



## It Ain't So Awful, Falafel

*Firoozeh Dumas*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

# It Ain't So Awful, Falafel

*Firoozeh Dumas*

## It Ain't So Awful, Falafel Firoozeh Dumas

Zomorod (Cindy) Yousefzadeh is the new kid on the block . . . for the fourth time. California's Newport Beach is her family's latest perch, and she's determined to shuck her brainy loner persona and start afresh with a new Brady Bunch name—Cindy. It's the late 1970s, and fitting in becomes more difficult as Iran makes U.S. headlines with protests, revolution, and finally the taking of American hostages. Even mood rings and puka shell necklaces can't distract Cindy from the anti-Iran sentiments that creep way too close to home. A poignant yet lighthearted middle grade debut from the author of the best-selling *Funny in Farsi*.

## It Ain't So Awful, Falafel Details

Date : Published May 3rd 2016 by Clarion Books

ISBN :

Author : Firoozeh Dumas

Format : Kindle Edition 389 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Childrens, Middle Grade, Young Adult, Fiction, Realistic Fiction

 [Download It Ain't So Awful, Falafel ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online It Ain't So Awful, Falafel ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online It Ain't So Awful, Falafel Firoozeh Dumas**

---

## From Reader Review It Ain't So Awful, Falafel for online ebook

### **Sarah says**

I read both of Firoozeh Dumas earlier adult books and enjoyed them both. Having worked with two Persian women I am intrigued by the future and an ardent fan of their food. Two thumbs up for anything with eggplant! I must say I liked this middle grade novel even better. I zipped through the pages, it was immensely enjoyable and very easy to relate to "Cindy" as the protagonist dubs herself after struggling through life in America as Zomorod. Additionally, I learned a lot more about the Iranian Revolution and events taking place in the late '70s and early '80s. Really hope Dumas will treat readers to further installments in Cindy's life.

---

### **Mary Louise says**

Zomorod Yousefzadeh is moving again the summer before sixth grade from Compton, California to a condo in Newport Beach, California in the late 1970s, because her father is an Iranian petroleum engineer relocated to America. This time Zomorod is adopting the name "Cindy" from the Brady Bunch because Americans can't pronounce her long Iranian name. Besides her own crisis of trying to fit in, there is a world wide crisis instigated by her own home country--Iran. This crisis of holding Americans hostages in Iran dominates Zomorod's family life, and affects her friendships.

The humorous situations "Cindy" found herself in made me laugh--from translating for her mother; to suntanning when she was already dark and mistaken for a Mexican.

A free history lesson was a bonus. Even though I lived the 1970s I was busy raising a family and they were my world at the time.

Thanks to the author for sharing some of her experiences through an entertaining and enlightening story.

---

### **Morvarid says**

Yet another brilliant novel by Firoozeh Dumas! I love how effortless she writes and how easily she can make you laugh or cry. Seeing the revolution from another perspective was a great and strange experience.

---

### **Abby Johnson says**

Loved this one!

This book is a great mix of funny and serious as Cindy (Zomorod) navigates her middle-school years as an Iranian living in California just before and during the Iranian Revolution and subsequent Iranian Hostage Crisis. It reminded me of one of my favorite books I read over and over again as a child - Judy Blume's *Just as Long as We're Together* - for a combination of the time period (historical now, contemporary then) and the loosely plotted friendship story. As the Iranian Hostage Crisis starts, the book takes a more serious tone as Cindy and her family experience new prejudices and bigotry from some of those around them.

I will definitely be adding this one to the booktalking roster for next school year! Highly recommended.

---

### **Michele Knott says**

I lost count how many times I laughed out loud.

