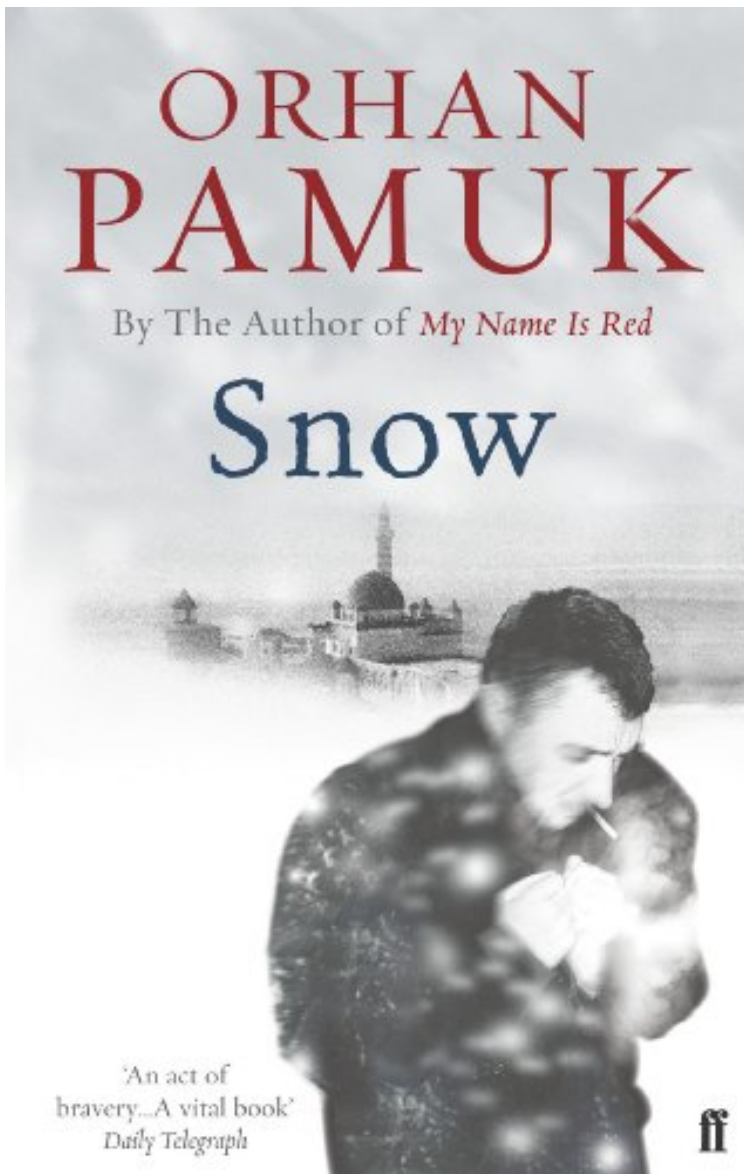


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## Snow (English Edition)



Par Orhan Pamuk  
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**Par Orhan Pamuk : Snow (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Snow (English Edition):

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### Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurSnow begins in the year 1992. Ka, a poet and political exile, returns to Turkey as a journalist, assigned to investigate troubling reports of suicide in the small and mysterious city of Kars on the Turkish border. The snow is falling fast as he arrives, and soon all roads are closed. There's a 'suicide epidemic' amongst young religious women forbidden to wear their headscarves. Islamists are poised to win the local elections and Ka is falling in love with the beautiful and radiant Ipek, now recently divorced. Amid blanketing snowfall and universal suspicion, he finds himself pursued by terrorism in a city wasting away under the shadow of Europe. In the midst of growing religious and political violence, the stage is set for a terrible and desperate act . . . Touching, slyly comic, and humming with cerebral suspense, Snow evokes the

spiritual fragility of the non-Western world, its ambivalence about the godless West, and its fury. 'A novel of profound relevance to our present moment' The Times Extrait The silence of snow, thought the man sitting just behind the bus driver. If this were the beginning of a poem, he would have called the thing he felt inside him the silence of snow. Hed boarded the bus from Erzurum to Kars with only seconds to spare. Hed just come into the station on a bus from Istanbul snowy, stormy, two-day journey and was rushing up and down the dirty wet corridors with his bag in tow, looking for his connection, when someone told him the bus for Kars was leaving immediately. Hed managed to find it, an ancient Magirus, but the conductor had just shut the luggage compartment and, being in a hurry, refused to open it again. Thats why our traveler had taken his bag on board with him; the big dark-red Bally valise was now wedged between his legs. He was sitting next to the window and wearing a thick charcoal coat hed bought at a Frankfurt Kaufhof five years earlier.

