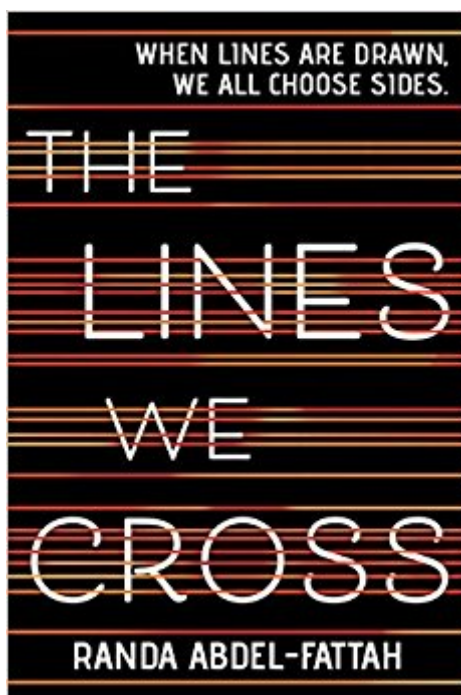


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# The Lines We Cross



## Synopsis

Michael likes to hang out with his friends and play with the latest graphic design software. His parents drag him to rallies held by their anti-immigrant group, which rails against the tide of refugees flooding the country. And it all makes sense to Michael. Until Mina, a beautiful girl from the other side of the protest lines, shows up at his school, and turns out to be funny, smart -- and a Muslim refugee from Afghanistan. Suddenly, his parents' politics seem much more complicated. Mina has had a long and dangerous journey fleeing her besieged home in Afghanistan, and now faces a frigid reception at her new prep school, where she is on scholarship. As tensions rise, lines are drawn. Michael has to decide where he stands. Mina has to protect herself and her family. Both have to choose what they want their world to look like.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 690 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 400 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1.4 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #32,296 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Emigration & Immigration #38 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism #56 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Praise for *The Lines We Cross*:\* "[T]his book could not be more necessary. Deserving of wide readership and discussion." -- Booklist, starred review\* "A meditation on a timely subject that never forgets to put its characters and their stories first." -- Kirkus Reviews, starred review"Abdel-Fattah (Where the Streets Had a Name) delivers an engaging romance within a compelling exploration of the sharply opposing beliefs that tear people apart, and how those beliefs can be transformed

through human relationships." -- Publishers Weekly"Abdel-Fattah . . . is a master at conveying themes of tolerance, working in humor, and weaving multiple emotionally complex points of view. A timely and compassionate portrait of the devastating losses of refugees, political conflicts within a family and a nation, and the astounding capacity of young people to identify hate and yet act with empathy and love. A must-purchase for all collections." -- School Library Journal"A Romeo and Juliet story for our times . . . Abdel-Fattah offers young readers immeasurable perspective into a present-day crisis." -- BookPage"Timely, relevant and quite thought-provoking." -- RT Book Reviews"An unflinching look at refugees, immigration, religion and Islamophobia . . . This timely book explores the emotionally and politically charged atmosphere behind immigration . . . putting personal stories to issues many only read about in the news." -- BustlePraise for *Where the Streets Had a Name*:\*"This novel is an important addition to a very small body of existing books that tell the Palestinian story for young people, and an intensely realistic setting brings that story to life. It is full of humor, adventure, and family love, but doesn't try to hide the heartbreaking and often bitter reality of life under Occupation. Abdel-Fattah manages to walk the line of truth-telling and sensitivity." -- School Library Journal, starred review"Hayaat's immediate, wry, and irreverent narrative intensifies the story of anguished struggle and Palestinian politics . . . The suspense builds . . . to heartbreaking revelations." -- Booklist"A refreshing and hopeful teen perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian dilemma." -- Kirkus Reviews"Abdel-Fattah (*Does My Head Look Big in This?*) crafts a classic quest . . . The heroine's courage, warmth, and humor despite mounting challenges will win over readers." -- Publishers WeeklyPraise for *Ten Things I Hate About Me*:\*"Written with insight, humor and sensitivity, Abdel-Fattah introduces a winning Muslim-Australian heroine who discovers that 'honesty is liberating.'" -- Kirkus Reviews"The teen's present-tense narrative is as hilarious as the narrator's in Abdel-Fattah's first book and is just as honest about the shocking prejudice against Muslims. Teens will love the free-flowing, funny dialogue, even as they recognize their own ways of covering up who they are." -- Booklist"The author brings a welcome sense of humor to Jamilah's insights about her culture, and she is equally adept at more delicate scenes. . . . For all the defining details, Jamilah is a character teens will readily relate to." -- Publishers Weekly"Beautifully written with well-developed characters, this novel raises very relevant questions about racism and identity that teens of any culture or religion will relate to." -- Romantic Times"The book will . . . appeal to teens who like stories about outsiders finding their place in the world." -- School Library JournalPraise for *Does My Head Look Big In This?*:\*"This breakthrough debut novel . . . [is a] funny, touching contemporary narrative [that] will grab teens everywhere." -- Booklist, starred review\*"Amal... emerges a bright, articulate heroine true to herself and her faith.