---

### **Ms. Yingling says**

ARC from Baker and Taylor

Zomorod's family has been in the US for a while, since her father's job as a petroleum engineer has taken them out of their native Iran in the late 1970s. When they move from Compton to the more well-to-do Newport Beach, she decides to reinvent herself as "Cindy" and try to be more "American". This is hard, especially since her mother doesn't speak much English and insists on giving their new neighbors Iranian food that isn't quite what the US palate expects. She has a good summer hanging out with a neighbor, Original Cindy, but when school starts, Original Cindy says that she can't be seen with her in public. Luckily, Cindy meets Carolyn, who is super nice and shares many of the same interests. Carolyn's family is everything that Cindy wishes hers was, and spends a lot of time hanging out at her house. When the political situation in Iran becomes tense, Cindy is often asked to tell about her country, but when hostages are taken, some people at school give her a hard time, and a few nasty things happen at her home, too, although she and her father hide this from her mother. Her father loses his job with the American company and can't find another one because of the political tensions, so even though they don't want to return to the political unrest in Iran, they start the process of moving back. Luckily, they get help from some unexpected sources and are able to stay in the US.

This is loosely based on Dumas' own life, and we must be exactly the same age, since I was in middle school when the Iranian hostage situation was going on. I, too, remember watching the nightly news and hearing about how many days the people had been in captivity, and remember how it affected the election that year. Cindy is often asked by Cindy's family to explain what is going on in Iran, and while the sections describing the history verge on the didactic, they were also very interesting, and a great overview of the events of the time. Other details about the 1970s, like the clothing and trends, make this a great choice for an entertaining historical read.

This will be interesting also to students who are curious about the immigrant experience as well. Cindy loves her parents, but is embarrassed by their accents and their behavior. She is also tired of translating for her mother, and wishes that her mother didn't cry all the time. The neighbors, teachers, and students are all understanding and supportive of Cindy, and there is even a mention of a teacher who brought Cindy a Halloween costume in elementary school because her family didn't understand the tradition, something which happened in the author's own life. This is a great example of those of us whose ancestors were not recent immigrants.

It's hard enough to fit in with the crowd during middle school when your parents are from the US, and middle school readers love stories about how difficult this process is. Adding an immigrant perspective is a great way to broaden their outlook and make them more compassionate to their classmates. Hand this fun book to readers who enjoyed Budhos' Tell Us We're Home, Ross' Kiki and Jacques, Senzai's Saving Kabul Corner or even Traci Jones' Finding My Place and tell them to see if their parents have the Saturday Night Fever soundtrack to play while they are reading it!

## Pamela says

*"Why let people only see the worst of the world? That's just upsetting and scary. It's not even the whole truth. If you're going to show bad news, show the good stuff too. It's just as important - actually more important."*

Such a fabulous book! *It Ain't so Awful, Falafel* is a thought provoking, culture rich, retro tween novel that adults can enjoy too. I laughed . . . I cried . . . I felt the twinge of peer rejection, cultural frustrations, and parental embarrassments, right alongside Zomorod. After all, it's awkward enough being a middle school girl, without adding racial/cultural prejudices and hostilities to the mix.

*"Not everyone hates . . . People who hate just happen to be the loudest."*

This semi-autobiographical story is based on the author's tween years in Newport Beach during the late seventies and early eighties; a time when relations between Iran and America deteriorated rapidly, provoked by: Iranian revolution; the ousting of the Shah; the militant rise of Khomeini; oil embargoes and a long enduring hostage crisis. Not a good time to be an Iranian in America. Or an American in Iran, either. In fact, it wasn't even safe for many Iranians to live in Iran.

However, despite the oil/hostage crisis being a pivotal and highly relevant element, hostility isn't the crux of the story. The story taken as a whole is about building friendships, overcoming cultural, racial, and economic obstacles and prejudices, celebrating diversity, love for family. And, as the author states in her end notes, it's also about history - yours, mine, ours:

*"I used to think that history was just about memorizing dates of battles, but history is really stories about people and the battles we fight within. It's about all that stuff you don't see on the evening news. It's about hopes, dreams, and popular music. The life you're living right now will someday be history. How will you tell it?"*

FIVE \*\*\*\*\* Tween Terrific, Retro Fiction, Culture/History Awareness \*\*\*\*\* STARS

---

## Kelly says

A really fabulous middle grade read about growing up in 1979 America as an Iranian during the Iranian Crisis. Cindy's voice is funny and perceptive without ever being too smart for 11/12. The situations and challenges with friends, with American customs, and with wanting to be a hero in your own family are realistic.

