



Minaret

1. Islam is often seen as either a cultural phenomenon or a political one. How does Najwa's faith defy these easy categorizations?
2. This book might be read as a critique of Sudanese patriarchy, as every man in Najwa's life seems to fail her. How does Najwa compensate for the lack of protection she experiences?
3. What kind of imagery does Aboulela adopt to convey the experience of cross-cultural encounters? How does she juxtapose themes of guilt and cleansing to explain Najwa's experience in her new home?
4. In *Najwa*, Aboulela depicts an independent woman whose faith is not a matter of abstract dogma or empty rituals, but rather a struggle within: between the lures of an individualist consumerist culture and the promise of a communitarian religious experience. Does the position of a woman like Najwa challenge Western notions of feminism? How does she defy stereotypes of Muslim women?
5. Leila Aboulela claims to write fiction that reflects Islamic logic—fictional worlds where cause and effect are governed by a Muslim rationale. Do you see this reflected in *Minaret*?