



2018

Pashmina

Emily Loveless

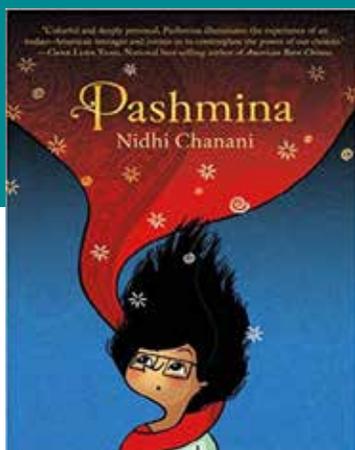
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Book Review

Pashmina

Author

Nidhi Chanani

Illustrator

Reviewer

Emily Loveless

Rating

Dependable

Level

Intermediate, Young
Adult

Pages

176

Year

2017

Publisher

First Second

ISBN

9781626720879

Priyanka Das doesn't know who her father is, and her mother won't talk about him or why she left India and her whole family behind before Pri was born. But Pri needs answers if she's ever going to know who she really is. When Pri finds a magical pashmina, she is transported to an India more vibrant than she ever dreamed, even with that shadow lurking around. Out of the blue, Pri's aunt invites her to stay for a week, and suddenly everything seems to be coming together, but the India Pri arrives in is more complicated than her visions showed. As she sees the layers in her cultural heritage, Pri learns her mother left India because her fiancé broke of their engagement after she became pregnant. In searching for family, Pri has discovered a culture of complicated, and not always pretty, history and expectations. She doesn't find the father she imagined, but maybe she can be another link in the chain encouraging change.

Pashmina tackles big topics like family, navigating two cultural worlds, and gender issues with an engaging visual medium. The illustrations are bold, and the juxtaposition between black and white and colored pages is a clever means of delineating Pri's experiences and the magical visions channeled through the pashmina. Pri's adolescent uncertainty is heightened by the complete absence of information about her family and where she and her mother came from. Her journey to India serves to ground and clarify her identity, but this goal ends up getting a bit overshadowed as the story shifts focus to the discrimination and oppression of women in India, historically through present day—which seems to be the ultimate mission of the pashmina. Chanani does broach an important topic, and Pashmina is an accessible means of starting the conversation with readers. However, the execution leaves the work itself feeling a bit disjointed by the end where we are left to wonder if Pri's journey will actually have a larger impact on her.