

## Children's Booklist - Arab American Heritage Month

Adapted from The Conscious Kid, 2024 &

Curated Content from the Los Angeles Public Library

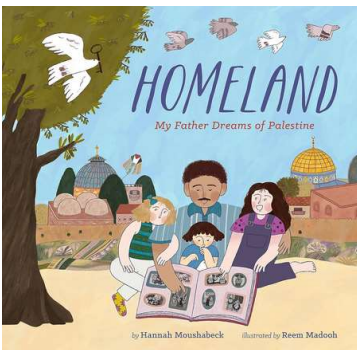
### Sitti's Bird: A Gaza Story by Malak Mattar



Malak is a little girl who lives in Gaza with her parents. She goes to school, plays in the ocean, and visits Sitti's house on Fridays. One day while she is in school, bombings begin. She spends the next 50 days at home with her parents worrying and feeling scared, until one day she picks up her paintbrush.

*Sitti's Bird: A Gaza Story* is a unique children's picture book, written and illustrated by Palestinian artist, Malak Mattar. Reflecting her experiences of childhood in occupied Palestine, Malak's story brings warmth and wonder to children as it tells of her rebirth as an artist during the 2014 airstrikes on Gaza. It is the story of a young girl whose love for her family and discovery of art help her channel her fears and overcome traumas that few of us can imagine—traumas shared by countless children in Gaza and around the world. Ages 4-7.

### Homeland: My Father Dreams of Palestine by Hannah Moushabeck and Reem Madooh

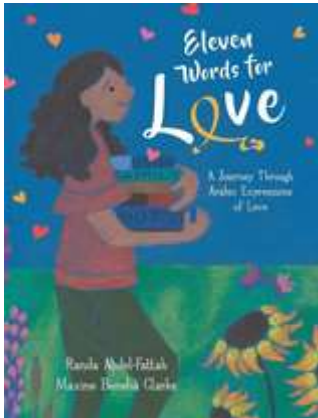


A father and his daughters may not be able to return home . . . but they can celebrate stories of their homeland!

As bedtime approaches, three young girls eagerly await the return of their father who tells them stories of a faraway homeland—Palestine. Through their father's memories, the Old City of Jerusalem comes to life: the sounds of juice vendors beating rhythms with brass cups, the smell of argileh drifting through windows, and the sight of doves flapping their wings toward home. These daughters of the diaspora feel love for a place they have never been, a home they cannot visit. But, as their father's story comes to an end, they know that through his memories, they will always return.

A Palestinian family celebrates the stories of their homeland in this moving autobiographical picture book debut by Hannah Moushabeck. With heartfelt illustrations by Reem Madooh, this story is a love letter to home, to family, and to the persisting hope of people that transcends borders. Ages 4-8.

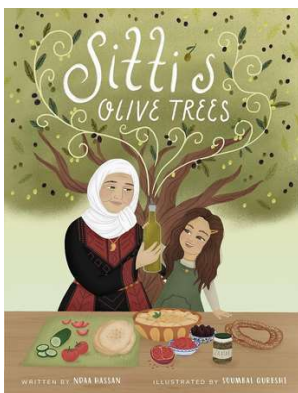
## Eleven Words for Love: A Journey Through Arabic Expressions of Love by Randa Abdel-Fattah and Maxine Beneba Clarke



A lyrical narrative of a Palestinian family in exile explores universal bonds of family, loyalty, and friendship through the lens of eleven Arabic expressions for love.

A family has fled their homeland in search of safety in another country, carrying a single suitcase. As their journey unfolds, the oldest child reflects on the special contents of that suitcase: photo albums that evoke eleven of many names for love in Arabic. From sunshine-warm friendship to the love that dissolves all tears; from the love that makes you swoon to the love that leaves you yearning for the heart's homeland—her family has experienced it all. Illustrated in vibrant watercolor pencil and collage on textured card stock, this moving scrapbook shows a family embracing an unknown future even as they honor the past, casting immigration and the refugee experience in the light of universal human connection. Ages 4-8.

