

Rania Hussein Amin

Author Nominee
Hans Christian Andersen Award 2025



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Biography

Rania Hussein Amin was born in Cairo in 1965.

She has studied in German schools in Cairo, Lagos and Bonn, and has received a BA in psychology from the American university in Cairo. She then started working in many different fields, such as teaching children with special needs, journalism, translation and others. At the age of 34, in 1999, she finally found her passion in children's books and has been writing for children ever since.

Her first work was a series of picturebooks called "Farhana" for ages 3-7 (written and illustrated by her) and she has received many awards for it. In the course of her 25 years of working in that field, she has produced more than 50 titles and has written for almost all age-groups, starting from 3 to 16.

Her themes are fictional aiming primarily at showing the children the beautiful side of our lives, encouraging empathy, altruism, understanding others, love for animals and for nature in general, kindness, self enhancement and self confidence, hard work and pro-active behavior.

Her primary aim is writing stories that are very close to children's hearts and to which they can easily relate.

In addition to writing, she has been working for over 5 years as a school-counselor for all age groups from KG to Highschool. This career helped her further in understanding the children of this generation and what their problems and dreams are. She was then inspired to write for young adults, and now she has ten novels published for that age-group. Three of which ("Screams behind Doors" and "Queen Sohila" and "It's not Allowed to Cry") won the Itisalal, the Arab Forum and the EBBY best book award in 2016, 2021. and 2024. Two others were short-listed in the Itisalal competition 2017 and the Arab Forum 2022.

Rania is currently working on her third graphic novel (for young adults, writing and illustrating it) but intends to continue writing for all age-groups.

She is currently living in Cairo with her daughter and two dogs.





Contribution to Literature for the Young

A Fresh New Character

- In 1999, when Rania wrote and illustrated her first series, Farhana, she was focused on creating a character children would love and relate to, who would be different from the typical characters that were created back then, characters with flawless idealistic personalities. Farhana's character, was an active, free tomboy of a girl who made lots of mistakes, but was kind, considerate and lovable. Rania did not expect the great success of this series and the many prizes it won, but that was definitely a push towards creating more and more children's books.

The following are reviews on "Farhana" on Goodreads:

https://www.goodreads.com/search?q=%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A9&ref=nav_sb_noss_l_6



1- The "Farhana" series is different and takes you to another world.
 2- Very entertaining for little kids.
 3- This entire collection of stories will remain my favorite. It has given me happiness and drew a smile on my face. I learned my first letters by reading them. I used to read it letter by letter as a reading training. My mother was a librarian and I used to read a book from the series every day. I love it and I love Farhana's disheveled hair. It is very useful for children from the age of 4 to 6. It teaches us healthy family life and many things that, despite their simplicity, the child needs them greatly at the beginning of his life.

Honesty and Depth

As a writer of realistic fiction, and as a psychology graduate interested in human behavior, Rania delves into the depths of her characters and likes to write about complex emotions (especially for the older ages) and about different and unique personality types, that both adults and children enjoy. For example, in her novel "Heavy Arm on my Shoulder" she wrote about how a manipulative girl tried to destroy the life of her friend, and thus raises awareness on how to deal with different types of people.

- Very creative in describing the feelings and actions of Samah and Samiha. I felt it was happening for real.
- I loved this novel. It's beautiful and honest! It has conveyed the feelings and emotions of adolescence brilliantly! It embodied the jealousy of friends, and the possessive love that girls feel towards their friends. I think most girls have experienced this feeling and understand its meaning.
 A good novel, and it ends in one session because of the element of speed and attraction in it.
- Shocking. Possessiveness is truly harmful and ugly...



- A beautiful and light novel among the heavy books. The writing is well-crafted and the story is suitable for teenagers.
- The novel contains very valuable lessons, even for a twenty-five year old like me. It's about friendship in adolescence and the confusion and recklessness that often occurs at that innocent age devoid of wisdom and intelligence. It is written in an orderly manner, well-woven, and the events and characters are harmonious. I loved it and wished I had read it at a younger age, because it truly affected me.

And about the 2 Young Adult novels ("Outside the Circle" and "Behind the Mask"), readers wrote the following reviews on Goodread:

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/42653568#CommunityReviews>



1- I hope that more titles will be published in this series that discusses many of the problems facing teenagers. I find that the author is uniquely capable of writing about them.

2- Thank God, that before I died, I read an Egyptian novel for young adults that breaks taboos and, does not offer direct advice!! Both?!?! I swear to God I can't believe it!! Bravo, bravo for the first step that I hope will take us to another level in the world of children's and young adult literature.

3- The story is very nice and very attractive.. I haven't read anything for a long time that I wanted to finish in one sitting. I am older than the target audience of this novel but I can still relate to it. It's very nice and I'm excited to show it to my children when they reach this age.

4- It's not the genre that I usually read, but I still liked it a lot, and I read it more than once.

5- Really enjoyed reading it as a 13 year old girl, so many relatable events for a girl my age and I would recommend it a lot to teens. It's my favourite book till now with no exaggeration and I didn't ever enjoy reading a book as much as I enjoyed reading this one and i'd really want to thank "Rania" for writing this book..

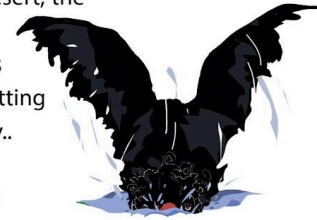
6- How realistic! How real!..The style is simple, not complicated, but what really caught my attention is that it was able to really reach our feelings...How?!!

7- It's really good. It took me back to school time. The only thing that bothered me was that it ended.

8- The problem with this book is that it shows that the friendship between a boy and a girl is ok, while it's not ok in our Arab, Muslim culture. But there are other values that are good in the story, like the idea of not succumbing to peer pressure and keeping our own personality.

Showing the Beauty of Nature

Loving to spend time in nature herself, Rania wrote two books aiming at encouraging children to explore their country and find beauty in the nature of the desert, the sea and the farm. She took them to places not widely visited by city children. The book "Siwa, a tiny little Love Story" (for ages 3-7) shows the beauty of the desert, the oasis and the simple life in Siwa. Whereas the book "Farhana in Nature" (a book for the same age-group) shows the beauty of our farms, river Nile, seas and deserts. It portrays healthy lifestyles for the children and shows how getting to know new places and different people can enrich their lives tremendously..



Raising Awareness regarding our Role towards the Environment

Rania has also written 5 books about the necessity of taking care of our environment. One of them is "Where did the River Nile Go?" in which the Nile decides to migrate after feeling offended by all the people polluting its water in different ways. The story gives the children the important message in a light, entertaining manner. Moreover, Rania has participated in the "Goethe Institute" project "Green Stories" with three poems about the environment. The poems were read by professional storytellers. They are:

- The Fish Object (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRYrRvJjewc>)
- What Remains of Them (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYolcCvjrow>)
- Silence is the Sign of Satisfaction (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7Ka6rsqcYc>)



Showing the Value and Beauty of Animals

Rania's love for animals also shows in 6 of her books where she introduces the detailed lives of different animals to the young readers, showing them how animals are just as valuable as people, having the same feelings, and are more intelligent than we think they are. She is hoping to raise awareness about people's duty to take care and protect all living creatures, no matter how small they are.

She has written about the inhumanity of zoos and of old perceptions of certain animals, like crows or stray dogs, that are hated or shunned for illogical reasons.

These books are:

- Farhana and a Zoo without Animals
- He who lacks Love, Gives it
- Mankoosh
- Are you Happy?
- Why this particular Dog?
- No, He won't Migrate



Helping the Child who feels unloved

Six of Rania's books, for ages 3 to 16, aim at relieving or decreasing the pain of a child with a misfortune. All books help the misfortunate child find alternative ways to deal with his problems. as well as show others the right ways of dealing with those children without being hurtful:

1- In "Farhana and a Special Friend" Farhana has to find ways to enjoy playing with an autistic child who is a guest in her house. *(This book obtained a prize from the Arab Thought Foundation and a prize from the Anna Lindh Foundation)*

2- In "Back Straight, Head up and say I'm beautiful" a gorgeous flower who loses her self-confidence after being bullied by weeds. learns to gain her confidence back. in addition to winning the weeds as friends.

3- In "He who lacks love, Gives it" a boy, an old woman and a dog who have been forced to live on the street, learn to help each other survive and be happy, instead of waiting for other people's help. *(This book reached the short list in Itisalat competition).*

4- In "One Miserable Bully", kids learn that bullies usually have more personal problems than they do, and the story guides them to find ways to stand up for themselves, as well as help bullies find alternative behavior that will make them happier.

5- "In Queen Sohila" a girl who has been forced by her mother to succeed in a beauty pageant, and a boy who is pressured into getting good grades help each other find a way to stand up for themselves without hurting their parents *(This book obtained the prize for the best book for young adults in the Arab Forum Competition).*

6- In "The Weightlifter" the teenager who becomes a champion weightlifter but as a result loses her freedom and her friends, finds a way to gain her life back. while keeping her passion for weightlifting.

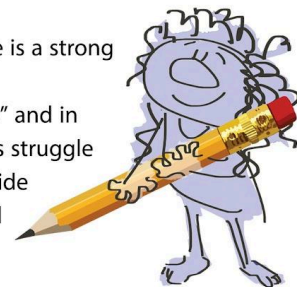
Strengthening Family Bonds

Another value Rania is trying to instill in children and teens is the importance of creating a happy life at home by helping family members understand each other in order to strengthen their bond. Apart from the book she has written for parents on how to raise happy and successful children, for children she wrote several books helping them understand their parents as well as accepting their less than ideal families and finding ways to deal with their problems at home.

1- "A little, verybig family" (for ages 3 to 5) is saying that no matter what type of family you have, you could always have a happy and successful life.

2- In the "Farhana" series. Farhana is a role model for children, and she is a strong and free spirit, but always loving and kind to her parents and little brother.

3- In the Young Adult Novel "Outside the circle" and "Behind the Mask" and in the book "Screams behind Doors" (for ages 8 to 12). children and teenagers struggle with their parents as they typically do, but the book also shows the other side and the reader gets to understand and sympathize with the parents as well as the child. *(Screams behind Doors has won the Itisalat prize)*



Subtle Messages:

While trying to instill values like love, empathy, altruism, etc in the young reader, Rania always makes sure to address those issues very subtly and in a way children would accept easily and relate to and be influenced by. These values are prevalent in almost all of her books.

Tackling Difficult Topics:

Rania has written about controversial issues that were considered taboo in her society or difficult to write about. But she saw that it was necessary for children to read about those issues and benefit from the books' messages:

- 1- "It's not Okay to Cry" (a graphic story for young adults) discusses the differences in raising boys and girls in our culture, which results in unhealthy relationships between the two.
- 2- "Outside the Circle", "Behind the Mask" and "A Heavy Arm on my Shoulder" (novels for young adults) discuss relationships between boys and girls, showing how healthy relationships look like and where the warning signs are. This was the first time this issue was ever addressed in Egyptian books for young adults, and the books were welcomed by this age groups and many of their parents, while a few others rejected them.
- 3- "The Angry Boy" (a novel for 9 to 14 year olds) talks about divorce and how the boy has learnt to get over his anger and hatred for everything around him. Divorce was also an issue that not many Egyptian children's book writers have written about.

Finding New Ways to Reach the Young:

Rania is always trying to find new ideas to get closer to what children of this generation are looking for in a book. She is preoccupied with the fact that only a very limited number of children read nowadays, and so she is trying to be flexible and meet them half-way:

- 1- She was the first one to write for young adults in spoken Arabic, and the two books were a big success.
The reason the publishers did not welcome the idea of publishing more of those books is that this project was fought by many people, because writing in spoken Arabic was always considered a threat to our language and value of literature.
- 2- When this project failed, she decided to try out graphic novels and see how they will be received by both children and young adults. This project is still being tested.
- 3- She has also stepped out of her comfort zone, and wrote a humorous book for ages 4 to 6 ("In the Wolf's stomach sits Little Red Riding Hood" to fill the gap in the Egyptian market, since humorous children's books in Egypt can be counted on one hand only.

Building Bridges:

Rania has written about the necessity of bridging between the different social classes and trying to understand and get along with people who are either higher or lower socially, since we all have many more similarities than differences.

- 1 - In "The Adjacent Seat" (a novel for young adults), two girls from completely different social classes find themselves sitting beside each other in a public bus and they both hate it. Little by little they open up, get into conversation, talk about their problems and reasons for taking this bus, help each other out and become friends.
- 2- In "Screams behind Doors" (a story for 8-12 year olds) the janitor's daughter and a girl living in the building are best friends and help solve mysteries in the building they live in.

Translations:

Rania has translated 15 books for young children and young adults from the German and the English language to Arabic.

**Comics:**

In the beginning of her career, Rania also wrote and illustrated comics for Tahwila, Katr el Nada and Rowayat magazines. She is now working on her first written and illustrated graphic novel.



Activities with Children in Egypt and Abroad:

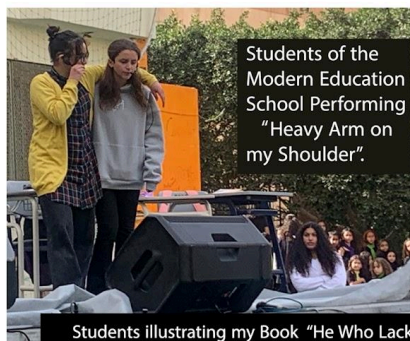
Rania has visited many schools, libraries, bookstores and cultural centers where she has done story-telling sessions, discussions of her books and talks about her experience as a writer. She has also organized different workshops and competitions and fun games around the topics of her books.

She has been invited in Amman and Beirut to do storytelling in different schools, libraries, bookstores and orphanages..

In 2007, she travelled to Stockholm where she participated in the "Anna Lindt" Program for the Development of Children Literature and Reading.

Two of her books ("He who lacks Love, gives it" and "Heavy Arm on my Shoulder") were chosen by students in two schools to turn into plays and played them in school events.

- The same two books are used in some schools as outside the curriculum readings..



Students of the Modern Education School Performing "Heavy Arm on my Shoulder".



Students illustrating my Book "He Who Lacks Love, Gives it"



Writing Workshops for Adults:

Rania has also contributed to the Children's literature in Egypt by giving workshops for adults who wish to write for this age and enhance their skills. More than ten writers who are well established and have published several books now were participants in her workshops.

