

Sami's Special Gift

An Eid al-Adha Story

ACTIVITY KIT

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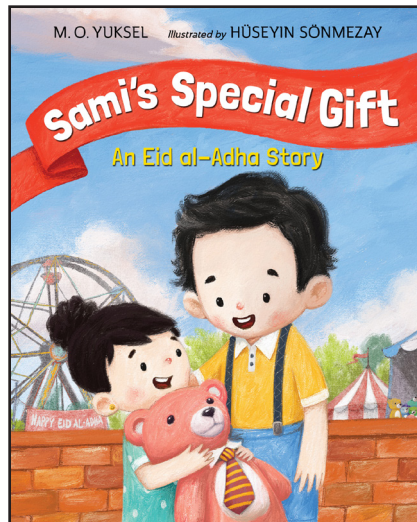
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★ **"A gift to all readers!"**

—*School Library Journal*, starred review

"Caring and sharing drive this charming tale."

—*Kirkus Reviews*



978-1-62354-296-2 HC

by M. O. Yuksel

illustrated by Hüseyin Sönmezay

e-book available

About the Book

The Eid al-Adha carnival won't be the same this year without Dede, Sami's grandfather, who passed away recently. Sami's grandmother sends him a very special gift—one of Dede's ties from Türkiye—and Sami vows to never take it off. After going to the mosque for Eid prayer, Sami's family stops at the shelter where Baba and Anne volunteer. Can an unexpected encounter and a special gift change Sami's whole understanding of Eid?

The gift of giving and the power of empathy shine through in this engaging, poignant holiday story.

About the Author

M. O. Yuksel is the award-winning author of *In My Mosque; One Wish: Fatima al-Fihri and the World's Oldest University*; and *Ramadan Kareem*. She was born in Türkiye, raised in New York City, and now lives in New Jersey. She loves celebrating Eid al-Adha and going to the carnival with her family.

About the Illustrator

Hüseyin Sönmezay is a freelance illustrator. He was born in Bulgaria and moved to Türkiye when he was young. He attended vocational school with a concentration in graphic design. He has worked with local and international agencies and publishers and has illustrated more than forty picture books. He currently lives in Izmir with his wife and two daughters. This is his first book in the United States.



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Discussion Questions

Use these conversation starters to get kids thinking and learning.

Pre-reading

1. After looking at the cover of the book and reading the title, ask kids what they think *Sami's Special Gift* is about. Write their responses on chart paper.
2. What is a gift? Ask kids to talk about the times when they give and receive gifts: birthdays, major holidays, or observances like Mother's Day and Teacher Appreciation Week. Cultural or religious milestones may also be occasions for gift-giving. Why do we give and receive gifts on special days, not every day?
3. The subtitle of this book is "An Eid al-Adha Story." What do the kids know about Eid al-Adha? If they're unfamiliar with the holiday, read "What Is Eid al-Adha?" at the back of the book.
4. At the beginning of the story, Sami misses his deceased grandfather on a special holiday they used to share. Make space for the kids to reflect on loved ones they may have lost. Do they sometimes feel sadder on some days than others? What helps them feel connected to these loved ones?

Post-reading

1. Revisit the predictions kids made before reading. What predictions (if any) were correct? Did *Sami's Special Gift* surprise them?
2. Talk about Eid al-Adha. Did the kids see their own holiday experiences reflected in this story, or learn more about Eid al-Adha from this book? What questions do they have about the holiday? How could they learn more?
3. Read "What Is a Shelter?" at the back of the book. Discuss the role of the shelter in this story. What do the kids understand about homelessness in their lives and communities? How can they help families who have no place to live?
4. What was Sami's "special gift"? Discuss how Sami's understanding of gifts and giving changed over the course of the book. How did Dede inspire Sami?

