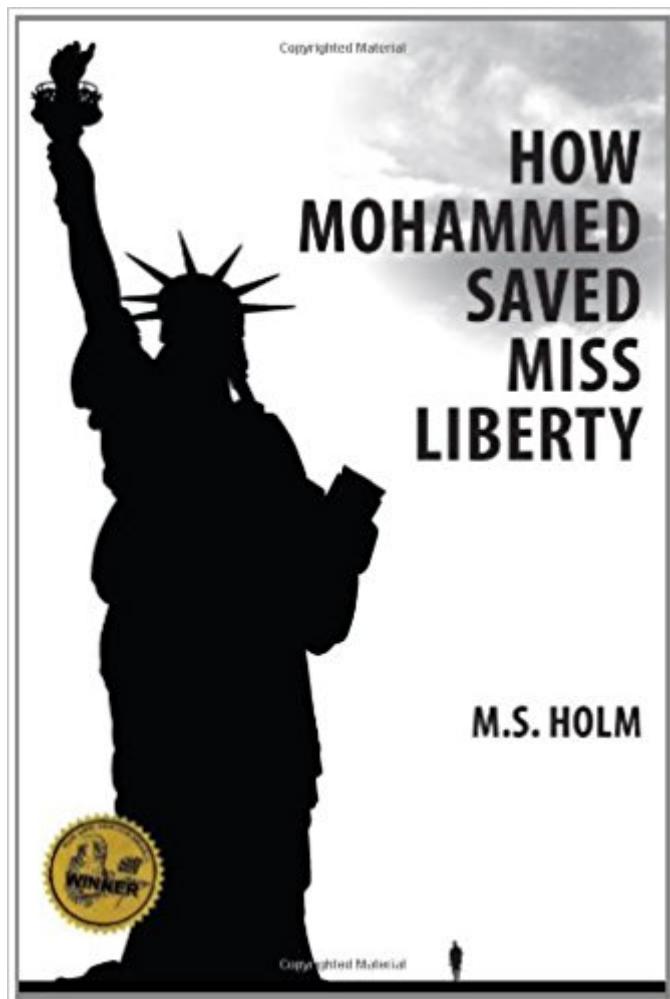


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How Mohammed Saved Miss Liberty



Synopsis

A fourteen-year-old boy questions his Muslim identity after 9/11 and makes a surprising discovery about himself and his place in America.FINALIST NATIONAL BEST BOOKS 2008 AWARDS2008 ERIC HOFFER BOOK AWARD WINNERFOREWORD BOOK OF THE YEAR FINALIST

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

How Mohammed Saved Miss Liberty addresses the issue of anti-Muslim discrimination following September 11, 2001. Told from the perspective of a Muslim teen, the novel explores how life for fourteen-year-old Mohammed Ahmed and his family changes after 9/11. How Mohammed Saved Miss Liberty also tells a unique story about one of our most treasured national monuments--the Statue of Liberty. --USA Book NewsLife is idyllic for a young Muslim Ohio boy who does well in school, helps his father at his service station, and dreams of seeing the Statue of Liberty. When the 9/11 terrorist attacks strike and the statue is closed due to heightened security, Mohammed fears he will never get to see his statue. Already in New York City on a class trip, Mohammed decides he is too close to go home empty handed. He sneaks off from the group, stows away on a crew boat heading for the island, and stands beneath Miss Liberty just for a minute, he says but he misses the last boat and spends the night sleeping under Miss Liberty's watchful stare. A storm starts wind and rain so strong you can't see. Is this the storm from his dreams? Will he come this far only to drown? Or will he get caught, a young Muslim boy sneaking around a cherished national monument carrying a Qur'an and no identification. --Eric Hoffer Award Committee Mohammed couldn't wait to