Workshops for Parents about the Importance of Books:

She has given session to adults on the importance of reading with their child and on how to do so.



الطفل يريد أن يرى نفسه في قصة تشبّهه دون مباشرة أكبر مشاكل الأهالي أنهم يريدون ابنهم الأفضل في كل شيء

ولمّا فإن الكتاب لا يتعامل مع فئة صغيرة محددة لكنه يأتي منذ لحظة الميلاد وحتى سن المراهقة فيما يتعلق ببعض سمات المراهقة والشباب وسعيد، وكما تقول رانية، هذا الكتاب هو توليفة خاصة من سيرتي الذاتية منذ الطفولة وحتى الجامعة ومن خلال عملي وخبرتي كإخصائية نفسية ومن خلال علاقتي بوالتي. الكتاب هو ما ذكرته رانية (الأم) من أكثر ما تلت بطري في هذا علاقتها بوالتي أمينة قليلة، ثم أكن يوما أخيل أن تعبري عما بداخلي من حب وأحباب وفخر تجاه ابنتي سوف يكون له هذا الكثير الإيجابي الهوي ليحول الصراخ والغضب فجاء إلى إعادة روابط. كانت تصطب تدريجيا مع دخولها في سن

والأجانب عن هذا السؤال في مشغولون هذا الكتاب الذي يشير ويثير المسيل إلى كيفية تربية طفل وأنسان صحيح وسعيد. وهنا كان لابد أن أسأل رانية .. هل نحن الكبار مشيرين صبح لتكون قادرين على تربية صغارنا؟

تجيب رانية .. كانا عندما مشاكل بنسب مختلفة، وربما لم يكن علم نفس الطفل له نصيب في الفهم عندما تربيها وكثيرا، ولكن هذه الأيام .. أوضحت الحياة وإزادت متطلباتي، وأصبح الأبناء والأمهات يتناصرون على فكرة أن يكون ابني هو الأفضل، في المدرسة وفي الرياضة، أي أنهم يستخدمون أولادهم لتحقيق إنجاز يصعبهم يتباهون بنجاحهم فيما يعتقدون أنه التبرية، أو معيار النجاح في التبرية، ومتأسين لقناع أن الطفل الذي يتنا في حياته بهذه الطريقة يفقد الكثير من الصحة ومن الثقة بالنفس والتجيم قدراته.



أمن نوزي - ريشة، عصام طه

اعتقد أن المجتمعات التي لا تعي هذه الحقيقة أو على الأقل تتفق على مفهومها، هي بلا شك مجتمعات تعاني مأساة إنسانية كبيرة، مأساة تربية أجيال وبني آدميين مضطربين، سلوكيا وأخلاقيا وقيميا ونفسيا وتربويا.

لحج علاقة مع ابنتك أو شخصية سوية سعيدة بما يشبه مستقلة، مستقلة، التعبير عن نفسها والثقة ما يدور حولها، عضوية من المحيطين بها فادرة حذر، راضية بحقوقها لا، فادرة على أن تحب سامح

بإتالة الصعبة والمتأثرة بماذا مؤامرات خاصة يستمرها، وهذا ما علمته من نفس الطفل وكأنيما فطال ورسمه الكوميكس حركة رانية حسين أمين كل ما تشكك من مهارت م عن أهل طفل سعيد

مور لآباء والأمهات عن ليمية للطفل، والكثير هذا اسم الكتاب الذي يرد أحد أهم المراجع ن أم وأب يريدان تربية جيدة صحية متوازنة

الطريق الذي كتبه مدته القليلة البعيدة أمين وهي الشخصنة كوكبة الطفل وكأنيما فكرة التي حاولت أن ينهلها لسطم التقليدية

والكثير من الحب (تقول رانية، وجع نحو الآخر.. داخل وخارج من مكتسب غير فادرة على حزنه وحالته وقلوب الأسم.. وأكثله مع الأباء والأمهات فتكون معظم الإجابات «واطف.. أنا بأديهم كل وقتي.. متى عارضة أمنل إليه أكثر من كده».

• إنسان سعيد

والأجانب عن هذا السؤال في مشغولون هذا الكتاب الذي يشير ويثير المسيل إلى كيفية تربية طفل وأنسان صحيح وسعيد. وهنا كان لابد أن أسأل رانية .. هل نحن الكبار مشيرين صبح لتكون قادرين على تربية صغارنا؟

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«رانية حسين أمين»

كلمة السر لعلاقة رائعة وراسخة بينك وبين أطفالك:

... الكثير من الحب!

Appreciative Articles and Interviews



1

READ KUTUB KIDS**Rania Amin on Arabic Children's Books That Tackle Environmental Issues**

Posted on November 25, 2010 by mlynxqualey

In today's Al Masry Al Youm, I have a piece about Arabic children's books that tackle environmental issues in both a fun and educational way.

I shan't repeat here what I wrote over there, but instead wanted to share the full version of an email Q&A I did with the award-winning author of the Farhana series, Rania Hussein Amin, (who will be appearing at Cairo's Al-Balsam Books this Saturday) about her forays into environmentally themed literature for children.

Thanks to Rania for her time!

*How do you walk the line between writing a book that is "beneficial" (helps children learn about the environment, or in Farhana's case sometimes has a "girls-can" twist) and writing a book that is "entertaining"—i.e., a book that children want to read and re-read?

I believe that – if we are talking about real-life type of stories, such as the ones I write – and if a story is honest, if it has many small details we can all relate to, and if – at the same time – the writer is aware of why he's telling this story and has a specific message to deliver, then automatically the story will be both beneficial and entertaining. Being aware of the message is important, but it's also very important to try as much as we can to avoid direct messages, which is not very easy to do as an adult writing for children. To avoid this I try to relive my childhood in my mind and write as Rania, the child. In that case I will not lift my finger & say "do this & don't do that", but I will say what I think & feel as a child would express himself exactly. I don't claim I always succeed in this process. Sometimes I feel so compelled to give a certain advice or I feel that a direct message would get through to the child easier & faster than a hidden message. And this is where I think I can honestly say I failed as an author for children, and this is what I should always be watching out not to do in my future books.

*Would you be interested in writing more "environmentalist"-themed books in the future?
Do you have any ideas brewing? Would Farhana ever come out with an environmentalist theme?

I have mainly – so far – been interested in psychological issues and small problems in the child's daily life, but I have always wanted to write to children about the beauty of nature & help them appreciate it. I think that for children – like the Egyptian children – who are not so much exposed to nature, it is important to make them aware of the nature around them, as a first step before introducing more serious environmental themes.

They should be encouraged to look around them and learn about the names of the trees & flowers they see, they should be encouraged to go on trips to the desert, to the farm, the sea, etc. Then they should

start acquiring more information about those places and their inhabitants (animals & plants), and learn how important it is to protect them & help them survive & flourish.

I have already written & illustrated a book for very young readers called "Siwa – a tiny little love story" about a girl going on a trip to Siwa & recounting every little detail on the trip, showing the children how enjoyable it is to be in touch with nature. My intention was to show them the beauty of the desert and of a simpler life, which so many of them are not aware of. I also wanted to encourage them to go on similar trips.

I have no specific topic in mind now, but I would like to make a series – similar to the book about Siwa – about different places, where nature is still wild & pure, adding to it an entertaining story to make it more interesting & enjoyable for the children to read.

*Do you particularly recommend any of the five books that you've written thus far over and above the others? (Is one a favorite?)

My two favorites are the ones I illustrated ("Farhana & the Egyptian Nature" and "The Disappearance of the Nile"). In the first one I give a brief view of the 4 different natures we have in Egypt (the desert, the Nile, the sea and the farm), as well as the nature we don't have, which is just as beautiful (the jungle, snow desert, green mountains, etc..) combined with a social theme, telling them the importance of making friends & mixing with all kinds of different people & nationalities.

In the second one (The Disappearance of the Nile) I wanted to show them the difference between the Nile during the Pharos' time & how they took care of it & protected it and worshipped it, and how on the other hand we treat it so badly & have no appreciation or awareness of its importance. The story is about the Nile feeling hurt and tired of being treated so badly & so runs away & tries to find a place where it is treated with more love & respect.

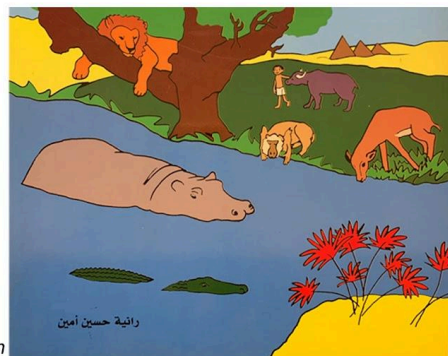
*Why do you say that you "should" write more about the environment?

As mentioned, I think in Egypt children are not taught to appreciate nature, mainly because they very rarely ever have first-hand experience with nature. Nature is mostly something they read about or watch on TV. But no one can appreciate something he never really knew. So the first books absolutely HAVE to encourage the child to go on trips and explore nature first-hand.

Other environmental topics, such as air & water pollution, or preserving water & electricity, or cleanliness and recycling, are all very important topics that are absolutely necessary to tackle, especially in a country like Egypt, so badly polluted and in which water & electricity are becoming more & more scarce. Awareness has to increase in adults and children alike, and being a writer of children's books, I certainly have to have a role in this.

And will, inshaaAllah...

Illustration by
Rania Hussein Amin



2

READ KUTUB KIDS**Farhana Book Event in Pictures (And Why We Need More of These)**

Posted on November 28, 2010 by mlynxqualey



Rania reading from---
well, telling the story of
"Farhana and the Secret of her Beauty"
-which took 3rd place at this year's
Etisalat awards.
Really well-done.
Attentive children.

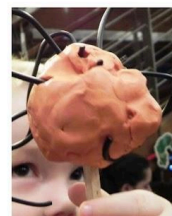


Then, she had puppets from the book.
She showed us the trick of changing
expressions: It's all in the eyebrows and
the mouth.



The kids got to make their own 'Farhanas' with plastecine
and other household implements (matchsticks, wiring
bobs). They could change the expression via mouth and
eyebrows...and of course they all had their ideas about
the hair.

Even a two-year-old could
do it. More or less



Last---Rania Amin works hard!---the children
told their own schoolyard story and Rania
assembled it into a book.
Well, there were cookies in there
somewhere, too.

What I liked about this event was how Rania encouraged them all to become storytellers, illustrators, and authors. She didn't tell them "you must make Farhana's hair curly, you must put the eyebrows like such, the story must be about X," but let them use their...brains!
Not only did they listen, learn, and appreciate, but they created.

3

READ KUTUB KIDS**“Farhana Talks and Talks” and the Importance of ‘Dialogic Reading’**

Posted on December 23, 2010 by mlynxqualey



Recently, the Huffington Post published an essay by Maxwell King and Michael Robb, Ph.D about one of the important ways we can help our children learn.

Talking.

Of course, they're not referring to any old chatter: Allowing our children to overhear our mobile-phone conversations won't help, nor will scolding them. What they mean is purposeful, instructive, helpful dialogue.

From the article:

Researchers and educators have recommended shared book-reading, also known as dialogic reading, between adults and children as one of the best strategies for vocabulary development and rich language interactions. Dialogic reading requires adults to listen to children, to ask questions, to extend and expand on children's responses, and generally to be active participants in a reading experience.

I was thinking about this notion yesterday as my seven-year-old and I were reading Rania Hussein Amin's "Farhana Talks and Talks" to one another. "Farhana Talks and Talks" is one of a series of new Farhana books, which includes the Etisalat-shortlisted "Farhana and a Zoo without Animals" and "Farhana and the Secret of her Beauty" (one of our favorites), and "Farhana and a Special Friend".

At the end of each book, Amin poses the question: If you were in Farhana's place, what would you do?

Of course, many children's books have a "Q & A" at the end, where parents can ask a child suggested questions, along the lines of "what happened first, what happened next, etc." My son rarely—if ever—is engaged by these.

But he likes the "What would you do" pages at the end of Farhana, because: 1) they're illustrated, comic-style, and 2) they show several, sometimes humorous options, and really get the reader to place him or herself in Farhana's shoes.

So, it's important for us to share the book-reading experience. For younger children, even just an "Where is the owl?" or "Is the rabbit happy or sad?" is a good start.

And it's nice to see an author including innovative opportunities for this shared experience with the book.

Thank you, Rania!

4

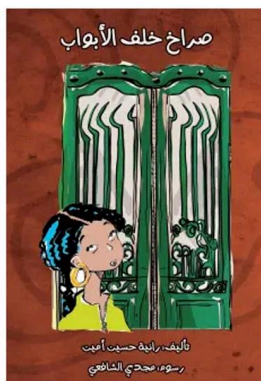
Women of Egypt Network

Creating the Next Generation of Women Empowerment

Award Winning Author Reveals Challenges Writing for Children and Teenagers

Saturday April 1, 2017 By: Iman Refaat

Rania Hussein Amin, children's books author and illustrator, won the 2016 Etisalat Prize for Arabic Children's Literature in the Young Adult category, for her book *Sorakh Khalf al Abwab* (Screaming Behind Doors). This was the first book she wrote for children above the age of twelve.



Born in 1965, Amin, a veteran in the field of children's books, is best known for her collection of stories *Farhana*, which she also illustrates.

Amin's audience are children between the ages of 4-7, whom she addresses through her character.

A psychology graduate from the American University in Cairo, Amin participated in countless children writing and illustration workshops and art courses. She also worked with children with special needs.

Women of Egypt had an exclusive interview with Rania Amin to learn more about her writing journey and her future plans.

WOE: What attracted you to get involved in writing?

RA: Since I was a child I used to write in my diary. I wrote about how I felt and what I did. I wrote about movies I watched and books I read yet I never thought I will become a writer. By the age of twenty I started to write short stories and after studying psychology I considered writing for children and the idea of *Farhana* emerged.

WOE: What inspired you to write for children?

RA: My daughter. Turning two-years-old she reminded me of my childhood and how I used to enjoy it. I created the series of *Farhana* to tackle real life and day to day situations and gradually the female character kept evolving.

WOE: What's the age range of your target audience?

