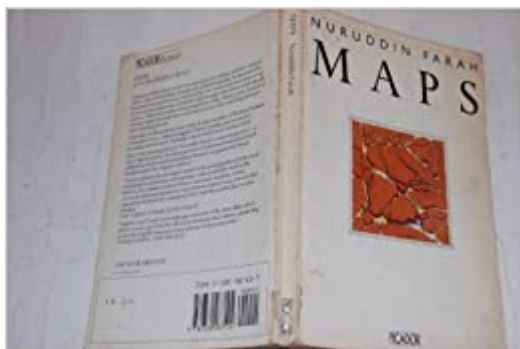


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## Maps (Picador Books)



## Synopsis

This first novel in Nuruddin Farah's Blood in the Sun trilogy tells the story of Askar, a man coming of age in the turmoil of modern Africa. With his father a victim of the bloody Ethiopian civil war and his mother dying the day of his birth, Askar is taken in and raised by a woman named Misra amid the scandal, gossip, and ritual of a small African village. As an adolescent, Askar goes to live in Somalia's capital, where he strives to find himself just as Somalia struggles for national identity.Â Â

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## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Maps and Gifts (see below) are the first two volumes in Farah's second trilogy, Blood in the Sun (after the acclaimed, three-volume Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship), but they stand as prequels to the previously published, award-winning third volume, Secrets (1998). This pair of works by Farah, a chronicler of modern Africa's sociopolitical turbulence and growth who has lived in exile from his native Somalia since 1974, are being released in hardcover in the U.S. for the first time, though they have been available abroad for several years. Of the two novels, Maps is the richer in concept and execution, beautifully worked in the dense, intricate prose for which Farah is known. Askar, orphaned as a child, is rescued from his dead mother's side and raised in a small village by Misra, an older woman who develops a mysterious, protective bond with him. Even when he moves to the capital to live with his prosperous Uncle Hilaal, Askar's origins continue to preoccupy him, and he grows into a serious, introspective youth fixed on the urgent question of his

identity. Hilaal, the cook and nurturer in his city home, is able to provide some answers for his baffled nephew on the subjects of African tradition, Somali manhood and selflessness. Employing a poetic, imaginative style, Farah skillfully juxtaposes Askar's emotional turmoil and the struggles of his beloved Somalia under siege, as the characters try to understand why blood must be shed for territorial gain. In the end, Askar must choose between avenging his soldier father's death by joining the army, or pursuing his academic studies, but the choice is taken out of his hands by powerful external forces. (Aug.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Intended as the first two books in the author's "Blood in the Sun" trilogy (the third being *Secrets*) (LJ 5/1/98) these novels are a moving study of life in Somalia before the civil war. *Maps* is the story of Askar, found as a newborn beside his mother's dead body and raised by Misra, an outcast in the village because of her Ethiopian heritage. Years later, during the war with Ethiopia, Askar must choose between his country and the woman who raised him when Misra is accused of betraying their village to the enemy. *Gifts* tells the story of Duniya, a nurse trying to raise three children alone in the capital city of Mogadishu. When she decides to accept responsibility for an abandoned baby, she must confront the patriarchs of her family, Somalia's male-dominated bureaucracy, and her own fierce independence. In both novels, Farah has eloquently woven dreams, memories, and folklore into modern tales of ordinary people trying to live their lives with dignity in the midst of famine, colonialism, and longstanding ethnic hatreds. With their own unique styles and engaging characters, each novel easily stands on its own. Recommended for all libraries, even those that do not own the third novel. AEllen Flexman, Indianapolis-Marion Cty. P.L. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Personally, I found in this book a great writer who uses a second persona narrator to give the story a special turn. A book to read through the symbolism and metaphors. It shows the reality of countries where women are mistreated because of different reasons, religion, culture. It is important to visualize a new tendency when the boy moved to Mogadishu. A story told by dreams and symbols. Worth reading I believe Nuruddin Farah is a great story teller

This 1986 book was the choice of the international book club at my local bookstore. Basically, it is about a search for identity. Set in Somalia and Ethiopia, the orphan Askar's mother dies at his birth and he is brought up by a servant woman named Misra. There's definitely a love bond between

them but these ties are strained and then broken as he grows up, especially when he is sent to live with his aunt and uncle in Mogadiscio. The story includes the thoughts of the young man, dream sequences and the complex politics of the time and the place. Interpersonal relationships are prominent, especially that between Askar and Misra as well as Askar and his aunt and uncle who are quite educated and introduce him to a more cosmopolitan world. As war rages its horrors intensify the question surfaces as to whether or not Misra is a traitor or just another pawn in the ongoing war and Askar matures has to deal with several questions about her loyalty to his country. The truth is never confronted directly. It is up to the reader to make his or her own judgments. There is no doubt that this is a fine book that introduced me to a culture I knew little or nothing about. However, the many dream sequences just add to the confusion as to what actually happened. I soon grew impatient with this book and even though I can respect it and appreciate the unique viewpoint the author brought to it, I found it difficult to follow the plot and much too sad and depressing for my taste.

Had to read this book for class and I must say I was completely stunned by it. Given the slow beginning and middle, I just assumed this was a typical cerebral novel but if you like complex, complicated characters and the impossible challenge of securing integrity in a prejudiced system, you may enjoy this book.

I could not put Maps down. I highly recommend it.

This edition is well crafted and durable, and looks and feels like a well-made book. The content shows even more care. "Maps" is the story of Askar, a Somalian orphan born in the Ogaden, a territory under dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia. When war breaks out in earnest, Askar's foster-mother, Misra, sends him to live with his maternal uncle and his wife in Mogadiscio. Ultimately, Askar must self-identify as he grows amidst a nation whose very map changes around him. Farah's writing is simple and elegant, and each chapter is told from a different perspective. All in all, very worth the read.

Great book but Kindle version is loaded with "typos" although I doubt anyone typed them. I notice this problem a lot with Kindle books. Needs to be fixed. Electronic version should be as clean as the printed version.

Incrediblebeautifully writtencaptivating story

The Kindle version of this book has multiple typographical errors on every "page," and even some missing words. There are times when I can't tell if a sentence is just missing its ending punctuation, or the last part of the sentence is actually missing. This edition needs a significant clean-up job.

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