

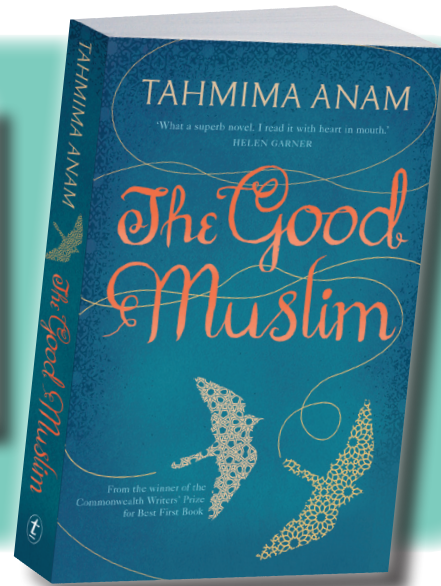
The Good Muslim

Tahmima Anam

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RRP AUS \$32.95, NZ \$40.00

Fiction, Trade Paperback



Praise

'A major talent.' *Observer*

'In this book of searing beauty, Tahmima Anam shows us a family searching for ways to navigate through the aftermath of war; in the process she takes us on an unforgettable journey through a young nation trying to define itself.' Kamila Shamsie, author of *Burnt Shadows*

'Tahmima Anam's unflinching examination of the agonies of post-colonial nation-building sets the intimacy of personal life against a backdrop of national and religious conflict. Delicate, heart-wrenching and poetic, this is a novel of great poise and power.' Tash Aw, author of *The Harmony Silk Factory* and *Map of the Invisible World*

About Tahmima Anam

Tahmima Anam was born in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her first novel, *A Golden Age*, was shortlisted for the *Guardian* First Book Award and the Costa First Novel Prize, and was the winner of the 2008 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book. Her writing has been published in *Granta*, the *New York Times*, and the *Guardian*. She lives in London.

Synopsis

In the dying days of a brutal civil war, Sohail Haque stumbles upon an abandoned building. Inside he finds a young woman whose story will haunt him for a lifetime to come . . .

Almost a decade later, Sohail's sister Maya returns home after a long absence to find her beloved brother transformed. While Maya has stuck to her revolutionary ideals, Sohail has shunned his old life to become a

charismatic religious leader. And when Sohail decides to send his son to madrasa, the conflict between them comes to a devastating climax.

Set in Bangladesh at a time when religious fundamentalism is on the rise, *The Good Muslim* is an epic story about faith, family and the long shadow of war.

Questions for discussion

1. What do you make of the title? Who is 'The Good Muslim'?
2. After the 1971 war of independence, Bangladesh is a country on the brink of change. Do you think the characters in this novel represent the potential for change?
3. Do you think Zaid is more like his father or his aunt?
4. How do you think Zaid's life would have differed had Maya not come back to Dhaka?
5. Which section of Bangladeshi society is represented by Piya?
6. Who do you think is the most sympathetic character in the novel? Who is the most interesting?
7. How would you describe the relationship between Maya and Rehana? Does Rehana's illness bring them closer together? Sohail and Maya each have a different approach to helping their mother at this difficult time. Discuss the different coping strategies used by the siblings. Who is responsible for saving Rehana?
8. *The Good Muslim* is a novel strongly based around ideas of love and loss. Which of these – love or loss – ultimately determines the paths taken by Maya and Sohail?



9. Do you think Maya and Sohail make their peace with each other at the end of the novel? Did you find the conclusion satisfying?
10. What do the concluding chapters tell you about the future of Bangladesh? Do you think the author's outlook is positive?

Further Reading

A Golden Age by Tahmima Anam

The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy

The Inheritance of Loss by Kiran Desai

The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid

Resources

www.tahmima.com

www.canongate.tv