

# Maitha Al Khayat Dossier

IBBY Hans Christian Andersen Award  
2026





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## a. Biography

**Name:** Maitha Al Khayat

**Date of Birth:** 27 July 1978

**Nationality:** Emirati

Maitha Al Khayat is an Emirati children's author, illustrator, and mother of five who has devoted her life to sharing the beauty of Emirati culture with young readers. Born in the UAE in 1978, Maitha's love for storytelling began during her childhood, which she spent moving between the United States and the United Kingdom. Immersed in diverse cultures, she developed a deep appreciation for the power of stories to connect people across boundaries.

After earning a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Maitha began working in a college library—a place that further fueled her love for books and inspired her to pursue her dream of becoming a storyteller. Her first book, *I Love My Dad's Long Beard*, was published in 2008, sparked by her desire to create stories that reflected the everyday lives of Emirati families. Since then, her literary journey has blossomed, with nearly 200 stories to her name, many of which have been translated into English, Turkish, and Italian.

Maitha's works, such as *My Own Special Way*, *Turn Off the Lights*, *Hunting My Breakfast*, and *When A Camel Craves the Logaimat*, have touched the hearts of children and families alike, combining humor, empathy, and a celebration of cultural traditions. Her latest young adult novel, *The Pearl Diver's Daughter and the Cowrie Necklace*, won the prestigious Etisalat International Children's Award in 2024, cementing her place as one of the region's most beloved authors.

## a. Biography-continued

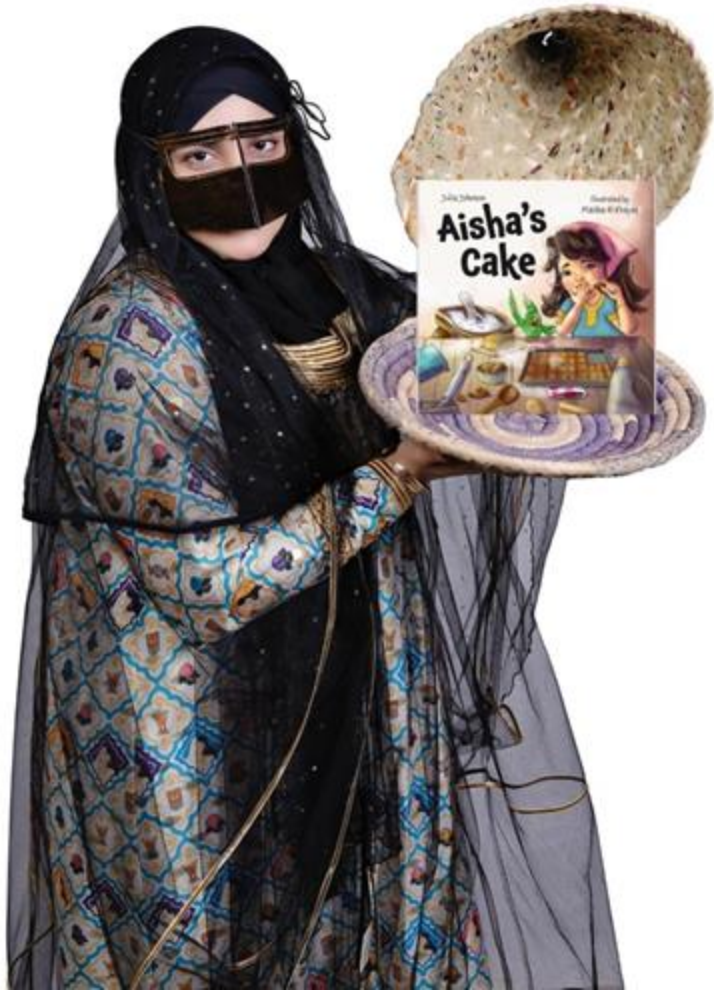
As a storyteller, Maitha's inspiration often comes from her children and her personal experiences as a mother. She believes in the importance of creating stories that children can see themselves in—stories that celebrate their heritage while sparking their curiosity about the world.

Beyond her writing, Maitha has contributed to the world of children's television, working on projects such as the Emirati edition of Sesame Street and Hamdoon. She also serves as a consultant in language and arts at Rubu Qarn in Sharjah, where she works to nurture creativity and preserve cultural identity among the younger generation, with lots of initiatives to promote the love of reading, writing and embracing culture globally.

In her pursuit of excellence, Maitha enrolled at the Academy of Art in San Francisco to hone her skills as an illustrator, a decision that reflects her dedication to raising the standard of children's illustration in the UAE. Her humorous, rhyming stories, enriched by her illustrations, continue to captivate audiences both locally and internationally, bridging cultural divides and fostering a love for reading.

Maitha Al Khayat's work is more than just storytelling—it's a heartfelt mission to connect, inspire, and celebrate the vibrant traditions of her homeland.

b. Portrait



## c. Contribution Statement

Maitha Al Khayat is a celebrated Emirati author and illustrator whose stories bring the richness of Emirati culture to life for children around the world. With nearly 200 works to her name, including *Grandma Moodhi Fashionista* and the award-winning *The Pearl Diver's Daughter* and *the Cowrie Necklace*, her books blend humor, empathy, and a deep pride in heritage. Her works, translated into multiple languages, offer young readers relatable characters and stories that spark curiosity and celebrate identity.

Inspired by her five children, Maitha's books, such as *My Own Special Way* and *When A Camel Craves the Logaimat*, capture the joys and challenges of childhood with warmth and authenticity. Beyond books, she has contributed to children's television, including the Emirati edition of *Sesame Street* and *Hamdoon*, and serves as a consultant at *Rubu Qam* in Sharjah, promoting creativity and cultural pride.

Her collaboration with Dubai Courts to create a book on children's rights *Wadeema's Law (The Illustrated Child Rights Law)* - reflects her commitment to empowering young readers with knowledge to protect themselves and build confidence. Maitha's training at the Academy of Art in San Francisco further highlights her dedication to excellence, elevating both the writing and illustration of children's literature.

Through her storytelling, Maitha Al Khayat continues to connect, inspire, and celebrate, leaving a lasting legacy of love, laughter, and cultural pride.

# d. Appreciative Essays/Articles /Interviews



## d. Appreciative Essays, Articles & Interview

### 1. **Revealed: The Arabian Business 100 Most Inspiring Women 2025**

Arabian Business unveils its 2025 list of 100 Most Inspiring Women, showcasing the female leaders transforming the Middle East through innovation, resilience, and empowerment. Maitha Al Khayat ranks 86.

[Read the full article here.](#)

### 1. **“#UAEREADS: Maitha Al Khayat”**

Global Literature in Libraries Initiative (GLLI), March 24, 2024.

This feature highlights Maitha Al Khayat’s dedication to representing Emirati culture in children’s literature and her impact on readers worldwide. It delves into her creative process and her passion for storytelling as a way to preserve heritage.

[Read the full article here.](#)

### 1. **“Emirates Airline Festival of Literature: In Conversation with Maitha Al Khayat”**

Khaleejesque, February 1, 2021.

In this interview, Maitha shares insights into her career, the inspiration behind her stories, and her role in shaping children’s literature in the UAE. She reflects on her experiences as a mother and how they influence her storytelling.

[Read the full article here.](#)

### 1. **“Author Maitha Al Khayat Introduces Emirati Culture Through Children’s Books”**

Arab News, July 20, 2020.

This article explores Maitha’s journey as a children’s author and illustrator, focusing on her mission to celebrate Emirati traditions and connect with young readers through engaging and meaningful stories.

[Read the full article here.](#)

### 1. **“Book Club- Maitha AlKhayat”**

Yalla Abu Dhabi Life, Aug 17, 2022

UAE author Maitha Al-Khayat chats to Yalla – Abu Dhabi Life on what inspires her to write.

[Read the Full article here.](#)



## d. Appreciative Essays, Articles & Interview

### 6. “Dubai Courts and Author Create Book on Children’s Rights”

The National, January 27, 2020.

This piece discusses Maitha’s collaboration with Dubai Courts to create a book educating children about their rights under the UAE’s Child Rights Law, showcasing her commitment to empowering and protecting young readers.

[Read the full article here.](#)

### 7. “How UAE Educators Are Looking to Redefine Literacy for Children”

Euronews, November 8, 2019.

This article highlights the efforts of UAE educators, including Maitha Al Khayat, to redefine literacy through innovative approaches. It emphasizes Maitha’s role in creating engaging stories that reflect the UAE’s culture while fostering a love for reading in children.

[Read the full article here.](#)

### 8. “We Need Writers: A Case Study of Writer-Illustrator Maitha Al Khayat and the UAE Children’s Book Publishing Industry”

ResearchGate, by Michelle Pacht and Anna Ziajka Stanton, 2019.

This academic essay examines Maitha Al Khayat’s role in shaping the UAE’s children’s book publishing industry. It offers multiple perspectives on her contributions as a writer-illustrator, emphasizing her ability to blend cultural authenticity with universal themes to engage young readers.

[Read the full essay here.](#)

### 9. “Maitha Al Khayat: A Writer from the United Arab Emirates at an English Congress on Children’s Literature”

University of Valencia, October 2019.