Readers who are interested in this part of the world or the history here would do well with Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey which is about the Turkish revolutions; it might be over the heads of middle grade readers, but it certainly wouldn't be for all. Obviously Iran and Turkey are not the same, but the experiences as insider and outsider here make fascinating comparisons to one another, especially as Dumas's story does touch upon Turkey's relationship with Iran.

I've read both of Dumas's memoirs and it was neat to see her using her own experience to color this story, but not in any way that was a self-insert (and there's a really great author's note about this, too).

### Jane says

I really enjoyed this. I listened to the audiobook, narrated by Dumas, and she read it perfectly. I'm definitely going to try out her other books.

Oddly enough, this was the second ya book I've read this year set in the US during the Iran hostage crisis. I find it a bit strange because the kids I know who read at this level would not be very interested in a book set in that time period. But lots of adults my age would like the trip down memory lane.

I think this book is actually somewhat relevant to today's current backlash against outsiders. It was interesting to see how this semi-autobiographical account sounded so similar to some of the nasty rhetoric I hear now about refugees and immigrants. Throughout time it seems we repeat the same vile behaviour towards those who are new or different.

---

### Maryam says

I loved this book. I laughed a lot, it had its sad moments too.

It's the life of a normal immigrant middle-schooler and challenges she faces like when she has to play translator role for her parents, or when she is the new kid at school and tries to melt in. At the same time it tells the story of my home country in a period that changed everything for it and us(the people).

When revolution happens in Iran, US and Iran relations were ruined forever and it shows how it affected normal people's lives. Although this books is about almost 40 years ago it can relate to today's world too. With all conflicts going on all over the world and so many people far from their country by choice or by force.

---

### Parisa Bookworm says

???? ?? ???? ?? ???? ?????? ???? ?????? ?????? ???? ?? ?? ?????? ?????? ????

???? ?????? ?????? ??? ??????. ???? ?? ?????? ??? ?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????

?????? ?????? ?????? ?? ??? ?? ?????? ??? ?????? ?????? ? ???? ?? ?? ?? ??????.

???? ?? ??? ?????? ?? ? ??? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ?? ??? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ?? ??? ?????? ???

?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????? ????. ???? ?? ?? ?????? ?????? ??????

? ???? ?????? ??? ?? ?????? ?????? ??? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????

???? ?? ?????? ?? ?? ?????? ??? ??? ??????

? ??? ?? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ??? ?????? ?? ??????

??? ?????? ?????? ? ???? ?? ?????? ??????

---

### Raina says

Booktalked this one to middle schoolers in Winter 2017.

We talked about pivotal days in your life - how some days you remember forever. Mine was 9/11. Some of the kids were days their parents told them they were getting a divorce, or major injuries. One said the Paris attacks of 2015.

For Zomorod/Cindy, it's the first day of the Iranian Hostage Crisis of the late 1970s.

It sounds very dramatic, but this book is more meandering than that. I read this book on lunch breaks from work, which might have colored my sense of the pacing - only reading in half hour chunks over months, instead of consuming it over a few evenings at home.

However, I did like the nitty gritty. How she talks about very universal struggles with fitting in within a new community, but adding on the difficulties of living in a different country from where you were born. And then liking a lot about the new place, but still not being recognized as someone who belongs there.

Liminality is tough.

It's a thoughtful, honest book, about a character who's very concrete and smart in her thinking. It's sticking with me. Especially with all of the junk on the news this year.

---

## **Lindsey says**

A middle grade novel about an 11 year old Iranian girl growing up in Southern California before, during, and just after the Iranian revolution of 1979. Funny, sweet, and sad (but mostly funny). I learned so much about 20th century Iranian history while enjoying myself.

