

# WINNY

magazine

## THE SUMMER BOOK CLUB

issue

THE COCKTAIL  
FOR COOL GIRL  
SUMMER

(Not an espresso martini)

IS PRINT  
REALLY  
DEAD?

ALL THE HOT GIRLS  
are reading  
**A HUNDRED  
OTHER  
GIRLS**

“YOUR IDENTITY  
CAN’T BE  
**PACKAGED  
FOR CLICKS**”:  
A convo with  
**Iman Hariri-Kia**

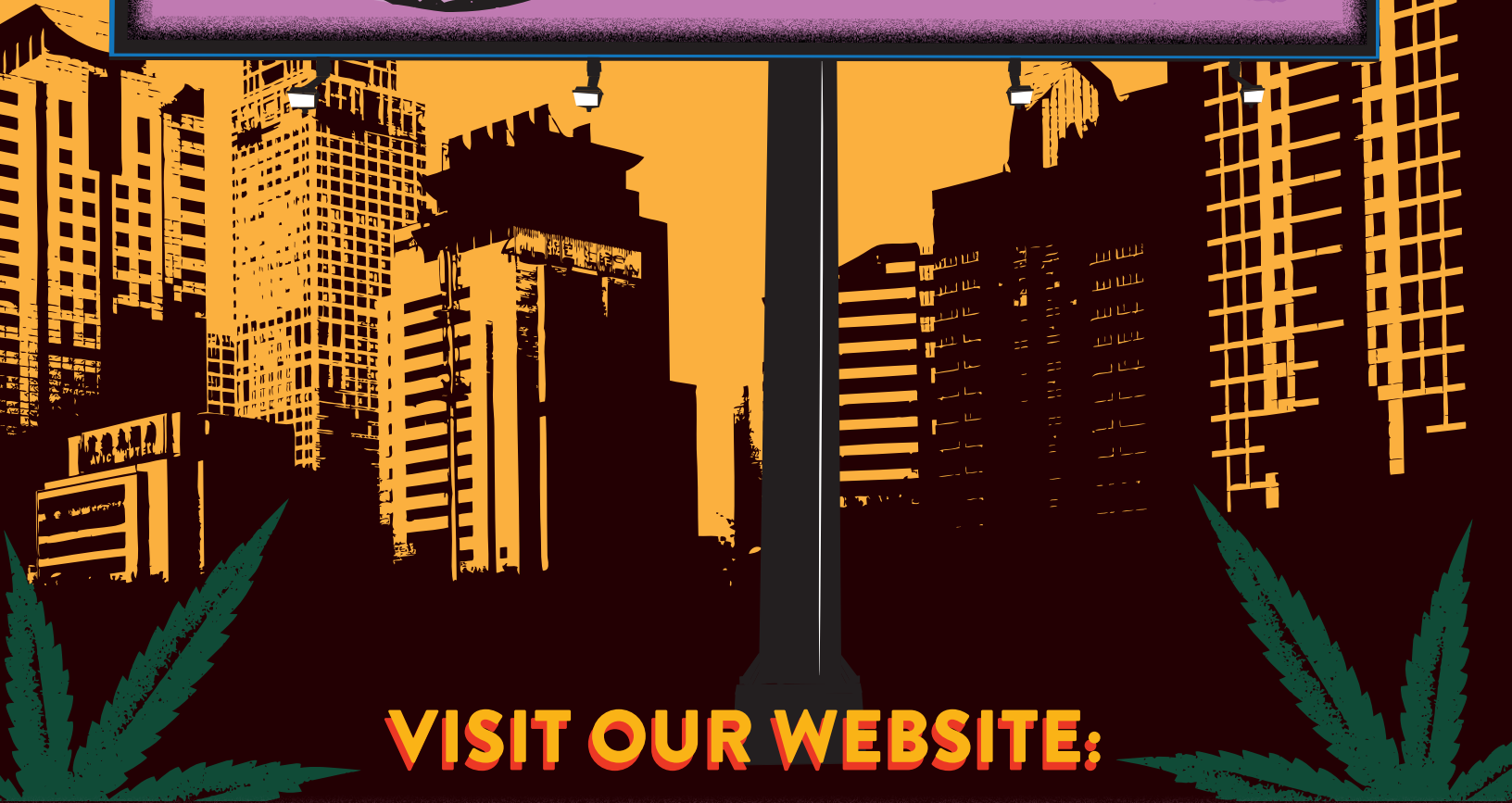




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# A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

