

MEET THE
MALIKS
TWIN DETECTIVES

THE COOKIE CULPRIT

ZANIB MIAN

ILLUSTRATED BY KYAN CHENG



HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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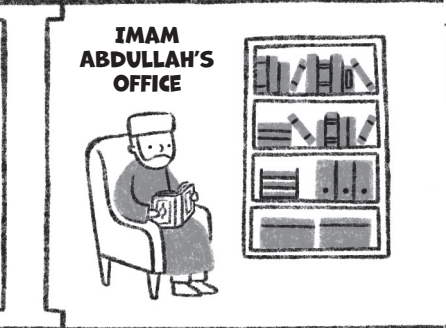
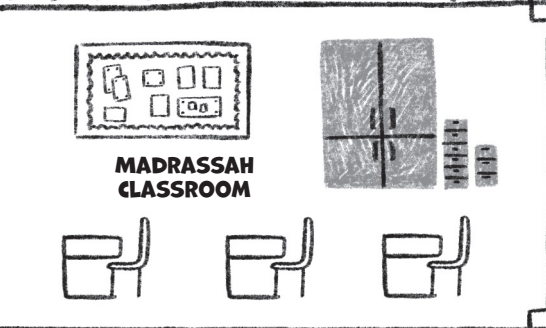
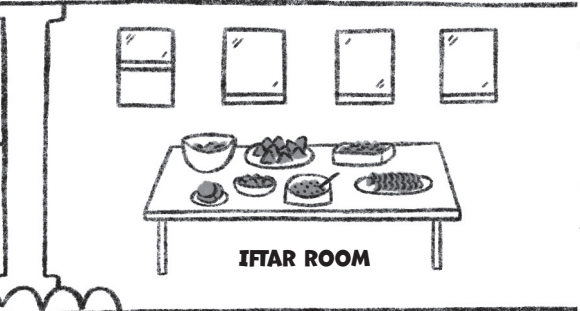
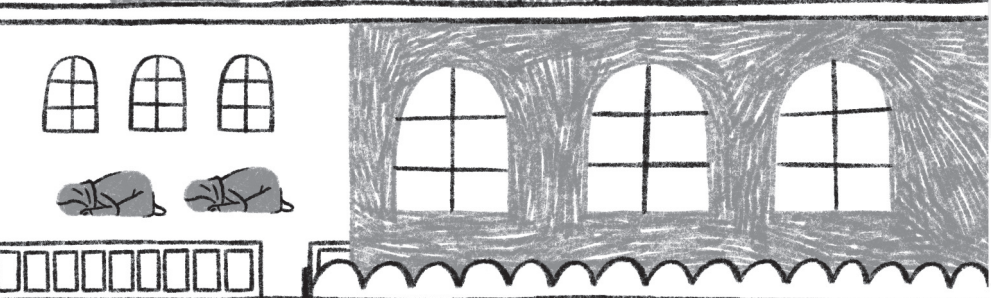
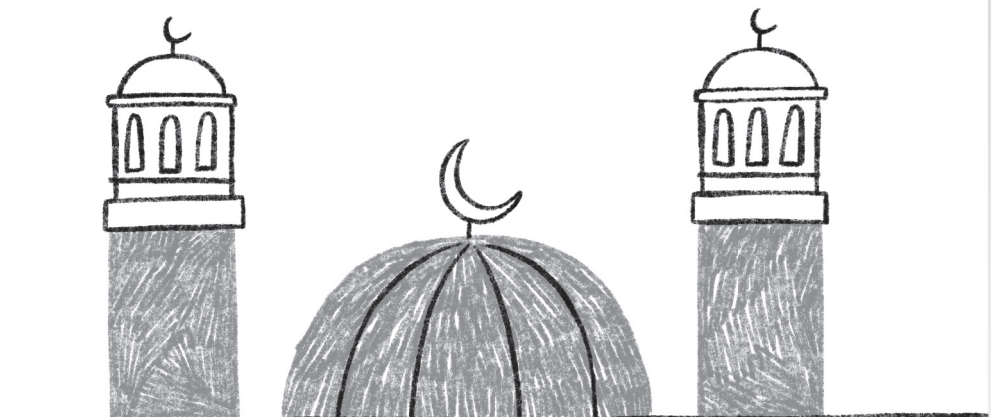
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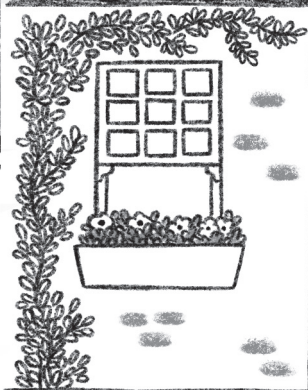
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For my parents, Ami and Aboo.

Thank you for nurturing the little writer in me.



