

ABOUT THE BOOK

A joyous short story collection by and about Muslims, edited by *New York Times* bestselling authors Aisha Saeed and William C. Morris Award finalist S.K. Ali, *Once Upon an Eid* showcases the most brilliant Muslim voices writing today, all about the most joyful holiday of the year: Eid!

Eid: The short, single-syllable word conjures up a variety of feelings and memories for Muslims. Maybe it's waking up to the sound of frying samosas or the comfort of bean pie, maybe it's the pleasure of putting on a new outfit for Eid prayers, or maybe it's the gift-giving and holiday parties to come that day.

Whatever it may be, for those who cherish this day of celebration, the emotional responses may be summed up in another short and sweet word: joy.

Jubilant and filled with heart, *Once Upon an Eid* will bring joy to families during holidays and all year round.

The anthology includes a poem, a graphic-novel chapter, and illustrations. The full list of *Once Upon an Eid* contributors include:

- ✦ G. Willow Wilson (*Alif the Unseen*, *Ms. Marvel*)
- ✦ Hena Khan (*Amina's Voice*, *Under My Hijab*)
- ✦ N. H. Senzai (*Shooting Kabul*, *Escape from Aleppo*)
- ✦ Hanna Alkaf (*The Weight of Our Sky*)
- ✦ Rukhsana Khan (*Big Red Lollipop*)
- ✦ Randa Abdel-Fattah (*Does My Head Look Big in This?*)
- ✦ Ashley Franklin (*Not Quite Snow White*)
- ✦ Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow (*Mommy's Khimar*)
- ✦ Candice Montgomery (*Home and Away*, *By Any Means Necessary*)
- ✦ Huda Al-Marashi (*First Comes Marriage*)
- ✦ Ayesha Mattu (*Maya Madinah Chooses Joy*)
- ✦ Asmaa Hussein (*Kareem Means 'Generous'*)
- ✦ Sara Alfageeh (*Seraj Captures the Moon*)

ABOUT THE GUIDE

Once Upon an Eid is an anthology of stories written by Muslim authors about their experiences celebrating Eid. There are two kinds of Eids that are celebrated at different junctures throughout the year. In its Editors' Introduction, the anthology explains the religious and cultural significance of the holidays to help set the context for all the stories. At their core, however, each story champions hope and joy during the holidays, a fairly universal experience. The stories can be used in a variety of ways for students of all ages. In our teaching guide, though we have recommended certain grade levels for each story, teachers can use their discretion and adjust as needed. To help teachers make those decisions, for each story, we have also included a basic summary of the story, discussion questions, a list of potentially new vocabulary, themes/ideas of the story, and activities students can complete.

As the authors of this anthology explain at the start of their book, "There are almost two billion Muslims around the world, and we come from many different walks of life and cultures." More specifically, according to the Pew Research Center, in 2015, there were about 1.8 billion Muslims in the world which is about 24% of the world's population.

- About 20% of the Muslim population lives in the Middle East, while the majority—62%—lives in the Asia Pacific region. Indonesia currently has the world's largest Muslim population. As of a 2017 PEW Research Study, there were 3.45 million Muslims in the United States.
- Within the 3.45 million Muslims in the United States, there is much racial and ethnic diversity. According to the Pew Research Center, about 41% are white, "a category that includes those who describe their race as Arab, Middle Eastern, Persian/Iranian or in a variety of other ways." About 28% of Muslims identify as Asian, and about 20% identify as Black. About 8% of Muslims in the United States identify as Hispanic.

These statistics depict a rich tapestry of cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity of Muslims in the United States and the world. This diversity permeates every aspect of life including the foods eaten, the traditions practiced, and the belief systems that are taught in their families. It is imperative that teachers emphasize that Muslims are by no means a monolith. There is not one story that could adequately encompass the Muslim experience because of how vastly it differs from one culture to another and even from one family to another. Nevertheless, this book does a phenomenal job of displaying some of the diversity of those experiences during the joys of Eid.