This article highlights Maitha Al Khayat’s participation in an English congress on children’s literature, where she discussed her approach to storytelling, her cultural influences, and her mission to inspire young readers with stories that celebrate Emirati heritage.

[Read the full article here.](#)

## d. Appreciative Essays, Articles & Interviews



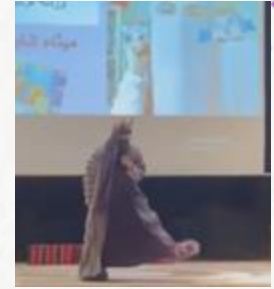
Emirates Literature Festival 2022



Emirates Literature Festival 2017



Read, Dream, Create / UAEBBY



School Visit 2023



Abu Dhabi International Bookfair 2014



Sefer Interview



Interview with author



Reading during Covid



Sharjah Children Interview



## e. Awards, Nominations & Achievements

## e. Awards & Nominations

1. **Etisalat Award for Arabic Children's Literature - Young Adult Category (2024)**

Winner for "The Pearl Diver's Daughter & the Cowrie Necklace". [@Etisalataward](#)

1. **Sharjah Children's Book Award (2024)**  
"Hunting My Breakfast": Best Arabic Picture Book.
1. **Sharjah Children's Book Award (2024)**  
"Aisha's Pearl": Best English Picture Book.
1. **Publisher's Forum, Sharjah (2016)**  
Winner for Best Picture Book:  
"Turn Off the Lights".
1. **Children's Forum, Riyadh (2011)**  
Winner for Best Book: "My Own Special Way".
1. Marsh Award for Literature in Translation, UK (2013)/ Nominee for Best Translated Book: "My Own Special Way".

## Achievements

- Consultant of Language and Arts at [Rubu Qarn](#) for Leaders and Innovators / currently
- [Collaboration with Mcdonalds](#) to help women in need - authoring three colouring books for Ghadeer.
- Collaboration with Dubai Courts to illustrate [Wadeema - The Illustrated Child's Right Law](#) (2020)
- [Helping young cancer patients by writing "A Very Special Place"](#) during the Year of Reading - 2016
- Participated in the [Berlin Literature Festival](#) - 2016
- 2015-2018 Iffah show - Sesame street Scriptwriter
- Writer of the complete graded readers Horouf Project by Kalimat Group (Bo Rashid's Family) - 144 books
- Member of Emirati Union Writer's Association – Ras Al Khaimah
- The Cultural Office Women's Artists Network
- CreativeLab member TwoFour54 & FilmIndependant



## f. Bibliography Picture Books

I Love My Dad's Long Beard (Arabic & English)  
Zodiac Publishing UK, 2009

My Own Special Way (Arabic , English, Turkish)  
Arabic - Kalimat Publishing & Distribution, 2010  
English - Orion Publishers, 2012  
Turkish - Eddam, 2017

When a Camel Gets the Munchies (Arabic & English)  
Arabic - Kalimat Group, 2012  
English - University Bookshop, 2019

العجيبة جوارب أمي (Arabic) Mum's Amazing Socks  
Kalimat Group 2013

أميرة التسريحات (Arabic) Princess Hairdo  
Al Hudud Publishing & Distribution, 2013

القلمة الهاربة (Arabic) The Runaway Louse  
Jarrous Press Publishers, 2013

خرفان عمي خلفان (Arabic) Uncle Khalfan's Sheep  
AlSalwa Publishers, 2014

أطفئ الأنوار (Arabic) Turn Off The Lights  
Kalimat Group, 2014

السّر (Arabic) The Secret  
Kalimat Group, 2014

حوتان (Arabic) Two Whales  
Al Hudhud Publishing, & Distribution 2015

Love in Ramadan (Arabic & English)  
AlHudhud Publishing & Distribution, 2016

I Love My Mum's Pretty Veil (Arabic & English)  
Al Hudhud Publishing & Distribution, 2016

The Bedouins Penguins (Arabic & English)  
AlHudhud Publishing & Distribution, 2016

A Very Special Place (Arabic & English)  
AlHudhud Publishing & Distribution, 2016

نخيل أبي (Arabic) Father's Dad's Palm Tree  
AlHudhud Publishing, 2017

أيده موزي على الموضة (Arabic & Italian) Grandma  
Moudi Fashionista / Nonna Mudi E Alla Moda  
(Arabic) – Kalimat Group, 2017  
(Italian) - Galucci, 2020

Wadeema: The Illustrated Child Rights Law (Arabic & English)  
Dubai Courts, 2020

Aisha's Pearl (Arabic & English)  
ELF Publishing, 2022

ناقشون (Arabic) Naqshon  
Dar Ashjar, 2020

فربوع (Arabic & English) Furboa  
(Arabic) Loala Publishing & Distribution, 2021  
(English) Early Starters, 2024

هُدوء الليل (Arabic & English) Silent Night  
Kiwi Stories, 2024

Aisha's Cake (English)  
ELF Publishing, 2024

البطاريق البحارة (Arabic) The Penguin Sailors  
AlHudhud Publishers & Distribution, 2024

سأصطاد فطوري (Arabic) I Will Hunt My Breakfast  
Kalimat Group, 2024

Kaysar, the Owl and the Stars (Arabic & English)  
Kaysar's Nocturnal Journey (Arabic & English)  
Kaysar and His Star Wheel (Arabic & English)  
Kaysar Makes a Wish (Arabic & English)  
Fatima Bint Hazaa Foundation, 2024

Kaysar Saves the Forest (Arabic & English)  
Kaysar's Masterpiece (Arabic & English)  
Kaysar Celebrates the New Year (Arabic & English)  
Kaysar's Stellar Adventure (Arabic & English)  
Fatima Bint Hazaa Foundation, 2025



## f. Bibliography - continued



### Chapter Books

نواف الجلاف (Arabic) Nawaf the Shipwright  
Kalimat Group, 2017



نواف الجداف (Arabic) Nawaf the Rower  
Kalimat Group, 2018



### Young Adult Books

طوفان (Arabic) Toufan  
Qindeel, 2018



ابنة غواص اللؤلؤ وعقد البعوض (Arabic)  
The Pearl Diver's Daughter & the Cowrie Necklace  
Ajyaal, 2024



### Anthology

خرييفة مجيريفة (Arabic) Emirati Folktales  
Sharjah Heritage, 2019



### Graded Readers

عائلة بوراشد سلسلة حروف مرحلة المبتدئ (Arabic) 48 books  
عائلة بوراشد سلسلة حروف مرحلة المتوسط (Arabic) 48 books  
عائلة بوراشد سلسلة حروف مرحلة المتقدم (Arabic) 48 books  
Kalimat Group,



### Commissioned Books

A Friend in Need (Arabic & English)  
Sadu of Friendship (Arabic & English)  
Help is on the Way (Arabic & English)  
Mcdonalds, 2022

# g. Translations

Maitha Al Khayat's works have been widely translated, reflecting her global appeal and resonance with diverse audiences. Her books have been translated into multiple languages, enhancing their accessibility to children and young readers worldwide.



I Love My Dad's Long Beard  
Translated into English



Grandma Modi Fashionista  
Translated into Italian



Love in Ramadan  
Translated into English



A Very Special Place  
Translated into English



Aisha's Pearl  
Translated into Arabic



When a Camel Gets the Munchies  
Translated into English



My Own Special Way  
Translated into English and Turkish



The Penguins  
Translated into English



The Child Rights Law  
Translated into English



I Love My Mum's Pretty Veil  
Translated into English

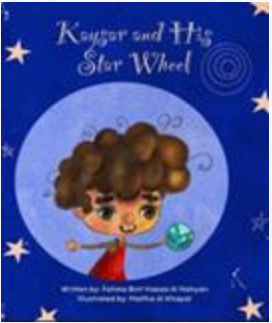


Furboa  
Translated into English



Silent Night translated into English

# g. Translations - continued





## h. Ten Most Important Titles



1. ابنة غواص اللؤلؤ وعقد البعور  
(Arabic)  
The Pearl Diver's Daughter  
& the Cowrie Necklace  
Ajyaal, 2024

A book about sacrifice in an Emirati tale infused with fantasy and adventure. The pearl diver's daughter is about a girl who wanted a pearl so badly, and not knowing that her dream would cost her the most precious thing she had. Winner of [@Etisalataward](#) YA category in 2024.



2. طريقي الخاصة  
My Own Special Way (Arabic)  
Kalimat Group, 2011

Hamda feels left out. She wants to be like her four sisters. One evening she makes a decision, and nobody can change her mind. She wants to wear the veil like her sisters. Each sister puts forward her own suggestion based on what worked for her. But it is up to Hamda to work out her own unique way to wear the veil, making it a part of her active and happy life. Translated into English and Italian.