Abdel-Fattah's fine first novel offers a world of insight." -- Kirkus Reviews, starred review"Refreshing . . . a valuable book." -- New York Times Book Review"[A] witty, sensitive debut." -- People Magazine"With an engaging narrator at the helm, Abdel-Fattah's debut novel should open the eyes of many a reader . . . Using a winning mix of humor and sensitivity, Abdel-Fattah ably demonstrates that her heroine is, at heart, a teen like any other. This debut should speak to anyone who has felt like an outsider for any reason." -- Publishers Weekly

Randa Abdel-Fattah is an award-winning author, former attorney, and an expert on Islamophobia in Australia. She is the author of the critically acclaimed novels *Does My Head Look Big In This?* and *Ten Things I Hate About Me*, as well as the middle-grade novel *Where the Streets Had a Name*. Ms. Abdel-Fattah lives in Sydney, Australia, with her husband and their children.

This book juxtaposes two teens from vastly different backgrounds and through their interactions and relationship, offers insightful commentary on racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. While Mina, who is Afghan and Muslim, struggles to find her place in a new environment where she is in the minority, Michael starts to unpack his privilege and internalized biases that he's acquired growing up in a very white environment with a parent who preaches anti-immigration rhetoric. It can be tough to write about race and privilege from the perspective of a white person in a way that doesn't objectify people of color, but Randa Abdel-Fattah pulls it off well and manages to develop Michael's character without reducing Mina to a lesson for him to learn from.

My tongue is tripping over the terrifically timely topics touched in *The Lines We Cross*. Universally relevant, remarkably well written; my personal recommendation for required reading resonates with me in an invigorating, inspirational way. Generally, offspring look up to their parents, seeing them as large-and-in-charge with all the answers. Beyond that, there is an inherent knowledge: parents are good people. (My reminder to myself when first meeting Michael) an amiable, ill-informed adolescent supporting his parents' new political party, Aussie Values. And, it's not as if his parents oppose Australia accepting refugees, after all. Provided the emigrants are truly fleeing persecution (as opposed to those pesky economic refugees) and they arrive via the magical queue, of course. Then, Michael meets Mina. Yes, it is a boy-meets-girl story; but in a boy-meets-radioactive-spider kind of way. Mina and her mother had come to Auburn, Australia from Afghanistan ten years ago. Forced to flee Taliban occupation among horrific loss, the two persist and painstakingly, rebuild their life. A scholarship allowing Mina to attend eleventh grade

at one of Australia's top schools, affects the entire small family. They choose to move their residence, along with the family restaurant to Melbourne. Starting a new school is rarely easy. Going from a kaleidoscope of cultures and ethnicities, to being a cultural diversity mascot, could be unbearable. For someone who has been smuggled out of a war zone, lived in a refugee camp, traveled on a leaky boat and spent months locked in detention, it was merely infuriating. Not wanting the role of refugee myth-buster, but being too smart and courageous to keep quiet, Mina may seem too mature, thoughtful, compassionate and well-spoken to be a typical teen, but because I have the privilege of actually spending time with high school seniors, I can say that this is a spot-on representation. Ms. Abdel-Fattah has brilliantly broken-down misconceptions without beating down people to present one of the most important books I have ever read. This review was written for Buried Under Books by jv poore.

(Note: Review is for the Australian edition, 'When Michael Met Mina'.) It's been such a long time since I have read a book that possessed such electrifying energy. I don't find it difficult to put a book down, but with When Michael Met Mina, I genuinely struggled. Needless to say, I was addicted. When Michael Met Mina is a powerful combination of political discourse and lived experiences, contributing to the conversations and debates surrounding the ongoing global refugee crisis. Whilst such conversations can be cold, disconnected, and forgetful of the suffering that refugees face, When Michael Met Mina is full of compassion and humanity. The story remembers, acknowledges, and humanizes the lives and real experiences of refugees. In this way, When Michael Met Mina has its heart and roots in the right place. The topics and themes within When Michael Met Mina are predominantly driven by its fantastic cast of complex characters. Michael's character development was particularly enjoyable, especially his internal conflict with political ideas and perspectives as he begins to consider another side to the coin. I've met people like Michael: people who have unquestioningly accepted their parents' beliefs and ideologies and parrot them to others, thinking that the opinions are their own. Michael is an example of an individual whose privilege has made him ignorant, but, with awareness and education, changes. Abdel-Fattah's portrayal of him, as an individual who is genuinely trying to grapple between two colliding worlds, was realistic and compassionate and I couldn't help but to empathize with him. It was refreshing to see a multifaceted portrayal of someone who was ignorant not because of malice, but due to lack of awareness. The book further challenges you by presenting two individuals, founders of Aussie Values, who are morally grey.

characters. They are characters who are causing hurt, speaking out of ignorance and fear, and spinning the refugee debate into not one of compassion but economics, but they weren't portrayed as inherently evil, antagonistic, or malevolent individuals. Indeed, a point the book raises is that sometimes people who do bad things can also be kind too; people are complicated and are held together by contradictory beliefs, and it's these people who we cannot diminish into one singular trait that are the most difficult to approach and understand. It's a fine line, but Abdel-Fattah explores and unravels this excellently.

This book doesn't shy away from the numerous ways racism manifests and affects others, yet it still resonates with hope. If we keep talking, if we keep trying to understand each other, then there can be change. I think this book is wonderful and can't wait to read more of Abdel-Fattah's work.

This was my first summer read, and I'm so grateful it was! The story has an element of modern day Romeo and Juliet but so much more. The storytelling is so well crafted that you ride the wave of emotions right alongside with the characters. This will be a definite add to my diverse book classroom library collection for next year to allow understanding of the struggle a Muslim refugee faces. And not only did the book help me to understand better, it also encouraged me to question my own beliefs-a sign of a quality narrative.

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