My darling readers,

Welcome to *Vinyl Magazine's* summer issue, celebrating the release of Iman Hariri-Kia's debut novel, *A Hundred Other Girls*. I like to think I discovered Ms. Hariri-Kia myself, back when she was just a young, promising talent. I was walking through the Lower East Side, exhausted after several hours of posing nude for abortion rights, when I spotted a young ethnically ambiguous girl sitting at a café table, scribbling away in a journal. She had the look of an old-school voyeur, and I was immediately drawn to her. I approached and informed her that she had real spunk. Three years later, I learned she had been writing a novel that was set to be published this summer. Can you believe it? I'm not saying that our encounter was responsible for her success, but I'm also not denying it. After all, I've always had the most exquisite taste.

Inside these pages, you'll find several delicious appetizers sure to tickle your fancy. There are book club recommendations for lovers of *A Hundred Other Girls*, a conversation with Ms. Hariri-Kia herself, and even the recipe for a custom cocktail sure to wet your lips and appease your palate. But the pièce de résistance, if you will, is an essay on the politics of hair removal by the one and only, C. Bates. This feature will change your misconceptions about every lock upon your little head. The next time you make a waxing appointment, be sure to bring up the piece with your technician.

The other day, I was thinking about a quote by my dear friend Gloria Steinem. She wrote something that really resonated with me. "You know what, Loretta?" she said. "Dreaming, after all, is a form of planning." Reader, what you'll find between these pages is the result of many years of hopeful dreaming. Today, you become a part of turning one girl's dream into a reality. And isn't that what this whole twisted life is about?

Love,

Loretta James

# VINYLYL *magazine*

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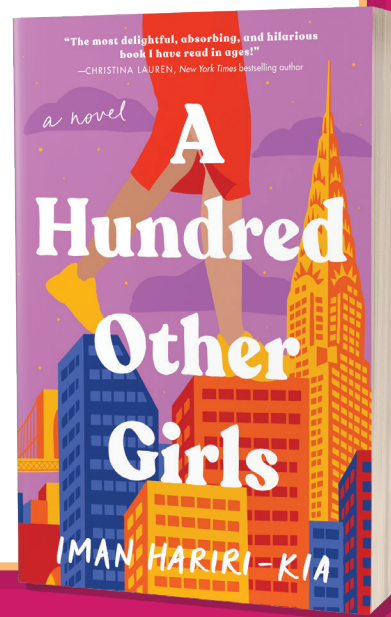
Assistant to the Digital Director: Kelsea

Social Media Team: Staci, Gwen, Amanda

# Introducing VINYL BOOK CLUB'S SUMMER PICK:

## A Hundred Other Girls BY IMAN HARIRI-KIA

1. Noora is quick to accept her job offer from *Vinyl*, even after seeing some glaring red flags during her interview (like the box of tissues in the beauty closet). If you were in her shoes, would these red flags be enough to deter you from your dream job?
2. Even though the *Vinyl* Digital team is young and progressive, microaggressions still run rampant in the office. What microaggressions did you notice throughout the novel? Have you seen similar behaviors in your own experiences in an office?
3. This novel was written by an industry insider. How do you feel about her take on the media industry? Does this align with your own expectations of what it's like to work for a major publication?
4. Noora does her best to be a decent person, free of biases and problematic behaviors. However, she is only human. Despite her best efforts, her narrative is still flawed and not always self-aware. Where did you notice Noora failing to meet her own standards of political correctness? Do you think her narration ever strays from her own values?
5. Cal is swoon-worthy at first, but he eventually reveals himself to be quite the opposite. Did you see any red flags in Cal's character before his final confrontation with Noora?
6. What do you think of Loretta's intentions in her feud with the Digital team? Do you admire her desire to keep the Print team alive, or do you think her motivations were more malicious?
7. One of the biggest dilemmas Noora faces is her decision to pick sides in the war between Print and Digital. If you were Noora, what would you do? Would you stay loyal to the Print team or act as a spy for the Digital team? Do you think Noora made the right call?
8. In the world of *A Hundred Other Girls*, Loretta is famous as a feminist icon, but her actions in the novel don't often feel very feminist. How do you think her old-school mentality fails in the modern age? Would you consider her a feminist by today's standards?
9. What was your reaction when Jade's tweets were leaked to the media? How does your own perception of cancel culture affect your reaction?
10. What does the title *A Hundred Other Girls* mean to you after finishing the book?