RA: I started with children at the age of 3 to 7 years old, then I moved to elder children. As my daughter got older, I started targeting older audience.

WOE: Why did you choose to write for children not parents?

RA: I studied psychology and being a parent I wished to write for parents, however I found it challenging and I didn't want to write direct messages for them. Hence I decided to write to children as if a child writing to another child, using simple language and avoiding direct preaching.

WOE: Does this age implies the usage of a certain language?

RA: Yes. I try to simplify my language as much as I can. The language was another reason for not writing for parents. Though I have ideas for adults' books, yet the language is an obstacle. I envy people from other nationalities who don't struggle between formal language and the colloquial one.

WOE: What are the genre you specialize in?

RA: I like to write about everyday life. I don't like to write about magical worlds and fantasies, as I think children, till the age of five, need to know more about real life.

WOE: Why did you create your main character as a girl?

RA: I believe that girls are chained in Egypt and don't live their lives the way boys do. Don't speak loudly, don't play, don't walk barefoot, are some examples. I wished to have a character which would encourage girls to reveal their own identity and to act freely. To become free.

WOE: Ending your books with "What would you do" is it a call for reflection and/or action?

RA: It's a call for thinking that I addressed in my books for children above the age of seven, when Farhana grew older. I invited children to reflect on matters they experienced in their daily lives, such as bullying and listening to others, in order to adjust their own behaviors.

WOE: In your book 'Farhana and the Evening Dress,' Farhana took off her uncomfortable dress in front of the guests. What's the story behind the harsh criticism it received?

RA: The USAID selected several books to distribute to schools and mine were among them. A publisher accused me of propagating for American values, though I meant to write a funny book and didn't mean any hidden message it. I ended up in the court and it was a scary experience. I felt embarrassed back then.

WOE: How did this experience affect you as a writer.

RA: First of all, the book was banned and was withdrawn from bookstores. I spent a week thinking and

considering not writing again. Then I decided to keep writing and just to be more careful about what I write and how it might be perceived.

WOE: Can anyone become a writer?

RA: Well, it's a mixture between talent and practice. In order to become a writer one needs to read a lot and learn. Joining on line workshops was a key factor which helped me develop my writing skills. Especially that the writing exercises opened for me new horizons by writing and thinking about topics I didn't consider before.

WOE: Which is harder writing or illustrating?

RA: Illustrating for me is harder. I know I am not the best illustrator and I might not be that creative. However, I preferred to do the illustrations myself, instead of hiring someone, to make sure that they match exactly what I had in mind.

WOE: What type of workshops did you participate in?

RA: I led many workshops. I worked as a school counsellor for four years during which I held several workshops on how to build your character, how to be happy and how to deal with bullying. I also led workshops for children teaching them to write and illustrate. Also, I organized workshops for Comics among school students and their work got published in their schools.

WOE: What type of work did you do with children with special needs and have you considered portraying them in your books?

RA: I worked with autistic children as a part of my work at schools and I got so attached to them. I wished to write about visually impaired children, but I believe I need to learn more about them and to get in contact with them in first before including them in my books.

WOE: What are your plans for the future?

RA: I have many plans. But right now, I plan to write books for teenagers in colloquial Arabic.

Apart from writing, I am considering starting a campaign for parents encourage them to read more for their children.

WOE: What's the message you wish to address to Egyptian women?

RA: I wish to tell women you are doing a great job. You need to care and pamper yourselves more. You need to believe in yourselves and stop carrying all the responsibility. Start involving men and stop them for taking you for granted.

5

Bard College Spring 2016

Challenging and Subverting Girlhood and Motherhood in

Contemporary Egyptian Children's Literature

by Zahrah Tahsiyn Bashir

Chapter 2: Farhana, Girlhood and Defiance

Hekāyāt Farhana (Adventures of Farhana) by Rania Hussein Amin

Farhana Tadhkhul Lawḥat Jūjān (Farhana Enters Gauguin's Panels)

Farhana loves going to the museum.

But she does not like standing in line.

Farhana loves Gauguin's paintings

So Farhana approached and touched it.

The security guard yelled: Leave the painting alone!!

Then she played with Gauguin's dog and she spoke with the ladies. The security guard screamed:

Get out of the painting!

Farhana climbed Gauguin's tree. The ladies looked at her in admiration. And the security guard

yelled: Get down from the tree!

The ladies helped Farhana to try on beautiful clothes. The security guard interrupted: "Leave

Farhana!"

The dog attacked the security guard and bit his leg.

Farhana said bye to her friends and she jumped out from the painting.

The security guard said: "Go to your group."

Farhana loves going to the museum.

But she does not like standing in line.

She also loves Picasso paintings...

Farhana Tujarribul Tayrān (Farhana Tries to Fly)

Farhana climbs the highest mountain in the world.

She was about to reach the peak, when...

"Mama...Mama! I hurt my knee. Can I put a bandage on it?"

Farhana is proud of the new bandage.

Farhana flies with the rest of the birds.

She goes with them around the world. "OUCH!"

"Mama...Mama! A second bandage...a second bandage."

"Two! How pleasing!"

Farhana, the World Champion Diver.

"OUCH"

"My head...my head. It really hurts!"

Mama takes Farhana to the hospital.

The doctor stitches up the wound.

Farhana is happy with her three bandages, but she does not want anymore.

Farhana, Girlhood and Defiance

Farhana offers us a new Egyptian girl. Cultural tradition has largely dictated expectations of and norms for Arab girl. This often means girl who are reserved and respectful, . Hekāyāt Farhana (Adventures of Farhana) is a book series focused on the brave but defiant Farhana, a young girl creating her own reality through exploration, imagination, fearlessness, and most of all, defiance. Farhana's unapologetic character serves as provides an alternative depiction of Arab girlhood. Through the reach of children's literature, her story attempts to shift and present a new representation, and ultimately challenge and subvert the norm and expectations surrounding Arab girlhood.



Illustration by
Rania Hussein Amin

6

9 Arabic Children's Books to Keep on Your Bedside Table

Make the most out of your bedtime stories with any one of these soon-to-be classic Arabic books...

Layla Raik

Sep 07, 2024

**'Farhana W Hadeeka Bedoon Haywanat'
(Farhana and a Zoo Without Animals)**

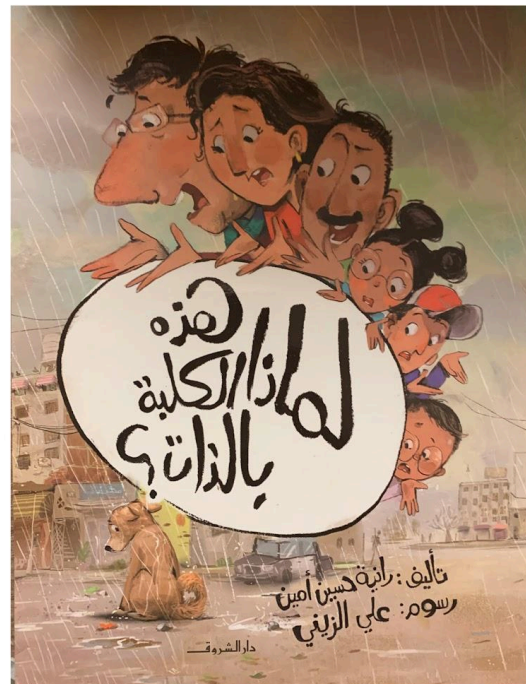
Rania Hussein Amin

A veteran in the field of children's and adolescents' books, Rania Hussein Amin has mastered the art of speaking to a young audience. She just knows how to speak to children, and her signature character, Farhana, which is illustrated by her to be as genuine as possible, has become a friend to her young audience. 'Farhana and a Zoo Without Animals' is a particular favourite because it teaches children the importance of kindness to all, and the cruelty of existing in captivity. And no, your kids won't hate the zoo after this; they're just going to be more aware

'Lematha Hathihi Al Kalba Belthat' (Why This Dog?)

Rania Hussein Amin

This book follows a young boy, Ramy, as he goes through the decision of picking out a new pet puppy. Ramy is given an array of options at the pet shop, dogs of all breeds, shapes and sizes, but instead makes up his mind by choosing the stray dog outside Dr. Fawzy's pet shop. The book highlights Ramy's unbreakable spirit, and how he is able to stand up for what he believes in. In the process, we're also encouraged to adopt, not shop



7

Women of Egypt Network

Creating the Next Generation of
Women Empowerment



Rania Amin's Campaign "WildSoul" Promotes Kindness and Empathy Towards Animals in Egypt

Wednesday August 12, 2020

By: Dina El Mahdy

Illustrations by: Rania Amin

The chaotic streets of Egypt are becoming equally challenging to people and to the thousands of stray cats and dogs struggling to find food and shelter. Although Egypt is home to the oldest animal protection group in the region — the Egyptian branch of the international "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals", established over a century ago by British expatriates — Egypt still has a long road ahead.

Veteran children's author and animal lover Rania Amin Hussein combined her two passions to promote kindness and compassion towards animals. Her latest book, "Not a Toy, Not a Meal, Not a Clown", which she also illustrated, is a cry out for more compassion towards animals. In parallel with the release of the book, Rania also started a campaign "Wildsoul" to raise awareness about animals' rights in Egypt. "I am hoping to get people to empathize more with the animals, feel the wrongfulness of the situation, and realize that it's not our right to use our power over them to harm them or humiliate and hurt them," Rania explains.

Animals in ancient Egypt were glorified, but are now mostly mistreated. Historically, Egyptians maintained exceptional relations with their animals, as shown by the huge number of animals decorating the ancient temples and tombs. Ancient Egyptians did not see humankind as superior creatures over the animal kingdom. They considered both humans and animals as creatures of Gods with the power to bear life. They respected and cared for their animals as they were deeply connected with their everyday life. They were necessary for food and drink, and were helping with agricultural work. Ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses were often depicted in the form of animals, sometimes as a combination of animal and human body parts.

Now the picture is completely the opposite. From exploited farm animals to abused street animals, the situation seems to be going from bad to worse. It is not uncommon to find children chasing or throwing stones at a dog or cat, or handlers harshly whipping starving donkeys pulling heavy carts. "I have always wanted to write about animals and try to bring them closer to people, help people understand and feel for them and put themselves in their shoes. If it's a dog tied to a balcony rail, a lion in the zoo, a donkey pushing heavy carts, so many heart-breaking scenes in Egypt that we pass by and many of us fail to notice," Rania says.

On paper, Egypt has severe penalties for animal abusers. The law requires that anyone who deliberately kills or badly beats any domestic animal should be jailed or fined. But the law is rarely observed or enforced, and so it falls upon private organizations and individuals to provide care for wayward or abused animals and to raise the public awareness to this pressing cause. "At the end of the book I am showing the history of man's relationship with animals and how things are developing world-wide to the advantage of animals, but that there is still so much that needs to change. There's always hope."

Many campaigns have used various religious teachings as a proof of strong injunctions to treat animals with compassion and not abuse them. The Holy Qur'an and Hadith (recorded sayings of Prophet Mohamed) emphasize respect for animals and all creatures of God. Prophet Mohamed gave many examples and directives about how Muslims should treat animals. Likewise, Christianity calls for hospitality, justice, humility, forgiveness, acceptance and mercy for all of God's creatures. Just as Jesus, the good shepherd, had compassion for the sheep, so must all Christians embrace the call to love animals.

With an increasing number of reports of severe cruelty and neglect against animals, there is still much to be done, and many local and international animal charities and NGOs are pressing for better treatment of animals. "The campaign that I started is called Wildsoul. It promotes kindness and empathy towards all animals in Egypt. I am hoping to create a big community of people working together on artwork and books and educational material to raise awareness on the necessity of treating animals with kindness, how it affects them and how it affects us. The book is just a start. Right now, I am working alone, but soon I hope we will be a big number of people, hopefully," Rania concludes.

Rania Amin is a veteran in the field of children's books, is best known for her collection of stories Farhana, which she also illustrated. Farhan's audience are children between the ages of 4-7, whom she addresses through her character. A psychology graduate from the American University in Cairo, Amin participated in countless children writing and illustration workshops and art courses. She also worked with children with special needs. Amin won the 2016 Etisalat Prize for Arabic Children's Literature in the Young Adult category, for her book Sorakh Khalf al Abwab (Screaming Behind Doors). This was the first book she wrote for children above the age of twelve. She also wrote, You Get Blood from A Stone, from the ages 10-14-year old kids. In November 2018, she published her book Outside the Circle for young adults.

Illustration by
Rania Hussein Amin



8

Mersal - A Blog about Children's Literature

<https://mersal-magazine.com/2022/04/16/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1/>

**The Adjacent Seat** - The book is written and illustrated by Rania Hussein Amin

On a bus trip from Cairo to Hurghada, two girls sit next to each other. The first is Kenzy, the daughter of a wealthy family who is going to Hurghada to meet her friend Mustafa, and the second is Fatima, the daughter of a modest family who intends to start a job as a cleaning lady in a hotel. At Fatima's initiative, they start exchanging pleasantries.



The novel discusses a number of themes, the most prominent of which is the theme of class, as embodied in the Egyptian context in particular. The author presents a frank picture of the apprehension felt by members of both the middle and working classes towards the other class. This is clearly evident in the way Kenzy treats Fatima with condescension and coldness at the beginning of their relationship, as a result of her preconceived ideas and lack of knowledge of how to deal with people from outside the society she knows. The reader may be surprised here by Fatima's decision to continue talking to Kenzy, but the latter later holds herself accountable for her behavior, and Fatima confronts her directly about her coldness towards her. This results in a fruitful dialogue between the two on the subject of relations between different social classes.

The author is credited with her realistic and unequivocal treatment of this topic, but she contented herself with dealing with class differences as if they were merely cultural differences or the result of poor communication, without actually addressing the implications of the large differences in economic privileges for members of each class. Nevertheless, we cannot but note the novel's call for openness to others and dialogue instead of being confined within closed circles.

In addition to the topic of class, the writer raises other topics such as exploitation and emotional manipulation in marital and romantic relationships, as well as diet, drug trafficking, non-stereotypical jobs for women, harassment, and the relationship between children and their stepmother, conveying most of her messages through dialogue between the two young women. Despite the abundance of these topics, the author succeeds in presenting most of them in an appropriate manner, especially the topic of

romantic relationships between young men and women and even adults. The novel indirectly indicates that there is no alternative to real dialogue to expand one's horizons instead of individual preoccupation with virtual worlds on the Internet.