Winner of the [Children's Forum, Riyadh \(2011\)](#) and also nominated for the Marsh awards best translated book

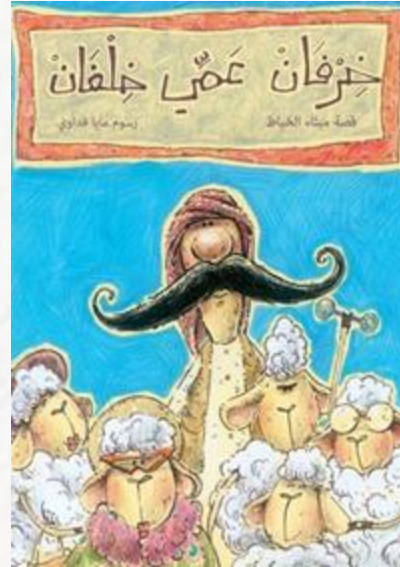
## h. Ten Most Important Titles

3.  
حين يشتهي الجمل اللقيمات  
When a Camel Gets the  
Munchies (Arabic) Kalimat  
Group, 2012

A little bedouin girl receives a surprise visit from an old camel. She has no choice but to be the perfect Emirati host, but no matter what she did, all the camel wanted or CRAVED was the munchy crunchy sweet dish called logaimat. What happens when she finds out she doesn't have any to serve?



A cultural infused book full of humour, rhyme and yummy traditional Emirati food that will keep you wanting for more and hungry like a camel!

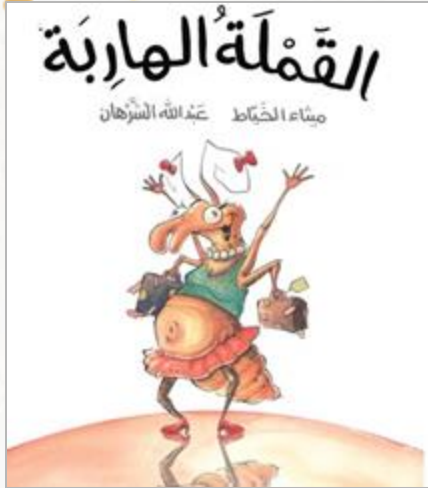


4.  
خرفان عمي خلفان  
Uncle Khalfan's Sheep (Arabic)  
Al Salwa Publishers, 2014

A delightful and funny story about going to the dentist. Uncle Kalfan's sheep who are unlike any other sheep are not afraid to go to the dentist. In this hilarious story they all happily hop in Uncle Khalfan's truck and off they go for their appointment. Each sheep is examined in turn and its problem is diagnosed by the dentist and fixed and the sheep hops happily away.

The child gets to see the equipment the dentist uses and learns about the different problems people have with their teeth and how the dentist can fix them. The story helps the child deal with his/her feelings of fear from the dentist and talk about them through the characters of the story. The rhyme in the story makes it easy to read and to repeat.

## h. Ten Most Important Titles



5.  
القملة الهاربة (Arabic)  
The Runaway Louse  
Jarrous Press Publishers, 2013

Imagine a louse living inside your hair with her offspring. This louse has had enough and decides to move to a new head / house! But each time she lands on a new head she discovers it's no perfect home. What if there is no perfect home? A fun rhyming book that will get you itchy and scratchy with laughter.

The moral of the story is ever to complain about your terrain even if it's worse than rain!



6.  
نقشون (Arabic)  
Naqshon  
Dar Ashjar, 2020

The little monster Naqshon discovers that his fish bowl needs cleaning, but he accidentally drops the fish which goes down the sink right in front of his eyes! He needs to save his little fishy and runs off asking help from his family.

It's a fun rhyming with illustrations that are inspired by children who participated in a competition held by the author Maitha Al Khayat during a summer 2019. She never expected the children on social media would find this so engaging and participated. They submitted beautiful illustrations which the Maitha was inspired to redraw for this book.

## h. Ten Most Important Titles



7.  
جوارب أمي العجيبة (Arabic) Mum's  
Amazing Socks  
Kalimat Group 2013

Mum's amazing socks is all about a mother who covers herself with a burqa and abaya from head to toe. There's something unique about her that help her children find her out - through her socks!

Learn the days of the week with mum's amazing socks and even get to know the names of the lovely patterns she wears.



8.  
أطفئ الأنوار (Arabic) Turn Off The  
Lights  
Kalimat Group, 2014

A little farm boy called Omar doesn't want to go to sleep. He takes his torch at night and decides to go and play with his little friends the farm animals. In the stable, he tries to wake up baby camel, but mama camel tells him it's actually bedtime.

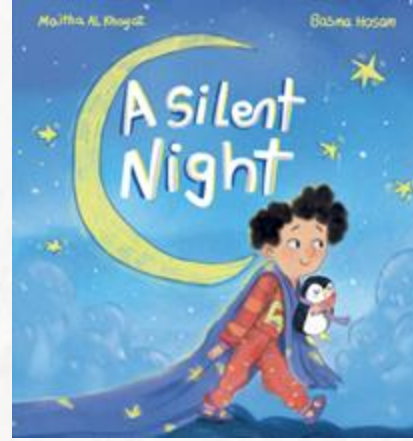
So Omar goes from one stable to the other, from one barn to another, asking if he can play with one of the small animals - till he finds himself sleepy instead. Winner of the Publisher's Forum, Sharjah (2016).

## h. Ten Most Important Titles

9. **سأصطاد فطوري (Arabic) I Will Hunt My Breakfast**  
Kalimat Group, 2024

Hunting My Breakfast is the sequel to Turn Off the Lights. The journey continues with Omar, who is this time fussy about eating. He doesn't want his mother's breakfast and would rather hunt his own food.

On the way, he meets his friends the little farm animal friends. He even invites them over to hunt breakfast with him, but he's surprised that each mama animal has cooked a special breakfast for her little one. It's an engaging rhyming book that celebrates the traditional food of the Arabian peninsula. It's a wonder Arabian feast. Winner of [Sharjah Children's Book Award \(2024\)](#).



8. **هدوء الليل (Arabic & English) Silent Night**  
Kiwi Stories, 2024

A little boy called Yousef cannot sleep because it is a very strange and silent night. He decides to go and try sleeping in each of his family member's beds. He's surprised to hear monkey chatter, a snake hiss, a lion roaring and even a horse neighing in their bedrooms.

Will Yosef ever find a good night sleep? Was moving from his bed was a bad idea? A fun story for the little ones - especially when they find out it's not a silent book at all. Rhyming, animal sounds and lots of fun. This book is also available in Arabic.

## i. Five Representative Books



1. **ابنة غواص اللؤلؤ وعقد البعور (Arabic)**  
**The Pearl Diver's Daughter & the Cowrie Necklace**  
Ajsaal, 2024

A book to be proud of which represents the Middle East, exploring the gulf's hidden realms. In a world where fantasy blends into our reality, bringing ancient myths to life as essential parts of our lives, "The Pearl Diver's Daughter and the Cowrie Necklace" stands out as a highlight of the Arabian Gulf's rich heritage. This story opens a new chapter in Emirati literature filled with hope, inspiration, and the cherished traditions of the past.

As Moza's eyes open wide to the vast sea, her heavy breathing confirms she's survived. This marks the start of Moza's story, our main character, surrounded by the endless sea. Choosing to fight rather than give up, she sets off to find a deeper purpose. Beware what you wish for – but the 14 year old girl, who dreams of having her own rarest pearl by none other than her courageous Pearl Diving father, who promised he will bring her one. She never expected that her only wish will lead to ending her father's life as pearl diver. She never new in her wildest dreams she had to confront evil spirits from under the sea, to save her brave father, who was transformed into a leather back turtle as punishment for taking the giant pearl! Who would have thought that a pearl will change Moza's life forever.

Inspired by the Arabian Gulf's history of sea exploration and pearl diving, and by the author's ancestral heritage in pearl diving, the novel beautifully mixes elements of fantasy with real-life challenges, aiming to capture the hearts of readers everywhere.

Winner of @Etisalataward YA category in 2024. The following are the first three translated chapters of the YA fantasy novel:

## i. Five Representative Books



### Chapter 1

#### Qawaqa Village – Village of Shells

There was a buzz of excitement at Qawaqa Village, on Neeli Island. Today was no ordinary day; it was the end of the Grand Diving Season, and Moza, daughter of the famous pearl diver Obaid, would finally receive her promised pearl –the largest of them all! Why not? –her father, was a Ghayss, one of the best-known pearl divers in the area, and it was high time his hard, daring work was honored by the Sea Lords.

Neeli, a rugged, isolated island surrounded by rocky desert mountains, was home to a resilient community. The coastal villagers were skilled in pearl diving and fishing, as harsh weather and barren land made farming nearly impossible.

Moza, feeling a flutter of anticipation, placed her shayla, her light floral cotton headscarf, on her head, gazing at herself through the tiny mirror by her clothes trunk. She stared at her reflection in the dim moonlight streaming through her window. The sun would rise soon, and the first light of dawn was already creeping into the sky.

She was still learning to wrap her shayla the way older girls did, to feel like part of the group of young women who proudly wore their brightly colored headscarves.