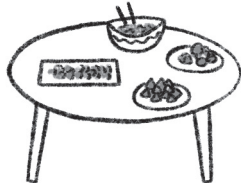
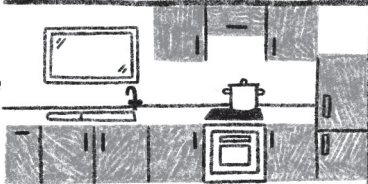
THE MALIK HOUSE



**MAYSA AND
MUSA'S
BEDROOM**



**NORMAN'S
BEDROOM**



CHAPTER 1

'BE GOOD!' That's what my mum said to me as I jumped out of the car.

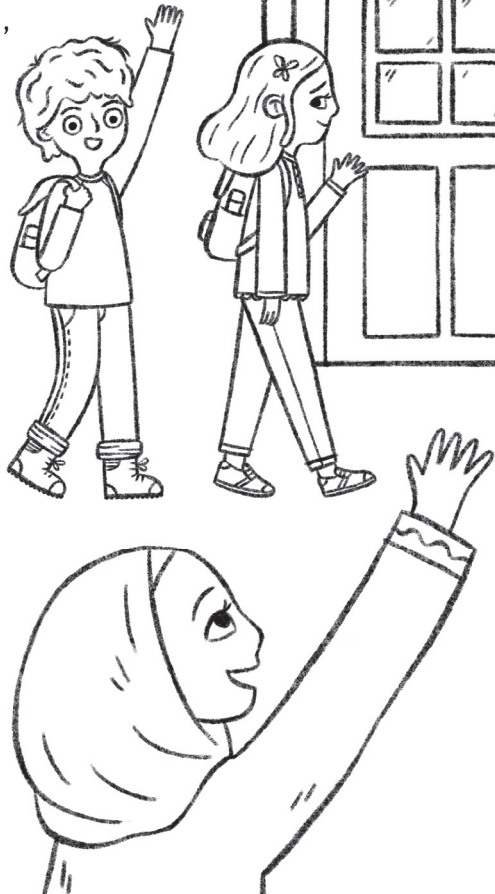
That's the worst thing to say to someone who always tries to be good, but never succeeds because things that are out of their control just keep happening!

My twin brother, Musa, looked over his shoulder at me with a **cheeky smile** because at least he knows it's never my fault that my world always turns **upside down**.

Mum had dropped us off at the mosque where we have an after-school club sort of thing called **madrassah**.

I focused really hard on what Mum said. *Be good*. Because I saw the look she gave me with it. It said,

**be good –
stay out of
trouble so
we know
you’re
sensible
enough to
go on the
school trip
to Wales.**



All was going well, at first. I was listening to my madrassah teacher, Mrs Hussain, and trying to stay hooked on her every word. But the next thing I knew, I heard my name being called loudly.



‘Maysa Malik!’

Mrs Hussain’s angry voice snapped me out of a daydream. I was a bit annoyed, to be honest, because I was daydreaming about what the world would be like if we were all orange, and it was funny and scary at the same time, which not many things are.

I quickly looked over at Musa. Maybe he could do a bit of twin telepathy and tell me what the answer was, or even the question! But he was just gawking at me with extra-large eyeballs and then did a fish swimming in water movement with his hand.

'Erm ... fish?' I tried.

'Fish? Fish?!' spluttered

Mrs Hussain. **'ARE YOU**

TRYING TO BE FUNNY?'



She stood glaring at me like I was supposed to answer her, but I didn't dare.

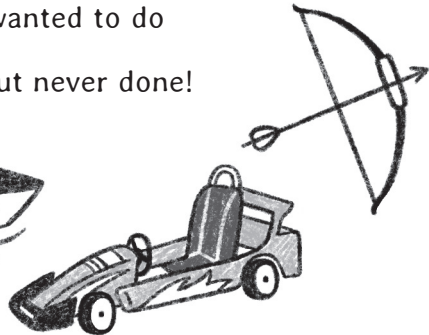
'The correct answer is **Prophet Nuh** (peace be upon him), who is also known as Noah! Fish? Honestly, I have no words!' she finally said.

To my horror, I realised that the question

had been on the board the whole time:

Which prophet built an ark?

It was so basic. Of course I knew the answer! Mrs Hussain would definitely think I was doing it on purpose. If I got into trouble again, my mum and dad would definitely not let me go on the trip. And if I didn't get to go, my life would be over! It was the trip of a lifetime. Literally *all* the kids in my class were going. There were going to be spectacular activities like pony riding, archery, canoeing, river walking and go-karting. That's all the stuff I've ever wanted to do but never done!



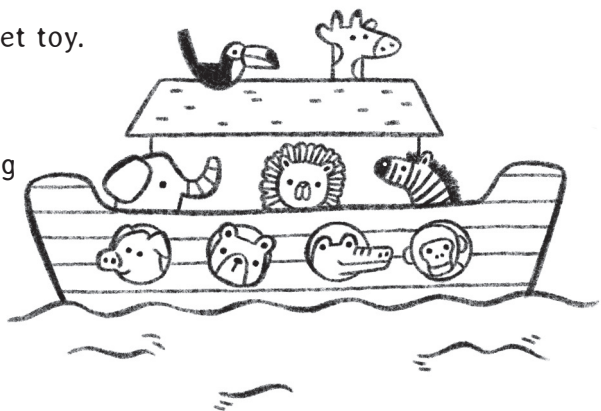
And all my friends would talk about it for at least a year when they got back. How would I talk about it if I wasn't even there?