MUST KNOW VOCABULARY

5 Daily Prayers	Muslims are expected to pray five times a day. The names for these prayers are Fajr (right before sunrise), Dhuhr (during the morning), Asr (during the afternoon), Maghrib (after sunset), and Isha (during the evening).
Allah	Literal translation for “God” in Arabic
As Salam Alaikum/ Wa alaikum as salam/salaam	“May Peace Be Upon You”/“May peace be upon you as well”/“Peace”: the standard greeting between Muslims. “Salaam” is a shorter version.
Eid	A celebration or feast
Eid-ul-Adha	The feast of sacrifice which is marked by the tenth day of the month of Hajj
Eid-ul-Fitr	The feast of breaking the fast which marks the end of Ramadan
Fasting	This is one of the five pillars during which Muslims abstain from any type of food and drink from dawn to dusk during the month of Ramadan.
Hajj	The holy annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, that is an obligation for every Muslim who is financially able to afford it.
Hijab	A head covering worn by many Muslim women and girls that signifies an expression of modesty
Iftar	The meal at sunset during which Muslims break their fast during Ramadan
Imam	The head of the mosque and the one who usually leads the prayers at the mosque
Islam	One of the three monotheistic Abrahamic faiths and the second largest religion in the world
Lunar Calendar	A calendar used by Muslims that follows the monthly cycles of the moon
Masjid/Mosque	The place of worship that Muslims attend
Muslim	A person who follows the religion of Islam
Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)	The final prophet in a long series of prophets that delivered the message of Islam to humanity. It is Muslim tradition to say “Peace be upon him” whenever his name is mentioned.
Quran	The Holy Book of Islam
Ramadan	A holy month in Islam’s lunar calendar in which Muslims fast from dawn to dusk every day. It is also the month the Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
Saqada	Charity. Islam champions charity but looks down upon those who remind others of their charitableness.
Suhoor	A meal that is eaten before dawn in preparation for the fast the next day
Taraweeh	Supplemental prayers offered at a mosque after the evening prayer during the holy month of Ramadan

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“PERFECT” BY JAMILAH THOMPkins BIGELOW

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary/Secondary

Genre: Descriptive Story

Summary

Hawa and her parents are traveling from Philadelphia to the Bronx to spend the last day of Ramadan and Eid with her dad’s side of the family. Her dad is from Guinea and her mom is African American, so Hawa feels the pressure to balance both sides of her identity. Hawa also remembers unpleasant feelings from their last visit. When they arrive in the Bronx, Hawa has an embarrassing moment trying to wear the African clothing gifted by her Mama Dusu. There are moments of misunderstanding and conflict between Hawa and her cousin Fanta. The two girls learn to communicate in order to understand each other and save their Eid celebration.

Themes & Ideas

family, racial/national identity, multiple identities, language, fertility, judgment, acceptance, communication

Discussion Questions

- Why was Hawa’s family not fasting on their way to New York?
- In what ways does Hawa struggle with her identity?
- How are Hawa’s and Fanta’s perspectives similar? How do Hawa’s and Fanta’s perspectives differ?
- What do both Hawa and Fanta learn about each other?
- Why was Hawa uncomfortable with her family’s last visit to their relatives in New York?
- In the story, there was one comment that created a misunderstanding between both sides of the family. What was the comment? What lesson can be learned from their interaction?

Activities

- In the story, there’s an emphasis on the tradition of new Eid clothing. Clothing can be very special for different reasons. Think about a piece of clothing that you value for whatever reason. (For example: cultural dress, a new item, memories attached to the item or the person that bought it, a comfortable piece, etc.) Write a description of the item and share with the class.
- Your identity is made up of your experiences. It could be made up of your racial, ethnic, cultural, or familial traditions. Reflect on your identity or multiple identities and how you may reconcile them. Showcase those identities in a visual way such as through a poem or drawing.
- Was there ever a time you tried a food or dish from a completely different culture? What was that experience like? Respond as a journal entry.

Vocabulary

Eid, Ramadan, hijab, Mandinka, Guinea, abaya, lapa, Assalamu Alaikum

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“YUSUF AND THE GREAT BIG BROWNIE MISTAKE” BY AISHA SAEED

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary

Genre: Descriptive Story

Summary

Yusuf is excited for his family’s Eid tradition of making brownies. He is bothered by his sister who wants to start a new tradition by making fruit tarts for dessert. When his mom leaves him to be responsible for the brownies, he is distracted and is afraid he has ruined them. He learns soon enough that family traditions can grow and change. His family comes together to save the brownies.

Themes & Ideas

family, tradition, arrogance, teamwork, food, siblings

Discussion Questions

- Why was Yusuf upset with his sister’s attempt at making fruit tarts?
- How were the brownies almost ruined?
- Who helped Yusuf fix the brownies? How?
- What did Yusuf learn about traditions and family?
- Yusuf’s family made brownies every Eid. Does your family have a tradition? What does that tradition involve? The tradition can be big or small, and it does not have to be holiday related.