## i. Five Representative Books



It was her way of showing everyone she was growing up. Yet, Moza didn't quite feel grown up—her wide, kohl-rimmed eyes still seemed too big for her face, and while she had gotten a bit taller, she still felt the same. But today, she would stand tall, knowing she was the daughter of a hero bringing home a special gift just for her—a pearl that would make all the other girls jealous.

Moza slipped quietly out of her areesh, her palm-frond house, located near the beach. She was careful not to wake, Yadoh Osha, her grandmother, who, despite her poor vision, could hear everything around her with uncanny precision. Though Yadoh Osha's vision was clouded—nearly blind, in fact—her hearing was sharper than anyone's. She could pick up the faintest sounds around her, like distant animal calls, the rustling of insects, even the stealthy steps of jinn...or so she claimed, just to keep Moza from wandering too far from home.

Of Course Moza rolls her eyes everytime her grandma mentioned this. “The village is filled with folktales of jinn and ghouls,” she would say, “Believe me, I know someone who has seen these creatures for real.” But Moza always scoffed at those stories. She was certain they were just tall tales to scare curious children like her from exploring Neeli Islands mysteries.

Yet, it wasn't that she was afraid of these stories. On the contrary, just thinking about such creatures only fueled her curiosity. She longed for an encounter with a real ifreet, to stand her ground face-to-face—though, of course, that never happened. She was sure the tales of jinn and monsters were nothing more than myths.

As she made her way to the coast, her mind wasn't on monsters but on heroes, especially her father, the pearl diver Obaid. This time, Moza hadn't brought her sandals as she slid down the sandy hill where her house overlooked the sea. She didn't need them; the sand was soft and velvety under her feet. Her goal was to be the first to reach the beach, to witness the firing of the cannon—a signal marking the end of the Grand Diving Season and a celebration welcoming the Ghawaseen's return from their awe-inspiring journey.

She had prepared everything needed with the women of the village days ago, helping to decorate the palm-frond houses with flags, cooking her father's favorite dish, pumpkin Assida, and assisting the other girls with traditional food like, khabees, harees and an assortment of date-sweetened treats.



## i. Five Representative Books



Yes, she had done everything asked of her. And before the blazing sun rose, especially in that fierce summer season, she wanted to beat everyone to the cannon and dash barefoot across the shore to savor the cool, seawater-soaked sand before it warmed under the sun's heat. She arrived at the cannon, breathless, where the coast guards had gathered, and called out eagerly:

"Uncle Ibrahim! Have they arrived yet? Did you see their sails?"

"Ah, Moza! Aren't you tired of coming here every day?" he teased with a smile, knowing how much she adored her father.

"Not at all! Today's the day, I just know it!" she insisted, tapping her nose with confidence.

"Oh really? And how does your nose know that?" he chuckled, humoring her as the other guards men laughed.

Just then, a thunderous BOOM echoed as the cannon fired, signaling the divers' return. Moza's heart leapt with joy, and she shrieked, "See? I told you! My nose never lies!" She raced down the beach, triumphant.

The beach was empty, and she felt a surge of victory knowing she was the first to welcome the pearl diver's home. As she shaded her eyes to gaze at the horizon, she saw the sails of the ship Ghaneema coming closer. Alright, it will take about four to five hours for the ship to arrive at the coast.

Her heart swelled with happiness; not only was her father returning safely from a dangerous journey, but today was also her birthday. She would turn fourteen, and nothing could have made her happier than her father's return on this special day.

Moza wished her mother were still alive to share the joy of her father's return from his heroic diving journey, but she had passed away due to an illness no one could explain years ago. Moza could no longer recall her mother's features, having been just a small child when she lost her, but on this day, she burned with anticipation to see her father, AlGhayss Obaid, and waited eagerly for the moment when she could throw herself into his warm embrace.

During the smaller diving seasons, her father would usually be away for just a month. But unlike previous trips, the divers had been gone for nearly three months on the Grand Diving Season. Moza knew that, among the islanders, the end of a diving season was called "Al-Qafal." Her father had told her how all the pearl-diving ships, even those from neighboring islands, would leave the oyster-rich waters of the pearl beds and return to their homeland.

## i. Five Representative Books



She stood gazing toward the distant horizon, where hints of blue were beginning to pierce the sky, heralding the dawn. Turning away from the horizon, Moza decided to make use of the waiting time by gathering shells and mollusks to create a special necklace for her father from the rare Cowrie shells.

The people of Neeli Island were widely recognized as the “Qawaqe folksmen”. The shore was known for its beautiful shells, scattered like treasures after the tides. The people enjoyed adorning themselves with shells as jewelry, used them in construction, and even crafted household items and other practical tools from them.

After about two hours, life began to stir along the beach. The sounds of children, men, and women blended with the roar of waves crashing onto the shore. In the meantime, Moza had managed to gather fourteen Cowrie shells and felt a sense of satisfaction and luck at finding this many of the beautiful, rare shells. Moza cast her gaze once again over the horizon, looking toward the sea to check if the ships were drawing nearer. Indeed, they were much closer now—just an hour away from the coast.

She sat down on the sand and took a sturdy thread from the pocket of her new Makhwaara, a traditional dress her aunt Hessa had sewn for her to welcome her father home. She had bought this special thread from Farouk, a merchant from beyond the island who came from distant lands to sell peculiar tools and trinkets. He always had stories about everything he sold, and this time, he told Moza that the unique thread she chose was crafted from mermaid hair and would never break under any condition. Moza didn't believe him of course, yet she still loved the story about the thread, and what truly captured her attention was its deep turquoise color.

She threaded the beautiful string through the Cowrie shells, creating a necklace that resembled a rosary, and so her father's necklace was ready—one that would never break during diving. She raised it high, delighted by the sunlight dancing on the shells' surfaces. Just then, her happy moment was interrupted by a voice she recognized all too well—a voice that could mean nothing but trouble.

## i. Five Representative Books



### Chapter 2 - Jalboot Ghaneema

“Daughter of a pearl diver, with no pearls!” Luluwa sneered, laughing. She was the daughter of Al Nokhatha Salim, captain of the pearl-diving boat that Moza’s father, Obaid, worked on.

Moza held back, biting down her frustration, and pretended not to hear Luluwa’s words. She clenched her jaw, choosing not to respond, out of respect for Luluwa’s father, al Nokhatha Salim—a generous man who always treated her father well.

“Oh, what are you making there? A pearl necklace? Oh how adorable!” Luluwa mocked, feigning interest. She nudged her friend, Mahra, the pearl trader’s daughter, to join in on the laughter. Moza quickly tucked her necklace away, hiding it from the Tawash’s daughter, who was always adorned with jewellery.

“My father will bring me the most beautiful pearl—you’ll see,” Moza blurted out defiantly. She stood up, brushing the sand from her simple dress, and couldn’t help but notice how plain it looked next to the girls’ fancy clothing.

“All the pearls are collected for my father, The Tawash,” Mahra chimed in spitefully. Mahra might not have Luluwa’s beauty, but her neck gleamed with a pearl-studded necklace, and she wore golden rings on her chunky henna tinted fingers. Her tousled hair, oiled and tightly plaited, was crowned with a gold-plated tassa.

The two girls stood before Moza, dressed in elegant tunics and embroidered shawls that shimmered like gold crowns under the sunlight. Moza thought, disheartened, Where did they get shaylas that sparkled and shimmered with golden polka dots?

Suddenly, the welcoming cannon sounded, signaling the return of the brave divers from their grueling journey. Moza seized the opportunity and dashed toward the shore, grateful for the excuse to escape the two bullies.

“Even if you’re the first to reach the waters, you’ll never get a pearl necklace. You don’t deserve anything – but a cowrie necklace!” Luluwa shouted after her.

## i. Five Representative Books



Moza could hear the girls' spiteful laughter trailing behind her, blending with the crashing waves. Who do they think they are? Moza chuckled to herself, running towards the sea. What a pair of fools! They actually thought she was obsessed with pearls! Sure, she loved pearls—who wouldn't?

But Moza's dreams went far beyond a mere necklace. She longed for a rare, unique pearl, not to wear, but to use as a ticket to leave this poor, miserable island and get away from people like Luluwa and Mahra. More than anything, she wanted a grand adventure in far-off lands, glittering and new, like those the merchant Farouk spoke about. So, no! Jewelleries and pearl necklaces were the last on her mind!

Finally, she spotted the fabulous ship, Ghaneema the Jalboat; its white sails high against the sky as it cut through the waves towards the shore. On the beach, a crowd had gathered: women, children, and the island's elders waited eagerly. Most of the crew aboard Ghaneema were young men of the island, but there were also weldan—youth brought along to learn the ways of their ancestors and to one day become pearl divers themselves.

Usually, the weldan didn't receive any pay, but they were eager to join the boat each season, excited to see heroes who fearlessly faced the sea's perils and learn the craft from them. As the ship drew closer, silence fell over the crowd; eyes were fixed on the ship, waiting for the first glimpse of the crew coming ashore. As the crew members began to disembark one by one, a burst of laughter, shouts of joy and grateful welcome filled the beach.