---

## **Reading is my Escape says**

It Ain't So Awful Falafel

To all the kids who don't belong, for whatever reason.

This one's for you.

- Dedication

My dad says that the dogs and cats in America are luckier than most people in the world.

- page 34

My dad always says that kindness is our religion and if we treat everybody the way we would like to be treated, the world would be a better place.

- page 40

... only bookworms get excited over other bookworms

- page 69

"Who would ever have thought that a person could be so powerful, then so completely powerless, all in the same lifetime?"

- page 219 (referring to the downfall of the shah)

... even though we belong to three different religions. We are alike in so many more ways than we are different.

- page 299

It was only when I stopped pretending to be someone else that I found my real friends.

- page 360

This was a good read. Zomorod (who changes her name to Cindy) is from Iran. Her father is an engineer who works with American companies building oil refineries in Iran, so they moved back and forth a couple of times. Now she is starting junior high (which nowadays is called middle school) and doesn't know anyone. She wants to fit in, but she focuses on how different she is from all the other kids. The first friend she makes (in the summer before school) decides she doesn't want to be friends when school starts. Poor "Cindy" is lost and worried and tired of having to explain to everyone where Iran is and how to pronounce her last name.

Cindy finds friends and seems to be settling in and basically happy. Then Iran has a revolution, the shah is kicked out of the country, and Ayatollah Khomeini takes over. On November 4, 1979, Iranian students, angry that President Carter allowed the shah to come to the United States, take a group of Americans hostage. This changes Cindy's family's life and her father loses his job.

I was in junior high during the Iran Hostage Crisis. I remember feeling vaguely angry at the hostage takers and worried about the hostages. My mom wasn't huge on watching the news with us or anything, but I knew what was happening (at least generally).

It was interesting reading this story told from the point of view of an Iranian girl in America at the time. It was so hard for Cindy's family, and many Americans were so hostile towards Iranians, even though those living in America weren't responsible for the situation and didn't necessarily approve of it. Cindy and her parents were so appalled that a religious leader could be responsible for such behavior. But that didn't save them from hate and discrimination.

This is a nominee for the Florida Sunshine State award grades 3-5. I really liked the book and will highly recommend it to our students when school starts.

---

## **Beckbunch says**

I recently read that adults should be more in the habit of taking book recommendations from young readers--especially from the young readers who live in their home. So I asked my 11 year-old bookworm to go to the library with me and pick something she thought I'd like and that we could discuss afterward.

Before I review the book that she chose for me, I should say that this particular bookworm will be starting middle school in the fall--not just starting middle school, but starting middle school in a new school district. To say she's had some angst about it is putting it mildly. Just a week before our library trip, we attended information night at what will be her new school and when she saw she was supposed to list 3 friends who she'd be willing to share a locker with, her eyes filled with tears and she whispered, "I don't know ANYONE!" So, just days later, when I asked for a book recommendation, out of the many, many books she's read and loved, she picked "It Ain't so Awful, Falafel", about a girl, Cindy, who is trying to fit in as she begins middle school in a new place. Coincidence? I think not.

As I read this book, I loved that my daughter frequently looked over my shoulder, saying things like, "Oh,

you're in such a good part!" or "I'm dying to tell you something Mom, but I really shouldn't" or "Mom, this character isn't really all that mean....you'll see."

I did legitimately enjoy this book, even apart from the time spent with my daughter. It was funny, touching, well-written, and it had an interesting historical slant--set in the late 70's/ early 80's during the Iran Hostage Crisis. My daughter probably didn't realize when she recommended it that I could relate to the shag carpet, canopy bed set, fashion trends and movie choices described in the book.

In a sweet side note, when I went to the computer to rate this, she asked if she could create her own Goodreads account, which she just did. We're now "friends". On her very first review, as she debated what to give "It Ain't so Awful, Falafel" she said exactly what I've said a thousand times....."What? You can't give half stars? What's up with that? Four is too few. Five is too many. It's absolutely a 4 and a half!" I feel your pain, 11 year-old bookworm, I feel your pain.

---