The novel's time is limited to the period of the bus trip. During this period, a real friendship develops between the two girls, and each of them, with the help of the other, reaches a decisive decision regarding a problem she faces, in a period that may seem relatively short to the reader. In addition to the main plot, there is a secondary plot that is connected to the first in a very successful way. Despite the lack of events, the writer excels at investing the suspense factor in an innovative context; she uses the space of public transportation as a tool to make people of different classes meet.

On the character level, each of the girls is attractive in her own way. Fatima is a bold, intelligent and friendly girl, while Kenzy is a mix of kindness and reserve, and it was nice to see her character develop throughout the novel to gain self-confidence and openness to others. The two girls play the role of narrators, except for some chapters where Mustafa, Kenzy's friend, plays this role. The language of the novel is smooth, sometimes spiced with expressions or even a few dialogues in Egyptian colloquial, which gave it a beautiful local flavor

The book is decorated with black and white drawings by the author. We may sense some class stereotyping in the drawing of the two main characters, as Kanzy appears thinner and her facial features are more precise than Fatima, while the latter's skin color is darker and her clothes are loose.

However, the drawings give the novel a lot of vitality and local specificity.

An enjoyable and smooth read that raises many topics that will certainly interest young people.



9



Al Sherouk Newspaper - 1 November 2019

By Shaimaa Shennawy

[vhttps://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=01112019&id=8354539e-a341-4245-b71c-99e30c831a13](https://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=01112019&id=8354539e-a341-4245-b71c-99e30c831a13)

Dar Al Shorouk is organizing a book signing ceremony for the two books **"Behind the Mask"** and **"Outside the Circle"** by writer Rania Hussein Amin, on Tuesday, November 12, at 6:00 PM at the Heliopolis Public Library, 42 Al-Oruba Street, Salah Salem, Heliopolis.

Rania Hussein Amin says describing her two novels: "I began thinking about writing "Outside the Circle" and "Behind the Mask" when I started working as a psychologist in a school, and I was mingling with teens and sharing with them their stories and experiences which I thought we need to shed light on. These students, whose ages range from 12 to 16, have problems and experiences that deserve to be told, so that readers their age would benefit from them."

The author of "Outside the Circle" added that she decided to write in colloquial language, in an attempt to get closer to the language spoken by these young people, and to help them relate to the characters.. Rania also sought to portray a healthy model for a healthy relationship, between boys and girls this age. Attraction is best followed by true friendship and sharing of thoughts and opinions. This is the main message of the story.

She added that the two books address some of the ideas that go through the minds of these young people, and also provide them with some advice that helps them form and understand themselves, including, for example, that being happy with one's beauty is not enough, but rather one must focus on the essence and spirit as well, because they are the most important and lasting values.

The author of "Behind the Mask" indicated that she drew inspiration for the characters of her heroes from real characters, noting that each book is independent in itself, and that she intends to complete it in a series discussing a variety of issues.

10

Arabic Book A Month (by Dina ElAbd)
about "Outside the Circle"

<https://www.arabicbookamonth.com/products/outside-of-the-circle.%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9>

This young adult book, written by the talented Rania Amin, is unique that it is written entirely in colloquial Egyptian Arabic. This definitely makes it much easier for young adults to read and relate to. Once a school counselor, Rania's masterfully crafted story explains situations that many young adults face growing up and how best to deal with it.

11

CAIRO 360**5 Arabic Language Books For Kids & Teens**

About "Outside the Circle"

<https://www.cairo360.com/article/books/5-arabic-language-books-for-kids-tee>

Rania Hussein Amin is known to many Gen Z kids as the author of the Farhana series that many grew up reading. She has been writing for children for a while now, and her target audience keeps growing in parallel with her daughter's growth.

Barra El Dayra is her first book for teens, about young love and a high school crush developing between Farida and Abdel Rahman. This book is also perfect for Egyptian teenagers as it not only delves into topics that preoccupy teens that parents may be uncomfortable talking to their kids about, but it also has two editions: one written in our dialect and another in fusha or formal Arabic.



12

MSA UNIVERSITY**A Session with Award-Winning Author Rania Hussein Amin**

Published in Campus News Wednesday, 13 March 2024 15:45



The Faculty of Languages wraps up another momentous event, with the distinguished guest, Rania Hussein Amin, the award-winning Egyptian book writer and illustrator. In this session and as a part of the course Young Adult Literature, Amin delved into her inspiration which she draws from her background as a psychologist and a school counsellor. She also attributed much of her creative inventory to being a mother and how her experience in reading to her daughter informed her writing for children and young adults.

In this most engaging session, our students did not leave a stone in Amin's world-building unturned, they did not only address important themes like bullying, catfishing, and rocky friendships, but they also addressed her artistic choices and brilliant writing techniques. We were very pleased, informed, and stimulated to have this brilliant author, and we eagerly await many sessions to come.

Some Videos and Television Interviews:

Poems written by Rania Hussein Amin (read by professional Storytellers)

اللي فاضل منهم (What Remains Of Them) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYolcCvjrow>

ولولة أسماك (The Fish Complain) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRYrRvJjewc>

السكوت علامة الرضا (Silence is Acceptance) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7Ka6rsqcYc>

TV Show: Accomplished Women

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TU-s7z7FPps>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TU-s7z7FPps&t=50s>

TV Show: Time Out

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HgCl8qdJls

TV Show: The Mamis Group

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjocvClEvy4&t=21s>

Website And Blog: Hady Bady

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CncwrY7Ccxw>

The Women Organization Council (About the YA novel "Queen Sohila")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoXQJUy5v0s>

TV Show: The Mamis Group

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsVBBDs9uBY>

Suggestions for Bookfair

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgcWRrUWy28>

TV Show: The Mamis Group (about the Novel: The Angry Boy)

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/A-iQNcyv2KQ>

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9+%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%86+%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%86

Lycee Francee Du Caire

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8Snafmh8Tk>

TV Show: The Mamis Group (about the Novel: No, He won't migrate)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqItEG_LMX8

TV Show: The Mamis Group (about the environment - raising awareness)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjsCuAdPjTM>

Arabic Book A month

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DP-3QUjyZVY>

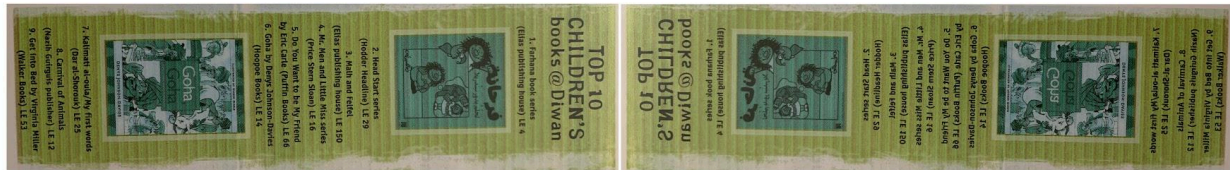
TV show: Last Word by Lamees El Hadidy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9833fUCH3u0>



Awards and Distinctions





- 2024 "It's not Okay to Cry" (Graphic novel for YA) was chosen as the best book by the EBBY (The Egyptian Board of Books for Youth) for the years 2021-2023
- 2022 "Heavy Arm on my Shoulder" (YA Novel) was short-listed in the "Arab Forum For Children's Books Publishers"
- 2021 "Queen Sohila" (YA Novel) received the prize of best book for Young Adults from the "Arab Forum For Children's Books Publishers"
- 2021 "Are you Happy?" (for 4-6 year olds) was short-listed in the "Arab Forum For Children's Books Publishers"
- 2017 "He who lacks Love, Gives it" (for 8-12 year old readers) was short-listed in "Itisalat" competition.
- 2016 "A Scream Behind Doors" (for 8-12 year old readers) received the "Itisalat" first prize for the Young Adults category.
- 2013 "When the Bird Discovered it's Wings" (for 8-12 year old readers) received the "Kitabi Prize" from "The Arab Thought Foundation".
- 2012 "Farhana and a Special Friend" (for 4-8 year old readers) received a prize from the "Arab Thought Foundation"
- 2011 "Farhana and a Special Friend"(for 4-8 year old readers) received a prize from the "Anna Lindh Foundation"
- 2010 "Farhana and the Secret of her Beauty" (for 4-8 year old readers) was short-listed for Itisalat Competition.
- 2000 "When the Bird discovered it's Wings" (for 8-12 year old readers) received the Suzan Mubarak's children's literature prize.
- 1999 "The Farhana Series" (for 3-7 year old readers) received the Suzan Mubarak's children's literature prize.



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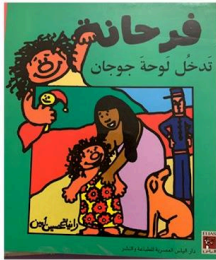
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Taqool Al 'Haqeeqa** (Farhana speaks the Truth); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

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Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Togareb Al-Tayaran** (Farhana Flies Away); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

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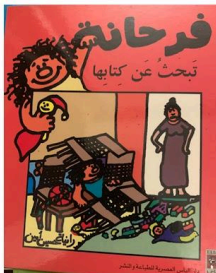
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Tadkhool Law'hat Gaugin** (Farhana enters Gaugin's Painting); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

4



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana wa Malabes Al-Sahra** (Farhana and Her Evening Dress); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

5



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Tab'hath 'an Kitabiha** (Farhana searches for her Book); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

6



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Tal'abo Korat Al-Qadam** (Farhana plays Football); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

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Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Tahrab men Al-Assad** (Farhana Runs From the Lion); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

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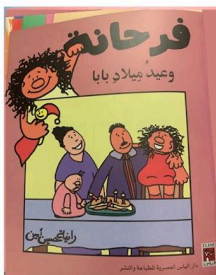
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Tatashagar ma' Sadeeqatiha** (Farhana fights with her Friend); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

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Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Tastaqelo Akhan Sagheeran** (Farhana gets a New Brother); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

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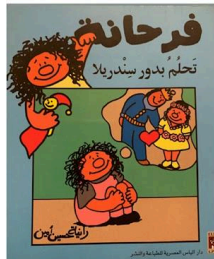
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Wa 'Eid Milad Baba** (Farhana and Daddy's Birthday); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

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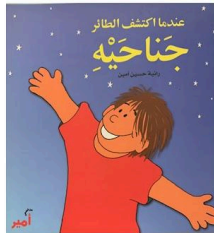
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana To'allem Nora Al-Shaga'a** (Farhana teaches Nora Courage); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

12



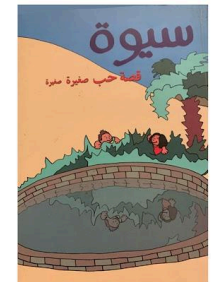
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Ta'hlam bi Dor Cinderella** (Farhana Dreams of the Cinderella Role); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 1999

13



Hussein Amin, Rania. **'Endama ektashaf Al-Ta'er Gena'hayh** (When the Bird Discovered its Wings); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2000

14



Hussein Amin, Rania. **'Siwa, Qesset 'Hob Sagheera Sagheera** (Siwa, A Tiny, little Love Story); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2001

15



Hussein Amin, Rania. **'Affour wal 'Asfour** (Affour and the Bird); illus. by Ahmed Dessouky. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2006

16



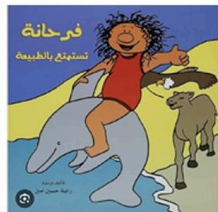
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Qemama Akher Moda** (Very Fashionable Garbage); illus. by Ahmed Dessouky. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2006

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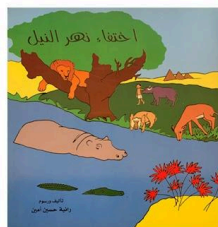
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Horoub Sa'habet El-Dokhan** (Where did the Smoke go?); illus. by Ahmed Dessouky. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2006

18



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Tastamte'o Bel Tabee'a** (Farhana enjoys Nature); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2006

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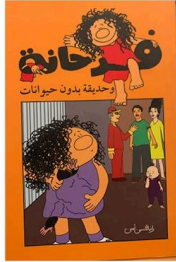
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Ekhtefa' Nahr El Nil** (The Disappearance of the River Nile); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2006

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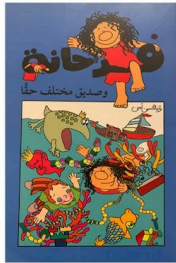
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Tatakallam wa Tatakallam** (Farhana Talks and Talks); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2009

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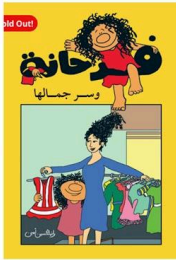
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana wa 'Hadeeqa bedon 'Hayawanat** (Farhana and a Zoo without Animals); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2009

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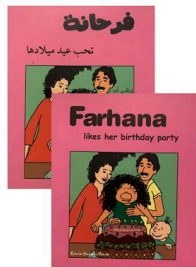
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana Wa Sadeeq Mokhtallef 'haqan** (Farhana and a Special Friend); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2009

23



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana wa Ser Gamalha** (Farhana and the Secret of her Beauty); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2009

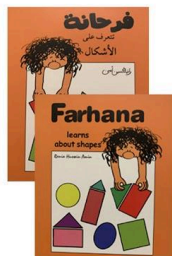
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Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana to'heb 'Eid Miladiha** (Farhana likes her Birthday Party); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2010

Translated into English by Rania Hussein Amin

25



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana tata'araf 'alal Ashkal** (Farhana learns about Shapes); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2010

Translated into English by Rania Hussein Amin

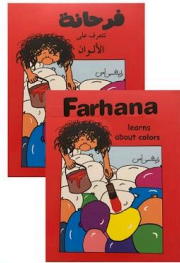
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Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana to'heb Al-Mosharaka** (Farhana likes to Share); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2010

Translated into English by Rania Hussein Amin

27



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Farhana tata'araf'alal Alwan** (Farhana learns about Colors); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Elias Modern Publishing. 2010

Translated into English by Rania Hussein Amin

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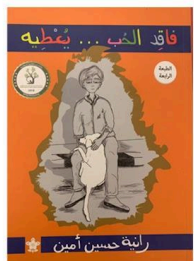
Hussein Amin, Rania. **One Miserable Bully**; illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Hawadit Publishing House. 2012