The first to jump from the ship were the tababoon—the young boys who helped pull the divers back onto the boat, followed by the older boys. Moza watched them with admiration, and tinge of envy, knowing they were destined to carry on the traditions of their ancestors. Someday, they would have countless opportunities to learn the craft of diving, and adventures awaited them in far-off places.

When Moza was only eight, she had begged her father to train her in the tasks the weldan did aboard the pearl diving ship. He had trained her well on how to open oysters with a miflaqah. It was a sharp tool, but he trained her well, so deep down, she believed she would be as skilled as any of those boys who jumped like madmen off the boat.



## i. Five Representative Books

As the divers began to reach the shore, the rhythmic beats of drums and the crowd's cheers filled the air, accompanied by the children's shouts of excitement. Moza's heart pounded with joy. Shielding her eyes from the sun, she scanned the scene, eager to catch a glimpse of her father.

She heard the nahham lead the sailors in chants, welcoming their safe return in harmony with the crowd's cheers. Then, she saw him—her father, Obaid, with his familiar, strong and calm presence. Ignoring the water splashing around her, she ran toward him and flung herself into his arms. He wrapped her in his strong embrace, resting his cheek against her head, breathing in the scent of his beloved only daughter, Moza.

### Chapter 3 - The Khashra (The Tiny Pearl)

"This is the sweetest Asida pumpkin I've ever eaten in my life!" Obaid shouted, sitting between his mother and daughter on the floor by the dining table.

After the divers received their share of the catch, and after the captain, Nokhatha Salem, expressed his thanks and congratulations to the crew for their safe return to their families and loved ones, each diver returned home to enjoy the fruits of their hard journey. For Obaid, Al Ghais, he was deeply grateful for his safe return to his only daughter, Moza, and his mother. He felt immense joy that they were in good health. He could hardly believe he had finally arrived on his island after the struggle for survival, and that he would now enjoy some peace among his loved ones.

"It's because you're hungry, my boy." said his mother, Osha.

"No, it's because it's made by the hands of my one and only pearl, Moza." Obaid replied, winking at his daughter.

"And every time you return from diving, I'll cook you the sweetest Asida, my brave Aboya," Moza responded warmly to her father.

Obaid lowered his head, as though something had occupied his thoughts. Then he washed his hand, in a small washing bowl. Moza understood that he had had enough of the sweet dish, so she picked up the coffee pot, poured him a cup, and handed it to him. He took the shell adorned cup and sipped his gahwa slowly, savoring the taste enhanced with cardamom and saffron. After drinking three sips, he shook the cup. Moza took it and placed it in a bowl of water.



## i. Five Representative Books

Obaid pulled out his small goat leather bag and opened it. He took out a velvet handkerchief, folded neatly. Moza's heart raced with excitement; she knew exactly what was inside. The moment she had been hoping for had arrived. She was certain that her father had found pearls of all sizes, and that the captain had gifted him the best one as a reward for such a long journey.

Last time, her father hadn't been so lucky; he returned empty-handed. But on this trip, she felt hopeful, certain that he had gathered pearls that would save them from their poverty, and perhaps also fulfill her wish to move to a new land, better than this desert God forsaken island.

When Obaid unwrapped the velvet cloth completely, Moza saw only a single pearl, so tiny it resembled a grain of sand. Her father pinched it between his thumb and forefinger, and it disappeared completely between his fingers, so small was it.

"This is for you, binti Moza. After days and days of searching, I almost lost hope of finding a beautiful pearl for you, as I promised. But finally, luck was on our side, and we all managed to find these kinds." Obaid said.

"But what is this? Are you sure it's a pearl?" Moza exclaimed in shock and disappointment. Staring at it incredulously, so tiny in her palm.

"Yes, this is called a khashrah."

"Khashrah? But, father, this is the worst kind of pearl! Maybe we should call it a hashrah instead! Even an insect is bigger than this!"

"You're right, my dear, but alhamdulillah, we must always thank God even if it's the least." He said, laughing with sadness.

Moza noticed a change in his expression, and then she realized that perhaps she had not been grateful enough, and her response may not have been fitting! She lifted the tiny pearl carefully, stared at it, willing it to get bigger, then sighed in resignation placing it back into the handkerchief.

She then took her father's hand with tenderness, gazed into his eyes with hope, and said enthusiastically:

"My dear aboya, don't worry! Next time, I'll pray to God to help you find the biggest, most beautiful pearl."

"You are my pearl, Moza. The biggest and the most beautiful one God ever gave me." He said, caressing her sweet, childlike face.

How much she resembled her mother, with her wide eyes and long dark lashes that hung like curtains over her eyes, black as the night! Sometimes, he imagined the deep blue of the night sea reflected in her eyes, especially when she was full of energy, like she was at that moment. So much like her mother.

"No, no! I mean a real pearl. You'll find it next time!" Moza insisted.



## i. Five Representative Books

Suddenly, Obaid stood up, walked to the door of their small areesh, opened it, and looked out at the sparkling sea under the midday sun. The sea appeared calm and less dangerous now, in stark contrast to when Obaid was either on its surface or, rather, at its depths.

He and the divers had faced many dangers. They were always prepared for the risks they encountered far from the shore, like diseases such as diver's ear, epilepsy or Samat, which leads to paralysis.

But beneath the sea, while diving, they sometimes experienced the AL Mess, the possession of jinn, something that never happened to them thankfully, while on the pearl diving ship, during their hunting season. However, Obaid had heard of other divers from other islands and regions who had suffered such fates.

Among the other dangers they faced were attacks from deadly, wild sea creatures, like the jelly fish they call sea devil, which had nearly taken the life of his friend, alghayss Jamal.

He turned around, his shoulders hunched, as if the weight of something heavy had brought him down. The flickering light of the lantern danced across his tanned, vitiligo-marked complexion. Even the strong outline of his muscled body seemed to waver before her.

"There won't be a next time, my beloved Moza. Honestly, I've grown old and tired." He said wearily.

Moza leaped to her feet and hugged him tightly.

"No, aboy, don't say that! You're still young and strong!" Moza replied confidently.

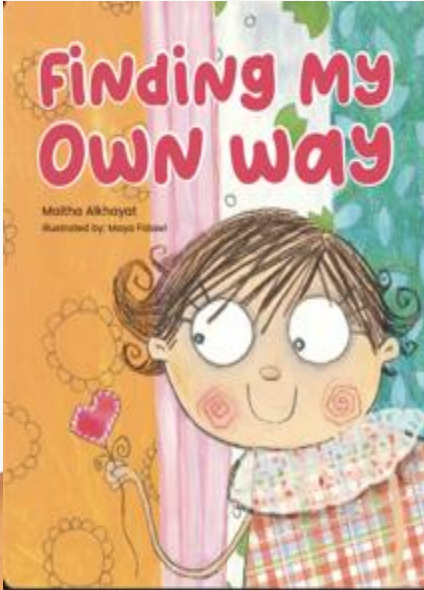
"I've made my decision, Moza. This is my last journey. I'd rather leave the diving profession and find something safer to do! And spend the rest of my life closer to you and omi"

## i. Five Representative Books

2.

طريقي الخاص

My Own Special Way (Arabic)  
translated into English and  
Turkish  
Kalimat Group, 2011



Hamda feels left out. She wants to be like her four sisters. One evening she makes a decision, and nobody can change her mind. She wants to wear the veil like her sisters. Each sister puts forward her own suggestion based on what worked for her. But it is up to Hamda to work out her own unique way to wear the veil, making it a part of her active and happy life. Translated into English and Turkish. Winner of the Children's Forum, Riyadh (2011) and also nominated for the Marsh awards best translated book, 2013.

This story is based on a true story that happened to the author Maitha Al Khayat, who has four sisters. Her youngest sister, who is twenty years younger than Maitha, is actually called Hamda. One time, Maitha noticed how it was hard for her youngest sibling to wear the head scarf. Her mother complained that her youngest daughter wears the scarf the worst! Without intention, Maitha said to lighten the mood said: "Don't worry Mamma, Hamda will find her own special way one day!". Immediately after saying this, Maitha thought what a great idea for a new book.

The author of course likes to add humour and lightness to her stories and based each character on her other sisters, including herself! The author is so proud of this book, because it was her second published book, and after winning the Children's Forum Award in Riyadh, it placed the author on the map – which drover her to decide that writing stories is her true calling.



# Finding My Own Way



## i. Five Representative Books

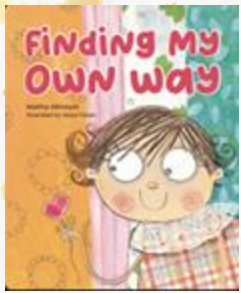
2.

