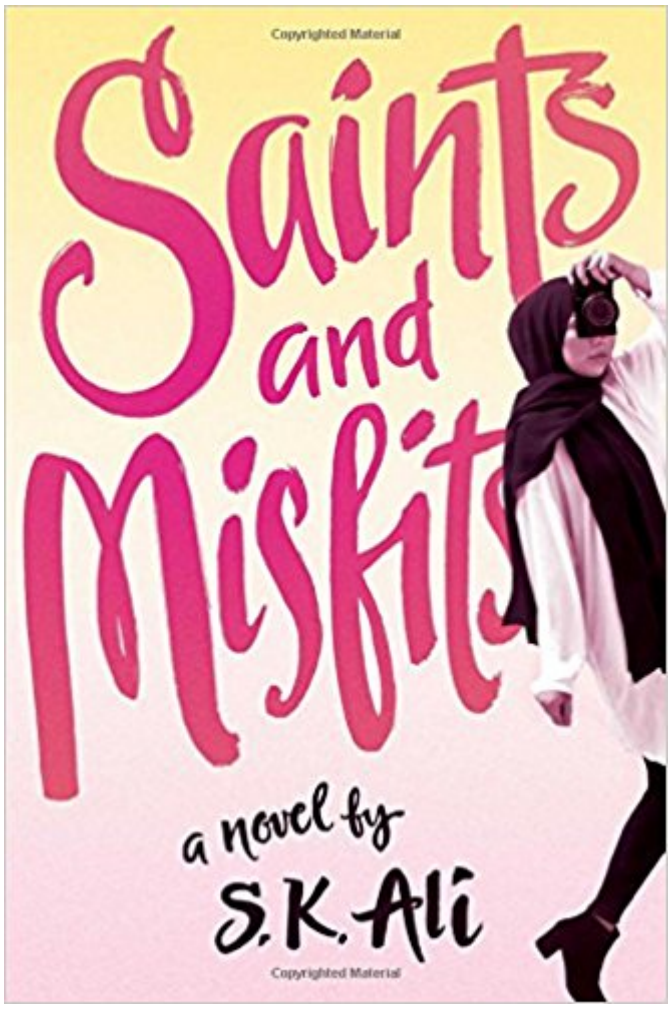
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Saints And Misfits



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Synopsis

Saints and Misfits is an unforgettable debut novel that feels like a modern day My So-Called LifeÃ¢â ¬Â¦starring a Muslim teen.There are three kinds of people in my world: 1. Saints, those special people moving the world forward. Sometimes you glaze over them. Or, at least, I do. TheyÃ¢â ¬â„¢re in your face so much, you canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t see them, like how you canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t see your nose. 2. Misfits, people who donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t belong. Like meÃ¢â ¬â •the way I donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t fit into DadÃ¢â ¬â„¢s brand-new family or in the leftover one composed of Mom and my older brother, MamaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s-Boy-Muhammad. Also, thereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Jeremy and me. Misfits. Because although, alliteratively speaking, Janna and Jeremy sound good together, we donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t go together. Same planet, different worlds. But sometimes worlds collide and beautiful things happen, right? 3. Monsters. Well, monsters wearing saint masks, like in Flannery OÃ¢â ¬â„¢ConnorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s stories. Like the monster at my mosque. People think heÃ¢â ¬â„¢s holy, untouchable, but nobody has seen under the mask. Except me.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

*"Ali pens a touching exposition of a girl's evolution from terrified victim to someone who knows she's worthy of support and is brave enough to get it. Set in a multicultural Muslim family, this book is long overdue, a delight for readers who will recognize the culture and essential for those unfamiliar with Muslim experiences. This quiet read builds to a satisfying conclusion; readers will be glad to make space in their heartsÃ¢â ¬â •and bookshelvesÃ¢â ¬â •for Janna

Yusuf." (Kirkus Reviews, STARRED REVIEW)*"This timely and authentic portrayal is an indisputable purchase in the realistic fiction category." Ã Â (School Library Journal, STARREV REVIEW)*"AliÃ¢â ¬â„¢s debut offers a much-needed,Ã Â important perspective in Janna, whose Muslim faithÃ Â is pivotal but far from the only part of her multifacetedÃ Â identity. . . .Ã Â For readers unfamiliarÃ Â with Muslim traditions, Ali offers plenty of context cluesÃ Â and explanations, though she always keeps theÃ Â story solidly on JannaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s struggle to maintain friendships, nurse a crush, deal with bullies and predatoryÃ Â people in her life, and discover her own strength in the process. A wide variety ofÃ Â readers will findÃ Â solidarity with Janna, and not just ones who wear a hijab." (Booklist, STARRED REVIEW)"[A] sympathetic and thoughtful study of a girlÃ¢â ¬â„¢s attempt to find her place in a complicated world." (Publishers Weekly)"Ali brings to life a nuanced intersection of culture, identity, and independence as Janna endures the typicalities of high school and the particularities of her evolving home life alongside the insidious impingement of rape culture. Readers will cheer JannaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s eventual empowerment." (Horn Book)"[R]eaders . . .will appreciate JannaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s finding of a way to embrace her anger, receive support, and keep her faith.Ã Â " (Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books)

S.K. Ali is a teacher based in Toronto whose writing on Muslim culture and life has appeared in theÃ Â Toronto Star. Her family of Muslim scholars is consistently listed in the The 500 Most Influential Muslims in the World, and her insight into Muslim culture is both personal and far-reaching. A mother of a teenage daughter herself, S.K. AliÃ¢â ¬â„¢s debut YA novel is a beautiful and nuanced story about a young woman exploring her identity through friendship, family, and faith.

