



2018

# Amal Unbound

Emma Patton

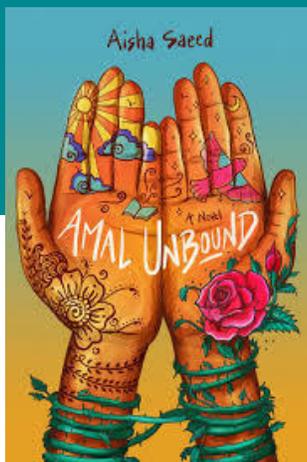
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### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Patton, Emma (2018) "Amal Unbound," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 39 : Iss. 9 , Article 10.  
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## Book Review

# Amal Unbound

### Author

Aisha Saeed

### Illustrator

### Reviewer

Emma Patton

### Rating

Significant Shortcom-

### Level

Intermediate

### Pages

226

### Year

2018

### Publisher

Nancy Paulsen Books

### ISBN

9780399544682

School is Amal's whole world. Pakistani girls are not guaranteed an education, but Amal is lucky enough to live near a school, and she loves it so much that she wants to be a teacher. But when Amal makes the mistake of insulting a powerful man, it seems that all her dreams will slip away. Suddenly, she goes from being free to learn all that her heart desires to being a servant in the Khan family's house for as long as they see fit. Amal finds small bits of joy in her new life, but she often feels hopeless. She considers trying to negotiate her situation, but speaking out of turn is what caused this mess in the first place, and she doesn't want to make it worse. But she knows that, at her core, she is a girl who does not stay silent about the things that matter. It is this knowledge that helps her to dream that there might be something for her to do to help her situation.

Amal Unbound begins very well, presenting what seems like an accurate picture of a Pakistani girl's life, with the writing suited to an intermediate-aged audience. However, as the story continues and Amal becomes a servant in the household of a notoriously cruel man, the story becomes less realistic. This is likely done in order to keep the book appropriate for the intended audience, but some of the integrity of the story is sacrificed as a result. Amal is treated very well at the house, never seeming to lack anything. Though she misses her family, she has positive relationships, opportunities to read and teach, plenty of delicious food, and a benevolent mother figure who cares about her. It becomes difficult to understand why Amal feels trapped and miserable when her life seems so pleasant. Also, the resolution to Amal's story happens too easily, too quickly, and with too few repercussions. Rather than feeling scared for Amal, the reader is more likely to see her experience as a grand adventure that wasn't so difficult to escape.