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Hamda feels left out. She wants to be like her four sisters. One evening she makes a decision, and nobody can change her mind. She wants to wear the veil like her sisters. Each sister puts forward her own suggestion based on what worked for her. But it is up to Hamda to work out her own unique way to wear the veil, making it a part of her active and happy life. Translated into English and Italian. Winner of the Children's Forum, Riyadh (2011) and also nominated for the Marsh awards best translated book





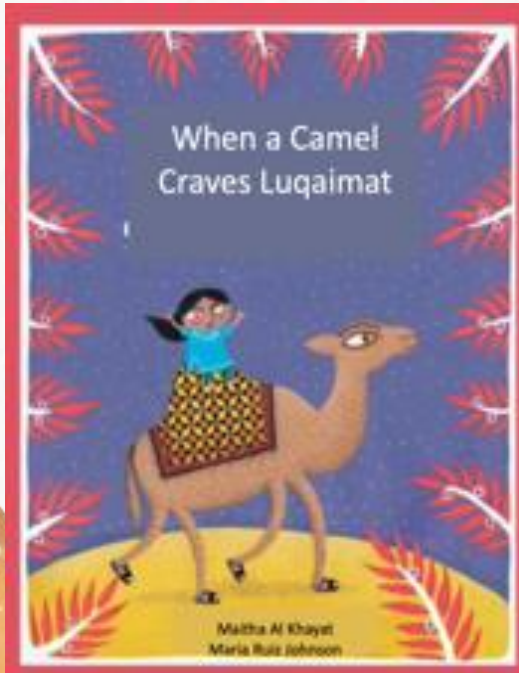
# i. Five Representative Books

2. **طريقي الخاصة**  
**My Own Special Way (Arabic)**  
**Kalimat Group, 2011**



## i. Five Representative Books

3.  
حين يشتهي الجمل اللقيمات  
When a Camel Gets the  
Munchies (Arabic) Kalimat  
Group, 2012



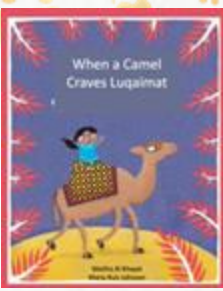
A little Bedouin girl receives a surprise visit from an old camel. She has no choice but to be the perfect Emirati host, but no matter what she did, all the camel wanted or CRAVED was the munchy crunchy sweet dish called logaimat. What happens when she finds out she doesn't have any to serve? A cultural infused book full of humour, rhyme and yummy traditional Emirati food that will keep you wanting for more and hungry like a camel!

The inspiration behind writing this book was the author's daughter, who was not into learning Emirati traditions. She came home from school one day, crying that social studies was so hard and she didn't understand a thing about UAE dishes and other household objects that were even hard for her to pronounce.

The author, Maitha Al Khayat, was saddened that the content of the text book was too formal and complex for children, and immediately was inspired to write a book about a Bedouin girl who lives in the desert, in a hut made of palm tree leaves. Suddenly, a very strange guest appears at her door – A CAMEL! The Bedouin girl is taught about hospitality which is an important cultural aspect in the UAE. She starts serving him different kinds of Emirati dishes in various traditional named cutlery and surroundings.

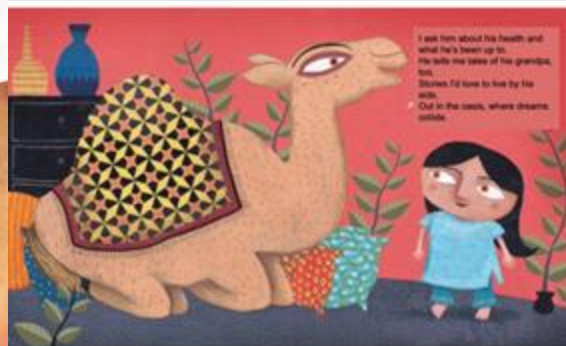
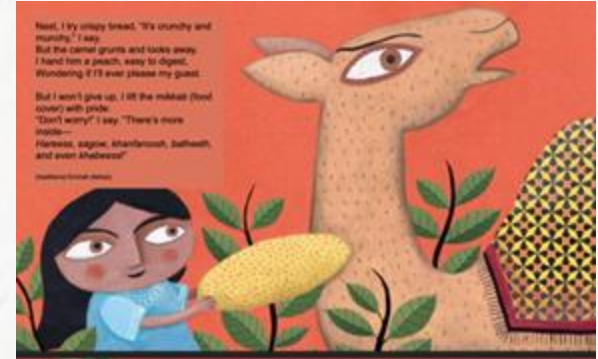
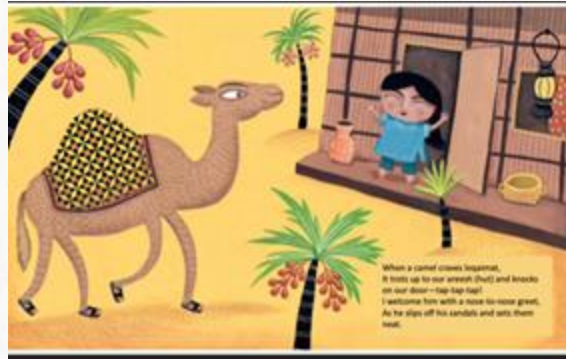
This book allows children in the UAE to discover traditional Emirati food in a colourful cultural tale of camel adventure, encouraging them to rejoice about their culture and be proud of their heritage.

## i. Five Representative Books



3.  
حين يشتهى الجمل اللقيمات  
**When a Camel Gets the Munchies (Arabic) Kalimat Group, 2012**

A little bedouin girl receives a surprise visit from an old camel. She has no choice but to be the perfect Emirati host, but no matter what she did, all the camel wanted or CRAVED was the munchy crunchy sweet dish called logaimat. What happens when she finds out she doesn't have any to serve? A cultural infused book full of humour, rhyme and yummy traditional Emirati food that will keep you wanting for more and hungry like a camel!





4.

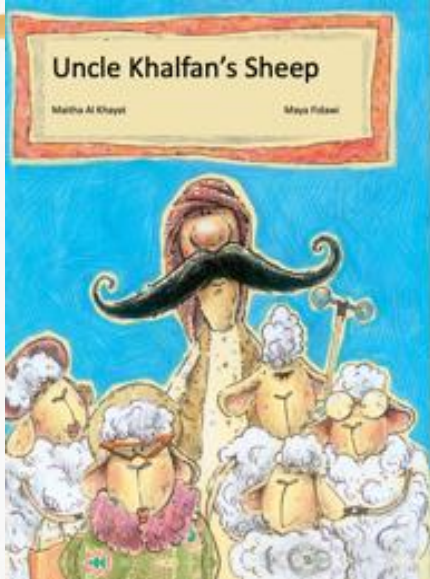
خرفان عمي خلفان

Uncle Khalfan's Sheep  
(Arabic)

Al Salwa Publishers, 2014

## i. Five Representative Books

36



A delightful and funny story about going to the dentist. Uncle Kalfan's sheep who are unlike any other sheep are not afraid to go to the dentist. In this hilarious story they all happily hop in Uncle Khalfan's truck and off they go for their appointment. Each sheep is examined in turn and its problem is diagnosed by the dentist and fixed and the sheep hops happily away. The story helps the child deal with his/her feelings of fear from the dentist and talk about them through the characters of the story. The rhyme in the story makes it easy to read and to repeat.

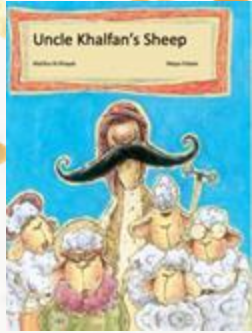
The author was inspired to write this story when she was taking her child to the dentist. While waiting their turn, she could not help but observe the pains and fears of other patients who were shivering in their seats waiting for the nurse to call out their names.

Fortunately, her son did not have any problems, but after dropping him at school, she took a taxi and head for the Sharjah International Book fair. On the way, she wrote the story in one go, imagining sheep going to the dentist and each one of them has a problem.

This a favourite book for the author, because she feels she addressed a very international pain which is the fear of going to the dentist. Whether your are young or old this book will put a smile on your face and will make it easier for you and your kid while you get your teeth checked up!

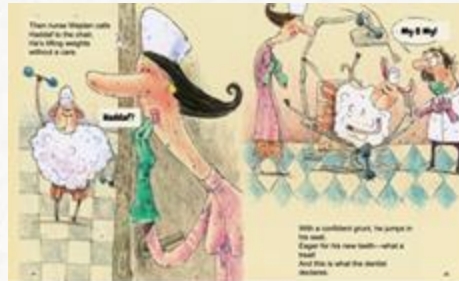
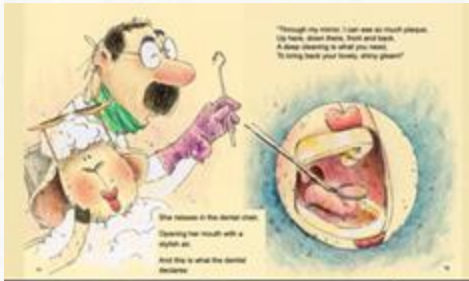


# i. Five Representative Books



4.  
 خرفان عمي خلفان  
 Uncle Khalfan's Sheep  
 (Arabic)  
 Al Salwa Publishers, 2014

A delightful and funny story about going to the dentist. Uncle Kalfan's sheep who are unlike any other sheep are not afraid to go to the dentist. In this hilarious story they all happily hop in Uncle Khalfan's truck and off they go for their appointment. Each sheep is examined in turn and its problem is diagnosed by the dentist and fixed and the sheep hops happily away. The story helps the child deal with his/her feelings of fear from the dentist and talk about them through the characters of the story. The rhyme in the story makes it easy to read and to repeat.





