immigrant life in America.

Eavesdropping on the lives of these new immigrants would give you a new perspective as you witness America through the eyes of its newest immigrants. Come meet these women as they struggle, celebrate, triumph and touch each other's lives in the crossroads of American melting pot.

Nomad Diaries, Life, laughter, and hope!!

**For more information send your emails to:
nomadiaries@gmail.com**