## Sitti's Olive Trees by Ndaa Hassan and Soumbal Qureshi



Sitti's Olive Trees is the story of the olive harvesting season in Palestine. Sitti shares the beautiful tales of her ancestors planting and caring for their precious olive trees with Reema, her granddaughter who lives in the west, and the unique culture and hard work that goes into olive picking season. This heart-warming tale is a celebration of culture, family, and storytelling. Ages 4-8.

## Sitti's Secrets by Naomi Shihab Nye and Nancy Carpenter



A beautiful picture book about family and love across distance.

Mona's grandmother, her Sitti, lives in a small Palestinian village on the other side of the earth. Once, Mona went to visit her. They couldn't speak each other's language, so they made up their own. They learned about each other's worlds, and they discovered each other's secrets. Then it was time for Mona to go back home, back to the other side of the earth. But even though there were millions of miles and millions of people between them, they remained true neighbors forever. Ages 5-8.

## Halal Hot Dogs by Susannah Aziz and Parwinder Singh



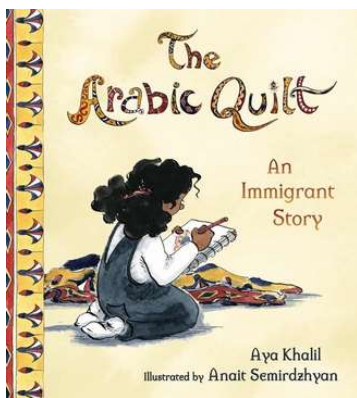
Every Friday after Jumma prayer at the masjid, Musa's family has a special Jumma treat. They take turns picking out what the treat will be, but recently the choices have been . . . interesting. Week one, Mama made molokhia. It's perfect for sharing, but gives us molokhia teeth for days! Week two, Baba burned the kufte kebabs on the grill. Week three, Seedi made his favorite riz b'haleeb-creamy rice pudding with pistachio sprinkled on top with an unexpected ingredient. Last week, Maryam brought jellybeans. . . . Finally, it's Musa's turn to pick, and he picks his favorite-halal hot dogs! But actually getting to eat this deliciousness turns into a journey riddled with obstacles. Will he ever get his favorite tasty treat? Ages 4-8.

## Olive Harvest in Palestine by Wafa Shami and Shaima Farouki



A story about the harvest traditions that have been shared among Palestinian farmers for centuries. The story takes the reader's imagination on a journey, starting from how the olives are picked, through how they are pressed into oil, bottled and finally arrive in the consumer's hands. Along the way the reader shares in this festive working atmosphere filled with singing, eating, love and laughter portrayed from the eyes of a child. Ages 5-7.

## The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story by Aya Khalil and Anait Semirdzhyan



Kanzi's family has moved from Egypt to America, and on her first day in a new school, what she wants more than anything is to fit in. Maybe that's why she forgets to take the kofta sandwich her mother has made for her lunch, but that backfires when Mama shows up at school with the sandwich. Mama wears a hijab and calls her daughter Habibti (dear one). When she leaves, the teasing starts.

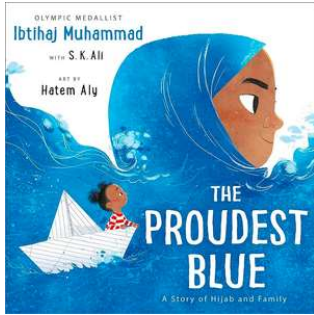
That night, Kanzi wraps herself in the beautiful Arabic quilt her teita (grandma) in Cairo gave her and writes a poem in Arabic about the quilt. Next day her teacher sees the poem and gets the entire class excited about creating a "quilt" (a paper collage) of student names in Arabic. In the end,

Kanzi's most treasured reminder of her old home provides a pathway for acceptance in her new one.

This authentic story with beautiful illustrations includes a glossary of Arabic words and a presentation of Arabic letters with their phonetic English equivalents. Ages 4-8.