Activities

- Yusuf’s sister decided to create a new Eid tradition. If you could create one new tradition for yourself, your family, or for our class, what would it be? And why? Make sure to describe what the tradition would consist of.
- Yusuf learns a powerful lesson on asking for help and accepting change. Was there ever a moment where you also learned from your mistakes? What happened? Write a personal narrative about that event from your life.
- Think about a tradition from your family that you love. Describe it with as much detail as you can to a partner in class!

Vocabulary

Eid, kamiz, gulab jamans, biryani, masjid, Fitrana, Imam

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“KAREEM MEANS ‘GENEROUS’” BY ASMAA HUSSEIN

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary/Secondary

Genre: Descriptive Story

Summary

Kareem has been working hard to buy himself a bike for Eid. A few days before Eid, his mom asks him to help the new neighbor, Shawn, on his paper route. On the route, Shawn's bike is destroyed and is taken away by garbage collection. Kareem's grandmother sends him Eid money, reminding him that his name means generous. Kareem buys himself a new bike but feels obligated to help Shawn. He figures out a way to have his bike and help Shawn. His grandmother advises him that “anytime you share something you love, it comes right back to you,” and Kareem quickly learns that it is true.

Themes & Ideas

sharing, friendship, sacrifice, solidarity, internal conflict, gifts, generosity

Discussion Questions

- What happened when Kareem refused to help Shawn finish his paper route? Why did Kareem feel guilty?
- What did Teta and Kareem's mother want to remind him to do with his Eid money?
- What did Kareem decide to do with his Eid money?
- What changed Kareem's mind when he went to the store to buy himself a helmet?
- What compromise did Kareem come up with in order to help Shawn with his paper route?
- Who inspired Kareem to be generous?
- In what ways did Teta's advice come true? Explain your answer.

Activities

- If you had a magic wand and could help any one person, who would it be and how would you help them? Be descriptive. (Students can pick one person or they can pick a social issue, depending on grade level.)
- Think of a time when someone gave you advice that you used or learned from. How can you use this advice in your life now?
- Teta gave Kareem advice that anyone can use. What advice would you give someone you love/care for? Why would you give this advice? Can anyone use it? Write the advice in a decorative way and decorate the classroom with all the advice.

Vocabulary

fasting, iftaar, koshari, bismillah, suhoor, fuul, Fajr, Teta, Mubarak, habibi, Assalamu Alaikum/Walaikumussalaam, Alhamdulillah, thobe, boomerang

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“DON’UT BREAK TRADITION” BY S. K. ALI

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary/Secondary

Genre: Descriptive Story

Summary

Nadia has a difficult time finding joy on Eid morning, reminiscing on a time before her mother was sick and her family was experiencing financial hardship. While her family goes to Eid prayer, she stays behind with her mother. She decides to go to Mr. Laidlaw’s local donut shop that carries all of her family member’s favorite donuts. She buys an extra gift on her way back for her mother. As she helps her mother get ready, Nadia starts to see that joy can be created during difficult times. As she waits for her family to return from prayer, she is surprised with some likely and unlikely guests that will celebrate Eid with them all.

Themes & Ideas

community, family, traditions, illness, hardship, food, love, gifts, responsibility, cheering up

Discussion Questions

- Why did Eid day not feel like Eid for Nadia?
- What happened that changed the way Nadia’s family lived? How did their lives change?
- Why is Joy’s name ironic in the context of the story?
- In what ways did Nadia try to create a sense of Eid for her family? In what ways did she help celebrate her mother?
- Why were the donuts significant to Nadia? How did she relate them to her family members?

Activities

- At the end of the story, the community came together to support Nadia’s family. Name a time you saw a community come together in a unified manner, small or big. What was the reason or cause for them to come together? Write a journal entry about what happened and draw a symbol that represents the unity of the community.
- Nadia’s family has very brief conversations with Mr. Laidlaw during their visits, but those turn out to be more meaningful than they realize. Sometimes, people do not realize how far our interactions with one another go. Think about people in your life that you meet on a consistent basis but don’t know a whole lot about. Find out by talking to them! Ask at least two of those people in your life: what’s something about you that people would never guess? Gather their responses, add some pictures, and share them with the class.
- Nadia is understandably sad about her mother’s illness and knows her mother also feels a little mellow. However, she takes steps to make her mom feel better. Think about someone in your life who might not be feeling their best. What is one simple thing you can do to make them feel better? Help each other brainstorm ideas as a class and try to do those things.