# A Q&A with Author

**How did your own experiences in the media industry influence your decision to write this book?**

I've worked at every level in print and digital media, from entry-level assistant to deputy editor. In order to write this book, I drew inspiration from each and every position—*Vinyl* is no one magazine but rather an amalgamation of the industry. Over the years, I've watched passionate employees grow disillusioned with their “dream roles” as they fight for job security. I came to realize that the true pulse of their content—the reader—was getting lost. I wanted to write a story dedicated to finding it again.



Photo Credit: Louisiana Mei Gelpi

**The feud between the Print and Digital teams at *Vinyl* is a key component in the plot. Do you think print and digital media are at war in reality? Have you seen this same tension in your career?**

Between print magazines trying to appeal to advertisers targeting a Gen Z audience and digital newsrooms attempting to balance meeting traffic goals with producing clickbait, I've definitely seen this tension play out in real life. But I actually believe that both teams are united in their fight for survival, with print brands facing the threat of folding and digital platforms living in fear of layoffs. Although the two are often pitted against each other, they're both struggling to create sellable content without compromising their integrity.

**What's your writing process like? What was your process for writing *A Hundred Other Girls*?**

In many ways, I've been writing this book in my head since I was a little girl. I've always been obsessed with coming-of-age novels but felt like I never had access to heroines who looked like me or had families like mine. I wanted to write a novel that was both fun and insightful, with a completely diverse cast of characters whose identities were integral to who they were without being key to the plot. In other words, representation without tokenization. And ever since I began my career in media and saw how different—and diverse—the industry has grown since *The Devil Wears Prada*, I knew it was high time for an updated depiction.

I still work full-time as a writer and editor, so I wrote this book after-hours, drawing on all the industry drama that I had been privy to, both first- and secondhand. In order to paint a full picture, I interviewed a lot of my former colleagues, read articles published in *Business of Fashion* and *Women's Wear Daily*, and digested more pop culture than I care to admit. I wanted this book to feel as timely in 2022 as it did when I wrote it in 2019. I never could have predicted that it would feel even more urgent and topical today than it did three years ago!

**What was your favorite scene to write?**

Oh my God, this is so tough because I had so much fun delving into all of the scandal, gossip, and intrigue

# IMAN HARIRI-KIA

surrounding the world of *Vinyl*. Selfishly, I'm going to have to go with Noora and Cal's romp in the beauty closet. As a former sex and relationships editor, I've always dreamed of writing a spicy scene that featured a young woman who was unabashed about chasing her own pleasure, taking control of her sexual agency. From her incorporation of a sex toy to her disappointment in Cal's, er, performance, I really loved exploring what sex can look like when women clearly communicate their needs. It felt so true to life and unlike anything else I've ever read in the genre.

## Which character was the most challenging to write?

All of the characters are morally gray and, therefore, were a challenge to write, but I found Loretta to be the most nuanced. On the one hand, she's clearly a narcissist who has zero awareness of how her actions and words impact the people around her. But she's also obviously driven by her insecurities and has had to overcome so much in order to thrive in a patriarchal environment—she's earned her icon status. Navigating Noora's push and gravitational pull to Loretta often toed the line because I wanted readers to understand why, after everything is said and done, Noora is still torn about where her loyalties lie.

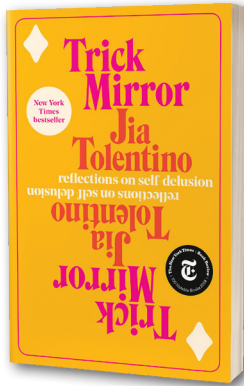
## What's the most important thing you hope readers take from *A Hundred Other Girls*?