## The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family by Ibtihaj Muhammad, S.K. Ali and Hatem Aly

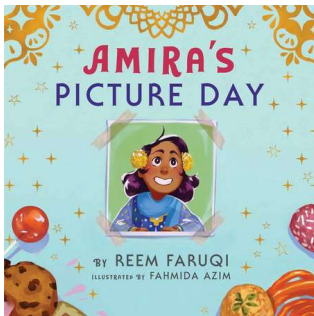


A powerful, vibrantly illustrated story about the first day of school--and two sisters on one's first day of hijab--by Olympic medalist and social justice activist Ibtihaj Muhammad.

With her new backpack and light-up shoes, Faizah knows the first day of school is going to be special. It's the start of a brand new year and, best of all, it's her older sister Asiya's first day of hijab--a hijab of beautiful blue fabric, like the ocean waving to the sky. But not everyone sees hijab as beautiful, and in the face of hurtful, confusing words, Faizah will find new ways to be strong.

Paired with Hatem Aly's beautiful, whimsical art, Olympic medalist Ibtihaj Muhammad and Morris Award finalist S.K. Ali bring readers an uplifting, universal story of new experiences, the unbreakable bond between siblings, and of being proud of who you are. Ages 3-8.

## Amira's Picture Day by Reem Faruqi and Fahmida Azim

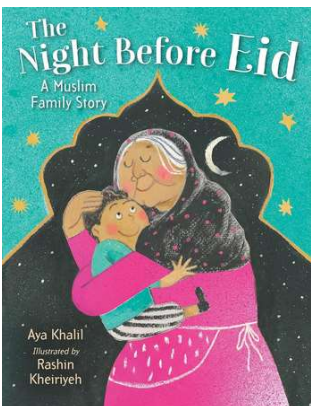


Ramadan has come to an end, and Amira can't wait to stay home from school to celebrate Eid. There's just one hiccup: it's also school picture day. How can Amira be in two places at once?

Just the thought of Eid makes Amira warm and tingly inside. From wearing new clothes to handing out goody bags at the mosque, Amira can't wait for the festivities to begin. But when a flier on the fridge catches her eye, Amira's stomach goes cold. Not only is it Eid, it's also school picture day. If she's not in her class picture, how will her classmates remember her? Won't her teacher wonder where she is?

Though the day's celebrations at the mosque are everything Amira was dreaming of, her absence at picture day weighs on her. A last-minute idea on the car ride home might just provide the solution to everything in this delightful story from acclaimed author Reem Faruqi, illustrated with vibrant color by Fahmida Azim. Ages 4-8.

## The Night Before Eid: A Muslim Family Story by Aya Khalil and Rashin Kheiriyeh

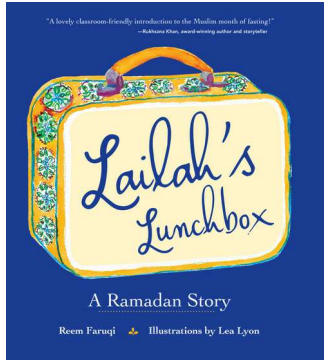


Celebrate the end of Ramadan with this luminous Muslim family story about faith, history, and delicious foods.

On the night before Eid, it's finally time to make special sweet treats: Teita's famous ka'ak. Zain eagerly unpacks the ingredients from his grandmother's bulky suitcase: ghee from Khalo Karim, dates from Amo Girgis, and honey from Tant Tayseer—precious flavors all the way from Egypt. Together with Mama and Teita, Zain follows his family's recipe and brings to life Eid songs and prayers, pharaonic history, and the melodies and tastes of his Egyptian heritage.

This Muslim holiday story, featuring a delicious ka'ak recipe, is a satisfying addition to a joyful and expansive Eid. Ages 4-8.

