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Amina's Voice



Synopsis

“Amina’s anxieties are entirely relatable, but it’s her sweet-hearted nature that makes her such a winning protagonist.” —Entertainment Weekly A Pakistani-American Muslim girl struggles to stay true to her family’s vibrant culture while simultaneously blending in at school after tragedy strikes her community in this sweet and moving middle grade novel from the award-winning author of *It’s Ramadan*, *Curious George* and *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns*. Amina has never been comfortable in the spotlight. She is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except now that she’s in middle school everything feels different. Soojin is suddenly hanging out with Emily, one of the “cool” girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more “American.” Does Amina need to start changing too? Or hiding who she is to fit in? While Amina grapples with these questions, she is devastated when her local mosque is vandalized. *Amina’s Voice* brings to life the joys and challenges of a young Pakistani American and highlights the many ways in which one girl’s voice can help bring a diverse community together to love and support each other.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 800 (What’s this?)

Hardcover: 208 pages

Publisher: Salaam Reads / Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers (March 14, 2017)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 46 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #10,332 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #5 in Books > Children’s Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American #12 in Books > Children’s Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Peer Pressure #24 in Books > Children’s Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

"Amina's middle school woes and the universal themes running through the book transcend culture, race, and religion. A perfect first book for this new Muslim imprint." (Kirkus Reviews, STARRED REVIEW)"Watching Amina literally and figuratively find her voice—bolstered by community, friendship, and discovered inner strength—makes for rewarding reading." (Publishers Weekly)"A universal story of self-acceptance and the acceptance of others. A welcome addition to any middle grade collection." (School Library Journal, STARRED REVIEW)"Written as beautifully as Amina's voice surely is, this compassionate, timely novel is highly recommended for all libraries." (Booklist, STARRED REVIEW)"[A] relatable portrayal of a tween who wants to fit in, and who's devoted to her faith even amid her confusion about her family's varied approaches to it." (Horn Book)

Hena Khan is a Pakistani-American who was born and raised in Maryland. She enjoys writing about her culture as well as all sorts of other subjects, from spies to space travel. She is the author of several books including *It's Ramadan*, *Curious George*; *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns*; *The Night of the Moon*; and *Amina's Voice*. Hena lives in Rockville, Maryland, with her husband and two sons. You can learn more about Hena by visiting her website at HenaKhan.com.

This is a sweet, heartwarming story of a girl just entering middle school and trying to figure out who she is. I got this book for my daughter but I read it as well. (My daughter is still reading it. She is enjoying it so far since she's been reading it until lights out at bedtime and woke up early to keep reading.) The author does a great job of describing the feelings of the main character and the common feeling kids have as they enter those awkward middle/intermediate school years. It definitely brought back memories and reminded me of what my daughter may be feeling. It is so wonderful to have a book like this especially during this time when minorities in the US are being villainized. It highlights the strength in diversity and the commonalities among us all.

In *Amina's Voice*, Hena Khan provides a lovely story of a middle school girl successfully navigating relationships with friends, family, and her faith community. Amina's Muslim heritage is an essential component of her sweet and caring personality. Readers get a glimpse of traditions that feel very much at home in America. When an upsetting incident threatens Amina's world, the community works together. This is a healing book which should be made available in every classroom across

the country.

Absolutely phenomenal book - brilliant writing hits every note in capturing the authentic voice of a teenager, with its emotional intensity and turbulence as she tries to find her footing and define her sense of self among family, friends, faith, as well as the world around her that is by turns hostile and embracing. Family, culture, and religion are elegantly and authentically woven into the story. The book is inspiring, engaging, and a fun read. I'm eagerly awaiting Sr Hena's next book!!

This is a lovely and heartfelt story about a Pakistani-American Muslim girl, Amina, who is trying to navigate the complicated tides of middle school friendship where old friends are changing and old adversaries might be changing, too. Amina also has to deal with her rather traditional and more strict uncle visiting their family and figuring out for herself how to express her beliefs and culture. Here are three things to love about *Amina*: 1. Amina's family! Her father - who is rather strict, does NOT care if he embarrasses his kids by asking a million questions at Open House, but stands up for his daughter at a moment when she needs it. At first I wasn't sure about him, but oh he grew on me! Her mom, who spends days preparing tons of traditional Pakistani food for their visiting uncle. That doesn't quite go as planned. And Amina's older brother, Mustafa, whose interest in trying out for the basketball team instead of joining something like Chess Club causes some friction at home. There was so much to relate to in those family moments in *Amina*. 2. That ending! I don't want to give away too much but something bad happens in Amina's Muslim community and the way things come together in the end makes me wish that every kid could read this story as a template of what to do in that kind of situation. It didn't shy away from difficult realities or make problems seem easy to solve yet it was uplifting and perfect. 3. That this novel offers Muslim students and students from the Middle East with a main character whose background and customs might be a reflection of their own, or have pieces they can relate to. I so wish that I had this book six years ago to offer to my own Amina. She was a student of mine when I taught 6th grade and Muslim. And may have connected to this *Amina*'s story but she was from Bosnia so although the religious details about the Imam and Sunday school and learning passages from the Quran may have been a connection, the food and other cultural details might not have been. So while this book is absolutely a great addition to any library, I just hope that people don't stop there and think they've covered a niche. It's one girl's story and

I just can't wait to see what else this new imprint of Simon & Schuster, Salaam Reads, will bring to the kidlit community so we have more and more stories to offer kids. (Review from Books Between Podcast)

So excited to read this and see how Khan brings the story to life. I am pleased to have another Muslim MG girl to add to my shelf and love that Amina's struggle is one that we can all identify with, while being especially powerful for Muslim readers.

I read this book a couple of months ago and knew it would be a hit for one of my Literature Circle groups (6th grade). The students really identified with the characters in the book. Today, I was lucky enough to have Ms. Khan visit my school. This was a wonderful visit, giving a whole new meaning to the word "voice." She spoke to the students in a way they understood (one of my students looked at me during the presentation and mouthed, "She's good" while showing two-thumbs up.). This book is a great read in today's environment ~ the message of acceptance, inclusion, friendship, and individual growth is perfectly delivered.

As Amina starts middle school, everything seems to be changing fast. Her best friend Soojin wants an "American name" and is reaching out to make new friends. Her Pakistani uncle visits and disapproves of Amina's piano playing. When her mosque is vandalized, she thinks more deeply about her Muslim identity, her courage to stand up in front of others, and the support of her family, friends and community. Amina's voice and feelings resonates strongly in this touching novel. (ages 9-12)

I loved this book and feel it will be an important book to have in my school library. Amina is a Muslim girl with family roots in Pakistan. The story is mostly about her struggles navigating middle school friendships and the things she loves--music--but also fears--performing in front of others. Interwoven with this plot are the cultural and religious aspects of life for both Amina and her Korean friend Soojin. There is much understanding that could come from both adults and students reading this book and I envision using this book in a book club that includes parents and students. I loved how this book truly helped me to look deeper into Islam to have a better understanding about things that are unfamiliar. I look forward to continuing to learn more and appreciate this book jump starting my search for understanding.

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