The title of the book alludes to an old-guard, toxic, "lucky to be here" mentality that permeates many industries and encourages burnout culture, a mentality that pits women against other women and belittles their self-worth. I hope that by reading this, readers are encouraged to draw boundaries and are reminded that they are more than their job descriptions. Your voice can never be reduced to a title, and your identity can never be packaged for clicks. Your perspective is unique and valuable because it's yours. You are inherently worthy.



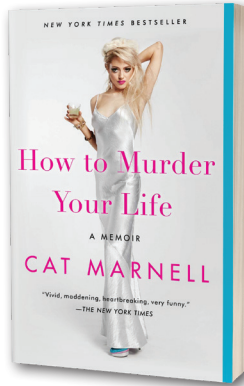
# READING RECOMMENDATIONS

from **Iman Hariri-Kia**



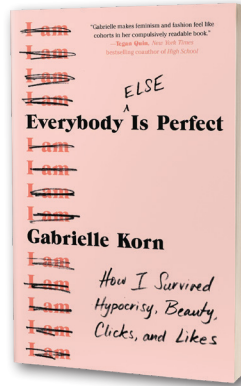
## Trick Mirror

Jia Tolentino perfectly captures what it's like to work in a world that's quickly becoming engulfed by one, big internet.



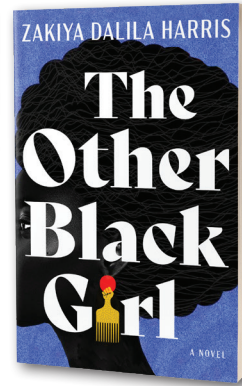
## How to Murder Your Life

Cat Marnell's memoir about her time as a beauty editor during the height of Print magazines is a colorful blur of drugs, makeup, and mayhem.



## Everybody (Else) Is Perfect

Gabrielle Korn, the former EIC of *NYLON*, will walk you through a real-life account of the Print/Digital degeneration divide.



## The Other Black Girl

Zakiya Dalila Harris's harrowing novel takes you entry level into the publishing industry and explores tokenization in representative media.



## Book Lovers

If you loved the sister relationship between Noora and Leila, you will lose your mind over the sibling dynamics of Emily Henry's Nora and Libby.



## A Hundred Other Girls Cocktail

Drink this custom cocktail, inspired by Noora in *A Hundred Other Girls*, while chatting about the book with your friends. All of the ingredients hold a special meaning in Persian culture.



P.S. You can get the drink at Cafe Skye (43 Clinton St.) in New York City throughout the month of August 2022!

### INGREDIENTS

- 1.5oz MEZCAL
- 1.0oz POMEGRANATE JUICE
- 0.5oz FRESH LIME JUICE
- 0.5oz HONEY
- 1.0tsp GROUND SUMAC

### METHOD

POUR ALL INGREDIENTS + ICE INTO A COCKTAIL SHAKER & SHAKE WELL. DOUBLE STRAIN.

### PRESENTATION

SERVE IN A ROCKS GLASS OVER ICE. GARNISH WITH A SPRIG OF MINT.

Credit: Matthew Creedon



# A TOUR OF NYC WITH NOORA




## BEACON'S CLOSET

10 W. 13th St., New York, NY

"Today's early-October weather calls for a big, chunky fisherman's knit sweater and a midi-length kilt I thrifted from Beacon's Closet two weekends ago. I've polished the look off with creepers, to give off that *schoolgirl gets devoured by Beetlejuice* vibe. I can't wait to upload it to the blog along with a poem about universal healthcare."

## THAI DINER

186 Mott St., New York, NY



Noora's favorite Thai restaurant "this side of the East River" where she and Leila "get drunk off Moscow mules and people watching, then waddle home, bloating from overeating."


## CIPRIANI'S

376 W. Broadway, New York, NY

Actually, Noora never goes here, but it's Loretta's favorite place to expense "business meetings."

## GOOD THANKS

131a Orchard St., New York, NY



Get the window table—it's Noora's favorite spot at this café owned by "hot Australian transplants." "Every trendy late-afternoon hot spot scattered across this island is an Aussie haven—minimalist meccas filled with altars of acai bowls, overpriced avocado toasts, and ridiculously handsome Australian exports sporting deeply bronzed tans and rugged denim button-downs."