# Lailah's Lunchbox by Reem Faruqi and Lea Lyon



Lailah is in a new school in a new country, thousands of miles from her old home, and missing her old friends. When Ramadan begins, she is excited that she is finally old enough to participate in the fasting but worried that her classmates won't understand why she doesn't join them in the lunchroom.

Lailah solves her problem with help from the school librarian and her teacher and in doing so learns that she can make new friends who respect her beliefs. This gentle, moving story from first-time author Reem Faruqi comes to life in Lea Lyon's vibrant illustrations. Lyon uses decorative arabesque borders on intermittent spreads to contrast the ordered patterns of Islamic observances with the unbounded rhythms of American school days. Ages 7-10.

New York Times bestseller and Newbery Honor Book!

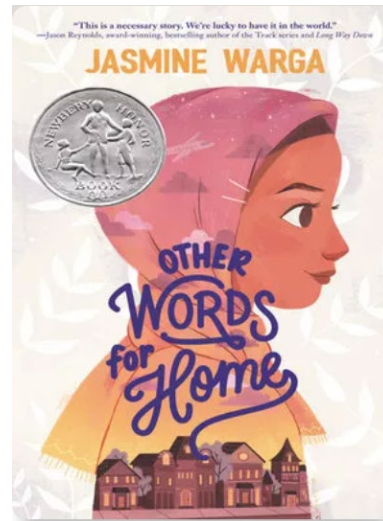
A gorgeously written, hopeful middle grade novel in verse about a young girl who must leave Syria to move to the United States, perfect for fans of Jason Reynolds and Aisha Saeed.

Jude never thought she'd be leaving her beloved older brother and father behind, all the way across the ocean in Syria. But when things in her hometown start becoming volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives.

At first, everything in America seems too fast and too loud. The American movies that Jude has always loved haven't quite prepared her for starting school in the US—and her new label of "Middle Eastern," an identity she's never known before.

But this life also brings unexpected surprises—there are new friends, a whole new family, and a school musical that Jude might just try out for. Maybe America, too, is a place where Jude can be seen as she really is.

This lyrical, life-affirming story is about losing and finding home and, most importantly, finding yourself.



#1 New York Times bestseller \* Best Book of the Year from The Washington Post, Publishers Weekly, New York Public Library, Chicago Public Library

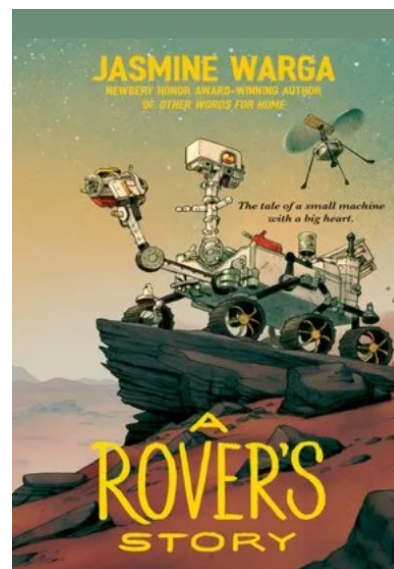
The One and Only Ivan meets The Wild Robot in this unique and deeply moving middle grade novel about the journey of a fictional Mars rover, from the Newbery Honor-winning author of Other Words for Home.

Meet Resilience, a Mars rover determined to live up to his name.

Res was built to explore Mars. He was not built to have human emotions. But as he learns new things from the NASA scientists who assemble him, he begins to develop humanlike feelings. Maybe there's a problem with his programming....

Human emotions or not, launch day comes, and Res blasts off to Mars, accompanied by a friendly drone helicopter named Fly. But Res quickly discovers that Mars is a dangerous place filled with dust storms and giant cliffs. As he navigates Mars's difficult landscape, Res is tested in ways that go beyond space exploration.

As millions of people back on Earth follow his progress, will Res have the determination, courage, and resilience to succeed...and survive?



An extraordinary new novel from Jasmine Warga, Newbery Honor–winning author of *Other Words for Home*, about loss and healing—and how friendship can be magical.