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Word Search

Name: _____

Date: _____

N	M	C	T	G	K	A	O
E	S	H	A	R	I	N	G
C	H	A	I	A	N	S	M
K	E	R	N	T	D	M	O
T	L	I	L	E	N	E	S
I	T	T	D	F	E	A	Q
E	E	Y	T	U	S	T	U
M	R	L	W	L	S	K	E

EID

MEAT

CHARITY

NECKTIE

SHELTER

SHARING

MOSQUE

GRATEFUL

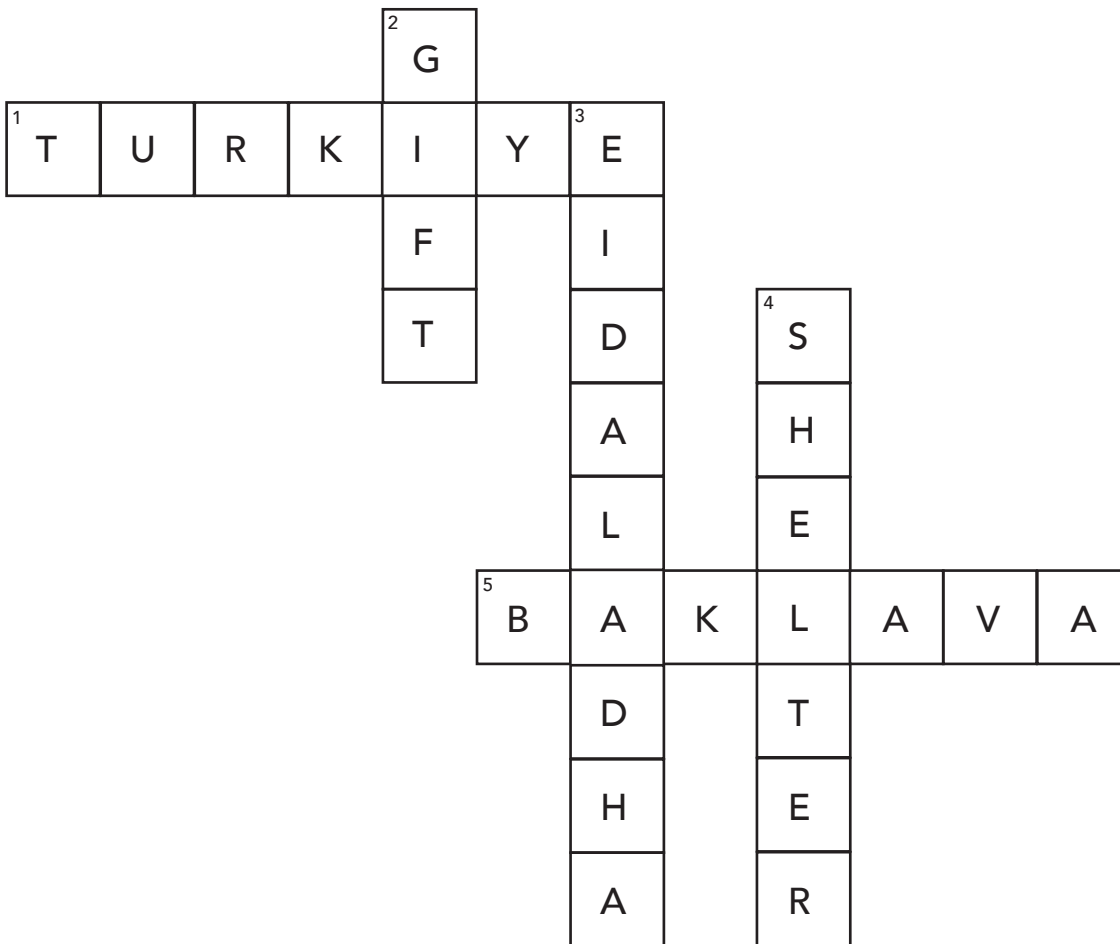
KINDNESS

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Crossword Answer Key



DOWN

2. An item or service given to someone, often to celebrate a special day
3. A Muslim holiday also called "Big Eid" or "Greater Eid"
4. A temporary place for people to live until they can find a permanent home

ACROSS

1. The country where the city of Istanbul is located
5. A dessert of layered pastry sheets, filled with nuts and soaked in honey

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Maze

Name: _____

Date: _____

Help Sami find his friend from the shelter!

