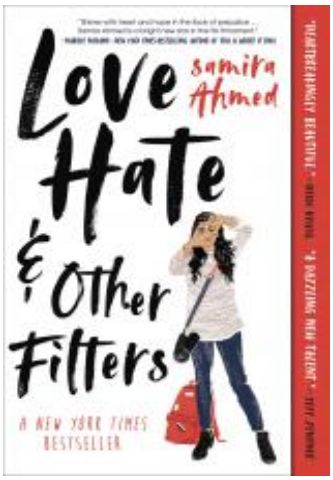
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Love, Hate and Other Filters

by Samira Ahmed



About the Book

In this unforgettable debut novel, an Indian-American Muslim teen copes with Islamophobia, cultural divides among peers and parents, and a reality she can neither explain nor escape.

American-born 17-year-old Maya Aziz is torn between worlds. There?s the proper one her parents expect for their good Indian daughter: attending a college close to their suburban Chicago home, and being paired off with an older Muslim boy her mom deems ?suitable.? And then there is the world of her dreams: going to film school and living in New York City --- and maybe (just maybe) pursuing a boy she?s known from afar since grade school, a boy who?s finally falling into her orbit at school.

There?s also the real world, beyond Maya?s control. In the aftermath of a horrific crime perpetrated hundreds of miles away, her life is turned upside down. The community she?s known since birth becomes unrecognizable; neighbors and classmates alike are consumed with fear, bigotry and hatred. Ultimately, Maya must find the strength within to determine where she truly belongs.

Discussion Guide

1. Maya begins her story with the phrase, "Destiny sucks." What do you think she means, and why does she start her story this way?

2. Maya tells Phil that she doesn't know how to be a good daughter while at the same time chasing after her own dreams. Why does she feel that these things are at odds? Does she change her mind over the course of the book?

3. Maya's story is told in the first-person POV, and the intercalary story is told from the third-person POV. Why do you think the author made that choice? How did that influence the way you related to the two narratives?

4. Why does Phil feel responsible for Brian's actions? What, if anything, could he have done differently that might have changed the outcome? What does this say about the broader theme of how events outside of our control affect us?

5. When we first meet Kareem, he is a possible love interest for Maya, but he transforms into something different. Why do you think Kareem still holds an important place in Maya's life?

6. Do you think that Maya is right to lie to her parents? Is there a difference between a protective lie and a self-serving lie?

7. Maya is a Muslim from an immigrant family. Even if you aren't from the same background as Maya, how could you relate to her struggles and dreams? What about her experiences felt familiar?

8. Consider the title LOVE, HATE AND OTHER FILTERS. How does Maya use filters in her daily life? How do the other characters use filters? What filters do you use?

9. Maya inhabits a variety of different worlds. How are they at odds with one another? What (if anything) brings them together? Should they be brought together?

10. What is the significance of the Whitman poem in the last intercalary chapter? What values/ideas in the poem are reflected in Maya's choices? Why would this poem have had meaning to the bomber?

Author Bio

Samira Ahmed was born in Bombay, India, and grew up in a small town in Illinois in a house that smelled like fried onions, cardamom and potpourri. A graduate of the University of Chicago, she taught high school English, helped create dozens of small high schools, and fought to secure billions of additional dollars to fairly fund public schools. She's lived in Vermont, Chicago, New York City and Kauai, where she spent a year searching for the perfect mango.

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