We should note straightaway that this soft, downy beauty of a coat would cause him shame and disquiet during the days he was to spend in Kars, while also furnishing a sense of security. As soon as the bus set off, our traveler glued his eyes to the window next to him; perhaps hoping to see something new, he peered into the wretched little shops and bakeries and broken-down coffeehouses that lined the streets of Erzurums outlying suburbs, and as he did it began to snow. It was heavier and thicker than the snow hed seen between Istanbul and Erzurum. If he hadnt been so tired, if hed paid a bit more attention to the snowflakes swirling out of the sky like feathers, he might have realized that he was traveling straight into a blizzard; he might have seen at the start that he was setting out on a journey that would change his life forever and chosen to turn back. But the thought didnt even cross his mind. As evening fell, he lost himself in the light still lingering in the sky above; in the snowflakes whirling ever more wildly in the wind he saw nothing of the impending blizzard but rather a promise, a sign pointing the way back to the happiness and purity he had known, once, as a child. Our traveler had spent his years of happiness and childhood in Istanbul; hed returned a week ago, for the first time in twelve years, to attend his mothers funeral, and having stayed there four days he decided to take this trip to Kars. Years later, he would still recall the extraordinary beauty of the snow that night; the happiness it brought him was far greater than any hed known in Istanbul. He was a poet and, as he himself had written in an early poem still largely unknown to Turkish readers it snows only once in our dreams. As he watched the snow fall outside his window, as slowly and silently as the snow in a dream, the traveler fell into a long-desired, long-awaited reverie; cleansed by memories of innocence and childhood, he succumbed to optimism and dared to believe himself at home in this world. Soon afterward, he felt something else that he had not known for quite a long time and fell asleep in his seat. Let us take advantage of this lull to whisper a few biographical details. Although he had spent the last twelve years in political exile in Germany, our traveler had never been very much involved in politics. His real passion, his only thought, was for poetry. He was forty-two years old and single, never married. Although it might be hard to tell as he curled up in his seat, he was tall for a Turk, with brown hair and a pale complexion that had become even paler during this journey. He was shy and enjoyed being alone. Had he known what would happen soon after he fell asleep with the swaying of the bus his head would come to lean first on his neighbors shoulder and then on the man's chest he would have been very much ashamed. For the traveler we see leaning on his neighbor is an honest and well-meaning man and full of melancholy, like those Chekhov characters so laden with virtues that they never know success in life. Well have a lot to say about melancholy later on. But as he is not likely to remain asleep for very long in that awkward position, suffice it for now to say that the travelers name is Kerim Alakusoglu, that he doesnt like this name but prefers to be called Ka (from his initials), and that Ill be doing the same in this book. Even as a schoolboy, our hero stubbornly insisted on writing Ka on his homework and exam papers; he signed Ka on university registration forms; and he took every opportunity to defend his right to continue to do so, even if it meant conflict with teachers and government officials. His mother, his family, and his friends all called him Ka, and, having also published some poetry collections under this name, he enjoyed a small enigmatic fame as Ka, both in Turkey and in Turkish circles in Germany. Thats all we have time for at present. As the bus driver wished his passengers a safe journey as we departed Erzurum station, let me just add these words: May your road be open, dear Ka. But I don't wish to deceive you. Im an old friend of Kas, and I begin this story knowing everything that will happen to him during his time in Kars. After leaving Horasan, the bus turned north, heading directly for Kars. As it climbed the winding road, the driver had to slam on the brakes to avoid a horse and carriage that had sprung up out of nowhere on one of the hairpin bends, and Ka woke up. Fear had already fostered a strong fellow feeling among the passengers; before long, Ka too felt at one with them. Even though he was sitting just behind the bus driver, Ka was soon behaving like the passengers behind him:

