



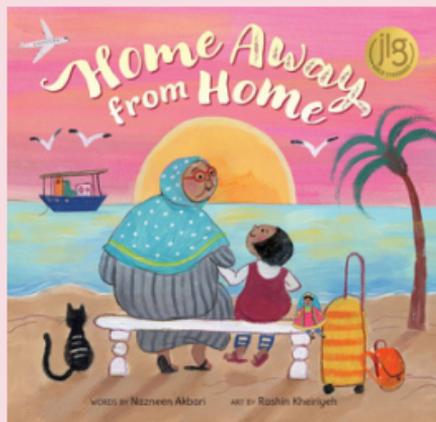
Author Visits with Nazneen Akbari

Bringing Oman's stories, history, and cultural pride to your classrooms

About Author: Nazneen grew up in Oman, and although she has lived in many places around the world since then, Oman will always feel like home. Her stories are shaped by her travels, and by the rich cross-cultural experiences she and her children share. A former journalist, Nazneen is now an American diplomat serving at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. She is a mother of three, and in her spare time she loves to dance and read (of course).

Home Away from Home is a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection. Chosen by librarians across the U.S. as one of the year's top picks.

This summer, Nuha and Mama are traveling to Oman to visit her Jadda. But for Nuha, Oman feels strange and Jadda, a grandmother she barely remembers. How will Nuha ever feel at home in a place so far away?



SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS COVER TOPICS FOR GRADES PREK – 5

My interactive school visits bring literacy and the creative process to life. Each presentation is tailored to grade level and audience size.

Programs for Lower Elementary (Ages 4–7) Focus: Storytime, curiosity, emotions, and connection.



Storytime with Nuha

A joyful, interactive read-aloud of *Home Away from Home*, followed by a friendly conversation about what “home” means to each of us. Children share their favorite places, things, and people that make them feel loved and safe. (30 minutes)



Kindness & Courage Circle

After the story, students gather in a circle to talk about moments when they’ve been kind or brave – just like Nuha. Together, they create a “Courage Collage” through drawing or simple crafts to celebrate what makes them strong. (30 minutes)



Meet the Author

Nazneen introduces what it means to be an author and how stories are made – from idea to book! (30 minutes)

Programs for Upper Elementary and Middle Grades (Ages 7–10)

Focus: Story time, curiosity, emotions, and connection.



From Muscat to the World

Take your students on a cultural journey through Oman! Nazneen shares real photos of Muttrah Souq, the scent of frankincense, and the beauty of traditional Omani doors – connecting these rich details to scenes from Home Away from Home. (45 minutes)



Finding Courage Like Nuha

This interactive discussion invites students to think about courage and change. Through Nuha's story, they'll reflect on moments when they've stepped into something new or shown bravery in their own lives. (45 minutes)



Global Kids, Many Homes

Perfect for international schools, this session celebrates children who live between worlds. Students map the places they've lived or have roots in, and share what makes each place feel like home. (40 minutes)



Story Behind the Story

Nazneen takes students behind the scenes of Home Away from Home – from childhood memories in Oman to the writing process that brought Nuha's world to life. The session ends with a short, creative writing or illustration prompt. (50 minutes)



Writing Workshops

Perfect for schools that want to nurture young writers. Students dive into the craft of storytelling through engaging, hands-on workshops.



The Secret to Writing

Learn how to make your words come alive through sensory details and strong imagery that draw readers right into the scene.



The Spine of a Story

Discover what holds a story together – from the first idea to a satisfying ending – and how to build tension and emotional connection along the way.



Magical Revision

Revision doesn't have to be boring! Students explore creative techniques to strengthen their writing and polish their stories until they shine.



Creating Memorable Characters

Explore how to create believable, memorable characters by thinking about their goals, quirks, and emotions – the heart of every great story.



Writing from the Heart

Students learn how to turn their own memories into powerful stories. Nazneen guides them through an interactive writing exercise that helps them find emotion, voice, and authenticity in their work.

Themes of Home Away from Home



Family Love

Nuha's bond with her Jadda (grandmother) celebrates the timeless connection between generations.



Cultural Pride & Identity

Rooted in the sights, sounds, and colors of Oman, the story invites children to take pride in their culture while embracing new experiences.



Courage & Adaptability

When Nuha arrives in an unfamiliar place, she must find the courage to adapt and connect. Her journey mirrors what many children experience – moving, starting a new school, or being away from family and encourages them to trust their resilience.



Belonging Across Borders

Written by an author who grew up in Oman and now serves as a U.S. diplomat, Home Away from Home speaks to children of global and multicultural backgrounds. It reminds readers that home isn't a single place, it's built through the people, memories, and love we carry with us.

All author visit sessions are customized to align with these themes. Educators are welcome to select the focus that best supports their curriculum goals or student discussions.

Pricing

In-person

- \$600 for a full day (4 sessions or 6 hours)
- \$300 for a half day (2 sessions or 3 hours)
- \$180 for a single presentation (45 min)

Virtual

- \$150 for 45-minute presentation

I am also a U.S. diplomat, and currently based in New Delhi. For in-person visits, travel expenses and lodging are to be covered by the hosting institution. If your school is located in Oman, lodging costs will be waived, as I maintain a home base.

Do you have another program idea?

I am happy to customize the activity and fees to your institution's needs.

Let's Connect!

I'd love to hear from you.

