



2019

Not the Girls You're Looking For

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Bishop, Amanda (2019) "Not the Girls You're Looking For," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 40: Iss. 10, Article 28.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol40/iss10/28>

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Book Review

Not the Girls You're Looking For

Author

Aminah Mae Safi

Reviewer

Amanda Bishop

Rating

Significant Shortcomings

Level

Young Adult

Pages

336

Year

2018

ISBN

9781250151810

Publisher

Feiwel & Friends

Leila, or Lulu as she prefers to be called, doesn't always fit in. She's a rebellious Muslim girl growing up in Houston, Texas. As she navigates the treacherous waters of high school, Lulu must balance her defiant behavior with the expectations of her family and friends. During Ramadan, after she gets in a fight with a family friend, she must make amends, all the while still negotiating her friendships and the budding relationship with the new boy at school.

Not the Girls You're Looking For is a stereotypical teenage coming-of-age tale. Lulu's obnoxious behavior, her petty tactics to resolve conflicts, and her highly conflicted interactions with her friends prevent her from being a relatable character. It is unclear what the thematic intent of this novel is, since the friendships are fraught with issues and Lulu's family relationships are complicated but never fully fleshed out. While there is a range of diverse characters, among them Muslim, lesbian, and Latina, this novel fails to explore the complexities of these topics in a meaningful way. Additionally, the writing is tedious and can be difficult to follow. Overall, this is not a highly compelling read, but it may have something to offer readers looking for representations of diversity.

*Contains severe language and severe sexual content.