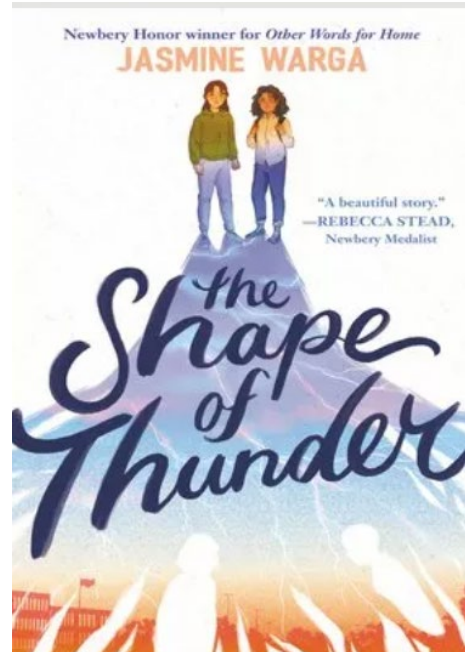
Cora hasn't spoken to her best friend, Quinn, in a year.

Despite living next door to each other, they exist in separate worlds of grief. Cora is still grappling with the death of her beloved sister in a school shooting, and Quinn is carrying the guilt of what her brother did.

On the day of Cora's twelfth birthday, Quinn leaves a box on her doorstep with a note. She has decided that the only way to fix things is to go back in time to the moment before her brother changed all their lives forever—and stop him.

In spite of herself, Cora wants to believe. And so the two former friends begin working together to open a wormhole in the fabric of the universe. But as they attempt to unravel the mysteries of time travel to save their siblings, they learn that the magic of their friendship may actually be the key to saving themselves.

*The Shape of Thunder* is a deeply moving story, told with exceptional grace, about friendship and loss—and how believing in impossible things can help us heal.



From the award-winning, ALA Notable author of *Unsettled* and *Lailah's Lunchbox*, this is a captivating coming-of-age middle grade novel in verse about seventh grader Aafiyah Qamar, a Pakistani American girl who hatches a special plan to help her family but finds that doing what's right isn't always easy.

For fans of *The Thing About Jellyfish* and *Clean Getaway*, this is a heartfelt, soul-searching story with laughter, hope, and lessons learned.

Seventh grader Aafiyah loves playing tennis, reading *Weird but True* facts, and hanging out with her best friend, Zaina. However, Aafiyah has a bad habit that troubles her—she's drawn to pretty things and can't help but occasionally "borrow" them.

But when her father is falsely accused of a crime he hasn't committed and gets taken in by authorities, Aafiyah knows she needs to do something to help. When she brainstorms a way to bring her father back, she turns to her *Weird but True* facts and devises the perfect plan.

But what if her plan means giving in to her bad habit, the one she's been trying to stop? Aafiyah wants to reunite her family but finds that maybe her plan isn't so perfect after all.

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A Bank Street Books Best Children's Book of the Year for ages 12-14 in Family/School/Community Fiction (2023)





**ALA Notable Book:** A "warm and humorous" novel of a boy's much-dreaded move from the Middle East to Michigan with his parents (Kirkus Reviews, starred review).

Aref Al-Amri does not want to leave Oman. He does not want to leave his elementary school, his friends, or his beloved grandfather, Sidi. He does not want to live in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where his parents will go to graduate school. His mother is desperate for him to pack his suitcase, but he refuses. Finally, she calls Sidi for help. But rather than pack, Aref and Sidi go on a series of adventures. They visit the camp of a thousand stars deep in the desert, they sleep on Sidi's roof, they fish in the Gulf of Oman and dream about going to India, and they travel to the nature reserve to watch the sea turtles. At each stop, Sidi finds a small stone that he later slips into Aref's suitcase—mementos of home.

Acclaimed poet and National Book Award finalist Naomi Shihab Nye's warmth, attention to detail, and belief in the power of empathy and connection shines from every page of this story following Aref Al-Amri as he says goodbye to Muscat, Oman and prepares for a journey to an unfamiliar world.

