

# A lake beyond the wind



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

### **A Lake beyond the Wind**

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War was the first of many conflicts to arise between the newly formed state of Israel and its Arab neighbors. Throughout this and many more conflicts, some of which still occur today, many people have become displaced and lost their lives. In, *A Lake beyond the Wind*, Yahya Yakhlif, who utilizes multiple narrators, vividly depicts the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the hardships of the Palestinian peoples as well as the struggles and sacrifices faced by the Arab men who fought to defend Palestine.

Yakhlif uses multiple narrators to emphasize the history and reliability of his narrative. Throughout much of the novel, there is the narration of a teenager that relates the tragic events in Samakh and Tiberias; this voice may be taken as that of Yakhlif himself because Yakhlif was born in Samakh and was four years old in 1948. He was actually turned into a refugee, like many of the novel. Also present are two first-person narrators: AsadalShahba, and AbdalRahman, who give accounts of their own journeys from Aleppo and Baghdad to Palestine, and of their aspiration to defend Palestine against the Zionist threat. By using many different narrators, Yakhlif gives us many different viewpoints during the conflict, whether it be from a teenager in a small village, to that of soldiers fighting the war to protect their homes. Throughout all of them though, we understand their sense of fear and the losses they endured.

The novel opens with a description of the simple, peaceful lifestyle of Palestinian citizens in 1948 in the town of Samakh, a typical Palestinian community located on the southern shore of Lake Tiberias. This is told through the eyes of a teenage boy named Rami, who lives in the town with

<https://assignbuster.com/a-lake-beyond-the-wind/>

his mother, father, and baby brother. We learn through his descriptions how the town's tranquility had been destroyed during the early months of 1948 by the Zionist threat, and by the clear prospect of war between Arabs and Israel, or the "Zionist" as said mostly in the novel. Eventually we see the decay of the village as pressures and conflict increase, until finally the village is disintegrated. The unfairness between the forces is another aspect in which we learn about. It is described how members of the Arab Liberation Army (ALA) suffered during the war because of a shortage of weapons, ammunition, and equipment. However, despite this shortage, they do their best to defend Jerusalem and other Palestinian cities against the attacks of Israel, which are superior in number and equipment and which often receive weapons and ammunition from British forces. However, throughout the novel, we also learn of another group forced to defend, the Palestinian citizens. In many small communities such as Samakh and other towns, the citizens have to begin defending themselves with their own weapons, such as rifles. Tiberias, Samakh and other Palestinian communities however, fall one after the other to the Zionist forces. In the end, the ALA loses the war, and is disbanded. Throughout this conflict, and amid the horrors of the war, Palestinian citizens flee from their homeland to Syria and Jordan as refugees.

It is during these conflicts that the novel depicts the end of the soldiers of the ALA, such as Najib of Samakh, AbdalRahman of Baghdad, an Iraqi volunteer who enlisted to help protect the lands, and AsadalShahba of Aleppo. These men, throughout their narrations, seem to always question the reliability of some of their commanders while they're enlisted. Ultimately though, they are finally discharged. Because of this, they come to feel that

their sacrifice and willingness to defend were pointless. AbdalRahman and Najib go to Syria and Jordan in search of Najib's family, which had to become refugees during the conflict. The two end up in Um Qais, a Jordanian village which rests over the village of Samakh and Lake Tiberias. As Najib looks down at the lake, and down at what was once his hometown, now abandoned, tears fall from his eyes in response to his emotional attachment to the area. As they leave, we get the title of this book; as Najib is walking away from the view of his hometown, next to the lake, it is to him now as "a lake beyond the wind." The wind serves as a symbol of the disaster that has happened to their people throughout the war, and ultimately for the whole Palestinian people.

Yahya Yakhliif's novel is a powerful look into the sufferings which Palestinian people lived through in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Like most wars, they entail not only the soldiers, but also the men, women, and children of the villages and towns which they are fought, leaving scars along the way. It is through his use of telling this novel in the eyes of many people that Yakhliif gives his readers this descriptive piece of history, culture, and conflict.