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# Does My Head Look Big In This? (Arabic Ed) (Arabic Edition)



## Synopsis

A witty and engaging story about being young and Muslim. Amal Abdel-Hakim is, a seventeen year-old Australian-Palestinian-Muslim trying to come to grips with her various identities.

It's hard enough being cool as a teenager when being one issue behind the latest Cosmo is enough to disqualify you from the in-group. Try wearing a veil and talking intimately about personal issues and you know you're in for a tough time at school in Australia. Luckily her friends support her, although they've got troubles of their own. Simone, blonde, gorgeous and overweight has serious image issues, and Leila's really intelligent but her parents are more interested in her getting a marriage certificate than her high school certificate! Maybe Amal's problems are not as bad as she thinks!

## Book Information

Paperback: 400 pages

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Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 73 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #3,250,867 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious > Other #94 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Religious Fiction > Muslim #1038 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up • Australian 11th-grader Amal is smart, funny, outspoken, a good student, and a loyal friend. She is also a devout Muslim who decides to wear the hijab, or head covering, full-time. The story tells of her emotional and spiritual journey as she copes with a mad crush on a boy, befriends an elderly Greek neighbor, and tries to help a friend who aspires to be a lawyer but whose well-intentioned mother is trying to force her to leave school and get married. Amal is also battling the misconceptions of non-Muslims about her religion and culture. While the novel deals with a

number of serious issues, it is extremely funny and entertaining, and never preachy or forced. The details of Amal's family and social life are spot-on, and the book is wonderful at showing the diversity within Muslim communities and in explaining why so many women choose to wear the hijab. Amal is an appealing and believable character. She trades verbal jibes with another girl, she is impetuous and even arrogant at times, and she makes some serious errors of judgment. And by the end of the story, she and readers come to realize that "Putting on the hijab isn't the end of the journey. It's just the beginning of it." --Kathleen E. Gruver, Burlington County Library, Westampton, NJ Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**\*Starred Review\*** Like the author of this breakthrough debut novel, Amal is an Australian-born, Muslim Palestinian "whacked with some seriously confusing identity hyphens." At 16, she loves shopping, watches *Sex and the City*, and IMs her friends about her crush on a classmate. She also wants to wear the hijab, to be strong enough to show a badge of her deeply held faith, even if she confronts insults from some at her snotty prep school, and she is refused a part-time job in the food court (she is "not hygienic"). Her open-minded observant physician parents support her and so do her friends, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, secular. Her favorite teacher finds her a private space to pray. The first-person present-tense narrative is hilarious about the diversity, and sometimes heartbreaking. For her uncle who wants to assimilate, "foreign" is the f-word, and his overdone Aussie slang and flag-waving is a total embarrassment. On the other hand, her friend Leila nearly breaks down when her ignorant Turkish mom wants only to marry her daughter off ("Why study?") and does not know that it is Leila's Islamic duty "to seek knowledge, to gain an education." Without heavy preaching, the issues of faith and culture are part of the story, from fasting at Ramadan to refusing sex before marriage. More than the usual story of the immigrant teen's conflict with her traditional parents, the funny, touching contemporary narrative will grab teens everywhere. Rochman, Hazel --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I read this book for a reading challenge and found it absolutely delightful. The teenage voice was just sassy and sarcastic enough to be hilarious. The main character dealt with many issues, not just her faith and decision to wear hijab full time. Through it all, she learned a lot about herself. I admire her being woman enough to not only stand up for her faith, but also for her friends and convictions, but most of all to admit to herself and others when she's wrong. This is why reading challenges are good. Ordinarily I would not likely choose a young adult novel about a Muslim teen. I am so glad I

did. Although my faith is different and my age is three times Amal's and then some, there is a lot I can learn from her character. Well done!

Contemporary Young Adult fiction has developed a greater sense of sophistication and maturity in its approach to a wide range of issues that concern adolescents in meaningful ways. Issues such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, violence, domestic abuse, and sexual abuse (among other themes) are examined sensitively and plausibly in any number of well written works of Young Adult literature. The topic of religion, however, consistently challenges writers of YA fiction. I have yet to come across a novel that features religion and faith as integral narrative elements and issues that profoundly affect characters in ways that compel them to develop and think independently. *\*Does My Head Look Big in This?\** comes pretty close but falls somewhat short. The novel focuses on Amal, a high school junior living in Australia. At the start of the final term of the school year, Amal decides to begin wearing the hijab full-time as an expression of her Islamic faith. The novel follows her through some quite typical high school experiences: she and her friends develop crushes on boys, contend with bullying "mean girls," deal with body image issues, worry about upcoming exams, and cope with overbearing/controlling/unsympathetic/embarrassing parents. Amal has a fairly diverse group of friends: some are Islamic, some are Jewish, some are Palestinian-Australians (like Amal), others hail from other parts of the world, including Mrs. Vaselli, Amal's elderly Greek-Australian neighbor who reluctantly befriends Amal. Throughout all of these encounters and the rest of the minor conflicts that arise throughout the course of the plot, Amal's decision to wear the hijab—which seems to be the driving force behind the novel's primary conflict—increasingly fades into the background. Until the latter portion of the novel, when Amal's friend Leila runs away from home because of her mother's strict opposition to her desire for education and independence. Ultimately, Amal's assertion of her faith creates few problems for her. It does, however, provide her with an enlightened perspective on the actions of others. It seems as though once Amal has resolved her feelings about her own faith and becomes comfortable with her decision (she even rejects a mere kiss from Adam, her crush, and explains that any form of intimacy is forbidden before marriage) only then can she develop insight and understand the beliefs and action of others, particularly Mrs. Vaselli and Leila. Although the novel is rather lighthearted and avoids serious drama, it sends a powerful albeit tangential message about faith in oneself and the value of

empathy.

I LOVED this book. It's a YA fiction novel about female empowerment, cultural & religious acceptance, and a wonderful depiction of how the hijab is viewed by many Muslim woman as a tool for self-expression and independence that empowers them in many, many ways. It's a beautiful (and funny) telling of how a young adolescent Muslim girl fights her oppression and the bigotry that she's faced with by standing up for what she believes in. The writing is also really good, albiet a little too teenagery at times, and the book has wonderful about self-identity and self-respect, messages that I think are important for any teen girl, no matter what their cultural or religious background.

This is an engaging YA novel, particularly for girls. While the content is particularly powerful for Muslims, the identity issues the narrator struggles with are universally relatable. The novel gives the reader perspective on faith and identity, as well as being a member of a minority in a majority culture. This is all done with great humor.

I'm a 30 year old convert to Islam, although I've become completely confident in my Islamic attire... I have 2 daughters who are becoming of age where they must pray, cover etc.. And I think this book will boost their cconfidence in doing what is expected of them as Muslim girls. I find this story so intriguing but I can't understand why her parents were stand offish about her wearing the veil.. I would be stoked! So cares what ppl think! Wear your veils proudly ladies, your beautiful!

Fun, easy read with a light take on Hijabi issues, but deep enough to make you see the struggle that Hijabis go through. It is often the inner turmoil and choice that is harder to deal with than external critique. The books highlights what a personal choice wearing the Hijab is. It was interesting to see the teen perspective - this Hijabi has just one more thing to deal with, on top of school, friends, boys and nagging parents.

A fun, sensitive book for readers of all ages.

Hilarious, love this! its a really a great story to read for women struggling with learning about hijab and living in the west. Having crushes and family problems. Its an easy read and made me laugh many times. I highly recommend it.

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