29



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Mini-Guide for Victims of Bullying & Mini-Guide for Bullies**; illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Hawadit Publishing House. 2012

30



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Faqed El'Hob Yo'teeth** (He who Lacks Love, Gives it); illus. by Zeina Nasser, Ghada Hisham, Zeina Abu Gamra and Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Al-Balsam Publishing House. 2015

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Hussein Amin, Rania. **Serakh khalf Al-Abwab** (Screams behind Doors); illus. by Magdy El Shafei. Cairo. Nahdet Misr. 2016

32



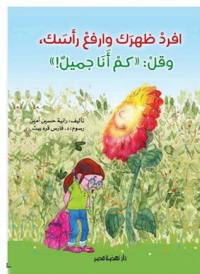
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Barra El-Dayra** (Outside the Circle). Cairo. Al-Sherouk Publishing House. 2017

33



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Warra El-Qena'** (Behind the Mask). Cairo. Al-Sherouk Publishing House. 2017

34



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Efred Thahrak w'erfa'a Ra'sak wa qol: "Kam ana Gameel!"** (Back Straight, Head up and say: "I am Beautiful!"); illus. by Fares Qorat Bayt. Cairo. Nahdet Misr. 2018

35



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Esma'ani** (Listen to Me); illus. by Walid Taher. Cairo. Al Balsam Publishing House. 2018

36



Hussein Amin, Rania. **El-Maleka Sohila** (Queen Sohila); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Nahdet Misr. 2018

37



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Rafe'at Al-Athqal** (The Weightlifter); illus. by Amr Selim. Cairo. Nahdet Misr. 2018

38



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Ayna Elebtesama El'helwa** (Where are the beautiful Smiles?); illus. by Youssef Wilson. Cairo. Nahdet Misr. 2019

39



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Mankoush** (Mankoush); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Dar Al-Sherouk. 2019

40



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Hal Anta Sa'eed?** (Are you Happy?); illus. by Hany Saleh. Cairo. Dar Al-Sherouk. 2020

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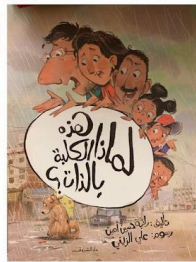
Hussein Amin, Rania. **Mesh Sa'b** (Not Difficult); illus. by Rasha Mounir. Cairo. General Book Authority. 2021

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Hussein Amin, Rania. **Thera' Thaheel Fawq Katfi** (Heavy Arm on my Shoulder). Cairo. Dar Al-Sherouk. 2021

43



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Lematha Hathehi Al-Kalba belthat?** (Why this Particular Dog?); illus. by Aly El Zeiny. Cairo. Dar Al-Sherouk. 2021

44



Hussein Amin, Rania. **El-Korsy El-megawer** (The Adjacent Seat); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Nahdet Misr. 2021

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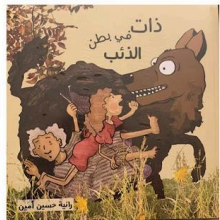
Hussein Amin, Rania. **La Yagooz Al-Boka'** (It's Not Okay to Cry); illus. by Hanan El-Karargi. Cairo. Nahdet Misr. 2022

46



Hussein Amin, Rania. **'A'ella Sagheera Kabeera Kabeera** (A Small, Big, Big Family); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Al-Sherouk Publishing House. 2022

47



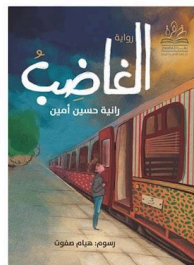
Hussein Amin, Rania. **That Fi Batn Al-The'b** (Little Red in the Wolf's Tummy); illus. by Rania Hussein Amin. Cairo. Diwan Publishing House, 2023

48



Hussein Amin, Rania. **La lan Yohager** (No, He won't Migrate); illus. by Sahar Abdallah. Cairo. Al-Balsam Publishing House. 2023

49



Hussein Amin, Rania. **Al-Ghadeb** (The Angry Boy); illus. by Hayam Safwat. Cairo. Al-Zahra Publishing House. 2024

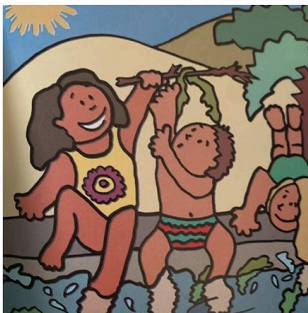
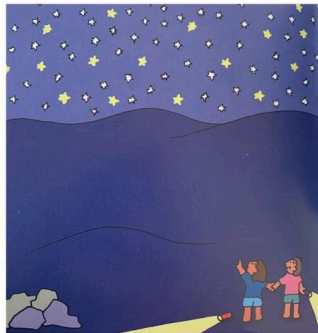


Top Ten Books



1- Farhana Togareb Al-Tayaran (Farhana Flies away)
(for ages 3-7)

Farhana is a very active girl. She climbs on top of wardrobes, dives in the bathtub and attempts to fly like a bird. So it's not surprising that she falls a lot and hurts herself. Everytime she falls, she runs to her mom shouting happily: "I need another plaster". Farhana loves plasters, and she proudly counts them in front of the mirror and shows them off to her father. Until one day she has a heavy fall, and needs to go to the hospital to get stitches. That day, she decides to be more careful, yet she still loves her plasters dearly, and is very proud of her collection.



2- Siwa , Qeset 'Hob Sagheera Sagheera (Siwa. A Tiny Little Love Story) (for ages 3-7)

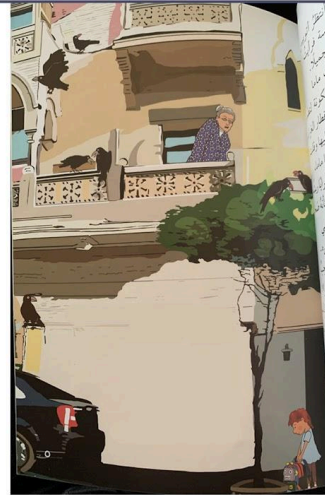
Five year old Amina goes on a trip to the Siwa oasis with her mom. Telling the story from the point of view of the little girl, the young reader will share her excitement going through all those new experiences: riding the jeep in the bumpy desert sand, sliding on dunes, doing sand-angels, watching the endless stars at night, and lighting torches on people's faces, sleeping in tents in the middle of the desert and having breakfast and showers outside in their swimsuits. observing the simple life of the inhabitants of the city of Siwa, having cart races, plunging in warm wells in the oasis. and watching the sunset. All this, while making friends with the group, especially with a 5 year old boy called Tony, who speaks a different language, but this doesn't stop their friendship in any way. On the way back, the two children sleep and don't get a chance to say good-bye. But Siwa remains in their memory and in the heart forever.

3- Mankoush (Mankoush) (for ages 6-9)

Rim is the kind of girl who loves observing animals, and watching the crows everyday while waiting for her schoolbus connected her emotionally to that unique bird. She fell in love with one of them in particular that she recognized because of his ruffled disheveled feathers. She started feeding them to make sure they come everyday but her neighbor, an old grumpy woman, hates crows and believes they are bad luck. She screams at Rim and wants them gone. The old woman is not the only one who does not understand Rim's love for crows and who does not see how special they are. Her parents do not really listen when she wants to talk about them, her teacher thinks she's weird, her friends don't care, and she ends up feeling alone. Until that day when her connection with Mankoush is stronger and he gives her a broken spoon as a present, she realizes that she doesn't need to share her love for something in order to enjoy it. This love is enough to fill her life.

But still the next day, she finds herself talking about the broken spoon in the "Show and Tell" activity at school. She was excited and happy, and her teacher and classmates really listened for the first time.

On the last page, we see the old woman observing the crows with a smile on her face



18- Serakh Khalf Al-Abwab (Screams Behind Doors) (for ages 8-12)

Romana, the janitor's daughter and Loza, who lives in the building, are best friends despite their different social backgrounds. Since both enjoy adventures and solving mysteries, they decide to try and solve the problems of their neighbors, in order to get them to stop shouting at each other and inside their homes. Problems create tension, and the one to blame is always the janitor. So when Romana's father decides to leave the building, Romana decides to take action, and together with her friend they start investigating and try to find out what their neighbor's problems are. and then they look for solutions.

Many of these solutions were found inside the building, and they realize that by connecting with each other, neighbors can be helpful with one another, they will also understand each other better and the whole atmosphere in the building becomes much brighter and more loving. Besides, Romana and her family get to stay, and this is wonderful news for her and her best friend, Loza.

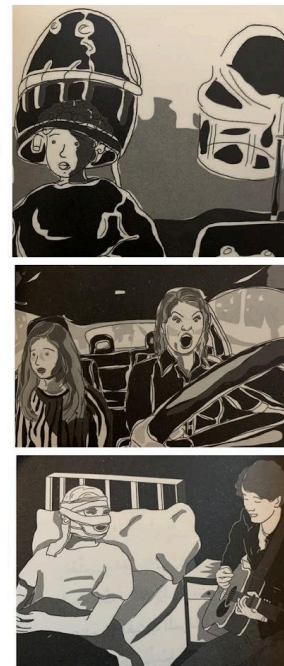
5- Rafe'at Al-Athqal (The Weightlifter)
(for ages 8-12)

Safaa is a big, heavy clumsy girl who lacks femininity and good looks, but is well-liked among her friends. She comes from a poor family struggling with everyday expenses. So when Safaa's father notices her physical strength he pushes her into weightlifting. Safaa finds her passion and trains hard. She starts winning championships and in spite of her happiness, she is sad because she is too busy to spend time with her friends, and they start moving away from her. This and the tremendous pressure of training, plus the difficulty of making friends with competitors, starts to be too much for her and she starts getting ideas of quitting. Finally, and in the middle of the Olympic games, with the trainer shouting instructions, and the pressure at home and from the media and everyone else, she quits. And she puts her foot down for the first time. She regains her friends, studies history which she always wanted to do, and wins her old life back. But she has a secret that no one knows about. In the middle of the night, when everyone's asleep, she takes out her hidden weights and starts training. Now she has broken the world record, but it's a secret that no one should know about.



6- Al-Maleka Sohila (Queen Sohila) (for ages 9-16)

Miranda's mom is obsessed with her competing in beauty pageants. Her obsession is stressing out Miranda and she becomes a copy of her mother, judging people by their appearance. The one who is the target of her bullying is her classmate Sohila, whose self-confidence is solid and she knows her self-worth despite the bullying that she has to endure daily. One day, after winning an important competition, Miranda and her mom get into a car accident and they are taken to a hospital, only to discover that Miranda's face was terribly scarred. Her mom is devastated and so is Miranda of course. But when her shy classmate Akmal comes to visit her at the hospital, her outlook on life starts to change. Akmal was another victim of her bullying and they all called him stupid, because he was far behind academically, but when he started confiding in her, talking about the pressures at home to succeed at school, and the time he spends taking lessons, she starts relating to him, since she experiences the same kind of pressure. Together they start contemplating their life trying to find out what's really important, away from the parents' dreams. And when Sohila comes to visit, things become even more clear.



7- Al-Ghadeb (The Angry Boy) (for ages 10-16)

Seif is angry. He hates his life. Comparing his life with his friend's makes him feel like a victim. His parents are divorced, his mother lives abroad with his baby sister, his father is remarried and moved to another city, and he has chosen to live with his uncle who lives alone. He tried living with his stepmother and step-siblings and hated it. He tried living with his grandparents but hated it, and now living with his uncle he also finds himself miserable. His kind uncle tries his best to make him happy, but Seif remains grumpy, and when his uncle gets upset and leaves the house at night, Seif feels guilty and goes out trying to find him. He ends up in a railway station where he meets an old woman selling flowers. After finding out about his story, she offers him a magical solution. He will take her magic train across different stages in his past, and she promises him he can stop at any stage where he finds the happiness he longs for. Then his destiny will change. But this will only happen if he finds his happiness. And Seif starts the journey only to find out that he was never really happy in any of the stages, and watching a poor boy his age on the train, who has nothing, but is happy and cheerful, he realizes that happiness comes from within and that it's not the circumstances that need to change for him to be happy, but his mindset and outlook on life.

**8- Al-Korsy Al-Megawer (The Adjacent Seat)** (for ages 12-16)

Kenzy, a well-off teen, takes the bus travelling to Hurghada, a city by the sea, to get to spend some time with her boyfriend and her friends.

Her boyfriend had threatened to leave her if she doesn't come.

At the same time, Fatma, a poor girl, is taking the same bus to start working as a housekeeper in a hotel. Her brother-in-law has hidden drugs in her handbag for a young man who will be waiting at the bus stop for them. This is why he almost forced her to travel when she had other dreams and studies she wanted to pursue.

This young man waiting for the drugs on the other side is Kenzy's manipulative boyfriend, but the two teen girls are unaware of all this.

They are focused on how much they hate sitting beside each other, because it feels very uncomfortable to have to share a place with someone who is totally different. But Fatma is a more sociable girl and little by little they start talking, and Fatma tells her about her brother-in-law who physically abuses her sister, and Kenzy tells her about her boyfriend who emotionally abuses her. Sharing their stories, they also share some of their life experiences, and help each other understand the mistake of taking this trip. When they reach Hurghada they both decide on taking the first bus back. In the toilet they find the drugs, and not knowing what they are, they throw it in the bin. On the bus back, they make sure to buy two adjacent seats.

9- Barra El-Dayra (Outside the Circle) (for ages 12-16)

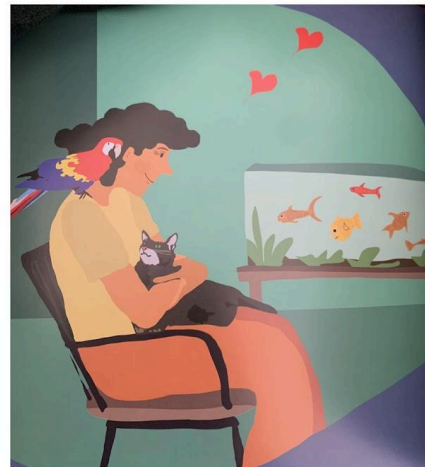
Farida is a friendly, serious, average-looking girl who feels lucky to be part of the popular group in her class. Her class-mate, Abdel-Rahman, is not so lucky, because he is not accepted in that group and is, most of the times, ridiculed for his eccentric behavior. Abdel-Rahman is confident and smart, but he likes to show off and loves to annoy people and play the clown. Farida finds herself attracted to Abdel-Rahman, and it's the first time she experiences those emotions. Abdel-Rahman is also falling for Farida, but is too shy to let it show. Farida, too, hides her feelings. She's especially careful, because she doesn't want to lose her place inside the popular circle.