I've been following this YA on Twitter for a hot minute and loved the preview chapter. I immediately ordered it and am finally reading the rest (about halfway through now, but at some point I'll have to stop and get work done, lol)! I'm hooked. Janna is such a recognizable and lovable characters. We feel /with/ her (which is just about the only thing that gets me through any full book). It's really a wonderful story for people of all backgrounds -- even adults! I don't want to give away too much of the story, but it was easy to relive high school with these characters. It's funny, exciting, and sometimes even frightening and sad. "Saints and Misfits" deals with some tricky but important topics in a nuanced, way.I'd recommend this read for anyone.

When I stumbled upon Saints and Misfits a few weeks ago, I wasn't sure what to expect, but it was

such a delight to read that I wish there still more chapters to read. Saints and Misfits shares the story of Janna, a hijabi teen whose Indian father leads a secular life while her Egyptian mother continues to be a practicing Muslim. Janna is dealing with criticism from some of her Muslim friends for hanging out with non-Muslims, lack of understanding from some non-Muslim friends who don't understand why she wears a hijabthe fear and frustration of being sexually assaulted by Farooq, the cousin of one of her closest friends and the sort of "perfect" boy that all parents adore. Farooq spends the better part of the novel stalking Janna and doing everything he can to make sure that he can have some influence over her.And then there is Janna's crush on Jeremy, a non-Muslim boy at her school, her older brother moving back home and deciding to court Sarah--who's just a little too perfect and has secrets of her own, Tats--one of Janna's non-Muslim friends who is just a little boy-crazy and trying to play matchmaker between Janna and Jeremy, And Sausun, her badass niqab-wearing friend who is trying to change the way people think of niqab-wearing girls with her YouTube channel, Niqabi Ninjas.I love how Ali makes sure that the reader understands that Janna's situation isn't very different from any other teenage girl: Janna is Every Girl, dealing with her own identity crisis, with wanting to fall in love, with worrying about if she is popular. And I loved how effortlessly this was conveyed to the reader. I also loved how Ali convey's Janna's struggles with her faith. This is handled so deftly, without ever veering into the heavy-handedness one often sees in stories that touch upon faith and any doubts related to it.Another wonderful thing about Saints & Misfits is the characterization. Each character in the story is so well-portrayed and unique. You never have that foggy sensation of not knowing who is who. They all stand out. And I loved the portrayal of Janna's relationship with Mr. Ram, whom she takes to the senior citizen center every week. Even when Janna sometimes took their friendship for granted, it was obvious that she cared about him and paid heed to the advice he gave her.Would I recommend reading Saints & Misfits? You betcha! And not only would I recommend it--if I were still teaching, it would be required reading for my students *and* their parents. Definitely a 5-star read!

I loved S.K. Ali's look at how a faithful Muslim girl navigates her life and her faith after a near-rape by a young man in her community who's held up as a pillar of the faith. I love that Ali presented faith as a matter of choice: Janna chooses to wear a hijab; another Muslim friend does not; another wears a niqab. I love that the "Ask an imam" post her uncle runs allows Janna (and the reader) to explore the complex ways faith intersects with living in a world that doesn't always share your values. And I loved seeing Janna come into her own--imperfect, sometimes rash, but always, at heart, a lovable person. I wish there were more books like this.

I absolutely adored this debut. Janna's voice is strong and unique, and Ali masterfully balances a large cast of characters and several plotlines that weave together to form a coming-of-age story that's equal parts hilarious, heartbreaking, and empowering. The kind of book I absolutely see myself re-reading.

What a fantastic, compelling, important read. This book is a gem; one I couldn't put down. There is so much heart and voice in this story (seriously, aspiring writers, this is a lesson in voice.) S.K. Ali captures Janna and that entire kid/adult tipping point perfectly, and I felt like this spoke to me at multiple levels: as a Muslim who knows only too well the fear of bringing up problems in the community when it seems the rest of the world is against you, as the mother of a daughter, and as my former teen self. I loved how well it captured her community; the secondary characters were amazingly nuanced and you could easily see their own stories spinning as well - I don't think I've ever been able to so easily visualize a character as Saint Sarah!

Wholly immersive. Touching, honest, and not overdone in its message of finding one's personal identity, Ali is one of my new favorite authors.

Fantastic portrait of life. I couldn't put it down. This book should be on all required reading lists for schools.

Janna Yusuf has a secret: only she knows that there is a monster in her tightly knit Muslim community. The boy that everyone admires for memorizing the Qur'an has a dark side. But Janna can't tell anyone, because she knows no one will believe her. She tries to go about her life--rushing on non-Muslim Jeremy, studying for finals, and competing in the Islamic Quiz Bowl--but the monster keeps appearing and she knows that eventually she's going to have to confront him and her own reasons for keeping silent. Ali has written a wonderful story of Muslim girl power, with a heroine whose love for her community, her family, and her friends shines on the page. For readers who loved WRITTEN IN THE STARS by Aisha Saeed and 2018's A GIRL LIKE THAT by Tanaz Bhathena, or THE INEXPLICABLE LOGIC OF MY LIFE by Benjamin Alire Saenz.

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