## i. Five Representative Books

5.

سأصطاد فطوري (Arabic)  
I'm Hunt My Breakfast  
Kalimat Group, 2024



Hunting My Breakfast is the sequel to Turn Off the Lights. The journey continues with Omar, who is this time fussy about eating. He doesn't want his mother's breakfast and would rather hunt his own food. On the way, he meets his friends the little farm animal friends. He even invites them over to hunt breakfast with him, but he's surprised that each mama animal has cooked a special breakfast for her little one. It's an engaging rhyming book that celebrates the traditional food of the Arabian peninsula. It's a wonder Arabian feast. Winner of [Sharjah Children's Book Award \(2024\)](#).

What's so special about this book, that it celebrates Arabian cuisine in a fun and engaging way. Omar, that main character is a fussy eater, and when his mother sets the breakfast table, he decides to hunt his own breakfast.

While hunting, he meets other farm animals and invites them over join him in the hunt. However, each animal is more happy to eat what their mama has prepared for them. The author cleverly mixes the food of for example a camel, with a traditional dish of an Arabic country, to make it sound more appetizing.

Arab children listening to the book, from around the world, will not only learn the names of the female farm animals, but also the names of the young animals. Moreover, they will see a banquet of Arabian food that will warm their little tummies because they relate to their home country, and even would love to explore other Arabian dishes!

## i. Five Representative Books

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**I'm Hunt My Breakfast**  
 Kalimat Group, 2024

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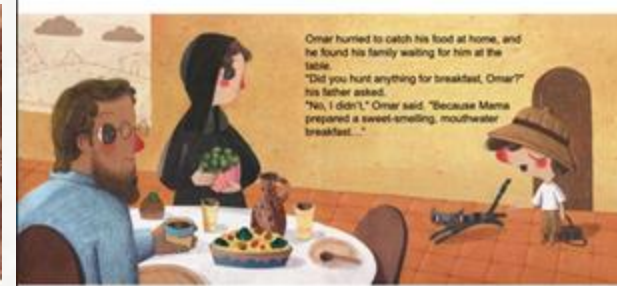
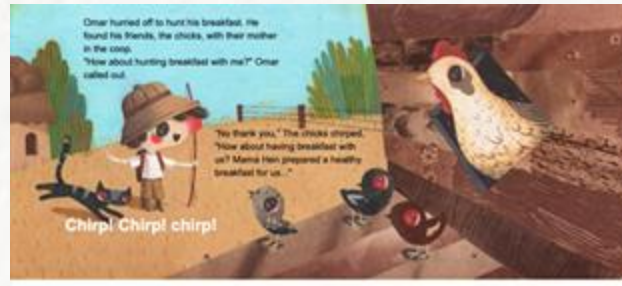
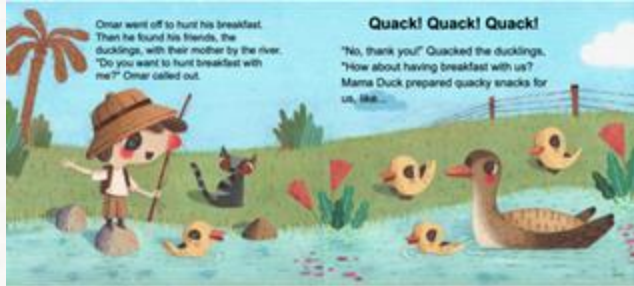
Maqlooba is a Middle Eastern dish that comes from Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon. It means "upside down".  
 Shirya Shakhuka is a popular Middle Eastern and North African dish that is made of eggs and tomato sauce.  
 Bilalwa is a popular Middle Eastern dish which is rice and lentils.



## i. Five Representative Books

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Masgouf is a popular Middle Eastern grilled fish, which is popular in Iraq. Manna is the national dish of Jordan and a popular traditional dish in other parts of the Levant, including Palestine and parts of Syria, usually cooked with herbs.

Kebab is a often considered the national dish of Egypt. Kebab is a major central food made from a mix of rice, herbs, and pasta. Manna is popular in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other parts of the Gulf region. It is a specialty and aromatic rice dish typically made with long-grain basmati rice, fresh sausage, herbs, chicken, or sometimes goat, and a blend of spices.

# j. Published Reviews

*These accolades and positive reviews highlight Maitha Al Khayat's impactful contributions to children's literature, reflecting her dedication to storytelling that resonates with readers across cultures.*



## "My Own Special Way"

This book received the Best Children's Book award at the Riyadh Children's Forum in 2011 and was nominated for the Marsh Award for Best Translated Book in 2012.

[GLOBALTHINKERSMENTORS.ORG](http://GLOBALTHINKERSMENTORS.ORG)



## "Turn Off the Lights"

Awarded Best Children's Book in 2015 by the Sharjah Publications Association. And it's a book suitable for kids that are fussy about sleeping.

[Hekaya Centre](http://HekayaCentre)



## "Love in Ramadan"

Described as a "cute book with a beautiful storyline focusing on love, compassion, kindness, charity, respect, community, togetherness, and family."

[UMMAFRAZBLOG.WORDPRESS.COM](http://UMMAFRAZBLOG.WORDPRESS.COM)



## "I Love My Dad's Long Beard"

Praised for its engaging narrative, this book holds a 5-star rating on AMAZON.COM

[Gulf News](http://GulfNews).



## "Uncle Khalfan's Sheep"

Layla Izruna praised the book for its rhyming and repetition, making it fun to read aloud. She also highlighted its effectiveness in teaching dental hygiene and addressing fears of the dentist in a fun way.

Biba Mina commended the book's excellent concept, noting its suitability for preparing children for dental visits.

[goodreads](http://goodreads)



## "Tofan"

Noura Noman appreciated the realistic portrayal of life and the relationship between the protagonist and horses. She also valued the author's research on horse care.

Jewel found the story simple yet beautiful, enjoying its ability to evoke emotions and provide general knowledge about horse care.

[goodreads](http://goodreads)



## "A Very Special Place"

Mohamed Abdalla Alnaqbi highlighted the story's depiction of kindness in healthcare settings, emphasizing the compassionate treatment of children from reception to surgery.

Fatima Al-Jishi noted the book's focus on a young Emirati boy's hospital experience, emphasizing themes of overcoming fear and discovering one's dreams.

[goodreads](http://goodreads)

## j. Published Reviews

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### "Naqshon"

Illustrations inspired by children's original artwork, it has received high praise on Goodreads, boasting an average rating of 4.88 out of 5 from 16 ratings and 12 reviews. Here are some of the selected reviews:

*Mohamed Abdalla Alnaqbi described it as a "wonderful story with beautiful words," appreciating the author's approach and emphasizing the importance of perseverance when facing problems.*

*Mansoor & Meeral expressed their enjoyment, stating, "What a beautiful story. We enjoyed listening to and reading it a lot. One of the best stories."*

*Fakhreya Alabdouli shared, "I read the story of Naqshoon and liked it a lot. I enjoyed his entertaining and exciting adventures."*  
[goodreads](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18111118-Naqshoon)



### "I'll Hunt My Breakfast"

The article reviews the immersing book that is has an adventurous theme. The book emphasized the importance of a healthy breakfast and introduced cultural elements, aligning with Al Khayat's commitment to educating children on healthy habits and Emirati heritage through her storytelling.

[Sharjah24](https://www.sharjah24.com)



### "Aisha's Pearl"

What's On highlights the duo Julia Johnson and illustrator Maitha Al Khayat with this adventurous yet Emirati book about pearl diving.

[Whatson](https://www.whatson.com)

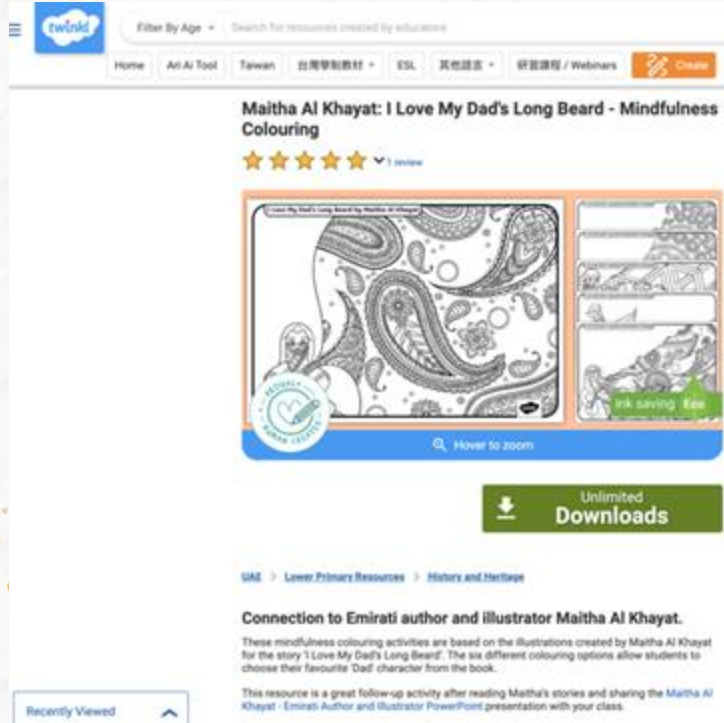


"Grandma Moudhi Fashionista", "Love In Ramadan," & In a feature on the Global Literature in Libraries Initiative website, young reader Noor Al Owais shares her admiration for Maitha Al Khayat's "Grandma Moudi is a Fashionista". Noor highlights the book's engaging narrative and vibrant illustrations, noting its celebration of cultural uniqueness and self-confidence. She also appreciates the inclusion of Emirati terms and the interactive element of crafting a paper burqa, which deepens readers' connection to the story.

