

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT SAMIRA AHMED



Samira Ahmed is a *New York Times* bestselling author of young adult fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Ahmed was born in Mumbai, India, but grew up in Batavia, IL, later attending the University of Chicago. She began publishing her poetry and short stories in 2016. In 2021, she started writing for Marvel Comics on their limited *Ms. Marvel* series. Her books have repeatedly made it on the School Library Journal's Best Books of the Year lists and have won multiple awards from The Children's Book Council. Ahmed is best known for her young adult novels *Love, Hate & Other Filters* (2018) and *Internment* (2019). Both works concern islamophobia and fearmongering, particularly within the political climate of the United States.



## QUESTIONS: *INTERMENT* (2019)

- Layla's town actively participates in book burning. What does *Internment's* worldbuilding suggest about how fascist regimes take over?
- Cpl. Jake Reynolds is conflicted with himself, working in an internment camp that is against everything he believes in. How are soldiers and veterans dehumanized through executive actions and war propaganda?
- Throughout the book, Layla disagrees with her parents on how to respond to the persecution they face. Why do you think these disagreements are so common between generations? What do we know about Layla's parents that might explain their reaction?
- When Layla begins organizing with her new friends in the camp, she is already familiar with historical instances of resistance from minority groups, which inform her own methods. How is the importance of education emphasized in the novel through its characters?

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

- The novel draws heavily from the history of Japanese internment camps during WWII. Do you think the historical references used in the novel were well-implemented? How has this history continued to affect US politics today?
- Think of your favorite dystopian novel. How does the setting and time period of that novel compare to the very contemporary one used in *Internment*? How do different settings in fiction allow for different social critiques?
- Consider other media that was created in response to the 2016 election and its aftermath. How do these works compare to *Internment* in their themes, tone, and impact? How have they aged in hindsight, and why do you think they resonate differently with audiences today?
- Compare and contrast Ahmed's other books such as *Love, Hate & Other Filters*. How does she explore similar themes across different stories?

## LITERATURE AS PRAXIS

- When Layla first manages to see David after he sneaks into the camp, they have a major disagreement about Layla's family cooperating with the government, causing a rift in their relationship. How can those with privilege do better at supporting people who are in dangerous situations?
- Because David is Jewish, he has a personal connection to the concentration camps of WWII. Discuss how his identity as a Jewish person intersects with Layla's own Muslim identity. How can we be more aware of the effects of intersectionality in our own lives?
- Throughout the novel, social media platforms are used as tools of resistance. Discuss the benefits and pitfalls of social media in the realm of political activism. What can the contemporary activist do to best utilize the tools at their disposal?

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- [Muslim Advocates](#)
- [Muslim Public Affairs Council](#)
- [Common Defense](#)
- [Amnesty International](#)
- [ACLU](#)
- [Malcolm X Foundation](#)

## ADDITIONAL READINGS

- Samira Ahmed, *Love, Hate & Other Filters* (2018)
- Hanif Abdurraqib, *They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us* (2017)
- Kevin Nguyen, *My Documents* (2025)
- John Okada, *No-No Boy* (1957)
- Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar* (1973)