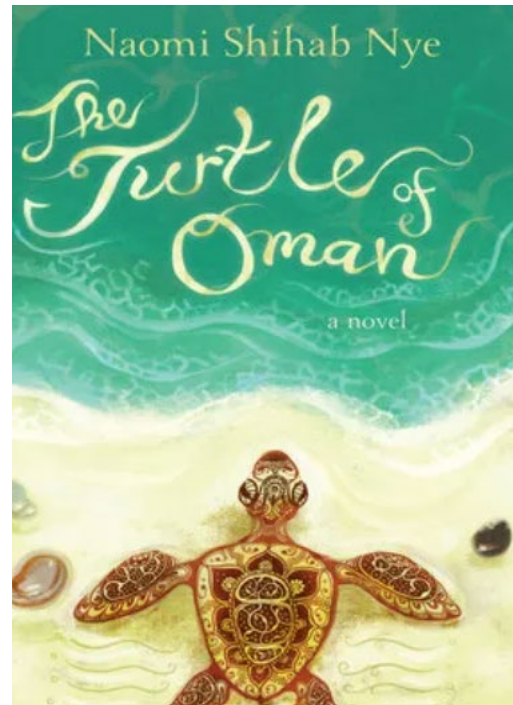
"Richly rewarding." —School Library Journal

"Deeply moving." —Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

"Nye's story about the special bond between a boy and his grandfather and their mutual love for their country is somehow both quiet and exhilarating." —Horn Book (starred review)

A Winner of the Middle East Book Award

Includes bonus material from the author and art by Betsy Peterschmidt



A Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year · Kid's Indie Next List · Featured in Today Show's AAPI Heritage Month list · A Kirkus Children's Best Book of 2021 · A National Council of Teachers of English Notable Verse Novel · Jane Addams 2022 Children's Book Award Finalist · 2021 Nerdy Award Winner · Muslim Bookstagram Award Winner for Best Middle School Book

For fans of *Other Words for Home* and *Front Desk*, this powerful, charming immigration story follows a girl who moves from Karachi, Pakistan, to Peachtree City, Georgia, and must find her footing in a new world. Reem Faruqi is the ALA Notable author of award-winning *Lailah's Lunchbox*.

"A lyrical coming of age story exploring family, immigration, and most of all belonging." —Aisha Saeed, New York Times bestselling author of *Amal Unbound*

"This empowering story will resonate with people who have struggled to both fit in and stay true to themselves." —Veera Hiranandani, Newbery Honor author of *The Night Diary*

"A gorgeously written story, filled with warmth and depth." —Hena Khan, author of *Amina's Voice*

When her family moves from Pakistan to Peachtree City, all Nurah wants is to blend in, yet she stands out for all the wrong reasons. Nurah's accent, floral-print kurtas, and tea-colored skin make her feel excluded, until she meets Stahr at swimming tryouts.

And in the water Nurah doesn't want to blend in. She wants to win medals like her star athlete brother, Owais—who is going through struggles of his own in the U.S. Yet when sibling rivalry gets in the way, she makes a split-second decision of betrayal that changes their fates.

Ultimately Nurah slowly gains confidence in the form of strong swimming arms, and also gains the courage to stand





up to bullies, fight for what she believes in, and find her place.

Farah and her best friend, Allie Liu, are getting excited to turn in their applications to the Magnet Academy, where they both hope to attend sixth grade. But when new girl Dana Denver shows up, Farah's world is turned upside down. As Dana starts bullying Farah's little brother, Samir, Farah begins to second-guess her choice to leave him behind at Harbortown Elementary/Middle School. Determined to handle it on her own, Farah comes up with a plan—a plan that involves lying to those closest to her. Will her lies catch up with her, or can Farah find a way to defeat the bully and rock fifth grade?



