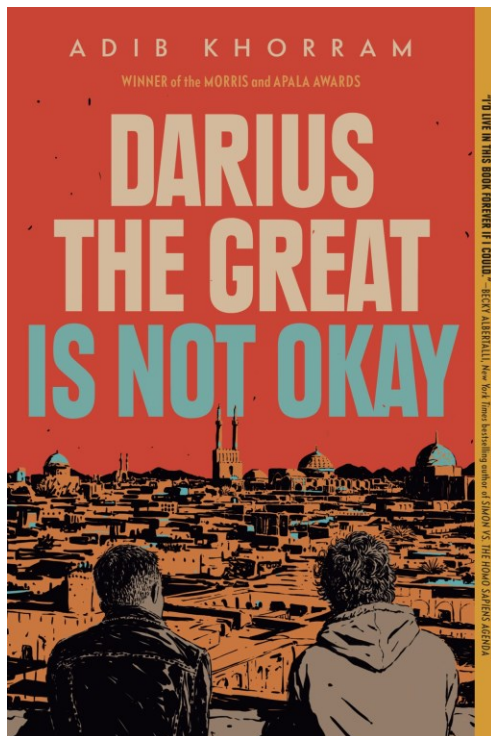


# DARIUS THE GREAT IS NOT OKAY



*Young Adult*

**By Adib Khorram**

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## **Book Summary:**

A teenager's life is changed after visiting family in Iran.

## **Summary of Concerns:**

This book contains inexplicit sexual activities; non-sexual nudity; bullying; mild/infrequent profanity and derogatory terms; and references to depression and suicide.

**2** /5

**Teen Guidance**  
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
4	I was many things—D-Hole, D-Wad, D’s Nuts—but I was definitely not great. ...When your name begins with D, the sexual innuendos practically write themselves.
7	“That’s a shame. I bet you really like tea bags.” Trent’s grin crept up one side of his face. He only ever smiled with half his mouth. “You just seem like the type of guy who would really enjoy them.” “Um.” “You must get tea-bagged a lot, right?”
12	I avoided mentioning Trent’s references to tea-bagging.
38	Me being me, I was stuck on a team with Fatty Bolger, which gave him even more opportunities to joke about balls flying at my face.
73	The sociopolitical climate of Chapel Hill High School seemed a little too complicated to get into with Mamou on a car ride, especially since I didn’t want her to know that people called me D-Bag and left bright blue fake testicles on my bicycle.
77	I didn’t even know camel jockey was a legitimate slur until the first time he called me one.
112	Sohrab tossed the towels onto the wooden bench between us and pulled off his shirt, peeling the wet fabric away from his flat chest and stomach. He was still breathing hard, his abdomen expanding and contracting. I turned away, to give him privacy and also because I was so embarrassed. Sohrab was in really good shape. Also, it was weird to get all the way naked. I had never taken my underwear off next to another guy.
114	“Darioush?” “Um. Yes?” “What is wrong with your . . . penis?” My throat clamped up. “Nothing,” I squeaked. Sohrab said something to the other boys, in Farsi again, and they answered, more insistent. Sohrab cleared his throat again. “It looks different?” “Uh. I’m not circumcised?” It was not a question. I just wasn’t sure if circumcised was a word Sohrab knew how to translate to Farsi. “Oh!” He started talking to Ali-Reza and Hossein again, no doubt explaining my penis to them. I didn’t think my skin could get any redder than it was, but I was pretty sure I had started glowing like a protostar about to undergo its first burst of fusion. Ali-Reza laughed, and then he said, in English so I could understand, “It looks like the Ayatollah’s turban.” ...It was the most humiliating comparison of my life. Hossein said something in Farsi, and Ali-Reza laughed again. And then Sohrab said, “Ayatollah Darioush,” and all three of them laughed. ...Maybe Dad was right. Maybe I would always be a target. Even for things I couldn’t help. Like being from America. Like having a foreskin. Those things were normal back home, but not in Iran.
118	Having Hossein and Ali-Reza and Sohrab—Sohrab—make fun of my penis had me excreting a lot of stress hormones.

Page	Content
	<p>I was not ashamed of my penis. It's just that Stephen Kellner isn't circumcised, and even though it was ubiquitous in Iran, Mom thought it was important for the son to look like the father.</p> <p>...I had never showered with other guys looking at me before.</p> <p>Maybe my penis really was weird-looking.</p> <p>Okay. I will admit I was pretty sure I was not weird-looking, because there was the Internet.</p> <p>I knew I didn't look any different.</p> <p>Though I still hoped I was going to grow some more.</p> <p>That's normal.</p> <p>Right?</p> <p>...I wondered if he had been there the whole time, caught in a temporal causality loop while I was out playing soccer/ non-American football and being humiliated for having an intact foreskin.</p>
122	<p>Dad dodged the Dancing Fan and sat beside me on the edge of the bed, generating a gravity well to try and pull me out.</p> <p>Standard Parental Maneuver Alpha.</p> <p>"You need to get back on a proper sleep schedule. Come on. Get up."</p> <p>"I will. In a little while."</p> <p>"Now, Darius."</p> <p>"Dad . . ."</p> <p>"I'm serious. Let's go."</p> <p>Dad grabbed my blankets, but I clenched them harder to stop him.</p> <p>"Dad," I whispered, "I'm, uh, naked."</p> <p>I did not think I could survive any more penile humiliation today.</p>
123	<p>Dad shook his head. "I understand. I used to sleep naked all the time. Up until you were born." He got this sly grin.</p> <p>"Uh."</p> <p>"How do you think you got made?"</p>
141	<p>Having my foreskin compared to a turban was still the most humiliating moment of my life, but being taught how to make Persian tea—when I had been making it for years—came in a close second.</p>
169	<p>Dad pulled Mom down for another kiss, this one at the corner of her mouth,</p>
206	<p>I always felt weird, if someone said "Alláh-u-Abhá" to me, because I wasn't sure if I should say it back—if I was even allowed to—since I wasn't Bahá'í and I didn't believe in God.</p>
240	<p>While Laleh distracted Sohrab, I poured a glass of water and took my medicine.</p> <p>I don't know why I didn't want him to see it. He had seen my foreskin, after all. And he knew all about my depression anyway.</p> <p>But I still hated that he was seeing me have to take pills.</p> <p>Somehow it felt more intimate than just being naked in front of each other.</p> <p>...I wasn't sure I could endure another episode of penile humiliation in the showers.</p>
251	<p>I was amazed Sohrab could carry on a casual conversation about the dynamics of Yazd's soccer/ non-American football-playing youth while soaping up his penis.</p>
259	<p>Of all Persian foods, kabob koobideh is probably the most suspicious-looking, even more than fesenejoon. Each kabob looked like a soft brown log, shiny with oil and fat, dimpled</p>

Page	Content
	where Dad had pinched it to seal it onto the skewer. It was deeply suggestive.
293	Things hadn't been this awkward between us since that day in the bathroom, when Ali-Reza and Hossein had compared my foreskin to religious headgear.

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	1
Camel Jockey	1
Shit	4