



# Bareed Mista3jil

*Meem*

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## Bareed Mista3jil Meem

The book, available in both English and Arabic versions, is a collection of 41 true (and personal) stories from lesbians, bisexuals, queer and questioning women, and transgender persons from all over Lebanon. The introduction to the book is a 30-page analysis of the general themes presented in the stories.

## Bareed Mista3jil Details

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Author : Meem

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# From Reader Review Bareed Mista3jil for online ebook

## Raneem says

i wouldn't say it's a wonderful book because the stories are not that deep , or may be the way they were represented was not fair enough.

but anw , it helped me understand how minorities feel and now i am more percieving and less judging toward them .though it didnt add to me neither a new prospective nor a new value again the stories may be so much better but they were not represented as they should be

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## Ribal Haj says

I remember the moment I laid my hands on this book at its launching, I couldn't wait to get home and start going through the lives of women inside of it. I remember crying and smiling at the same time. I would not put it down until I was done with it. The beauty of it is the diversity and richness of experiences within. The book echoes a genuine taste of what it really is being an arab woman, Lebanese in particular, some of whom I had the pleasure of knowing.

Many books have been written about what it is being Queer or Transgender in the region, but none was able to reach out as strongly as this book, because it uses the charming power of storytelling, which I believe is the ultimate form of instruction.

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## Melinda says

This book was a refreshing collection of stories from lesbian and queer women in Lebanon. The pieces are well written and thoughtful, and they express a wide range of views and experiences. The stories are everything from inspiring to depressing, from light-hearted to serious. The book challenges stereotypes and generalizations about Lebanon, lesbians, and religion by providing a broad spectrum of stories and giving a solid introduction to Lebanon and the production of the book at the beginning. The book is based in what I would consider to be third-wave feminism, and it rejects U.S./Western European dominance in feminist and queer theory by providing Lebanese feminist perspectives. It also calls out racism and xenophobia in queer spaces in Europe and the United States, showing how queer Lebanese women face intersectional oppression and that running away to a Western "oasis" is not the solution many expect it be.

Unfortunately, the book is not widely available (I was only able to find it at a university library, where I had to read it in one sitting), but I recommend it highly to anyone who's interested in the subject matter. It's an important work, and I'm looking forward to finding more that are like it.

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## Noor says

Couldn't put this book down, this book made me smile and cry at times. Loved it.

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## Rebecca says

Well Queer women and Transgenders in Lebanon, what else can I add?

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## Serena says

I couldn't stop reading even when my eyes were giving up on me.

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## Vicky says

Very many resonating parts, very refreshing to read, with forty-one stories presenting a range of experiences by lesbians, bi women, queer + questioning women, and trans people all over Lebanon, though, yeah, no inclusion of trans women. . *Bareed Mista3jil*, or "mail in a hurry"—I am glad to have pushed this up my priority reading list and sorry that I had a pre-impression of the book as written in a "market-memoir" sense—"moving" & "inspirational"—which the book *is* but it is an "anti-memoir" with both happy and sad endings, honest and humorous, conversational in tone, with some of the girls being in their twenties like me so I especially enjoyed reading about dial-up internet and chat rooms, lolol.

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- coming to terms with how "ugly" the word "lesbian" sounds
- how queer women would generally begin their coming out to their parents with a declaration of "I don't want to get married" (so true!)
- "The common misconception in Lebanon is that lesbian relationships don't last. Here's the insider's guide to a stereotypical Lebanese lesbian relationship. Two women meet (probably online), fall in love within a week (if not faster), vow eternal love and devotion to each other (forever and ever), meet in person (probably at Dunkin Donuts) [#LOL], announce that they are girlfriends (7ayeti inti) ["You are my life."], tell all their friends (including lesbians on their MSN they have never met) [#LOL] that they are now in love, go dancing in Acid a month later (where one of them will throw a jealousy fit because the other looked at someone else), start fighting about everything (and nothing), break up (over the course of six months), and finally decide to become good friends (lesbian ex's never leave). Repeat as necessary."
- "Lesbanese" and the chat room called "Lesbanon"
- "Who was I to reject someone who wanted me? I wasn't worthy enough to say no. I should just accept it and be thankful for what I mistakenly thought was a brief moment of connection with another human being." (on giving her body to men in hope of exchange for love, p 218)
- "The popular chatting program at the time was called ICQ, which I immediately downloaded, created some romantically morbid nickname, and set out to find other lesbians. There was some method of searching through lists of people and I spent hours looking till I found someone with a nickname like "sexy lesbian 4u." Oh my God! I thought, a sexy lesbian for me! I messaged her instantly and said: "hiiiiiiii! I am a lesbian too!" She said hi back but with far less enthusiasm and then asked me if I wanted her to bite my ear. I