I said sorry, of course. And Alhamdulillah, thank God, at home time, Mrs Hussain got side-tracked by Yasin, who had been looking green all through class and threw up just as my mum arrived to pick us up, so she couldn't tell her I was once again too distracted by my own daydreams.

'WHAT WAS THAT FISH SIGNAL!?' You got me in trouble!' I said

to Musa on the way to the car, ferociously spinning my fidget toy.

'It was a boat thingamajig going through water!'



said Musa. 'It's your fault for daydreaming *and* **being bad at charades.**'

He was right, actually. **It was my fault.** I daydream way too much. Musa's much better at being completely aware of what's going on around him. Even when he's playing on his games console, he'll know the exact conversation that other people around him are having.

We're **total opposites** in some ways, and completely the same in other ways. We're both messy. **Our room is a hazard.**



The floor isn't lava, but Dad says it's a death trap. And he has stepped on things that either made him scream in pain or gag with disgust. Mum and Dad usually take extreme measures to get us to clean it – like no ice cream till the day we tidy it up.

Mum was in a **super-excited** mood because Ramadan starts when the moon is seen, and that was either tonight or tomorrow.

'I kind of hope the first fast isn't tonight,' she was saying as we walked into our house, 'because I've been so last-minute with the samosas. But I *do* also hope it's tonight because I can't wait!'



‘We’ll live if we do Ramadan without samosas, you know,’ said Dad, from the top of the stairs.

‘No, we won’t!’



Musa and I screamed together.

Mum giggled. ‘What are you doing home already, honey?’

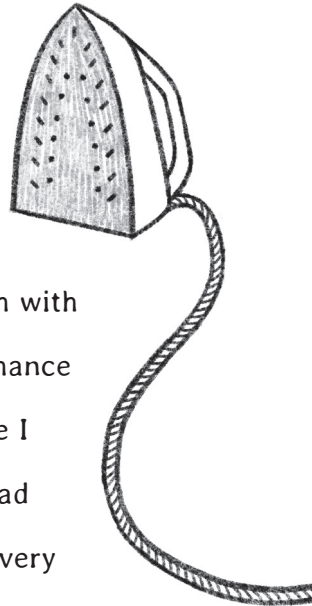
‘I came home early. **IT COULD BE RAMADAN!**’ Dad winked.

‘Can we help make the samosas?’ said Musa.
‘Pleeeeeease?’

'Oh, fine.' Mum gave in, seeing Musa's angelic smile. She hated when extra bodies were in the kitchen.

'*I cook alone,*' she would say, like a mysterious spy. Thankfully, she's not a real spy, she's a maths teacher. If she were a real spy, she would have discovered all of the accidentally terrible things I had done and managed to fix before anyone found out.

There was the time **I burnt the carpet** with the iron, which I'm not even supposed to be using. I covered up the scary patch with the rug (well, I guess there's still a chance that she will discover that!). And once I accidentally knocked over a cake she had baked for some guests. I made sure every



last crumb vanished that day and it's now a 'weird mystical thing' that happened in our house, which my grandma blames on **jinns** (the Muslim version of ghosts).

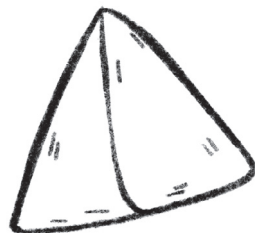


We sat around the kitchen table, peeling layers of filo pastry and trying to make triangles to hold the minced meat mixture. We



had to use a 'glue' made out of flour and water to seal the edges together. Mum and Dad were making perfect little triangles. I couldn't wait to eat them.

Neither could **Fuzzball**, our cat, who sat across the room looking at them with **keen eyes**. All of mine



and Musa's samosas were half open, messy and falling apart. Musa had licked the edible glue off his fingers more than once and made his with the same germy hands, which is why Mum used her teacher voice and said, 'Thank you, both of you, I'll finish the rest.'

It took so long that it was time for **Maghrib** when they had finished.
This is the sunset prayer.

We also have:

Fajr: the dawn prayer.

Dhuhr: the noon prayer.

Asr: the afternoon prayer.

Isha: the night prayer.

We all prayed together and went outside to see if we could see the Ramadan moon, which was like trying to spot a thread from across a

school playground
with your naked
eyes. If it was
there, we couldn't
see it, but all we had
to do was switch on the TV and see what the
Islamic channels were saying.



Musa took the remote and jumped on to the
sofa. 'What number is the Muslim channel on,
Mum?' he asked.

Mum helped Musa look for the right
channel and it was pleased to announce that

Ramadan had begun!

love Ramadan – it means Eid
is coming! We all hugged
and there was a **special**
sparkle in the air.



A wonderful, glittery calmness that lasted like five minutes. Then the phone rang to spoil the rest of my day, the rest of my Ramadan and maybe even the rest of my life.

