**Alma’s Loyalty Media Kit**

**Title:** Alma’s Loyalty

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**Tagline:** Author Amra Pajalić releases second book in her own voices young adult series

**Short tagline:** When Alma finds out that she has a half sister she never knew, she is faced with competing loyalties.

**Medium tagline:** Alma’s perfect family is fractured when her father finds out he has a long-lost daughter from his first marriage. When his overtures are rebuffed, it’s up to Alma to bring her new-found sister, Sabiha, into the family fold.

**Blurb:**

Alma’s perfect family is fractured when her father finds out he has a long-lost daughter from his first marriage. When his overtures are rebuffed, it’s up to Alma to bring her new-found sister, Sabiha, into the family fold.

Now Alma is caught between family loyalties: her feuding parents, the brother she grew up with and the sister she just met, the new friends she made who are conflicted in their loyalties between her and Sabiha. Can Alma maintain the role of the perfect daughter and navigate the competing loyalties in her life?

‘Amra Pajalić writes with such honesty every young adult will empathise with her… While dealing with some ordinary “stuff” Pajalic’s observations are sincere and often hilarious.’ BENDIGO ADVERTISER

**Lead In Post**

**Why we need to have a real talk about sexting and dating with young adults?**

With the recent resurgence of own voices stories (books about characters from marginalised groups in which the author shares the same identity) resonating with readers, author Amra Pajalić re-published her young adult novel as *Sabiha’s Dilemma, a*nd has repackaged it as the first book in the series. Her second book *Alma’s Loyalty,* continues the story of six sassy teens coming of age in St Albans, as they navigate their sexual and cultural identity, and search for belonging.

In *Alma’s Loyalty*, Alma’s perfect family is fractured when her father finds out he has a long-lost daughter from his first marriage. When his overtures are rebuffed, it’s up to Alma to bring her new-found sister, Sabiha, into the family fold. Delving into familiar themes of friendship, coming of age and growing up from a migrant background, this novel also deals with themes of dating and sex as Alma rebels against her father with a secret boyfriend.

Exploring the dark side of sexting and the repercussions of internet bullying Pajalic says, ‘I remember the heady feeling of being the object of male attention with my woman’s body, while not understanding how to deal with this attention. As a high schooler I experimented with taking ‘sexy’ photos of myself that I printed and placed into an album and brought to school. I didn’t face any longterm repercussions because this was in the days before internet and no one had access to those photos but me. These days teenagers are navigating a much more complex landscape with the proliferation of phones and selfies.’

**Excerpt**

**Chapter 1**

## I was in my room completing my homework when my mother called me. I bookmarked my Maths textbook and walked down the hallway, hearing a conversation in progress. We had visitors, a regular event in our household.

## I entered the living room and saw my parents on the couch, with a trio I’d never seen before.

## ‘This is my daughter Alma.’ Mum made the introductions in Bosnian. ‘This is Arnesa and her husband Nermin, and Arnesa’s mother Enisa.’

## ‘*Bože sačuvaj,*’ Arnesa said, which meant God Forbid, her mouth formed an O in surprise as she scrutinised my face. ‘She looks exactly like Sabiha.’

## ‘Who is Sabiha?’ Mum asked.

## ‘Esad’s other daughter,’ Arnesa said. ‘We saw Bahra a month ago in Melbourne.’

## I didn’t understand what this stranger was saying. My father had another daughter? I looked at my mother for help.

## ‘Esad doesn’t have another daughter,’ Mum said.

## ‘Yes, he does. Sabiha, from his first marriage with Bahra. She is the spitting image of her father and sister.’ Nermin nodded to me.

## My legs felt weak. My father was married before? I turned to my father, hoping to get confirmation this was all a lie. His face was white.

## ‘Alma, return to your room,’ Mum commanded.

## I walked down the hall, hiding in the alcove so I could eavesdrop.

## ‘How could you not know?’ Arnesa demanded. ‘Bahra was four months pregnant when you moved to Hobart.’

## There was an awkward silence before Mum jumped in. ‘Bahra told him the child wasn’t his.’

## ‘Aren’t there tests to find out?’ Arnesa said. ‘After all, you both know that she wasn’t of sound mind.’

## ‘Do you have Bahra’s phone number?’ my father asked.

## ‘Of course,’ Nermin said.

## I heard the ping of a SMS. Nermin must have sent my father the phone number in an SMS.

## My father passed in front of the hallway and went to his study, closing the door behind him with finally.

## ‘My apologies. Maybe we should reschedule this visit,’ Mum said, walking our guests to the front door.

## I inched down the hallway and closer to the study. Mum closed the front door after our guests and walked to stand in front of the study door to eavesdrop with her back to me.

## Dad initially spoke in a regular voice and then shouted, ‘You should have told me she was my daughter.’

## Mum opened the study door. Dad was staring at his phone with a distraught face, tears streaming down his face. ‘What am I going to do now?’ He fell into Mum’s arms, his sobbing rending the air.

**Author Bio:**

Amra Pajalić is an award-winning author, an editor and teacher who draws on her Bosnian cultural heritage to write own voices stories for young people, who like her, are searching to mediate their identity and take pride in their diverse culture.

Amra Pajalić won the 2009 Melbourne Prize for Literature's Civic Choice Award for her debut novel *The Good Daughter,* now re-released as *Sabiha’s Dilemma*. The anthology she co-edited, G*rowing up Muslim in Australia* (Allen and Unwin, 2014, 2019), was shortlisted for the 2015 Children's Book Council of the year awards and her memoir *Things Nobody Knows But Me* (Transit Lounge, 2019) was shortlisted for the 2020 National Biography Award.

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