



Today's YA Lit



William P. Breitsprecher

Adolescent Literature

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★ Suzanne ★ Fisher Staples

Born on August 27, 1945, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Suzanne Fisher Staples is the daughter of an engineer, Robert Charles, and a business manager, Helen Brittain. She describes her family as being very "literal," that everyone communicated very directly and saying only what they mean without embellishments – regardless of how other's felt or whether what they were saying made any sense. Given such an upbringing, her and her mother now reflect that is amazing that she grew up to be a writer.

The Gale Group's Literary Database identifies the following

highlights of her professional career:

-  Asia marketing director for Business International Corp, 1974-1976
-  News editor and correspondent for UPI in New York; Washington, DC; Hong Kong, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and India, 1975-1983
-  Part-time editor for foreign desk for Washington Post, Washington, DC, 1983-1985
-  Consultant to U.S. Agency for International Development, 1986-1987

She became a fiction writer in 1988 and gives presentations on the status of women in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. One of her books, Dangerous Skies, is set on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay in an impoverished area. All of her books draw on her life's experiences and she spent time their developing an understanding of the community and the challenges and issues its residents face. She is a board member of Citizens for a better Eastern Shore, an organization that promotes education and environmentally sound housing for the poor residents of the area.






Contributions to YA Lit

If reading is a way to open our minds, then Suzanne Fisher Staple's works prepare us to for diversity and stimulates interest in cultural differences. She shares the art of storytelling with variety of emotional experiences that stretch beyond our abilities to experience firsthand.

Her ability to write about life in Asian cultures without imposing American values and judgments is perhaps her greatest contribution to YA Lit. Her work contributes to a meaningful dialog about gender roles, perspectives from teenagers in other cultures, and promotion of global understanding. She has helped move the genre of YA Lit to include celebrations of ethnic diversity and insight into other cultures.

YA Lit by Suzanne Fisher Staples

She has written 5 novels, all of which look at how the human spirit thrives and grows in harsh situations and difficult environments. Chinaberry Books reports "All across the country, teachers are using her books to teach human dignity in the face of adversity." Interestingly enough, Suzanne Fisher Staple never intended to write for teenagers. She claims that she "simply writes stories, and that's how they are published." Her website, at www.suzannefisherstaples.com, identifies her books as follows:

-  **Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind**. The New Your Times called this book set in modern Pakistan "a small miracle."
-  **Haveli**: In this sequel to the Newbery Honor book Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind, a young woman walks a perilous line between tradition and her fierce independence
-  **Shiva's Fire**: A girl in India learns to use her magical powers wisely.
-  **Dangerous Skies**: A gripping, award-winning story about friendship and betrayal.
-  **The Green Dog**: A heart warming and funny story taken from the author's childhood









Source: <http://suzannefisherstaples.com>






Spotlight on: Suzanne Fisher Staples

Awards and Citations

Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind

-  Newbery Honor, 1990
-  International Reading Association Young Adults' Choices, 1991
-  Notable Book in the field of Social Studies, 1992
-  IRA Teachers' Choice
-  Horn Book Fan Fare Honor Book
-  New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year
-  ALA Best Book for the Young Adult
-  ALA Notable Book

Haveli:

-  Family Choice Award
-  ALA Notable Book
-  Starred reviews in Kirkus, Booklist, School Library Journal







Shiva's Fire:

-  New York Public Library 2001 Books for the Teen Age List
-  Parents' Choice Gold Award, 2000
-  Parent's Guide Award, 2000
-  Publisher's Weekly Best Books of 2000
-  Children's Book of the Year, Bank Street College, 2000







Dangerous Skies:

-  IRA Notable Books for a Global Society, 1997
-  ALA Best Book for YA
-  NCTE Notable Children's Book in the Language Arts, 1997
-  Publishers Weekly Best Book of 1996
-  Children's Book of the Year, Child Study Committee of Bank Street College
-  Dutch Foundation for the Collective Promotion of the Dutch Book Golden and Silver Kisses recommendation, 1999 (Amsterdam)
-  The Black Experience in Children's Books, 1999
-  Maud Hart Lovelace Award, Minnesota Youth Reading Awards, 1999-2000
-  Virginia Young Readers Program Reading List
-  Pennsylvania School Librarians Association's Best of Best Fiction, 1996
-  Parents' Choice Gold Award, 1996

Internet Resources: Suzanne Fisher Staples

-  The Allen Review, Different is Enough: Suzanne Fisher Staples (<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/winter95/Staples.html>)
-  Rambles: Suzanne Fisher Staples Shiva's Fire (http://www.rambles.net/staples_shivasfire.html)
-  Reading Matters: Storm, by Suzanne Fisher Staples (http://www.readingmatters.co.uk/author_php?id=147)
-  Suzanne Fisher Staples' Homepage (<http://www.suzannefisherstaples.com>)
-  What to Read: Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind (<http://www.people.virginia.edu/~jkb3y/project/shabanu.html>)
-  Wonders of Florida, Homespun Authors: Suzanne Fisher Staples (http://www.sptimes.com/2002/03/04/NIE/Capturing_a_world_bet.shtml)

Lesson Plans

-  The Mother/Daughter Relationship in Young Adult Fiction (<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/winter95/Nadeau.html>)
-  Dangerous Skies (<http://www.harperchildrens.com/hch/parents/teachingguides/sfsindex.asp>)
-  Haveli (<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=0679865691&view=te>)
-  Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind: (<http://www.eduplace.com/tview/tviews/s/shabanudaughterofthewind.html>)
-  Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind (http://www.lincoln.smmusd.org/staff/Hart_Web/english/shabanu.htm)
-  Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind (<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/shabanu.html>)

In the Author's Own Words: Suzanne Fisher Staples

By combining her "reporter's eye" with an accepting attitude and ability to weave a captivating tale, Staples has "opened the minds" of adolescents and adults readers alike. While she recognizes that she has a gift for words and stories, she credits her success to her ability to refrain from passing judgments.

Perhaps her interview with Teenread.com best summarizes her positive impact on YA Lit when she says, "We're born accepting, but we learn to fear. The difficult thing is getting adults to give up their fears so they don't pass them on to their children. Literature, film, visual arts, television, magazine articles, music – these express what we all have in common. Art makes the differences among cultures appealing."

