



2018

The Lines We Cross

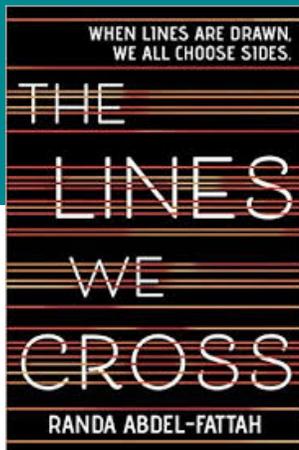
Meagan Andrus

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Book Review

The Lines We Cross

Author

Randa Abdel-Fattah

Illustrator

Reviewer

Meagan Andrus

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Young Adult

Pages

389

Year

2016

Publisher

Scholastic Press

ISBN

9781939629395

Mina is an immigrant from Afghanistan who fled the rule of the Taliban when she was very young. Now settled in Sydney, Australia, Mina moves to a new prep school. There, she meets Michael, whose family has started a grassroots organization opposing what they call the Islamification of Australia and illegal immigration. Michael's always just gone along with what his family tells him, but finds that his unexplainable attraction to Mina and her beliefs complicates things. Mina and Michael find themselves falling for each other, while also struggling to understand their own beliefs and their place in a gray world, void of the convenient black-and-white of innocence and naivete. Though at times it's difficult, they discover that they can find strength in their relationship and also learn from each other about what it means to be a good person in a conflicted and messy society.

This book deals with many complicated issues in a very realistic and meaningful way. Though the political opinions of Michael's parents are a bit more extreme, the author still portrays them as good people who want the best for their family—good people who might not look at every side in the issue. Likewise, Mina is at first angry at others for not understanding her predicament. She, too, is still a good person and learns to be more understanding and patient with people who don't share her experiences or expectations. Though this book shies away from making definite political statements, it portrays many sides to one situation, with people acting in negative and positive ways on all sides. This book leaves readers with the author's intended take-away: everyone on this Earth feels pain, everyone belongs, and differences do not and should not divide us. This is a powerful book that readers will find themselves returning to year after year, no matter the political situation of the time. Its themes transcend temporary politics and root themselves in universal foundations.

*Contains severe language, mild sexual content, and mild violence.