Vocabulary

Eid, Eidhi, binti, salaah, oud, mosque, hijab, pashmina

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“JUST LIKE CHEST ARMOR” BY CANDICE MONTGOMERY

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary/Secondary

Genre: Descriptive Story

Summary

Leila has been wanting to wear the hijab for quite some time. Her aunt gifted her a hijab for her birthday that she wants to wear out, but her mother has some reservations. Leila practices wearing her hijab as her mom reminds her that it is about Leila's relationship with Allah. Finally on Eid, Leila wears her new hijab to school and after some reactions from her classmates, she realizes why her mother had reservations. She battles with her feelings but finds support from a fellow classmate who wishes her Eid Mubarak.

Themes & Ideas

acceptance, internal conflict, friendship, bullying, parents, role model

Discussion Questions

- Who gave Leila her first hijab?
- Why might Leila's mom not think she's ready to wear the hijab?
- How might the hijab be like an armor to Leila?
- How did Leila's classmates react to her wearing the hijab? Give two examples of two different reactions.
- How did Leila feel towards the negative reaction? Did it make her question her decision to wear it?
- Do you think Leila will continue to wear her hijab or not? Explain your answer with evidence.
- How did Tennyson support Leila as a friend and classmate?

Activities

- Tennyson made a list of people that he learns from. Make a list of people that you learn from and give specific examples of what they taught you.
- Think of an item that makes you feel safe or protected. It can be any current item or an item you used to have. Draw the item and share with the class. Who gave you the item? What color is it? Do you wear it? Be descriptive.
- Standing up for what you believe can sometimes be a scary thing. Write a journal entry about a time in your life where you had to stand up for something you believed in but people around you did not. How did you feel? How did people around you react?
- Children have a tendency to replicate the behaviors of their parents. It's also common to see adults be influenced by the company they surround themselves with. What is something positive that you saw someone else do in their life that you also would like to replicate in your life? Why? Explain in a journal entry.

Vocabulary

querida, ochre, hijab, masjid, Allah/Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala/Allah SWT, dolma qarnuon, segunda, salaah, masjid, Fajr, Eid Mubarak/Khair Mubarak, mosque

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“GIFTS” BY RUKSHANA KHAN

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary/Secondary

Genre: Descriptive Story

Summary

Idrees is fasting for only his second year and is struggling to get through the days without feeling like he isn't as good as his older brother, Sulaymaan. Idrees is on a hunt to find the gifts his parents bought for him and his brother for Eid but when he finds them, he is not as happy as he thought he would be. He learns the value of a gift lies deeper than the gift itself.

Themes & Ideas

love, family, acceptance, traditions, faith, growth, gifts, self-doubt, integrity

Discussion Questions

- What are the lessons Idrees learns in this story? Are these universal lessons? How?
- Why do you think Idrees is not happy when he finally finds the gifts?
- What type of struggles does Idrees have in school?
- What is the significance of Ramadan and Eid to Idrees?
- Why did ancient civilizations use a lunar calendar? When and why in history did following the lunar calendar change?

Activities

- Muslims follow a lunar calendar for their religious obligations. Other cultures and religions also use calendars other than the Gregorian Calendar. Compare and contrast three different calendars and create a visual that represents each one.
- Work as a group or with your class to create a mega calendar of as many holidays and days of cultural significance you can find. Post it up in the class and refer to it throughout the year.
- Idrees struggles with himself at multiple moments in the story. His internal conflict of doing the right thing consumes him. Create a musical playlist of five to eight songs that encourages listeners to stay strong and true to who they really are, no matter how hard it may be.

Vocabulary

Quran, Isha, Taraweeh, Imam, Allahu Akbar, suhoor, Eid

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“THE FEAST SACRIFICE” BY HENA KHAN

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary/Secondary

Genre: Descriptive Story

Summary

Humza and his two siblings are spending two weeks with their grandparents as their parents make the Muslim pilgrimage, Hajj, to Mecca. Humza is tasked with taking care of his younger siblings and celebrating a holiday without his parents for the first time in his life.

Themes & Ideas

sacrifice, traditions, family, responsibility, siblings, parents, relationships, generosity

Discussion Questions

- What types of sacrifices did Humza have to make? What about his grandparents?
- Why is this Eid, Eid-ul-adha, called the “feast of sacrifice”?
- How did Humza’s perspective of his grandparents change?
- What types of traditions does Humza’s family have for Eid?

Activities

- Traditions are essential for Humza and his family. What are some traditions your family has or you wish they had? Write a short story describing those traditions.
- Huzma surprises himself at the end of the story when he chooses to help his grandparents. Was there ever a time where you changed your mind about something you thought you disliked but actually ended up liking? What happened during that time? Respond as a journal entry.
- Imagine that you were in Huzma’s position where your parents went away for about ten days and left you in charge of your siblings at a grandparents’ or relative’s house. What would you do differently? Create a one-minute video message to yourself giving advice and tips on how to make those days easier for you.

