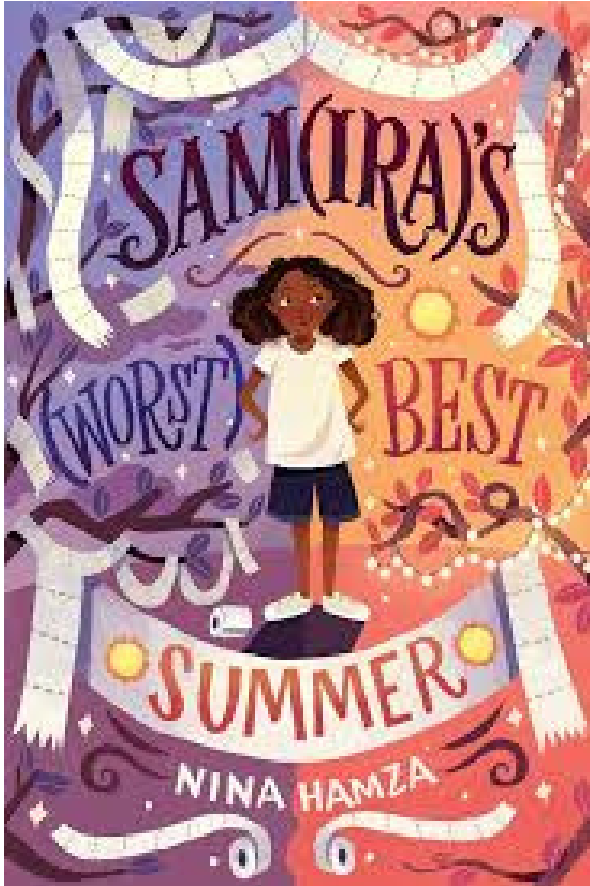


SAMIRA'S WORST BEST SUMMER

Written by Nina Hamza



SUMMARY

Samira expects a lonely and disappointing summer, but a strange toilet-paper mystery, an unexpected new friendship, garage-band practices, and support from her neighbors help her discover her courage, feel belonging, and find a stronger voice than she ever knew she had.

WHY WE CHOSE THIS BOOK

This heartfelt novel explores friendship, belonging, prejudice, and courage.

VOCABULARY FOR DISCUSSION

dachshund: a small dog with a long body

Bharatanatyam: a classical dance style from India

Malayalam: a language spoken in Kerala, India

Kerala: a state in southern India

saree: a long cloth worn as clothing

idiyappam: thin steamed noodles from South India

semaphore: sending messages with flags or signals

pristine: very clean, fresh, or untouched

recluse: someone who avoids other people

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE READING

1. How can a summer be both the “worst” and the “best”?
2. What clues about the story do you notice on the cover?
3. What qualities help someone become a trustworthy friend?

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE READING

1. How do Samira’s feelings about Kiera and Alice change?
2. What clues are they gathering about the toilet-paper mystery?
3. How do Umma, Imran, and the neighbors affect Samira’s summer?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER READING

1. Why does Samira’s summer become both her worst and best?
2. How does Samira learn to stand up for herself and others?
3. What does the story teach us about friendship and belonging?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Divide a page into two columns labeled “Worst” and “Best.” Describe how one difficult experience can also lead to something positive.
- Make a list of qualities found in healthy friendships. Include examples of boundaries, trust, respect, apologies, and communication.
- Draw a neighborhood map showing important people and places. Add notes explaining how each person adds to Samira’s sense of belonging.
- Write a journal entry, comic, poem, or short speech about a time when someone might need to speak up for themselves or another person.