

Cityread London 2019

One City. One Month. One Book.

1st May – 31st May

- *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* by Ayisha Malik and published by Bonnier Zaffre is unveiled as 2019's Cityread book
- Launch event at House of Lords 1st May
- Live readings from the novel by Anjali Mohindra (*Bodyguard*, *Dark Heart*) and Nina Wadia (*Eastenders*)
- Comedian, writer and actor Helen Lederer to chair London Libraries discussion with Ayisha and Queenie author Candice Carty-Williams
- Events to span 24 London boroughs plus Luton and Slough
- Cityread London 2019 is supported by a generous grant from Amal, a programme of the Saïd Foundation
- Partnerships with Museum of London, Aga Khan Centre, Waterstones Tottenham Court Road and Picturehouse Greenwich

Cityread returns for its eighth annual festival, turning the capital – and some spots further afield! – into one massive, interactive book group with Ayisha Malik's *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* as the city's collective page-turner from 1st – 31st May.

The month-long celebration of reading will help Londoners discover and celebrate their city through its stories.

Launching with an event at the House of Lords on 1st May, and running throughout the month, expect live readings from the novel by Anjali Mohindra and Nina Wadia, author discussions chaired by Helen Lederer with Ayisha and Candice Carty-Williams at the London Library, and events in public libraries across 24 London boroughs plus Luton and Slough, with lots more very special announcements to come.

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Key partnerships include the Museum of London, Aga Khan Centre, Waterstones Tottenham Court Road, and Picturehouse Greenwich.

Ayisha Malik says: "I couldn't be more excited for *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* to be selected for Cityread this year. It's already a special year for me with the publication of my third novel *This Green and Pleasant Land* in June, and to have my debut book out there again with the whole of London reading it is just wonderful!"

Billed as the Muslim Bridget Jones, *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* is the hilarious romantic comedy from the writer behind Nadiya Hussain's bestselling *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters*. Sofia



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Khan is single once more, after her sort-of-boyfriend proves just a little too close to his parents. And she'd be happy that way too, if her boss hadn't asked her to write a book about the weird and wonderful world of Muslim dating. Of course, even though she definitely isn't looking for love, to write the book she does need to do a little research . . .

“We couldn't be more thrilled that Ayisha and her enduring novel *Sofia Khan is not Obligated* has been chosen as this year's Cityread London. Ayisha's distinctive voice is smart, funny and engaging and now even more readers will have the opportunity to discover her brilliant writing. I'm so proud that Bonnier Books UK is taking part in this annual celebration of literature and meaningful cultural moment for London.” Perminder Mann, CEO, Bonnier Books UK

Ayisha Malik is a British Muslim born and raised in South London. She holds a First Class MA in Creative Writing. Her novels *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* and *The Other Half of Happiness* starring 'the Muslim Bridget Jones' were met with critical acclaim. She was a WHSmith Fresh Talent Pick, contributed to the anthology *A Change is Gonna Come* (Stripes Publishing): short stories and poems by BAME authors. Ayisha's third novel *This Green and Pleasant Land* publishes in hardback in June 2019. She is also the ghostwriter for *The Great British Bake Off* winner, Nadiya Hussain.

About Cityread London:

Cityread London is a registered charity that promotes the key ideas of reading for pleasure, engaging new library users, enhancing the experience of existing readers, and encouraging people to explore and celebrate London's culture, landscape and history through its stories. Cityread works in partnership with library services in 24 London boroughs plus Slough and Luton. Founded in 2012 it has featured: *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens (Penguin), 2012; *A Week in December* by Sebastian Faulks (Vintage), 2013; *My Dear I Wanted to Tell You* by Louisa Young (Borough Press), 2014; *Rivers of London* by Ben Aaronovitch (Gollancz) 2015; *Ten Days* by Gillian Slovo (Canongate) 2016; *Prophecy* by S.J. Parris (HarperCollins) 2017; *The Muse* by Jessie Burton (Picador) 2018.

For full listings, quotes, & more information about *Sofia Khan Is Not Obligated*, Ayisha Malik, Cityread or its sponsors, please see: www.cityread.london or Facebook/CityreadLondon

Notes To Editors

- Funding support by Amal, a programme of the Saïd Foundation making grants in the UK in support of a rich diversity of arts projects and activities, including storytelling, visual arts, theatre, poetry, film, music and dance. The programme aims to increase understanding of Britain's Muslim communities among people of other faiths and none; and to foster a stronger sense of belonging in the UK among its Muslim communities. www.amal.org.uk.
- Bonnier Zaffre is a division of Bonnier Books UK, which encompasses the children's imprints Hot Key Books and Piccadilly Press and adult fiction imprints Zaffre and Twenty7. Bonnier Zaffre combines brand new voices with established storytellers to bring a broad spectrum of high quality and innovative fiction to all ages.



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- Bonnier Books UK is a major publisher with group sales of £80m. Home to 15 adult and children's imprints, we publish across a wide variety of genres, for different ages. From crime to reading group fiction; memoir to self-help; activity to reference – we believe every book matters. Bonnier Books UK is owned by Bonnier Books, a family-owned company headquartered in Sweden. Bonnier Books is a top-15 world publisher with global sales of £728m.



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