On a trip, Farida starts to realize that holding on to her popular friends is not what makes her really happy, and being with them means she will lose herself little by little. Only with Abdel-Rahman is she who she really is, and only with him can she laugh and really enjoy herself.

At the end, when he enters the popular "circle" unwillingly to be with her, she takes his hand and together they step out of the circle to start discovering this new romance.

**10-'Aella Sagheera Kabeera Kabeera (A Small, Very Big Family) (for ages 4-6)**

When Anas' teacher asks them to draw themselves with the family-members who live with them, Anas draws himself and his mother only, and knowing that she'll describe his family as small, like she did with other students, he was ready with the reply. He convinced his teacher that his family is in fact a very big family, because of all the things they have achieved, all the problems they solved, all the people they helped, all the friends they made, all the laughs they laughed and all the dreams they have. At the end the teacher also tells them about her very big family, consisting of her, her parrot, cat and fish.



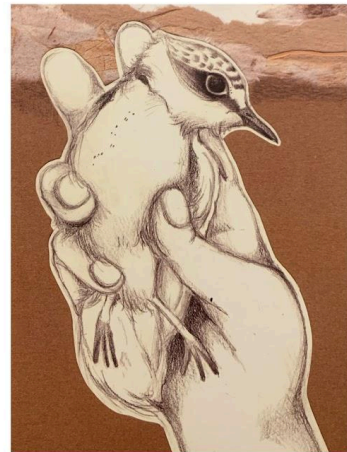


Five Books sent to the Jurors and their Reviews

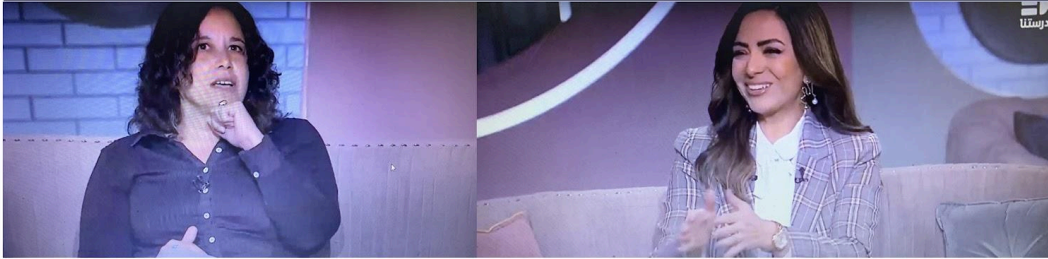


1- La Ian Yohager - Qessat Sagheer estata' al-taghalob 'ala Makhawefeh (No, He won't Migrate - The story of a little one who was able to overcome his fears) (for ages 10-16)

Othman, a boy who lives in the early 19th century in Turkey, is forced to move from his city, to Istanbul to live by the sea. He is a shy boy and so finds it very difficult to make new friends, but he can still enjoy his new life, because he loves going out in nature, observing animals and insects. Then discovering the Kentish plover by the sea, he falls in love with this bird, and spending day in, day out observing the flock, he can't get enough of it. One day when he rescues a little one from an owl, he gets attached to this one in particular. So when the day comes for them to migrate, he won't let go off it, but the bird wants to follow its flock. Othman takes it home, but the little bird finally escapes and decides to try and migrate on its own. We follow the bird on its dangerous flight from Turkey to Egypt then further south. Simoultaneously, we follow the boy's struggle to make friends. Both are trying to overcome their fears, and grow a lot during those months.



But the boy cannot understand where the birds went. At that time nothing was known about migration, and people had many different theories about where the birds go. But when a German Count finds an African spear in one of the flying storks, the world learns about the bird's migration to the south during the winter, and so does Othman. When the bird finally returns to Istanbul, Othman is overjoyed, so is the bird, but they start a new more mature relationship.



**TV Program “Group El-Mamis”
discusses the novel “No, he won’t migrate” with its author Rania Hussein Amin**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqltEG_LMX8&t=107s

Q

No, He won’t migrate. This is the decision taken by Othman who was so attached to a little bird which he has known from the day it hatched. He tried keeping hold of him, fearing that he might fly away and leave him behind. He called him “My Little One”; that’s how close he felt to the bird.

Othman is a young boy who feels alone, and is scared of approaching other children. He is the hero of this amazing young adult novel “No, He won’t Migrate”. This novel was published by Al-Balsam Publishing House, and is illustrated by Sahar Abdallah and written by the wonderful author Rania Hussein Amin. Rania has written several novels for young adults that are considered landmarks in that field. She is the author and illustrator, who has also worked in the field of psychological counseling and parenting. With this beautiful novel she gave some good tips to every parent who has a child who suffers from social anxiety and prefers to spend time alone. What is the story? And how did Othman get over his fears?

Let us know the answer from our author, Rania Hussein Amin. Hello, Rania.

A

Hello.

Q

What a wonderful novel this is. It is a novel for teens, but also serves parents, it can be used to raise awareness for the environment, and has many parenting and psychological tips for children and adults... Tell me, how did you manage to combine all these elements in one novel?

A

How did WE do that, the publisher, Balsam Saad, and I. It was HER idea to publish a young adult novel about bird migration. And I loved the idea because I like writing about nature and animals in general.

Q

Yes, you have many books about animals. “Why this Dog in particular” is also an amazing book you’ve written. You love animals, don’t you?

A

Of course, and I love getting children to love nature in general. So, I liked the idea about bird migration, but I had to think about how to write it for that age in a way that would attract them. Besides the information, there had to be a story they would relate to. So, the hero had to be a teenager, and there should be some relationship between him and a bird that migrates, and this is where the story started to be formed. There had to be some kind of struggle that is related to migration. What kind of emotions can a migratory bird have? Fear and dread. So, I decided that those same feelings should be the ones the boy is suffering from. He is anxious about making friends or approaching others, and this is why he gets so attached to the bird.

Q

The story has two narrators. There's Othman who is telling the incidents, and we hear the same incidents from the other narrator: the little bird, the Kentish Plover. Why did you choose to have those two narrators?

A

I did that before, and I love that style, because it encourages the child to see things from other people's perspectives, or the perspective of animals, so that way it's easier to understand and empathize with others.

Q

Geographically, the story takes place in Istanbul in Turkey, except for the time when the bird was flying south and stopping in different countries, in Egypt for example. But you chose Istanbul to be the main setting of your novel. Why?

A

My main intention wasn't to have a story happening in Istanbul. I just wanted the migratory route to be a long one, from Europe to Africa. So where should it start? Before deciding on the route, I started searching for the bird that I wanted to use as my character. It had to be a bird with certain characteristics, one of which would be that it had to look somehow cute and lovable when illustrated. Then I also researched each one's migratory route, how and where they live, etc. It was also important for me to have the setting by the beach, and the Kentish Plover lives, among other places, on the beach in Istanbul. That's how I chose the bird. And the most important thing is that it passes by Egypt on its way further south in Africa.

Q

If we are talking about our children's fears, and let's talk about Othman in particular... How should we deal with those fears? What is the right thing to do? And is the way the parents handled the situation the right way? Is this the message that you want to give?

A

Some parents act the way Othman's parents did (forcing him to go out and communicate with others even if he's not ready yet), because they don't really understand what their child is going through. They would think: "Why is he afraid to talk to others or make friends? It's not such big of a deal." They would push him and pressure him into communicating with others, and for him this step is very scary. He feels that his parents do not understand, and do not know what he's going through.

So, they leave him in the middle of a few kids who are playing ball, and tell him not to come home except after mingling with those kids. He feels angry because they don't understand.

In children's books it is very important that the child is the one who finds solutions. It's not his parents who will tell him do one, two, three, and he listens to them and everything gets solved. This way, the reader will not feel that he has the strength to solve problems the way that he will feel when the child in the story is the one who manages to find the solutions.

Q

You are an author but also an educator. So, tell me: does the author sometimes disagree with the educator? Maybe the author would want to take the drama to a different path, and the educator says: no, take care because we need to teach the kids right from wrong.

A

Yes of course, the problem with writing for children is that we need to be very careful regarding what we write for them. So, some plots could be serving the drama, but are harmful for the child. So, it's important to be knowledgeable about child psychology in order to know how the story will influence them. But I believe drama and psychological solutions were in harmony in that novel.

Q

Definitely. And I really believe that this novel is just as important for parents as well. The part when Othman refused to let the little bird fly and held on tight to him. He's too worried about the bird going on this long trip on its own, with all the dangers it could be exposed to, like storms, eagles or hunters. This is exactly what overprotective parents do with their child. Excessive worries, to the extent that they prevent their child from living their lives. But in this story, the father was different. When Othman told him about his worries regarding letting the bird fly, fearing that it would be exposed to dangers, his father said simply: So what? What if it is exposed to dangers? It will face them, and when it gets out of the experience, it will be much stronger. It will believe in itself, in its bravery and ability to face problems and solve them.

A

Exactly. I really wanted the child to know that whatever problems he might be facing, there are always solutions. Nothing good comes from hiding from a problem or ignoring it. It will not go away. You absolutely need to face them with courage and try solving them, and if you fail, try again. And this is why I had him fail the first time he approached the kids and asked to play with them. They didn't immediately welcome him and tell him to join them, no they continued to bully him, and he was hurt, but he didn't totally give up and took the next chance to try approaching them in a different way.

Q

Of course, there is no magic solution that happens from the first attempt, we always have to try again and again. But let me ask you a question here: What should we do when one of our kids has social anxiety, like Othman, afraid of approaching people or making new friends, afraid to be bullied or ridiculed, and ends up lonely with no friends. Unfortunately, many children of this generation suffer from this. How do we help them in your opinion?

A

A very important thing is to help them see the point of view of the person they're dealing with. They should be aware that all children, no matter how popular they seem, have fears of not making friends or fears of losing their friends. Everyone feels that they are lacking something. They are not the only ones suffering from this. My advice would always be: YOU should take the initiative, because so many children in your school or family or club, feel the same way as you do and are waiting for someone to make the first step and talk to them. Don't consider all children strong and capable of making friends easily, no, many would be happy with you approaching them. So, make the first step, but be confident and start a conversation, always ask many questions, because people love talking about themselves, show you care, but also express yourself honestly and bravely.

Q

This reminds me of the saying: "Fake it until you make it." You might not have the confidence but pretend you are confident, and it will slowly be part of who you are. This is also something we could tell our kids.

A

Exactly

Q

But it's not all about psychology. There is also a big part about our environment in your novel. A lot of research has been made to write about the bird, his life, his migratory route and about all the dangers all birds are exposed to because of what humans do. Is it necessary to do this kind of research for every novel you write?

A

For most novels, yes. Almost every novel has a part for which I have to research or ask for information. But a book that has scientific information, like this one, required a lot of work certainly. I had to research

stuff like what kinds of dangers the migratory birds are exposed to, some are natural and some are man-made. I wanted to include as much information as possible, but in a way that the child feels is naturally an entertaining part of the story, not a lesson at school.

Q

And you succeeded in this brilliantly of course.

Rania, you wrote about a Turkish kid living in the year 1822, that is 200 years ago. Why?

A

Ok, I'd like to explain why I chose the year 1822. Because the incidents took place before the discovery that some birds migrate to the south in the winter. At that time, it was a mystery, they had no idea where those birds go. So, one day those birds are here, and suddenly they disappear. Many theories were made, like that the birds fly to the moon. Or that they hibernate, or are transformed into different creatures. All theories were wrong, but at that time there was no way to know, no way to follow those birds or track them to find out where they go.

When I read this information and discovered that people only learned about bird migration in 1822, I wanted to include that in my novel, that's why I chose this year. The story behind finding out about migration, is also a very nice story.

A German Count was hunting birds with his rifle, and when he shot a stork and it fell, the Count noticed that it had a wooden spear in its body. The stork was flying with the spear since it didn't harm any vital organs. The spear was something the Count has never seen before. After a lot of research, they found out that the wooden spear comes from Africa, and this is how they found out about birds travelling south. The first bird observatory was built in Germany, followed by many others throughout the world, and rings were fixed on birds' legs to be able to track their routes. So, now they were able to track the birds and find out roughly about their migratory routes.

Q

That's a very nice story. And that leads me to ask you a question: You said that the publisher asked you to write about bird migration. Having someone telling you to write about something, doesn't it make you feel restricted? Isn't it a difficult task for a creative writer? Or do you feel challenged by such a request?

A

When I'm asked to write about topics that I don't care much about, I do refuse. But I liked this one, although I'm not used to write about something scientific. But it was a challenge I wanted to take. I decided to research well and write a good story. Recently I was also asked to write about divorce for young adults, and when I thought about it at first, I found that it is very difficult to tackle such a sensitive and emotional topic. I was especially considering kids whose parents are not divorced, and I felt it was not right to give them unnecessary fears whenever they find their parents fighting. But here too I welcomed the challenge and I was eager to find a "right" way to do that without creating any psychological harm. And I think the end result turned out pretty good. For the first time, I used fantasy in my stories, because I felt that it needed that. So, when I'm challenged and I do something good I'm really happy, maybe even happier than I am with any other story I write. Because usually you write about topics that you're comfortable with. It's very rare when you challenge yourself, so maybe it's good when you have others challenging you, because you find that you're capable of doing so much more than you thought you were.

Q

Ok, let me ask you a different question, related to this generation: You write for young adults, for whom reading is not the most important thing. You make an effort, and of course you want your book to be read. Do you think children will actually buy this novel, or do you write for competition and prizes?

A

It's difficult. It's so difficult to even dream that this novel will reach many children. Some authors do give up and decide to write for competitions only, but what I do is try to find a way to reach those kids. One of the ways is writing in a way they can relate to, and make it attractive and suspenseful starting the first page, the first sentence even. Also, the title has to be different and catchy.