Vocabulary

Qurbani, Hajj, Ramadan, Mecca, Insha’Allah, Eid-ul-Adha, Assalamu Alaikum, Salaam, Medina, mosque, Eid Mubarak, Masha’Allah, sari, kufi, shalwar kameez, korma

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“SERAJ CAPTURES THE MOON” BY G. WILLOW WILSON, ILLUSTRATED BY SARA ALFAGEEH

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary/Secondary

Genre: Descriptive Story

Summary

Seraj is on a mission to find out if there is a moon sighting that will dictate whether or not the next day is Eid. He travels with his donkey to try to find the moon.

Themes & Ideas

perseverance, faith, teamwork, exploring, creativity, friendship, animals

Discussion Questions

- Why is the moon sighting important?
- How did faith play a role in Seraj’s journey?
- At one point, Seraj is very close to giving up until he gets an idea to do something different. Was there ever a time where you felt a similar sense of wanting to give up? What happened? Did you give up or keep going? What advice would you give someone in the same position?

Activities

- Think of a significant tradition or holiday that you celebrate with your family. Draw a short comic that represents what is happening and how you’re feeling as you’re celebrating or engaging in the tradition.
- Sometimes when people are stuck or hit a writer’s block, they cannot think of what to do next. Seraj has a friend to help him out, and he changes his position to get away from any and all distractions to help him focus better. Create a poster that lists five things people can do to help themselves when they feel unmotivated or stuck.

Vocabulary

Ramadan, hilal, Prophet, Jebel Hijra, Eid, Allah

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“SEARCHING FOR BLUE” BY N. H. SENZAI

Recommended Grade Level: Secondary

Genre: Descriptive Story

Summary

Bassem and his family were forced to flee Syria after his father was killed in a bombing raid at the hands of Bashar Al Assad, the dictator. It is the first time that they will be celebrating Eid without his father and Bassem struggles with his own emotions as he tries to find a way to make it special for all the refugees he is with.

Themes & Ideas

loss, family, sacrifice, refugee, war, perseverance, poverty, tradition, culture, hope, community

Discussion Questions

- What types of hardships did Bassem face as a result of the war in Syria?
- Describe Bassem and his family’s refugee experience.
- Why did Bassem and his family flee Syria?
- How did Bassem cope with his family’s situation?
- How do the community respond to Bassem and his family?

Activities

- Research the Syrian Civil War and the Refugee Crisis and create a news broadcast that explains the historical situation as well as anecdotes of the stories of the struggles of refugees.
- Write a letter to a politician describing the hardships of refugees as well as statistics and data that support allowing refugees to settle in your hometown.
- Bassem seemed to have lost hope in the ability to feel joy again after losing his father, especially on the holiday that his father loved the most. Write a journal entry about a time where you (or someone you know) was feeling hopeless and what changed the trajectory of those emotions into hopefulness.
- It is the little gestures that end up meaning so much for the Bassem family and the refugees—being able to bake and eat their traditional sweets and celebrating the day with balloons and festivities. Think about a group of people or a person you know who is in a situation where they need help from their community. Brainstorm something simple people can do to help make their day a little brighter.

Vocabulary

habibi, Ramadan, Quran, ma’amoul cookies, Eid-ul-Fitr, kabob, baklava, Salaam Alaikum, Masha’Allah, ka’ak, Mecca, Eid, Mubarak

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“CREATIVE FIXES” BY ASHLEY FRANKLIN

Recommended Grade Level: Secondary

Genre: Descriptive Story

Summary

Makayla and her family recently converted to Islam and this is going to be their first time celebrating Eid together. Makayla is struggling to make the adjustment but wants to make her parents proud and happy. Her new friend, Amira, catches Makayla looking at an expensive dress on her phone and makes the assumption that Makayla can afford the dress. Makayla’s family cannot afford buying that expensive dress, and Makayla is feeling very self-conscious about her economic status. Ultimately, Makayla’s mom makes her a beautiful dress and Makayla learns to be more confident in herself and her family.

Themes & Ideas

self-consciousness, confidence, converting religions, traditions, celebrations, charity, perseverance, appreciation, community, friendship, mothers

Discussion Questions

- Why was Makayla so afraid of Amira seeing what she was looking at on her phone?
- Why does Makayla feel strange in the masjid?
- Describe the emotions Makayla might have felt when her family ran into Amira’s outside of the thrift shop.
- How does Makayla’s mom make up for not being able to purchase the dress Makayla wanted?
- What lessons does Makayla learn once she realizes her mom made her a dress?