## NO RELATION

204 1st Ave., New York, NY

Noora's preferred first-date shopping vintage store "with a giant selection of vintage denim, rogue slogan T-shirts, and retired motorcycle jackets."

## LA ESQUINA

114 Kenmare St., New York, NY



Noora and Leila's happy place—a "nondescript taco stand sitting on the far end of a tiny park on Kenmare Street. There's a red LED sign extending over the ceiling that says THE CORNER in big, bright lights, right in front of a billboard that usually boasts YSL ads. The interior consists of a sole work-table to order your meal and a series of barstools, facing an open window into the heart of Nolita. Every surface imaginable is covered in stickers—free stickers, band stickers, Fuck the Man stickers. There's an impressive display of vintage Coca-Cola bottles featured behind a sheet of glass below the counter. During the warmer months, you'll find scattered lime-green and pink tables and chairs sitting outside. A fake greenery, like a virus of vines, lines the scaffolding above. It's a secret plastic garden."


## HOUSE OF YES

2 Wyckoff Ave, Brooklyn, NY

"Like stepping through a time portal back to the age of extravagance and grandeur. Except, like, much queerer. It's a weird and wonderful paradise."

## BAR PITTI


268 6th Ave., New York, NY



"Known for its infamous people watching...it's difficult to describe the magic of Bar Pitti—it's a tiny, crammed restaurant with the majority of its tables positioned in open-air seating, covered by a single dark-green awning overhead. There's a line that curves around the block of people waiting for tables, since the current management refuses to take reservations....but it's probably not the best Italian food you've ever had in your life and definitely not the best Italian food in New York City. So what sets Bar Pitti apart from the other Manhattan establishments? The customers. Sitting at a sidewalk table on any given day, lunch or dinner, is like refreshing your Netflix queue: You never know what will pop up next. One night, I was lucky enough to come across Julianne Moore, Martin Scorsese, and my dude Joffrey from *Game of Thrones*."

## BUTCHER'S DAUGHTER


19 Kenmare St., New York, NY



"The people watching at Butcher's is truly phenomenal, even if the healthy-ish food isn't. It's full of well-to-do vegans and sustainability Soho-ists who spit in the face of single-use plastic but have no problem taking a private jet to Paris."

## CAFE SELECT

212 Lafayette St., New York, NY

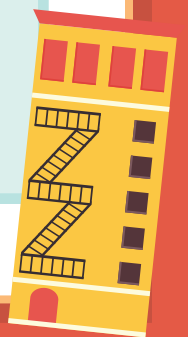


"Cafe Select has always welcomed me with open arms. Although its patrons have deeper pockets and purses than I and speak more languages combined than the entirety of the UN, it feels like a safe space. There's always a table waiting for me as I walk in."

## CENTRAL PARK

"The only location in all of New York where a person can really hear their thoughts echoed back to them."

Listen to  
**NOORA'S  
PLAYLIST**  
as you visit her  
favorite spots!





Beauty and Politics Column:



# THE POLITICS of BODY HAIR

by C. Bates

Nisha, 25, was in the fifth grade the first time she got her eyebrows threaded. It was a family affair—her mother, aunts, and sisters all came with her to the salon and crowded around the technician, offering feedback on her work. “I was so embarrassed, but I was told that their behavior was normal,” she tells *Vinyl*. “Threading was a cultural tradition, and my appointment was, in many ways, a rite of passage.” Nisha found the entire experience to be painful, in more ways than one. “I wasn’t prepared for how much threading would hurt,” she says. But it was the comment her mother made afterward that hit the hardest: now she could finally fit in. Before that day, Nisha had never really realized how much she had stood out.

**“THREADING WAS A CULTURAL TRADITION, AND MY APPOINTMENT WAS, IN MANY WAYS, A RITE OF PASSAGE...I WASN’T PREPARED FOR HOW MUCH THREADING WOULD HURT.”**

In 2022, hair removal is just one part of a billion-dollar beauty industry, one that thrives on an ethos

of exclusion. Between waxing, threading, lasering, and more, the global hair removal products market size was valued at just over four billion dollars in 2019. That same year, Private Label revealed that they had sold around 57 million disposable razors. But as these companies’ profit margins grew, so did marketing campaigns spotlighting hairless, pale-skinned women, reinforcing the American Beauty Standard. The only way for women of color to fit the bill? To spend hundreds of dollars every month removing every follicle of hair from their bodies.