In our country we don't care much about the title but it's very important. For example, when we translated "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" we removed the word wimpy, which means dumb, because we thought this was inappropriate for kids, but then the title was not attractive anymore. We need to be more brave, more innovative, more creative. We need to loosen up and enjoy ourselves with the kids. We need to write funny stories, which is almost non-existent in our country. We need to write in a simpler language, something the child can relate to. I try to do some of these, but publishers do not always welcome those attempts. It can become quite frustrating.

Q

In your epilogue you fast forwarded the events 200 years later, that is today, where you talked about a girl who is the grand grand grand daughter of Othman. In this part you stressed on the environment today, on how things have deteriorated, but also on how things can improve. You mentioned a lot of solutions and in the end you even wrote a list of applications the children can use related to bird watching and migratory route tracking. Tell me more about this part.

A

I find it very important to mention solutions to the children, not just problems. I noticed that when talking about the environment we mostly talk about the dangers and the harm, that for example in a hundred years the world will be in a very dark place if we continue doing what we do. I prefer telling children that from now on, if we plant enough trees, do this and that to save our environment, in a hundred years our earth will be a very beautiful colorful place. We need to give the child hope, so that he can find a will to contribute and help solve the problems. So, I mentioned that yes, we CAN help those birds to migrate safely. They already face many natural challenges, let's not add to those.

Q

Tell me, have YOU done all this research alone or has anyone helped with it?

A

I've done it alone.

Q

Is this part of the author's job?

A

Yes, certainly. I needed to do that and to watch a lot of videos before I started writing, in order to get in the mood.

But after I finished writing the story, the book was revised by professionals in the field.

Q

You know I can feel how happy you are with your final product, and I think this is the most important thing, to make a big effort in order to succeed at something. This is another thing adults and children should learn from this experience. We should teach our children that any step forward in life is preceded by a lot of studying and hard work. And this is something we should continue doing as long as we live...

A

Definitely! This is also the most enjoyable thing in life: Learning new things. The world will never run out of information. So, it's very exciting when you realize that you could learn so many new things every day if you want to.

Q

This will lead me to the next question: What is your next challenge?

A

I decided for the first time in my life to break free and write – without being influenced by publishers – write what I believe is the best thing for children and young adults. I really want to reach them and write things they can relate to.

I am currently working on a graphic novel for young adults, in simple language, about a girl who everybody thinks she's a loser but she proves them wrong. There's also some adventure in the story, and so for the first time I step out of the circle of home and school. I move out to far-away places.

Q

How far away?

A

I prefer not to talk more about it.

Q

To be honest, I am really happy with all what you said. I love your courage to try new topics and styles. You always try new things, and it always turns out nicely. We trust you. Rania, and God willing the new work will be even better and better.

I was very happy to talk with you today, and wish you all the best

A

Thank you very much, Yasmine.

2- La yagooz Al-Boka') (It's not Okay to Cry) (for ages 14-16)

This is the story of Malek and Maggie, a boy and a girl whose life the reader follows from nursery to marriage. Maggie, the girl, is free-spirited, outgoing and uninhibited. She was raised up by parents who encouraged her to express her thoughts and emotions. While on the other hand Malek was humiliated when he cried or when he showed weakness, so he started hiding inside his shell, and he hid well.

In highschool, Maggie fell for him, mistaking his fear of showing his feelings for mystery and charm. Malek also fell for her outgoing, free personality, and admired her for the qualities he lacked.

Little by little, Maggie starts to doubt her choice, and his closed personality together with his jealousy and passive aggressive behavior start to scare her. He too is starting to get bothered by her too open personality which makes him uncomfortable. But because they love each other, they still get married. As a married couple, the problems double, Malek shares very little with his wife and this offends her. When she seeks friends for comfort, he gets jealous and possessive. She finds other ways to make her life bearable, but any pleasures she finds away from him makes him feel unwanted and weak, and he lashes out. He wants to fix the relationship but doesn't know how. At the end when she decides to leave, he finally cries for the first time since his mom asked him not to cry on his first day in nursery. This is when she finally feels like she's getting a glimpse of the real Malek. He talks about his feelings for the first time, and they start all over again with a fresh start.



Al-Arab newspaper – January 5, 2024 - by Mona Lamloom

“It’s not Okay to Cry” – A Young Adult Story putting a spotlight on a huge parenting mistake.

Rania Hussein Amin confronts the concepts of fake masculinity

“It’s not Okay to Cry” is an educational, psychological graphic story for young adults, showing girls the reason why some boys find it difficult to express their feelings, and showing boys the importance of expressing emotions, and raises awareness regarding social barriers that could be psychologically damaging.

The period of adolescence is extremely critical and requires for us to keep an open mind and be open to change, especially in light of the incorrect upbringing methods in various Arab societies, which is what the writer Rania Hussein Amin addresses in her book “It is Not Okay to Cry,” which was recently chosen as the best book (authored and illustrated) on the Egyptian Children’s Book Board’s EBBY list of the best publications of publishing houses in children’s and young adult books 2021-2023.

“You are a man, and a man does not cry” is a phrase we are accustomed to hearing in homes directed at males, thus contradicting human nature in expressing emotions. In our culture there is a distinction between the way feelings are expressed among the sexes, as if crying is reserved for females only. Add to this, the sentence “Crying is for girls” which aims at belittling the boy for sharing qualities with a girl. This is the topic that Rania Hussein Amin chose for her story for young adults, “It is not Okay to Cry,” for which she chose the comic format that is popular with this age group, to present to us through a soft narrative, a love story between a girl and a boy, how it began and how it continued and changed throughout the years. The story discusses how the early upbringing affects the lives of both parties, pointing out the importance of childhood experiences in shaping the personalities of young people and adults. The novel is illustrated by Hanan El-Karargy, and published by Nahdet Misr in 2022.

The Suppressed Crying

The cover of the book shows a profile of a girl with long black hair and inside her picture is a man crying. On his chest are cracks the same color as her hair as if her hair is filling those cracks. The muscular young man is holding his chest and crying, with an Adam’s apple appearing on his neck.

The illustrations of Hanan accompanying the text portray the feelings perfectly, for example showing Malik embracing himself inside a follicle of the mother’s black hair, hiding in it, feeling frightened.

As much as this story is important for young adults, it is also very important for parents to pay attention to the importance of encouraging children to express emotions and how dangerous suppressing emotions can be. Encouraging children to express emotions will later positively affect all of their relationships, while suppressing emotions will come out in many negative forms, like violence, weakness, confusion and irrational behaviors, and it also raises men with a false masculinity. One of the beautiful phrases describing true manhood that I believe should prevail is “We should not tell males not to cry, but we should teach them that a man does not make a woman cry.”

Although this story is not the first one that I have read by Rania Hussein Amin, this is the first time I am writing about one of her works, because this story has a spirit of its own. She wrote it with psychological depth and a great understanding of the stage she is writing about, and therefore it is full of emotions. As you read it, you will not be able to help but merge in an emotional state with the heroes and sympathize with them greatly.

Rania Hussein Amin started with the “Farhana” series for children, and she has about 50 books for different ages, from 3 to 16 years. She also wrote the book “With Lots of Love” for parents about raising happy children. She gives parenting sessions, and also offers workshops on writing for children. Rania

studied psychology at the American University in Cairo, worked as a psychologist in many schools, and now devotes herself full-time to writing and illustrating.

As for the illustrator, Hanan El-Karargy, she is a comic artist, character designer, and doll maker. She has participated in many Arab children's magazines with her work. She has also published comic books for adults, the most important of which is "The Locust Effect" with Dr. Ahmed Khaled Tawfiq, which won the comic book award at the Cairo Comics Festival, in addition to her participation in international festivals. Hanan inspired many through her lecture entitled "Developing Consciousness Through Creativity" at TEDxERU, and she also holds many art workshops for children and adults.

3- Thera' Thaqeel Fawqa Katfy (Heavy Arm on my Shoulder) (for ages 12-16)

The novel is about the friendship between two girls, "Samah and Samiha", both of who transfer from a governmental to an international school when they get first place in the preparatory certificate at the national level. The two girls face great difficulties because they are surrounded by children who are completely different from them and they are not accepted among them.

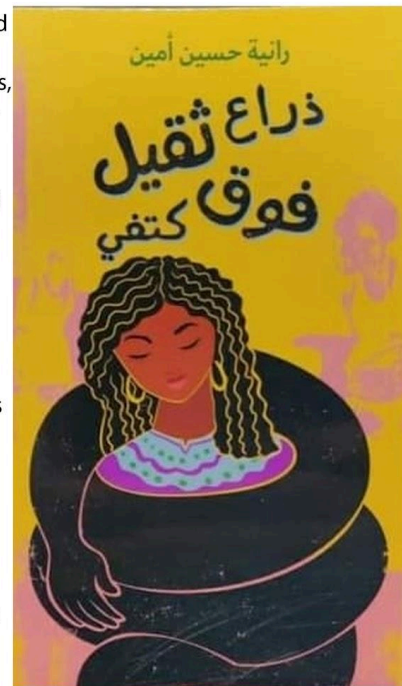
Samah tries to adapt to this different environment, but Samiha always pulls her away from them, wanting to keep her by her side, being very scared of losing her and ending up alone. Samiha becomes a burden and a huge obstacle for Samah that she tries hard to get rid of. But at the same time she feels safer with her than she feels with the strangers she's so attracted to, and she also pities her.

Then she falls in love with one of the boys in her class. As she distances herself more and more from Samiha, she falls more and more into a well of confusion. Strange things are happening to her. The boy she likes is only texting her, asking her not to talk to him at school until he manages to get out of his current relationship with a classmate.

At first, Samah is happy with his texts and is moving further and further away from Samiha. But the texts never stop, and they take over her life. She starts losing her newly made friends, she starts neglecting her studies, and even her perfect relationship with her parents and little brother are badly influenced. The boy is taking full control over her playing with her mind, and it's driving her crazy. He comes closer then pulls away, and finally when she decides to face him, and does so in front of all their class, he has no idea what she is talking about and humiliates her in front of everyone.

Feeling heartbroken and in total shock, she has no one else to run to except for Samiha, and breaks down and asks for her forgiveness. Samiha hugs her and is ready to forgive, when Samah sends a final message to the boy she liked, and Samiha's phone pings. The truth comes out:

Samiha was catfishing her all this time. The boy never sent her a single message. Samiha got her revenge. Samah is so shocked, runs away and standing on the bridge, on her way home, she drops her phone in the water. She gets rid of what has brought her so much misery for the past month. Finally, going home, she knows she will have to start over, and she can choose one of many, many paths in order to turn her life around.



<https://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=19112021&id=2453f977-26ca-42b5-a036-ae0eeb7e1fd0>

Al-Sherouk News

Friday 19 Nov 2021

"Heavy Arm on My Shoulder"

by Asmaa Saad

At the Heliopolis Library last week in the presence of a crowd of writers, intellectuals and public figures, rich discussions and interesting talks were taking place about children's and young adult literature. In the symposium, held by Dar Al-Shorouk, the novel "Heavy Arm on My Shoulder", by writer

Rania Hussein Amin, was discussed. It was moderated by Dr. Heba Qoura, a researcher in the humanities. Qoura began the talk by saying, "Rania Hussein is one of our most distinguished and cultured writers. There are not many writers in Egypt who focus on the age group of adolescence, which is a very critical age especially in this era of social media revolution.

Qoura asked the writer Rania Hussein Amin about the source of the idea for this book, and Rania answered that she got the idea after watching a documentary about a real incident that happened in America about two girls with a very complicated relationship, one of being very dominant and controlling. She added: "Usually when I write, I prefer to weave events from realistic data and true stories, which makes the story more alive and convincing."

Rania continued: "I started by imagining how this story would look like if those characters were living here in Egypt.. I continued by adding creative details that would make the story more interesting and suspenseful for the reader."

"Young adulthood is a stage in life where one is the most confused. At that age teenagers are eager to discover the world, but at the same time they are scared because in reality they are still just children." said Rania, explaining the reason for choosing to write for this age-group, saying: "Teen-agers try to enter the world of adults, but they face many conflicts. We are surprised that many of them enter a stage of depression, but we should realize that they are suddenly deprived of their carefree childhood, and are forced to dispense with the fun and excitement of life and succumb to academic pressures and all kinds of other pressures related to competing with others."

She adds: "I am interested in using novels to light the way for the young adults to help them understand those around them better and be able to live a healthier life on all psychological and behavioral levels."

When asked why she chose the title "Heavy Arm on My Shoulder" for her novel, she said "I chose this title after writing a large part of the story. By then it was apparants that this is the strongest and most important emotion in the whole novel: How one character feels about being controlled and manipulated by the other. How heavy it feels and how draining and suffocating. The heaviness is a feeling many who experienced this would immediately relate to it: when someone has their arm around your shoulder and you want to get rid of it."

Rania said, "It is very clear that excessive use of social media, as we often see these days, has an immediate and negative impact on concentration, studying, communication and interaction with others." She points out that young people have lost their ability to communicate properly because of their excessive use of social media, which has caused great harm to children and youth. There is no longer any real closeness in human relationships."



Regarding the link between self-confidence and social level, Rania Hussein confirmed that she wanted to convey a message for example through the father of one of the heroes when he showed disappointment in his daughter when she started caring too much about appearing more well off or classy. The value he wanted to instill in his family was always self-sufficiency, hard work and will-power. The novel shows how difficult it is to escape the clutches of manipulative and controlling people when you are needy and weak; and how only self-sufficient, strong people can stand in the face of such destructive characters.

When asked about the preparations she makes before writing to young adult literature, she said that the thing she cares about most is creating believable characters, the main ones of which should have some unique and interesting, but also relatable characteristics. She describes the characters in detail, and tries to understand them in depth before working on the novel.

Writer Rania Hussein confirmed that most children's problems are primarily caused by their parents. Giving examples from her novel, she describes how her main character, Samah, was raised by loving and caring parents, but being too protected she couldn't see the warning signs before getting too deep into the relationship with Samiha, who was raised by neglectful and selfish parents. This resulted into a relationship between a jealous, manipulative and controlling character who is trying so hard to crush the self-esteem of her friend.

Writer Rania Hussein warned about controlling people, saying that when they don't get what they want, they can become very vengeful and dangerous. She points out that we must realize this from the beginning of the relationship and deal with them intelligently, cautiously, and carefully.