visit New York City. He dreamed of the Statue of Liberty at night, and during the day he fantasized about the grand city and all that he would do and see there. Plans were underway for the eighth grader to take a trip with the Young Engineers Club of his junior high school, but then 9/11 happened. *How Mohammed Saved Miss Liberty* is the story of a Muslim family in small-town Ohio. M. S. Holm tells of the friendships and hardships Mohammed and his family encounter in the aftermath of the tragic events. The community feels confusion, anger, and immense sadness at the loss of lives. Mohammed's father knows times will be difficult for a while. He tells Mohammed, Son, trouble comes when people are blinded by anger and hate, when they cannot see the good men differently from the bad ones. We are Muslims--peace-loving Muslims--and we are Americans too. Everything will be all right for us. *Tawakkul 'ala Allah*. But things aren't all right for the Ahmed family. Mohammed endures jokes, hatred, snickers, and even physical violence. His father's business, Ahmed Automotive, is boycotted, bringing financial problems to the family. To make matters worse, the trip to New York is cancelled. Holm writes about Mohammed and his family with much attention to detail and cultural nuance. He is knowledgeable about Muslim religious rituals and practices, and also gives insight into Mohammed's mother's Mexican culture. His storytelling is honest, believable, and compelling and his likeable characters lead the reader to feel compassion for the family, especially in light of the injustice and hatred they encounter. Holm brings great twists and anticipation to the story, building on each of the negative events, but also emphasizing the care and love that Mohammed receives from most of his neighbors, friends, and teachers. The story reaches its suspenseful climax when Mohammed finally makes it to New York. He plans to visit Miss Liberty, even though it is not on his club's agenda and the park has been closed for security reasons. This episode is full of tension, risk, and determination. *How Mohammed Saved Miss Liberty* can help show teens and young adults the complexities of relationships, and the possibility for good will toward friends, neighbors, and humanity. It also draws attention to the realities we face in this angry world. While some people choose hatred, the world is really full of kindness, acceptance, and generosity. **FIVE STARS OUT OF FIVE** --ForeWord Reviews

M. S. Holm is the author of *The Arborist* and *When Your School Bus Goes to Mexico*, a Moonbeam Award winner.

Although the author seems to have tried hard to give an authentic picture of the Muslim American experience, as a Muslim American I was disappointed to find so very many inaccuracies in the book that made it totally unreadable to the point that I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. It's evident that

she did a lot of academic/online research, but clearly no one reviewed the book to show that her understanding of practices and understanding is very incorrect and confused.

I purchased this title after reading M.S. Holm's first book, his Christmas novella *THE ARBORIST*. I was not disappointed. *HOW MOHAMMED SAVED MISS LIBERTY* is another fine example of young adult fiction written with social conscience. I'm surprised it has not been more extensively reviewed, in light of its popularity with Muslim teens. It has acquired a sort of word-of-mouth "classic" status among those who experienced America's sudden disaffection with all things Arab and Muslim after September 11, 2001. An interesting turn, considering the author is neither Arab nor Muslim. The book tells the very believable story of what everyone of Middle Eastern descent went through after the terrorist attacks. Its relevance is no less diminished ten years later, as was revealed by the resurgence of anti-Muslim sentiments following the Fort Hood shootings. This is a must read for all middle school students. The book is honest, the writing pure, the story compelling and suspenseful. Lady Liberty literally comes to life in a way that only a fourteen-year-old boy could imagine.

Though intended for middle grade and young adult readers, *How Mohammed Saved Miss Liberty* is an welcome novel for readers of all ages and backgrounds. After the tragedy of the September 11th attacks, life in Ohio's small town changes drastically for fourteen-year-old Mohammed and his family. Their masjid is vandalized; their family business is boycotted; he has to endure taunts and threats at middle school for being a Muslim; and worst of all, his trip to New York City with the Young Engineers Club is cancelled. Mohammed is crushed over the loss of his boyhood dream to see Miss Liberty; even when the Young Engineer's trip is suddenly rescheduled, he learns the statue is closed to the public. Determined to realize his dream of going to see it, he dares to break the rules and visit Liberty Island - not a safe thing to do in the currently hostile political climate! A thoughtful novel that invites the reader to see the world from a different perspective, and a much-needed contribution to children's literature shelves in the wake of hysteria or predispositions to assume the worst about all Muslims in the wake of 9/11.

Saving Miss Liberty tiptoes into the post-9/11 world of an Islamic family. The economic and social adversity is poignant. The author, however, fails to craft a well-planned odyssey for Mohammed.

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