Activities

- Wearing the dress gives Makayla the confidence to be proud in front of her friends. What would be your ideal outfit to make you feel more confident? Either draw it out by hand or on the computer. Share with the class.
- Joining a new community can be a challenging, lonely experience. Think about someone who is new to your community—whether that’s your school, your town, or your extracurricular activity. What can you do to make the newcomer feel welcome? Consider writing a letter or inviting them to a group activity.

Vocabulary

Ramadan, Iftaar, Eid, Laylatul Jaa’izah, henna, masjid, wudu

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“TASTE” BY HANNA ALKAF

Recommended Grade Level: Secondary

Genre: Narrative Poem

Summary

Alia is twelve years old and trying very hard to not think about all the ways her life has changed because of her mother's accident. But that is not an easy thing to do, especially when she's trying to recreate the traditional familial dish of lontong, a dish she always prepared with her mother. Poignant and heart-breaking, Alia's reflections gently guide the reader as she finally confronts her sorrow and guilt and grows from it.

Themes & Ideas

perspective, family, love, survivor's guilt, role of a sibling, fatherhood/motherhood, holidays, cooking, family recipes, coming of age, sadness, accidents

Discussion Questions

- What dish does Alia and her family have every year on Eid?
- How does the incident with Alia's mom affect her father?
- How do Alia's feelings toward the incident change throughout the story?
- At one point, the narrator of the story freezes. What causes her to freeze? Do all events in our lives affect us this way? Why do some and not others? What does that reveal about us?
- In this narrative poem, the author skates around the ideas of expectations—the expectations of a daughter, son, girl, father, mother, traditions, and so many more. What do you think the story is saying about expectations? Consider what other factors may be influencing these expectations (society, family, etc.) and why.

Activities

- Family plays an important role in this narrator's life. Think about what family means to you and how that may look different for you. Draw a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting your family and the narrator's family.
- Save those family recipes for the next generation! Is there a dish or a meal that your family always makes at a certain time around the year? What is that meal/dish? How do you make it? Your job is to create an instructional how-to video, write the recipe, add some imagery, and write a quick story about what this meal means to you and your family. Find a creative way to present all this information to your own family at an upcoming holiday.

Vocabulary

abah, lontong, kuah lodeh, nasi impit, lashings, tempeh, tofu, Quran, Malay, Raya, kakak, galangal, sayang, tamarind, manga, chickadee, sambal

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“EID PICTURES” BY JAMILAH THOMPkins BIGELOW

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary/Secondary

Genre: Descriptive Poem

Summary

The young speaker of the poem looks at pictures of Eid and reflects on how her family’s celebrations of Eid have changed over generations.

Themes & Ideas

culture, clothing, holidays, dressing up, generations, family history, pictures

Discussion Questions

- There are many descriptive details mentioned in this poem. Which of the five senses do these details appeal to?
- What are the people mentioned in this poem doing?
- The speaker in this poem mentions that looking through her family’s albums causes her to reflect and feel a variety of emotions—joy, pride, wistfulness, sorrow, and more. Consider then: what role do family albums play in preserving memories for generations? Do you think all families have albums? Why or why not?
- It is sometimes said that clothes are an extension of one’s identity. To what extent do you think that is true? Why do you think so?
- In the poem, the speaker mentions the first Muslims who came to America as slaves. What do you think their experiences were like on Eid?

Activities

- Think about an object or place that meant a lot to you growing up. How has that object/place changed over time?
- Create and maintain a family album for a year by keeping track of a two to three happy memories every month and collecting them in one place. Surprise your family with the final collection!
- Write a letter to an older relative and ask them about how they celebrated a family holiday when they were younger. Compare and contrast your experiences and share with the class.

Vocabulary

Ummi, hijab, shayla, dashiki, Imam, ameen, Jedda, khimar, fez, kufi, dhikr, Quran, Mansa Musa, Sankoré

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“NOT ONLY AN ONLY” BY HUDA AL-MARASHI

Recommended Grade Level: Secondary

Genre: Personal Story

Summary

Aya has a hard time being the only Shia Muslim at her school, but things start to change when a new Muslim girl moves to the town. Aya navigates the pain and joy that comes with the impossible expectation to represent an entire group of people.