"Celebrates the power of human connections."—School Library Journal (starred review)

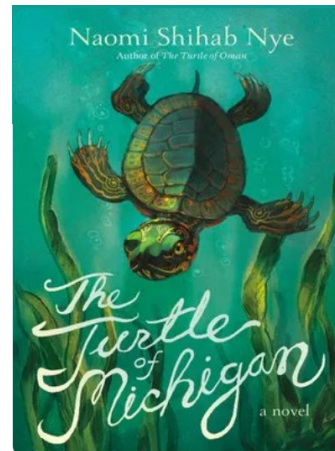
"Humorous, sensitive, and poignant."—Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

The stand-alone companion to National Book Award Finalist and beloved poet Naomi Shihab Nye's *The Turtle of Oman*. *The Turtle of Michigan* is a deft and accessible novel that follows a young boy named Aref as he travels from Muscat, Oman, to Ann Arbor, Michigan, and adjusts to a new life and a new school in the United States. A wonderful pick for young middle grade readers and fans of Kevin Henkes, Erin Entrada Kelly, and Meg Medina.

Aref is excited for his journey from Oman to the United States, where he will reunite with his father in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Aref makes a friend on an airplane, wonders what Michigan will be like, and starts school in the United States. While he does miss his grandfather, his Sidi, Aref knows that his home in Oman will always be waiting for him.

Award-winning author Naomi Shihab Nye's highly anticipated sequel to *The Turtle of Oman* explores immigration, family, and what it means to feel at home. Carrying a suitcase and memories of Oman, Aref experiences the excitement and nervousness that accompany moving to a new home and new school. *The Turtle of Michigan* is a great choice for reading aloud as well as a perfect read-alone for younger middle grade readers.

Illustrated in black-and-white throughout.



It's summer break, and Farah is eager to attend an enrichment camp at her new school. But with car trouble and other family expenses, Farah's parents won't be able to pay for the camp this year. Taking matters into her own hands, Farah takes various odd jobs, including selling items at a yard sale, mowing neighbors' lawns, and finally starting her own tutoring business. When Farah discovers that someone is sabotaging her business by taking down her fliers, she's shocked. Can Farah find the culprit, continue her business success, and earn enough money in time to go to the camp of her dreams?



"An emotional tale of a family's grief and healing, full of courage and hope" —Kirkus Reviews

"Faruqi renders this tender story of loss with a deft hand, employing vivid details surrounding Adnan's Pakistani Muslim identity . . . and nuanced characterizations to present a tear-jerking ode to family." —Publishers Weekly (starred review)

"A realistic, moving exploration of family, loss, and healing." —ALA Booklist

"Faruqi takes on the difficult subject of family loss with beauty and grace in her gentle lyrical style. She allows Adnan, a young table tennis enthusiast, to go through grief while holding not just sadness but love and joy, in an honest and nuanced story that is ultimately filled with hope." —Veera Hiranandani, Newbery Honor author of *The Night Diary*

For fans of *Planet Omar* and *The Ethan I Was Before*, award-winning Pakistani author Reem Faruqi of *Unsettled* delivers a middle grade novel in verse about table tennis player Adnan, who dreams of the championship and a fun-filled family trip to Florida. But when tragedy strikes, he and his family must cope with a terrible loss and come together as one again. This poignant story about a Muslim family learning to heal is hope-filled and moving. Now in paperback!

Adnan Zakir loves table tennis. He's also colorblind and left-handed and has a fondness for the aviation alphabet. He's super close with his sister, Aaliyah, who is a great dancer and memorizer of the Quran, and he loves his little toddler brother, Rizwan, who only wants to grow up and play table tennis like his big brother.

All Adnan dreams of is making it to the Ultimate Table Tennis Championship in Florida, and if he qualifies for the tournament, he knows he will get to spend the Eid holiday with his cousins. But when the family travels there, unthinkable tragedy strikes, and Adnan swears he'll never play table tennis ever again. Slowly, he and his family must learn to make peace and move forward, as a family.

A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection pick!



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 about 2 weeks



Earn Fiction achievement