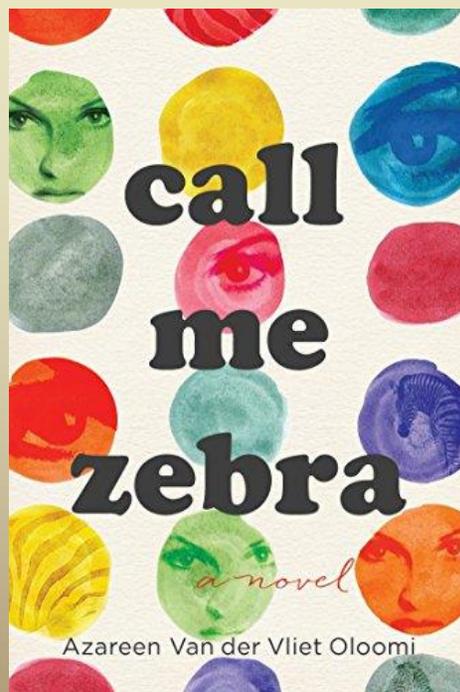


Call Me Zebra

Zebra, born BiBi Abbas Abbas Hosseini, was an exile before she was born. Her parents were driven from their home city of Tehran, forced to flee through a number of countries, and lost her mother along the way. Still, the Hossienis—Anarchists, Atheists and Autodidacts—persist in New York.

When her father dies, Zebra leaves for Barcelona, to retrace the journey she and her father made to the United States when she was a young girl. On her quest to reclaim her past Zebra finds—and rediscovers—adventure, love and the enduring power of literature.



Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi is the author of the critically acclaimed novels *Call Me Zebra*, published in the U.S. by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in February 2018 and in the U.K. by Alma Books in May 2018, and *Fra Keeler*, published in 2012 by Dorothy: a publishing project, and by Giulio Perrone Editore in Italy. In 2015, Van der Vliet Oloomi won a Whiting Writers' Award and a National Book Foundation "5 Under 35" award. She is the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship, a Fellowship from the Institució de les Lletres Catalanes in Barcelona, and residency fellowships from the MacDowell Colony and Ledig House. Van der Vliet Oloomi's work has appeared in *Electric Literature*, *The Paris Review*, *GRANTA*, *Guernica*, *BOMB* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books Quarterly Journal*, among other places. She is an Assistant Professor in the English Department's M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing at the University of Notre Dame and lives in South Bend, Indiana.



Azareen
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Useful Links:

Brains and Benighted, Lost in the Books of Bolaño and Borges:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/29/books/review/call-me-zebra-azareen-van-der-vliet-oloomi.html>

Eugene & Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Award:

www.indianaauthorsaward.org

The Indiana Authors Award

The Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Award was established when **The Indianapolis Public Library Foundation** received a generous grant from **the Glick Fund, a fund of Central Indiana Community Foundation**. This program seeks to recognize the contributions of Indiana authors to the literary landscape in Indiana and across the nation. The Award is divided into three categories: Emerging, for new writers of one or two books that show great promise; Regional, for writers well known and respected especially in Indiana and the Midwest; and National, for writers of widespread acclaim. Each winning author receives a cash prize and a \$2,500 grant for the Indiana public library of his or her choice.



Discussion Questions

1. Given the many facets of Zebra's adventures, what genre would you consider "Call Me Zebra?"
2. "Call Me Zebra" has a lengthy and distinct opening line. How do you feel it sets the tone of the novel, especially compared to other first lines?
3. Which character did you identify with most? Why?
4. Zebra and Ludo's relationship is a contentious one. As the reader's get only Zebra's perspective, how do you think Ludo sees Zebra? Why does he develop such an intense emotional attachment to Zebra?
5. Though her goal is always expanding it, Zebra has a vast literary canon by which she lives. Do you have one? What is on that list? Why?
6. The Hossieni family commandment says: "Trust nobody, and love nothing but literature." Assuming the commandment has served the Hossieni's well so far, do you think it continues to help Zebra process her grief? Or does the commandment get in the way her recovery.?