



BOOK CLUB NOTES

Discipline Randa Abdel-Fattah

‘Blistering and brilliant.’ Melissa Lucashenko

Silence is complicity, but how do we confront the cost of speaking up?

Sydney, May 2021. Ashraf is an academic whose career and personal life are in freefall. Hannah is a young journalist struggling to honour the voices of her community.

When a Year 12 student from a local Islamic college is arrested for protesting a university’s ties to an Israeli weapons manufacturer, Ashraf sees an opportunity to exploit his personal connection to the situation for professional redemption. Meanwhile Hannah, who is juggling the demands of new motherhood and family trauma, fights racism in the newsroom. As Israel’s bombardment of Gaza intensifies into the final weeks of Ramadan, Ashraf and Hannah must reckon with their choices, values and places in their communities. Will they be prepared to make sacrifices in the pursuit of what is right?

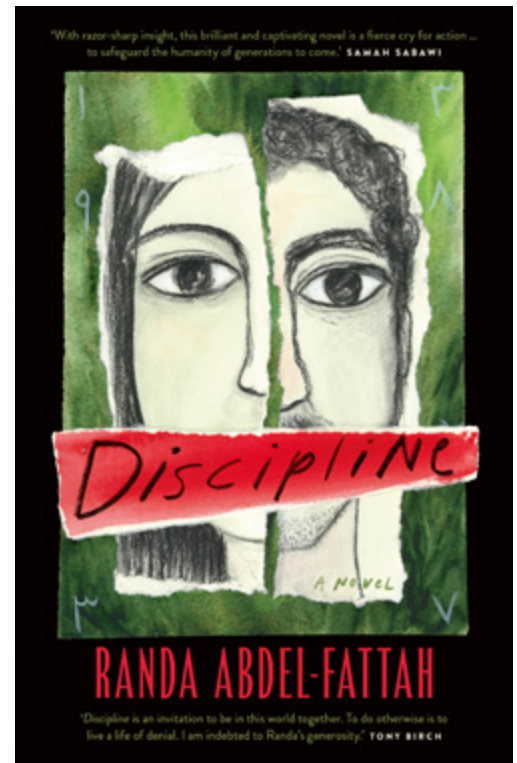
With a focus on two of today’s most contested fields academia and the media, *Discipline* tallies the price we all pay when those with privilege choose to remain silent.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Randa Abdel-Fattah is an ARC Future Fellow at Macquarie University. Her research areas cover Islamophobia, race, Palestine, the war on terror, youth identities and social movement activism. Dr Abdel-Fattah is also a former lawyer and the award-winning author of twelve books for children and young adults, which have been translated

into over thirteen languages. She has won and been shortlisted and longlisted for awards including the CBCA Award, Prime Minister’s Literary Award, the Stella Prize and more.



BOOK DETAILS

C-format paperback | 978 0 7022 7101 4
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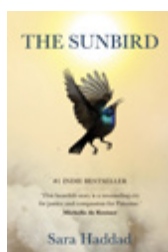
‘With razor-sharp insight, this brilliant and captivating novel is a fierce cry for action – a demand to fight for justice in order to safeguard the humanity of generations to come.’

Samah Sabawi

‘For those who seek to sincerely understand the endless obstacles one must face in the body of an Arab, a Palestinian, a Muslim, *Discipline* is the place to begin.’

Michael Mohammed Ahmad

**FURTHER
READING**



QUESTIONS OVER PAGE



Questions

1. Does the title invoke discipline as training, as control, as punishment or in scholarly terms?
2. How do the time and place – Sydney in May 2021, the final weeks of Ramadan – shape the mood, stakes and the pace of events?
3. The arrest of Nabil, a Year 12 student, is a catalyst for the story. What does the novel suggest about youth agency versus adult gatekeeping?
4. What do you notice about Nabil as a character in the book?
5. Where do you see the tension between principled advocacy and opportunism in Ashraf's choices? What pressures shape his decisions?
6. Hannah navigates newsroom racism while juggling new motherhood. How do home, work and community obligations collide for her?
7. What did you learn about Islamic schooling? What challenges do students and staff face?
8. *Discipline* asks what we owe our communities and what it costs to speak truth to power. Who pays those costs in this story? Who is insulated?
9. How does privilege operate differently in academia compared to in the media as portrayed in the book? Where do you see institutional risk-management overriding justice?
10. Name a moment that made you reconsider your own threshold for speaking up at work or school. What would 'speaking up' look like in your context?
11. In light of the story, what does the art on the cover (*Red Tape* on the front, *Eye on Gaza* on the spine, both by Amani Haydar, 2025) communicate? Which symbols stand out and why?