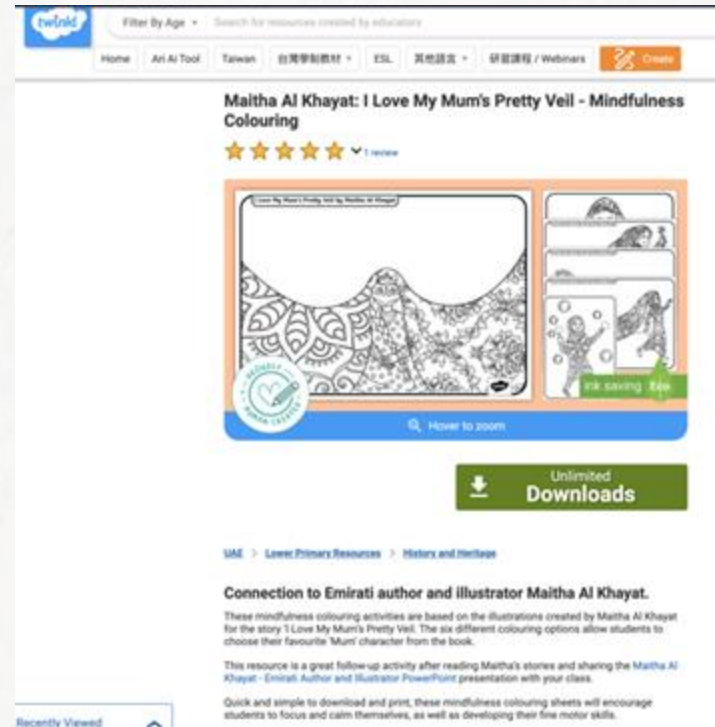
## k. Reproductions of Covers and Illustrations

Twinkl, an educational platform, offers a mindfulness coloring activity based on Maitha Al Khayat's book, "I Love My Dad's Long Beard". This resource features illustrations from the book, allowing children to engage creatively while reflecting on the story's themes. It's a testament to the book's visual appeal and its effectiveness in fostering interactive learning experiences. They also created one for "I Love My Mum's Pretty Veil".

[twinkl](https://www.twinkl.com)

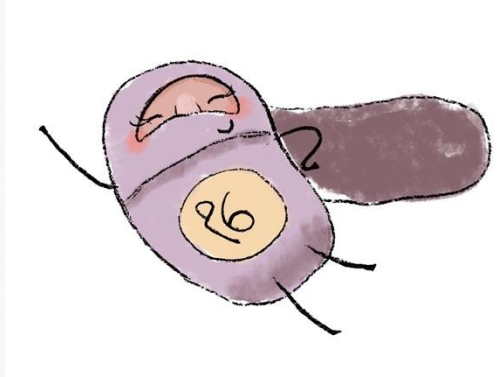


The screenshot shows the Twinkl website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation tabs for 'Home', 'Art & Tools', 'Taiwan', '台灣學制教材', 'ESL', '其他語言', '研習課程 / Webinars', and 'Create'. The main content area features the title 'Maitha Al Khayat: I Love My Dad's Long Beard - Mindfulness Colouring' with a 5-star rating and '1 review'. Below the title is a large image of a coloring page with intricate paisley patterns and a smaller image of a man's face with a beard. A green badge in the bottom right corner of the image says 'ink saving - Eco'. Below the image is a green button with a download icon and the text 'Unlimited Downloads'. At the bottom, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'SME > Lower Primary Resources > History and Heritage'. The main text reads: 'Connection to Emirati author and illustrator Maitha Al Khayat. These mindfulness colouring activities are based on the illustrations created by Maitha Al Khayat for the story 'I Love My Dad's Long Beard'. The six different colouring options allow students to choose their favourite 'Dad' character from the book. This resource is a great follow-up activity after reading Maitha's stories and sharing the Maitha Al Khayat - Emirati Author and Illustrator PowerPoint presentation with your class.' A 'Recently Viewed' button is visible at the bottom left.



The screenshot shows the Twinkl website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation tabs for 'Home', 'Art & Tools', 'Taiwan', '台灣學制教材', 'ESL', '其他語言', '研習課程 / Webinars', and 'Create'. The main content area features the title 'Maitha Al Khayat: I Love My Mum's Pretty Veil - Mindfulness Colouring' with a 5-star rating and '1 review'. Below the title is a large image of a coloring page with intricate floral patterns and a smaller image of a woman wearing a veil. A green badge in the bottom right corner of the image says 'ink saving - Eco'. Below the image is a green button with a download icon and the text 'Unlimited Downloads'. At the bottom, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'SME > Lower Primary Resources > History and Heritage'. The main text reads: 'Connection to Emirati author and illustrator Maitha Al Khayat. These mindfulness colouring activities are based on the illustrations created by Maitha Al Khayat for the story 'I Love My Mum's Pretty Veil'. The six different colouring options allow students to choose their favourite 'Mum' character from the book. This resource is a great follow-up activity after reading Maitha's stories and sharing the Maitha Al Khayat - Emirati Author and Illustrator PowerPoint presentation with your class. Quick and simple to download and print, these mindfulness colouring sheets will encourage students to focus and calm themselves, as well as developing their fine motor skills.' A 'Recently Viewed' button is visible at the bottom left.

# I. Book Bird Profile : Maitha Al Khayat





# i. Book Bird Profile : Maitha Al Khayat

## Biographical Information

Maitha Al Khayat, born on July 27, 1978, is an Emirati children's author, illustrator, and mother of five. Her childhood experiences across the UAE, U.S., and U.K. shaped her appreciation for storytelling as a way to connect cultures. After earning a Business Administration degree, she rediscovered her passion for stories while working in a library.

Since publishing *I Love My Dad's Long Beard* in 2008, Maitha has written nearly 200 stories that blend humor, empathy, and pride in Emirati heritage. Her works, such as *My Own Special Way* and *Grandma Moudi Fashionista*, have been translated into multiple languages.

Beyond writing, Maitha has contributed to children's television (*Sesame Street* and *Hamdoon* – an Emirati cartoon series) and works as a consultant at Rubu Qarn in Sharjah, where she fosters creativity and the love of reading. Often considered a guardian of heritage, she showcases traditions infused with a dash of cardamom joy and cinnamon laughter, through her stories, illustrations and reading shows.

## Discussion and Commentary on Her Work

With a Master's in Fine Arts Illustration, Maitha's stories are rich with humor and warmth, often inspired by her children. In *My Own Special Way*, readers are encouraged to embrace their uniqueness, while *I'll Hunt My Breakfast* creatively introduces healthy eating habits through a fun adventure with traditional Arabian foods.

Her ability to weave cultural elements into relatable narratives makes her stories universally appealing. *Naqshoon* exemplifies this, featuring illustrations inspired by children's artwork from a community contest. Her works emphasize themes of courage, empathy, and family bonds, always delivering stories that connect and inspire young readers.

## i. Book Bird Profile - continued

### Significant Quotations from the Candidate

“Storytelling helps children take pride in their roots, grounding them like a mountain—strong, steady, and ready to take on the world.”

“Every story I create is sparked by the kids around me. Through their eyes, I rediscover the wonder of the universe and the heartbeat of our culture.”



# i. Book Bird Profile - continued

## Five Most Significant Titles



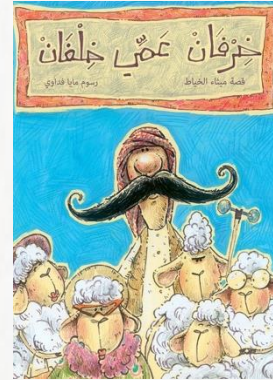
**The Pearl Diver's Daughter & the Cowrie Necklace** – A young adult fantasy tale of sacrifice, winner of the 2024 Etisalat Award.



**My Own Special Way** – A story about finding identity within tradition, awarded by the Riyadh Children's Forum.



**When a Camel Gets the Munchies** – A humorous story celebrating hospitality and Emirati food traditions.



**Uncle Khalfan's Sheep** – A playful book that helps children overcome fear of the dentist.



**I'll Hunt My Breakfast** – Winner of the 2024 Sharjah Children's Book Award, promoting healthy eating through traditional storytelling.

# m. Appendix / Photo Album





*j. Appendix / Photo Album*

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