Whenever the bus slowed to negotiate a bend in the road or avoid going over the edge of a cliff, he stood up to get a better view; when the zealous passenger who had committed himself to helping the driver by wiping the condensation from the windshield missed a corner, Ka would point it out with his forefinger (which contribution went unnoticed); and when the blizzard got so bad that the wipers could no longer keep the snow from piling up on the windshield, Ka joined the driver in trying to guess where the road was. Once caked with snow, the road signs were impossible to read. When the snowstorm began to rage in earnest, the driver turned off his brights and dimmed the lights inside the bus, hoping to conjure up the road out of the semidarkness. The passengers fell into a fearful silence with their eyes on the scene outside: the snow-covered streets of destitute villages, the dimly lit, ramshackle one-story houses, the roads to farther villages that were already closed, and the ravines barely visible beyond the streetlamps. If they spoke, it was in whispers. So it was in the gentlest of whispers that Ka's neighbor, the man onto whose shoulder Ka had fallen asleep earlier, asked him why he was traveling to Kars. It was easy to see that Ka was not a local. "I'm a journalist," Ka whispered in reply. "This was a lie. I'm interested in the municipal elections and also the young women who've been committing suicide. This was true. When the mayor of Kars was murdered, every newspaper in Istanbul ran the story," Ka's neighbor replied. "And it's the same for the women who've been committing suicide. It was hard for Ka to know whether it was pride or shame he heard in the man's voice. Three days later, standing in the snow on Halitpasa Avenue with tears streaming from his eyes, Ka was to see this slim handsome villager again. During the desultory conversation that continued on and off for the rest of the bus journey, Ka found out that the man had just taken his mother to Erzurum because the hospital in Kars wasn't good enough, that he was a livestock dealer who served the villages in the Kars vicinity, that he had been through hard times but hadn't become a rebel, and that for mysterious reasons he did not disclose to

Ka he was sorry not for himself but for his country and was happy to see that a well-read, educated gentleman like Ka had taken the trouble to travel all the way from Istanbul to find out more about his city's problems. There was something so noble in the plainness of his speech and the pride of his bearing that Ka felt respect for him. His very presence was calming. Not once during twelve years in Germany had Ka known such inner peace; it had been a long time since he had had the fleeting pleasure of empathizing with someone weaker than himself. He remembered trying to see the world through the eyes of a man who could feel love and compassion. As he did the same now, he no longer felt so fearful of the relentless blizzard. He knew they were not destined to roll off a cliff. The bus would be late, but it would reach its destination. When, at ten o'clock at night, three hours behind schedule, the bus began its crawl through the snow-covered streets of Kars, Ka couldn't recognize the city at all. He couldn't even see the railroad station, where he had arrived twenty years earlier by steam engine, nor could he see any sign of the hotel to which his driver had taken him that day (following a full tour of the city): the Hotel Republic, a telephone in every room. It was as if everything had been erased, lost beneath the snow. He saw a hint of the old days in the horse-drawn carriages here and there, waiting in garages, but the city itself looked much poorer and sadder than he remembered. Through the frozen windows of the bus, Ka saw the same concrete apartments that had sprung up all over Turkey during the past ten years, and the same Plexiglas panels; he also saw banners emblazoned with campaign slogans strung above every street. He stepped off the bus. As his foot sank into the soft blanket of snow, a sharp blast of cold air shot up past the cuffs of his trousers... From Publishers Weekly A Turkish poet who spent 12 years as a political exile in Germany witnesses firsthand the clash between radical Islam and Western ideals in this enigmatically beautiful novel. Ka's reasons for visiting the small Turkish town of Kars are twofold: curiosity about the rash of suicides by young girls in the town and a hope to reconnect with "the beautiful Ipek," whom he knew as a youth. But Kars is a tangle of poverty-stricken families, Kurdish separatists, political Islamists (including Ipek's spirited sister Kadife) and Ka finds himself making compromises with all in a desperate play for his own happiness. Ka encounters government officials, idealistic students, leftist theater groups and the charismatic and perhaps terroristic Blue while trying to convince Ipek to return to Germany with him; each conversation pits warring ideologies against each other and against Ka's own weary melancholy. Pamuk himself becomes an important character, as he describes his attempts to piece together "what really happened" in the few days his friend Ka spent in Kars, during which snow cuts off the town from the rest of the world and a bloody coup from an unexpected source hurtles toward a startling climax. Pamuk's sometimes exhaustive conversations and descriptions create a stark picture of a too-little-known part of the world, where politics, religion and even happiness can seem alternately all-consuming and irrelevant. A detached tone and some dogmatic abstractions make for tough reading, but Ka's rediscovery of God and poetry in a desolate place makes the novel's sadness profound and

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