

Randa Abdel- Fattah



Randa Abdel-Fattah was born in Australia to an Egyptian mother and a Palestinian father. Wearing many hats – academic, lawyer, author, mother, community advocate, media commentator – she has tried over the years to raise awareness about the Palestinian yearning for justice. She practiced law for ten years and holds a PhD in sociology, focusing her work on the topic of Islamophobia and race in Australia. Currently, she is an Honorary Research Fellow at Macquarie University.

Randa's doctoral research inspired her to write the novel *When Michael Met Mina*, which explores issues of race and refugees in Australia and recently won the prestigious Victorian Premier's Literary Award and People's Choice Award. Randa has written 11 award-winning novels that have been published in over fifteen countries in multiple translations. Her novels

address issues of identity, belonging, and political consciousness among young Australians, both Muslim and non-Muslim. She has been invited to run writing workshops for teenagers in the United Kingdom, the United States, Sweden, Qatar, Egypt, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Malaysia. Her books are studied as part of primary and high school curricula in Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Randa's novel *Where the Streets Had a Name* is set in Palestine and currently in stage production by Australia's leading children's theatre company; the play will open in late 2017. The adaptation involves a collaborative project with writers and actors, and incorporates the running of storytelling workshops in schools about the novel's themes of refugees, identity, and family. Randa hopes to bring Palestine into classrooms, and the students who have so far been exposed to it have loved the experience! Randa's first novel, *Does My Head Look Big In This?* is currently being adapted as a feature film. It will be the first Australian film written by a Muslim woman and deals with a Muslim Palestinian teenage girl's navigation through her identity, as she struggles with racism in a post 9/11 world. Over the years, Randa has seen an increasing openness towards and embracing of the Palestinian cause. There is an undeniable shift in the balance of moral power. Randa is convinced that this shift has come about partly due to intersections between the work of politics, academia, activism, culture, and the arts.