wondered why she was saying that, but was so excited about meeting another fellow lesbian that I just started babbling on with details about my life, the suffering I've been through, the identity crisis, the broken heart, and other teenage lesbian drama. You have to remember, it was over 10 years ago, and I was very slow at typing. Then the sexy lesbian 4 me made a very indecent proposition that involved touching her private parts. I was shocked! Mortified! No! I said. I want us to talk and share our life stories!" (p 107)

- "Independence, to me, meant living alone. The problem with wanting to be independent here is that, as a woman, baddik trou7i min beit ahlik la beit jawzik ["You have to go from your parents' house to your husband's house"]. Tab iza ma fee beit jawzik ["So, if there is no husband's house"], what do you do? You stay at your family's house your entire life? In that case, you're not really allowed a life. And so I had made the decision that I did want to live, and I did want to leave my parents' house, but I wasn't able to do it for a very very very long time. It was only now, six months ago, at 29, that I was finally able to move out. . .When I was 25, [my mother] would still be asking me where I was going and what time I was coming back. I still freaked out about sleeping outside of the house. If I slept over at a friend's, I would wake up at 4am and go home." (p 137, yes)

- Really enjoyed "The Motorcycle Gender" story, "My Hijab and I", "Untitled"

- A straight homophobic, genderphobic Moroccan man asks why one narrator can't wear her hair down, wear dresses, be more feminine, etc: "I want to shake him, *Why don't YOU wear your hair down? Why don't YOU wear dresses? Why don't YOU show your femininity?*. . .But I know that wouldn't be interesting or successful. I tell him my secrets in the hope that one day he will come to terms with his own. *My femininity is not for everyone*, I say. *Not for the public. I decide who sees it and who does not.* My public butchness is a hijab for my private femininity." (p 183, I feel like that last sentence a little: secret pink items that I own)

- "My dyke friend B wears a hijab. I always tease her. Underneath her purple feminine hijabs and ladylike coats, she's a badass butch. Cut off t-shirts and short hair. Her public femininity is a hijab for her masculinity" (p 183)

- "The ex gay conference. Full of exexex gays. Or XXX gays?" & "My mother calls from the kitchen, *Come eat.* + *No thanks*, I reply. *I'm ex hungry!*

- I also liked the part when this girl meets another cute girl during a basketball match that never happened because there weren't enough players on the other school's team.

- and the part where someone reflects on how they'll never get to introduce their partner to family and friends with typical intros like, "This is my better half" <-- that phrase, she likes that one

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## Nour Makhoul says

A must read !! Especially for those living in Lebanon and the Middle East. Love this book in every possible way.

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## Sara says

I borrowed this from a friend and for a period of time developed somewhat of an attachment to the book. Unfortunately I had to return it eventually but am still looking for a way to own this book. The stories from various Lebanese women echoed in my mind, some of them attempting to mirror my own while others drastically different from anything I ever knew. My only complaint is that only one volume of such book exists when there should be more already. As a queer Arab it was exhilarating reading about women who not only share my passion, but my heritage and language. Women who dared to share their fears and nightmares, alongside the intimate details of their love. It honestly made me feel less alone in this world.

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### **anka says**

This isn't so much a review as a quick PSA to everyone who sees this interested in social justice. This book is very important. It tells real-life stories of a couple of dozen lesbians, bisexual women, non-binary & transgender folk who were born and raised in Lebanon. So obviously, it is about people who come from a different environment than the typical Western setting, where, I think, a vast majority of the LGBT discourse comes from, but at the same time it shows how, in many cases these stories are relatable and I think it's safe to say that many of us Western Queers went through a lot of similar situations and dealt with many of the same problems.

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