Themes & Ideas

friendship, self-identity, community identity, representation, tokenism, bullying, culture, cultural differences, burden of representations, togetherness, labeling

Discussion Questions

- When Aya’s class first starts learning about Islam in social studies, she enjoys the attention she gets. How do those feelings change over time? Why do they change?
- Why does Aya talk about going to a carnival on Eid even though she has never done that?
- Celebration comes up as a theme repeatedly in the story. To what extent does it impact the characters? What do you think that says about the ways families choose to celebrate their holidays?
- At one point, Aya feels helpless in class because the textbook mentions some things that she disagrees with, but she doesn’t have enough information to counter the ideas presented by the book. Has there ever been a time where you felt the same helplessness, maybe in response to a book, TV show, movie, teacher, or anything else? What would you tell Aya to do in that situation? Why?
- What causes Hana and Aya to form a friendship?
- Hana and Aya are confronted by some girls who try to cause problems for them. What did you think of Hana’s response? What would you have done in that situation? What do you think is the best way to deal with people like Amanda?

Activities

- Hana and Aya form a friendship because they are able to laugh about their similar experiences. Think about your friends. Write a quick email telling them why you appreciate their friendship.
- There is always something that everyone feels passionately about and knows a great deal about. In class, give every student time to prepare a one- to two-minute speech informing their peers about a topic that they know a lot about. Afterwards, discuss what the students shared and how their knowledge may differ from what is commonly known.

Vocabulary

hummus/hummus bi tahina, Ramadan, masjid, Sunni, Shia, hijab, Allah, Assalam Alaikum, biryani, Alhamdulillah, tasbih, shalwar kameez, gelabeya, habibti, Insha’Allah, skullcap, Eid Mubarak, sujud

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“MAYA MADINAH CHOOSES JOY” BY AYESHA MATTU

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary/Secondary

Genre: Personal Story

Summary

Maya Madinah Mu'min is trying very hard to be happy on Eid, but things are just not the same since her dad moved away. Unable to put on a happy face at her mom's annual holiday party, Maya Madinah takes life into her own hands and runs away to her aunt. There, she pours out her anger, anxiety, and tears as her aunt listens sympathetically and gives her some loving advice. Processing and talking out her emotions helps Maya Madinah feel better, and she ultimately realizes that just because life may be different, it does not mean it is worse.

Themes & Ideas

family, multicultural family, divorce, holiday season, mental health, sadness, children & emotions, mother-daughter relationships

Discussion Questions

- Why were people singing and laughing at Maya's house?
- What did Maya's dad put in her wooden Ramadan calendar? What does Maya's mom put in her wooden calendar? How does this affect Maya?
- Navigating family holidays after a divorce can be difficult in its own ways. How do each of the characters in Maya Madinah's family respond to the change in their lives? What does their reaction reveal about them?
- Who is Maya named after?
- Maya Madinah describes her crying as a cathartic experience. According to the Oxford Dictionary, catharsis is a process of releasing strong or stifled emotions, which then causes the person to feel comfort and relief. Consider your own life and emotions. Do you think it's true that people feel better after sharing their deep emotions? Why do you think that is the case? What role does Nusayba Khala play in helping Maya Madinah reach catharsis?

Activities

- It is normal to sometimes be overwhelmed by emotions. Maya Madinah makes a series of decisions when she is in that state. In a group or as a class, list all the decisions she makes when she is overwhelmed and discuss if those are constructive or destructive ways of confronting one's emotions. Then, as a group, generate a list of constructive things students can do when they feel just as overwhelmed by their emotions.
- Sometimes, creating new family traditions can be hard. What is something you wish your family did more of? What can you do to help them do that thing? Create a proposal that convinces your family to start that new family trend and also acknowledges any potential obstacles you may face when trying to convince your family.

Vocabulary

Ramadan, Chand Raat, Shawwal, Eid-ul-Fitr, khala, habibti, Hikayatna, postNakba, shay, Punjabi, wet nurse, Imam

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“EID AND PINK BUBBLE GUM, INSHA’ALLAH” BY RAND ABDEL-FATTAH

Recommended Grade Level: Elementary/Secondary

Genre: Narrative

Summary

Thirteen-year-old Deyana and her family are on a road trip headed toward their grandparents’ house to celebrate Eid together. With her three siblings in the back of the minivan, Deyana’s observations about the trip and her family reflect her increasing annoyance as the trip goes on. Humor abounds in this simple tale of a family navigating its relationships while fasting on a road trip. Deyana experiences growth as a character once she realizes what truly matters most.

