

It Ain't So Awful, Falafel

By Firoozeh Dumas

Annotation

Cindy, a middle schooler whose given name is Zomorod, moves to a new California city with her Iranian parents. Set in the late 70's / early 80's, Cindy has to learn to navigate middle school, balance new friendships, and stay true to her parents and culture all in the face of anti-Iranian racism after the Iran hostage crisis.

Book Talk

She's moved to a new town, is starting a new school, and Zomorod, a.k.a. "Cindy" is an Iranian-American who has just given herself a new name. Now all she needs is some good friends and a way to navigate her new middle school. But when events cause some to be biased towards Iranians, "Cindy" learns fitting in may not be as easy.

Book Trailers

- No book trailer as of March 2017. This is more of an interview with the author (almost 25 minutes long): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8dBlrcTe8o>

Author on the Internet

- Website: <http://firoozehdumas.com/>
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/firoozehdumas?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Firoozeh-Dumas-Author-Page-266725127048586/>
- Tumblr: <https://www.tumblr.com/tagged/firoozeh-dumas>
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/firoozeh_dumas/?hl=en

Items to use in a library display

- Picture of Jimmy Carter
- Newspaper article from late 1970's
- Girl Scout uniform
- *Of Mice and Men* - book

Book Club Discussion Questions/Topics

- Cindy makes some very good friends throughout the story. In what ways do Cindy and her friends demonstrate their friendship for each other?
- Why is it difficult for Cindy to fit in at first? What are some things she does to fit in and build friendships?
- Cindy's family states that they don't necessarily practice their religion, but they do practice "kindness". In which ways do characters demonstrate kindness?

- Cindy often complains that she has to translate for her mother. Why does Cindy feel this way?
- The novel includes a lot of humor. What are some scenes that you thought were funny?

First Line of the Book:

- “Today’s Sunday and we’re moving, again.”

Non-Fiction Companion Title(s)

- *Our Man in Tehran: The True Story Behind the Secret Mission to Save Six Americans During the Iran Hostage Crisis and the Foreign Ambassador Who Worked with the CIA to Bring Them Home* by Robert A. Wright ****NOTE: Adult title**

What to Read Next

- *90 Miles to Havana* by Enrique Flores-Galbis
- *My Basmati Bat Mitzvah* by Paula J. Freedman
- *Saving Kabul Corner* by N.H. Senzai

Other Books by this Author:

- *Laughing Without an Accent: Adventures of an Iranian American, at Home and Abroad (Adult)*
- *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America (Adult)*

Additional Resources

- Music: Late 70’s / Early 80’s pop music
- Art/craft activity: Origami, Make caramel apples
- Interview with the author:
<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/70073-q-a-with-firoozeh-dumas.html>
- Interview with the author:
http://www.hbook.com/2016/07/talks-with-roger/firoozeh-dumas-talks-with-roger/#_
- Lesson ideas: Research the Iran Hostage Crisis or the Reagan election and report on what you learned.