One of the attendees asked if controlling people can change to the better if they get enough care and love outside the family, and she replied that better results happen when the reform comes from the family. External parties could be influential but not as much as the parents.

Rania Hussein Amin concluded by saying: We ultimately want to raise children who are highly aware of who they are, who are aware of their problems and what is going on around them, and who can easily understand the motives of others. She said we should not diminish the ability of books to influence the young in that regard.

Rania Hussein Amin (born 1965) is an Egyptian children's book writer and illustrator. She is best known for her Farhana book series, which she also illustrates. Her drawings and writings have been published in Al-Delta newspaper and Qatar Al-Nada magazine. She has also written many books and designed illustrations for books by well-known authors, such as *Me and Me* by Michel Hanna. Amin was also an educational figure in her professional career, contributing to the education of children with special needs, and through her books and the character Farhana that she designed, she calls for practices that parents should follow when raising their children.

https://www.dostor.org/3478906#google_vignette

Al-Dostour – 13 June 2021 - Khaled Hammad

Heavy Arm on my Shoulder

Rania Hussein Amin discusses many youth issues

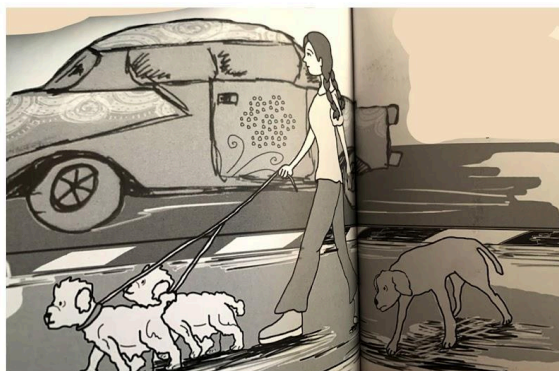
(Summary of the book)...

“Heavy Arm on my Shoulder” discusses many issues that concern young people, mainly the controlling type of friendship and the need to stand strong and be aware of their manipulative personality. It also discusses the issue of young people’s immersion in social media to the point of distancing themselves from family and friends, and everything that is real in their lives. One more topic is the problem of parental separation and the child’s feeling of alienation in his home due to the parents’ preoccupations or their absence from home for long periods of time. It also points out to the importance of getting closer to our parents and strengthening our relationship with them. Another important topic is the emotional relationships at this age and the necessity of dealing with them wisely. It also talks about dealing with others belonging to a different social class, and the necessity of trying to understand them, and many other topics.

4- Faqed El-Hob Yo'teeh (He who lacks Love, Gives it) (for ages 9-12)

This story talks about the life of 3 homeless characters living on the streets of Cairo: A dog, a 12 year old boy and an old woman. The three characters tell their stories in different chapters, how they came to live on the street, what their experience is like and what their dreams are. Then they tell about how they met, the three of them, and how they helped each other start building up their lives again, and how they got out of their misery and loneliness. It all started by them giving each other the love they needed, which gave them the power to work on changes. The woman finds work as a cook, the boy goes back to school, and they take the dog in to live with them. It's a happy ending to this sad story.

The story is illustrated by three highschool students.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7L53plhhw8&t=8s>

Video on YouTube: an Interview by a ten-year-old student with the author Rania Hussein Amin on her book "He who Lacks Love, Gives it"

Q

My name is Nadia Sherif and I would like to interview the author Rania Hussein Amin. Hello, Rania.

A

Hi, glad to meet you.

Q

I have read your book "He who Lacks Love, Gives it" and I wanted to ask you a few questions regarding the story. I will start by saying that I loved this book, because it is talking about real people and animals and their lives, and I found it very interesting.

I would also like to give the audience an idea about the story. It actually consists of three stories, the story of a dog, of a boy and of an old woman, who found themselves forced to live on the street. And despite the problems they had in their past and continue to have daily, they found their way to love. There's a question I would like to ask you: Where did you get this idea from?

A

The idea came from a number of incidents that happened in my life, from things I experienced and things I observed related to people and animals living on the street. A lot of what I saw was heartbreaking and some things really touched my heart.

If we start with dogs, I have always had dogs and living with them day in, day out made me understand how they function and how deeply they feel. And so seeing dogs on the street being subjected to so much danger and abuse from humans is very sad. In Egypt there are so many of them, and unfortunately not many people like them, and those people have no idea how much better our lives can be if we just made friends with the dogs. We can really make each other happy, the dogs and us. But people don't even try to approach them kindly.

As for the boy who lives on the street, I have also spent some time with those boys. I used to visit a center where street children go to eat and get medical help. I talked with a number of them about their experiences and what they told me was truly horrific. You can only imagine how cruel their life at home could be, if they find the streets with all the dangers they encounter there, safer than their own home. And in the end, this is a child we are talking about. They are no different than any other child, like you for example. They also need care and love from us. It is not ok to pass by them on the street and frown or even just ignore them and treat them as if they are invisible.



No, this is totally not ok. It hurts too much.

As for the old woman living on the street, I want to read you a poem I wrote about an experience I had with an old woman I met daily on my way to drop my daughter off to school. This is exactly as it happened: *(Arabic poem roughly translated to English)*

Sitting in a dusty place, staring in front of her,
Dressed up in layers of rags in all colors and shapes
A plastic bag beside her, don't know what's in it
Not moving, not blinking and not uttering a sound

Passing by her daily, and every single time
I look and I find her, and I don't know why I slow down
Should I ask her? But why? How can my question help?
So, I leave and I forget about her until the next day comes

Day after day, month after month, and a year passes by
And I'm surprised that the woman neither moves nor dies
And one day I see a dog standing a few meters away
All alone, without a friend or a home

And when I reach him too, I slow down, no idea why
He looks at me, as if asking: What is it that you want?
And I continue driving, and days and days pass
And one day I find him tied up, and one day he is bleeding

One day he looks tired, the next day he is happy,
One day he is hungry and one day he's been beaten
And she? She's the same: No movement and no life
No words, no blinking, no screams and no sound

Until one day I pass and I slow down when I reach her
I find the dog sitting with his head in her lap
I was happy. Finally someone has acknowledged her!
Someone sat beside her, someone cared for her!

And for the first time she looks at me, and my eye catches hers
And for the first time I feel that she regained her soul
The happiness in her eyes, because she's sitting by his side
The dog did what no one else was capable of doing

No one sat beside her and asked her how she's doing
Asked her: Are you hurting? Or: Why are you here?
Have you been kicked out? Beaten? What's on your mind?
I'm sure she wanted to tell her story, I'm sure she needed to talk

The next day I passed where she had been sitting
I found no traces of her, and none of her dog
The dog is the one who managed to move her
The dog is the one! Where has he been hiding?

Inside me so many feelings, big and contradictory
Feelings of happiness? Feelings of jealousy?
I still wanted to do so much for you
You left me behind, as if I am useless

So, what in the world stopped me?
Was the question on my mind.
I left, not knowing if I should cry
Over you, or over me.

That's it. So, to answer your question: The idea of my book came after I experienced many things, and this is one of them.

Q

I liked that it was three students who illustrated this book. What made you choose this idea?

A

Many young people are very talented, and I have been considering working with them for some time. And when I thought of this book, I felt their illustrations could be suitable for this story, to give it more of a primitive and simple touch, similar to the characters of the story. I hired a well-known illustrator, Sahar Abdallah, to guide them, and I worked with them as well, illustrating some pages, and I think the results came out pretty well.

Q

What is the comment that you liked most that somebody said about your story?

A

The comment I liked most was from a student who told me that after finishing the book he felt like he wanted to do so much to help, especially children who live on the street. And that he decided to be actively helping them when he grows up. I felt that this was something huge and I was really happy with that comment.

Q

And what was the comment that you disliked?

A

There was no comment that I disliked. Even if it's negative, and especially if said by a child, I always consider it guiding me in order not to repeat that mistake. So, what a boy once told me is that, in spite of the happy ending, the story was too depressing. Actually, this was something I was trying to avoid while writing the story, but I might not have succeeded 100%. So, now I am always careful to add some humor or lighten up the heavy or sad topics. It's not my intention at all to upset children.

Q

Did you receive any offers to turn the book to a movie or play?

The story was played once in a school event, but other than that, no, I did not receive any offers. But of course I will not refuse offers if I receive any. I was actually thinking of turning it into a script for a play myself. The only difficulty will be the dog. It's not easy to find solutions for animals in a play.

Q

What is your next project? (Talking about "Outside the Circle")

goodreads

May 7, 2018

The book is interesting and enjoyable. It contains three stories in one story... It reflects and contradicts the saying that "the one who lacks something does not give it"... In life, despite its difficulty, for all beings, whether human or animal, we lack the sufficient amount of compassion, empathy and love towards each other....

The book urges spreading love and happiness in this life. Its words are simple and light, but of great value. Personally, after I finished the book, I searched within myself and my feelings for things that I miss about myself and instill in my children. I found many, praise be to God.

The book, in terms of paper quality, is excellent. It contains nice drawings by young artists. Although at first glance, the book gives a childish look. I congratulate the author, Rania, on this book..

July 21, 2019

A book for young people, but also suitable for adults. It tells about the absence of mercy and kindness in society through the story of a child, a dog, and an elderly woman. With the utmost simplicity and smoothness, it explains many details without complexity or resonant sentences. It is wonderful and penetrates the heart. I highly recommend it. I finished it in 40 minutes.

June 5, 2017

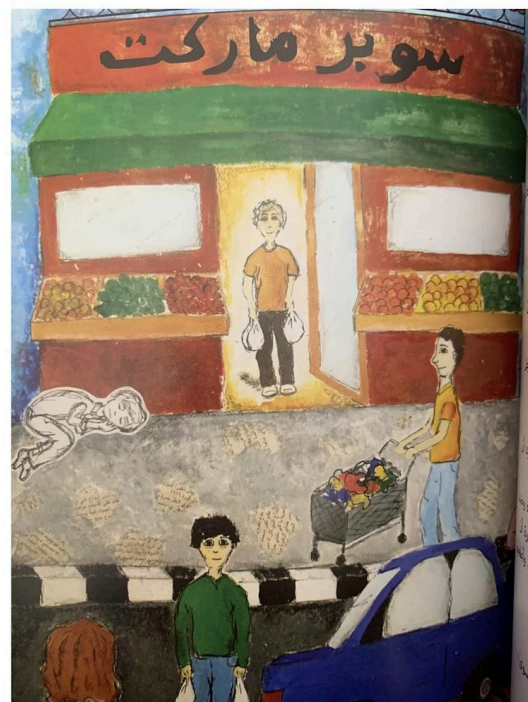
A touching story written in a smooth style.

December 5, 2022

Amazing book!!

July 16, 2020

One of the most beautiful novels you can read,



5- Lematha Hathehi El-Kalba Belthat? (Why this Dog in Particular?)
(for ages 4-8)

Ramy wants a new dog. He and his father walk to a petshop, and on his way there he sees a stray dog hiding behind a trash can. She's cold and scared and Ramy puts his jacket around her. When he looks in her eyes he immediately falls in love. In the petshop the vet tries to convince him to buy all kinds of breeds, and lists their favorable characteristics. Ramy is confused and does not know which to choose. They are all lovely, but finally he steps out of the shop and points at the stray dog and says: I want her. His father is astonished and tries to talk him out of his decision, but Ramy insists, so finally his dad takes the dog home. The vet tells them she will give them a surprise within a few days. Her tummy is bloated but Ramy and his parents believe she's sick. Everyone who sees the dog asks Ramy: Why this dog in particular? And he always answers: Because I love her. But Ramy is frustrated because the dog is always tired. She doesn't want to walk or play or do the things he hoped to do with his pet friend. Still he loved her dearly and continued taking care of her. One morning he woke up to find that she gave birth to 6 puppies, and soon she was well again, and Ramy found himself the lucky owner of six healthy puppies and their mother. She was well again and they played, walked and cuddled together. At the end, Ramy asked himself what he did to deserve such luck, when all he gave her was love.



https://www.instagram.com/mama.bear.uae/p/CUw5ngGpZUg/?img_index=1

Mama Bear (mama.bear.uae)

about: Why this Dog in Particular?

In my humble opinion, Yes, there are many writers in our Arab world who can write for children and young adults as well. Many of them succeed in writing for both age-groups that are in some ways alike, but in many ways very different. But if we look closer at their work, we'll find out that each one of those writers has a specific comfort zone and age group that they are more comfortable writing for, in a better, more successful and more beautiful way.

In my opinion, Rania Hussein Amin's "comfort zone" covers all age groups, from the very young ones to the young adults, and she moves from one to the other in a very free and easy manner. Her words carry her own style, ideas and her strong emotions for the target group without fail every time.

(Summary of the story)

A wonderful story, written in a style that attracts children from the beginning to the end. It gives children the green light to listen to their hearts and humanity, no matter in what circumstances. It contains the atmosphere of mercy and kindness, and a very comforting thought: that God connects us to each other in order to be kind and helpful and make each other happy.

The wonderful illustrations are done by Aly El Zeini who proves in every new book that he is one of the best.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/58655355>

goodreads

The young boy's action defy the stereotype that stray dogs are "bad" dogs, and it delivers the message that stray dogs can in fact bring happiness and love to the household, the writer does this magnificently through naming the dog Farha which literally translates to happiness and showing that these dogs are clearly misunderstood.

The book also offers the unique point of view of the child and what it means to that child to have and care for a dog, we follow along as the boy navigates his emotions, both the positive and the negative ones. And as he learns to gain the responsibility of his, and come to understand the effect of loving an animal, and maybe the effect of love in general.

The story line is one with which many children can connect with and understand, and while it offers great meaning and delivers big messages in a simple way, it may have understated what it means to own a pet and the responsibility that it entails. Other than that, the relevance and delivery are spot on.

<https://www.arabicbookamonth.com/products/why-this-dog-specifically-%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B0%D8%A7-%D9%87%D8%B0%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B0%D8%A7%D8%AA>

One Arabic Book A Month

Rania Amin amazes us once more with a story about a boy with a big heart. He goes against the tide, and adopts a lonely street dog instead of purchasing a fancy dog from the pet shop. Why this dog specifically is beautifully illustrated by Aly Elziny, and helps the reader see beauty in animals and people.