Themes & Ideas

family, road trips, siblings/sibling rivalry, parental attention, love, holidays, conflict resolution, traveling, holidays

Discussion Questions

- Where are Deyana and her family headed? Why?
- Why do Deyana and her family pull over at a restaurant? What does the dad ask Deyana and Noor to do before they eat?
- What causes Deyana’s attitude to finally change?
- Based on what you know about families and siblings, do you think this story is an accurate portrayal of a family or not? Why do you think so? Compare and contrast how your family might behave in a similar situation.
- Deyana is a teenager in this story. In what ways does she behave as a stereotypical teenager? In what ways does she not behave as a stereotypical teenager?
- Love is an essential part of a family and is demonstrated through a variety of ways in this story. How do the characters show their love to one another without saying the actual words?

Activities

- Traveling during the holiday season with family can be challenging at times. Noor brings a book on facts to keep himself occupied, while the parents bring CDs and snacks. Imagine if you were going on a trip with your family. What do you think each person in your family would need to help make their trip better? What would you need to keep you happy? Make a list and keep that handy the next time your family goes on a trip!
- Plan a family trip! Consider all the factors that would go into planning a family trip: finances, budgeting, itinerary, food, activities, and packing. Put together a proposal for your family to visit a reasonable place and try to plan out the different aspects of the trip. In order for you to put this together, you will have to utilize your skills as a mathematician, writer, and researcher.
- Sometimes, a little note can go a long way. Send a note of love to a family member or friend who means a great deal to you.

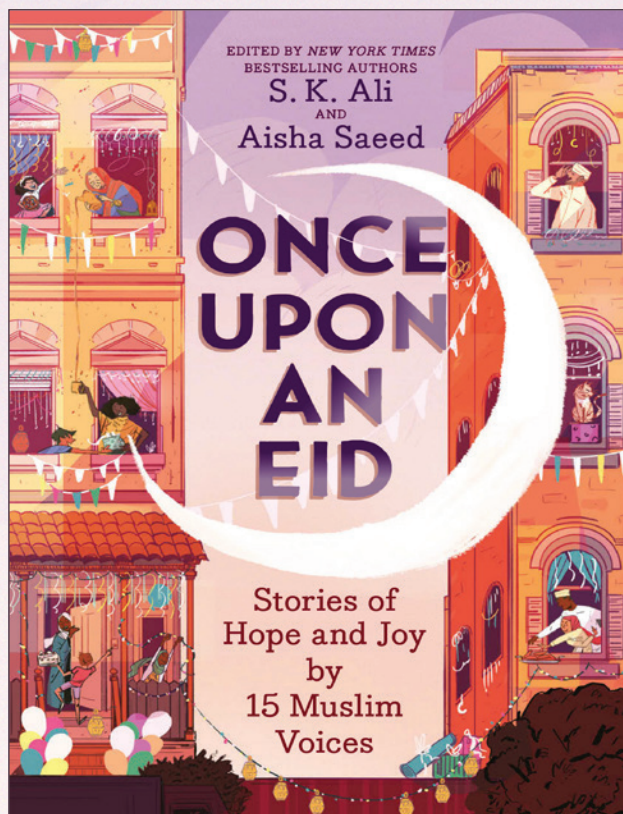
Vocabulary

sheikh, Ramadan, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid prayers, falafel, hummus, Insha’Alah, Iftaar, Azaan, dua, Eid Mubarak, Teta, Gedo

ONCE UPON AN EID

Stories of Hope and Joy by 15 Muslim Voices

Edited by S.K. Ali and Aisha Saeed



Paperback: 9781419754036
Hardcover: 9781419740831
Ages 8-12

PRAISE FOR ONCE UPON AN EID

- ★ *“This special anthology about sharing family traditions, sharing meals, giving presents, and delighting in the cultural uniqueness of people all over the world isn’t just for those who celebrate Eid; it’s for all who want to share and learn about the holidays.”*
—Booklist
- ★ *“The diversity within the collection is impressive, including several blended families and a recently converted one, and while the writing varies in style and quality, each story is engaging, full of emotion and thought . . . This thoughtful and uplifting volume will keep readers turning pages year-round; here’s to many more.”*
—Kirkus Reviews
- ★ *“A range of diverse, multidimensional characters—among them Shia Muslim, converted Muslim, Algerian, Caribbean, and West African representation—results in a stimulating, celebratory read.”*
—Publishers Weekly
- ★ *“Emotions seem to spill straight off the pages in this absolute triumph of a celebratory anthology.”*
—School Library Connection
- ★ *“A joyous title that radiates love. This much-needed collection is recommended as a first purchase for all libraries.”*
—School Library Journal



ABRAMS