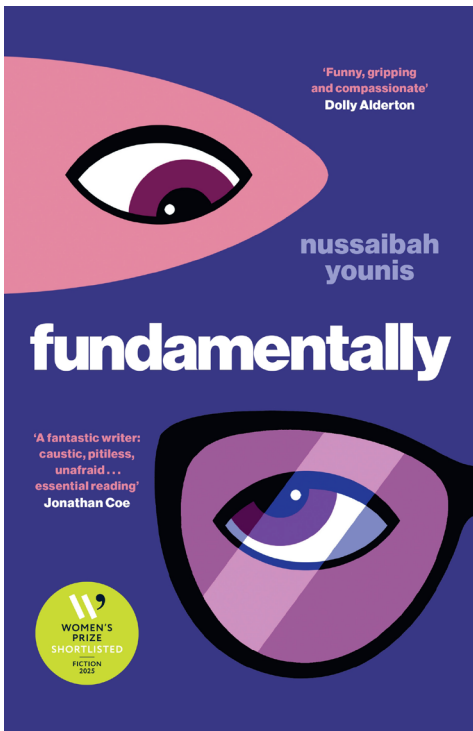


FUNDAMENTALLY

By Nussaibah Younis

AN ADVENTURE FOR EVERYONE READ. SHARE. RECOMMEND



Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Orion Publishing Group, 2025

About the Book:

Nadia is an academic who's been disowned by her puritanical mother and dumped by her lover, Rosy. She decides to make a getaway, accepting a UN job in Iraq. Tasked with rehabilitating ISIS women, Nadia becomes mired in the opaque world of international aid, surrounded by bumbling colleagues.

Sara is a precocious and swearsy East Londoner who joined ISIS at just fifteen.

Nadia is struck by how similar they are: both feisty and opinionated, from a Muslim background, with a shared love of Dairy Milk and rude pick-up lines. A powerful friendship forms between the two women, until a secret confession from Sara threatens everything Nadia has been working for.

A bitingly original, wildly funny and razor-sharp exploration of love, family, religion and the decisions we make in pursuit of belonging, *Fundamentally* upends and explores a defining controversy of our age with heart, complexity and humour.

About the Author:

Dr Nussaibah Younis is a peacebuilding practitioner and a globally recognised expert on contemporary Iraq. For several years, Dr Younis advised the Iraqi government on proposed programs to deradicalise women affiliated with ISIS. She has a PhD in International Affairs from the University of Durham, and a BA in Modern History and English from the University of Oxford. Dr Younis was a Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council in Washington DC, where she directed the Task Force on the Future of Iraq and offered strategic advice to US government agencies on Iraq policy. She lived in Washington D.C. and in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center. Dr Younis has published Op-Eds in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* and provided on-air commentary for the BBC and Al-Jazeera. She was born in the UK to an Iraqi father and a Pakistani mother, and has worked in Washington D.C., Dubai, Cairo, Beirut and Baghdad. She currently lives in London. Her debut novel, *Fundamentally*, is out with Weidenfeld & Nicolson in the UK and Tiny Reparations in the US in 2025.



Nussaibah Younis

Other Books by the Author:

Nussaibah Younis is a debut author.

Discussion Points:

- The novel uses humour to explore some incredibly serious topics. How did the tone affect your reading experience? Did it enhance or complicate your understanding of the issues at hand?
- How does Nadia navigate questions of identity, belonging and belief?
- Discuss the friendship that forms between Nadia and Sara. What draws them to one another, and how does their relationship challenge assumptions about both women?
- Nadia's estrangement from her mother plays a powerful role in the novel. How does her upbringing influence the choices she makes and the way she views her work?
- Can individuals who have committed acts of violence be rehabilitated? How does the novel engage with this question through Sara's story, and through Nadia's response to it?
- How does the book tackle stereotypes about Muslim women and the politics of representation? What moments felt particularly impactful or thought-provoking?

Useful Links:

- [The Guardian - Fundamentally by Nussaibah Younis review – witty debut about Islamic State brides](#)
- [The Rumpus - Pawn or Perpetrator: Nussaibah Younis's Fundamentally](#)

Suggested Further Reading:

Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie
The Beekeeper of Aleppo by Christy Lefteri
An Unlasting Home by Mai Al-Nakib
Girls Burn Brighter by Shobha Rao
The Return: Fathers, Sons and the Land in Between by Hisham Matar

Connect with the Author:

www.nussaibah.com