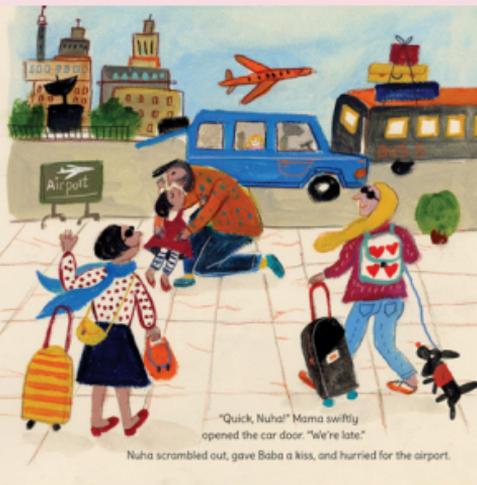
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Sneak Peak



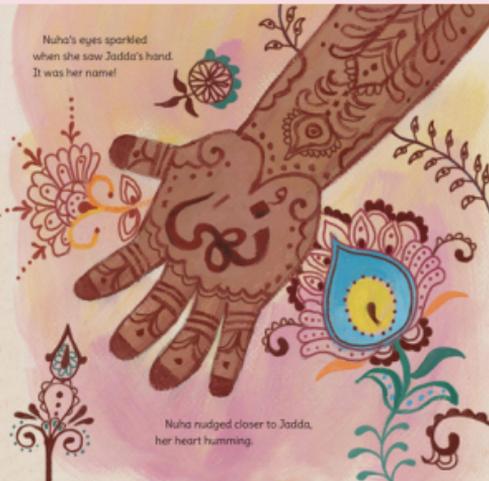
Just then, Nuha spotted something that reminded her of Eid celebrations at home.

"Look! Henna!" Nuha tugged at Jadda's sleeve. "Can we put on henna, please?"

Nuha sat still. Soft flowers swirled on her hands and the air filled with the scent of mint.



Nuha's eyes sparkled when she saw Jadda's hand. It was her name!



Nuha nudged closer to Jadda, her heart humming.

Nuha's Dolls

In both Christianity and Islam, the mother of Jesus is greatly respected. She is called Mary in English and Maryam in Arabic. Nuha chooses to name both her dolls after Mary/Maryam, using these different names from the two languages. Can you think why she might have done this?



Muttrah Souk

The market where Nuha and Jadda shop is a real place. Muttrah Souk is a historic marketplace that is hundreds of years old. It was once an important stopping point for merchants on their travels between India and China. Today, the souk remains vibrant and bustling, attracting both tourists and local shoppers.



Clothes in Oman

Omani women like Jadda wear the *abaya*, a long dark gown, along with a headscarf. Men in Oman typically wear a simple robe called the *dishdasha*, paired with a cap. Another traditional Omani outfit for women is a short dress worn over loose trousers. These dresses are often decorated with fancy gold or silver embroidery. This is the kind of dress that Maryam, Nuha's Omani doll, wears.



Henna

Henna is a brownish dye made from plants. People use it to draw detailed patterns on their hands and skin. It is very important in Arab, South Asian, and African celebrations and occasions such as religious festivities, weddings, and childbirth. Nuha remembers henna from the Muslim festival of Eid.



Glossary

assalamu alaikum / السلام عليكم

(*as-sa-LAM uh-LAH-ahm*) a common greeting among Muslims, meaning "Peace be with you"

habibi / حبيبي

(*ha-BEE-bee*) "my dear" or "my beloved"

Jadda / جدة

(*JAD-ah*) Grandmother

ladha / لذيذة

(*la-THETH*) delicious

shawarma / شاورما

(*shah-WAR-mah*) a popular Middle Eastern street food made from thinly sliced meat, vegetables, and herbs, typically wrapped in flatbread

souk / سوق

(*souk*) busy marketplaces in Middle Eastern and North African cities, offering clothing, spices, crafts, food, and more

ta'al / تعال

(*ta-ALL*) "come"

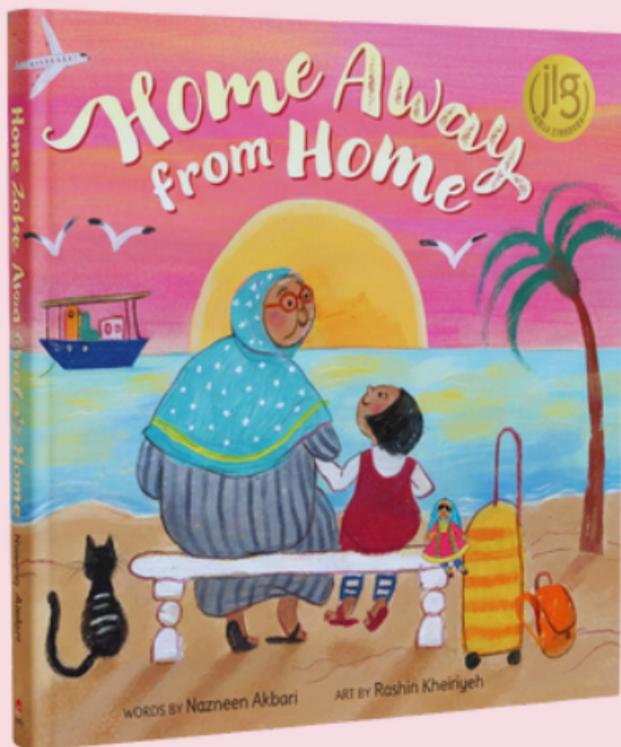
ta'ali hana / تعالي هنا

(*ta-ALL-ah HEW-ah*) "come here"

(*ta'al*) for a boy and "ta'ali" for a girl

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