But what is the Western standard of beauty? In 2022, the answer is complicated. Brands have pushed conflicting narratives onto the idealized femme body, boxes that are impossible to simultaneously check. A woman must be rail thin but somehow also sport buxom curves. Her eyebrows must be thick enough to brush up with glue but thin enough that they never grow past the point of perfection. And while Americans have historically favored the white, blue-eyed, thin, and young, the exact measurements and requirements have grown so constrictive and limiting that the standard of beauty has been rendered utterly unattainable. But this directly benefits hair removal companies: as long as women of color consistently fall outside the margins, they make money off of their insecurities.

Roya, 22, was only eleven years old when she started waxing her arms and legs, but she says the impact was immediate. “All of the kids at school who bullied me for being hairy, who called me names, all of sudden started treating me differently,” she tells *Vinyl*. “To be accepted, even a small amount, was electric.” Roya says that her peers’ validation became addictive, and before she knew it, she was scared to go even several weeks without waxing. “I was terrified for my classmates to realize what I actually looked like,” she says. “Maintaining the facade, while feeling like a fraud, was exhausting and expensive. But I couldn’t go back to the way things were. I had no choice.”

**“I WAS TERRIFIED FOR MY CLASSMATES TO REALIZE WHAT I ACTUALLY LOOKED LIKE... MAINTAINING THE FACADE, WHILE FEELING LIKE A FRAUD, WAS EXHAUSTING AND EXPENSIVE. BUT I COULDN’T GO BACK TO THE WAY THINGS WERE. I HAD NO CHOICE.”**

The process that Roya is referring to is known in anthropology and sociology as the “assimilation experiment,” or the system under which individuals or groups of different ethnic heritages are absorbed into the dominant culture of society. While originally founded as a safe harbor for persecuted religious groups, the United States now has a rather harrowing history with assimilation. Between the years of 1890 to 1920, America absorbed immigrants from many different countries after receiving an influx primarily from Europe and Asia. The majority of immigrants came to the country seeking asylum or for economic benefits, expecting to discover a diverse array of cultures, the “melting pot” they’d been pitched. Instead, many have faced varied types of xenophobia, a fear of or prejudice against outsiders. Their choice? To blend in, or rather, assimilate, the best they can—or suffer the consequences.

But white-washing one’s physical features can lead to the loss of cultural heritage, and that disconnect can grow to become irreversible after several generations. As conglomerates get

richer as marginalized Americans divorce their sense of self in order to survive, they’re forced to reconcile the true cost of participating in the politics of the hair removal industrial complex. Is it all monetary? Perhaps on the surface, but when you dig a bit deeper, this isn’t just a conversation about wealth displacement. It’s a moral conundrum rooted in identity. Can you put a price tag on your first language? Your grandmother’s homemade recipes? Of course you can’t. Why don’t we treat the way our hair sprouts naturally from our body with the same respect?

Valencia, 17, was about to graduate from high school when she decided that enough was enough: she was going to stop shaving her hair. “I was terrified,” she tells *Vinyl*. “The idea of playing a game I could never win was sickening to me, but I’d been shaving my entire body since I was in grade school. I had no idea how my skin, my follicles, would react.” Ultimately, Valencia was disappointed to learn her eyebrows would never regain their original shape or texture. “I feel like I’ve lost something,” she says. “I’m not very close to my family, and I don’t speak Spanish. My hair was one of the last connections I had to my Venezuelan roots.”

So, what comes next? The beauty industry’s systemic issues are part of a fire that can’t be put out overnight. But if we can’t change the Western standard, is the only solution to stop removing our hair altogether? Or, perhaps, it’s the intention behind your actions that matters most. Is there a way to remove your hair ethically? “While I regret starting hair removal at such a young age, I’d never judge another woman of color for doing it,” Valencia says. “In this country? The odds are stacked against us. Frankly, we have enough shit to deal with. Can I say that in print?”



# VINYL BOOK CLUB'S SUMMER PICK!

Available  
NOW!



BY

IMAN HARIRI-KIA

How far would you  
go to keep the job a  
hundred other girls  
are ready to take?