

East of Hounslow

Khurrum Rahman

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Star Teen Book Reviewer of the Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Javid Qasim, or Jay, is just your average weed dealer in west London. On Fridays, Jay likes to go to his local mosque and join his community for Friday prayers. But one day the mosque is vandalized, and tensions stir within the area. Most of the mosque-goers believe that they should just carry on, but a select few begin thinking that they need to show the world that treating Muslims this way is unfair. Jay, by association with this mosque, gets called to work for the MI5. The MI5 use Jay to try to keep tensions under control, and get information about potential threat. There's trouble brewing in Hounslow, and its up to Jay to stop it.

The book was fast paced and I managed to finish it all in one go. The way the chapters are only a few pages long really helps keep the audience's interest, as well as the way the author captures not only Jay's life, but Kingsley Parker's, the MI5 Agent. This way we know not only what is happening with our main character but also the overall approval of Jay's work. I also love how the novel is written in such a way that Jay is having a conversation with you. It feels as though he is telling you his story as you read along, and it really keeps your interest. Overall, the story was unique and incorporated the perspectives of today's society, creating a context for the novel, and explaining the point of view of our antagonists. This is why the problem wasn't so black and white to Jay, and Jay's internal conflict captivates the audience as we move along the novel.

I would recommend this to anybody looking for a new book. Anyone in eighth grade and above can handle this book. There are some scenes of violence and the book can get a bit political, however, some of the content is important to understand so that readers can get a grasp of problems in the world. This book would also make a great gift for anyone who likes contemporary novels or just wants a good book to read.

Recommended Titles:

I Am the Messenger — Markus Zusak

Little Brother — Cory Doctorow

There There: A Novel — Tommy Orange

Scythe – Neal Shusterman