

Love From A to Z

S. K. Ali

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Zayneb has just been suspended a week before spring break, and the reason she's been suspended is completely bogus in her eyes. The simple way to put it is that her teacher's an Islamaphobe, and she has to constantly deal with his hatred toward her religion and his twisted views of Islam that he just loves to share passionately with the class. In her week off before spring break her parents agree to let her go to Doha a week early to get a headstart on spring break. She's excited but tells herself to block out her anger to really enjoy herself this week, but knowing Zayneb, that will serve as quite a challenge.

Adam is a freshman in college, well actually he just dropped out and hasn't told anyone yet. He's focused on making things, trying to keep the memory of his mom alive for himself and his younger sister. When he returns to Doha to see his family for spring break he decides it's the perfect time to tell his father and sister about his decisions about school as well as the looming multiple sclerosis diagnosis he got back in November that he must face.

The one thing that Adam and Zayneb have in common is their shared observations of marvels and oddities in the world. They both have journals where they record the marvels in life (mostly Adam) and the oddities in life (mostly Zayneb). So when their paths cross in the airport on their way to Doha and Adam notices that she has a marvels and oddities journal like himself, he's thrilled. The real question is: was Adam and Zayneb meeting each other a marvel or an oddity?

This book is one of my favorite books in the whole entire world. I think what made this book amazing for me was reading about Muslim main characters who actually had all the qualities and characteristics of Muslim teens. In short, it was done right; there wasn't any misrepresentation that made me feel confused or would misrepresent Islam to non-muslims. Not only the great representation, but the romance was just so good. I've never read a romance novel with relatable Muslim main characters that was also done properly by following the "rules" that come with Islam; until this book. The whole book was so sweet and cute and the character dynamics were so fun to read. For instance, Adam mostly recorded marvels in his journal, so he was more of a glass half full type. Zayneb on the other hand recorded lots of oddities, she was angry and just wanted the world to be just. Reading their conversations and seeing how they changed the way they viewed things when listening to each other explain concepts was- for lack of better words- really cool.

One thing I've noticed in S.K. Ali's books, is that she always adds a more serious learning factor to her books. In her first book, *Saints and Misfits*, she talked about sexual assault and all the panic and misconceptions that comes with it. In *Love From A to Z* she focuses on Islamophobia, conversion, and chronic illness awareness (multiple sclerosis). It's a small part of the books but I absolutely love that she does this.

All in all, this book was just so heartwarming and made me feel unconditional happiness. The amount of times I smiled or giggled at the page was alarming. I would definitely buy this book, I've already re-read it once and annotated it and all that, and would 100% do it again. This book

would be best suited for readers ages 13 and up, it's a great book to read to be able to learn so much and feel completely satisfied at the end. If you love it as much as I did, the author released a free short story called *The Eid Gift* and there's a sequel called *Love from Mecca to Medina* that's coming out in October of 2022!

Recommended Titles

Saints and Misfits by S. K. Ali

Salaam, with love by Sara Sharaf Beg

Ayesha at Last by Uzma Jalaluddin