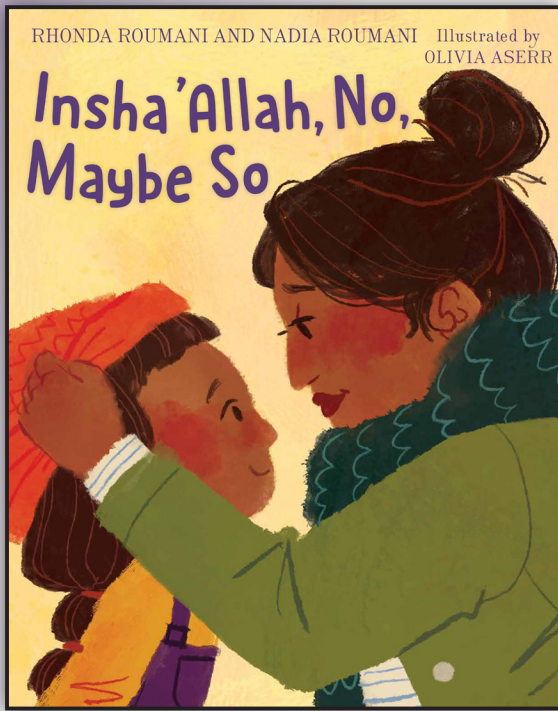


HOLIDAY HOUSE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

GRADES
PREK - 2



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Insha'Allah, No, Maybe So

by Rhonda Roumani and Nadia Roumani
illustrated by Olivia Aserr

A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

ABOUT THE BOOK

A sweet and playful picture book about a common Arabic word for life's uncertainties that will ring true for all families.

Ranya wants to go to the park. “Insha’Allah,” her mom tells her. But doesn’t that just mean no? Ranya’s mom says “Insha’Allah” when Ranya asks to make cookies. She says it when Ranya wants to sleep over at Jayda’s house. She says it when Ranya begs to go to Disneyland.

This might sound familiar to parents and caregivers—it’s hard to know what to say when you can’t promise anything! Sometimes grown-ups say “Maybe” or “We’ll see.” And in millions of

Arab and Muslim homes around the world, families use the phrase “Insha’Allah” when talking about the future.

So what does “Insha’Allah” really mean? In this warmly illustrated picture book, Ranya and her mom tackle the meaning of the powerful phrase and ponder the best way to talk about their hopes and dreams—and maybe, sometimes, the things they want to put off. (Like cleaning up toys!)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Study the cover art. What does the front cover tell you about the girl and her mother? How do you know they are going out? Take a hint from the back cover and discuss where they have been.
- Note the illustration on the dedication page. Who is in the picture on the table? How does this show how many people are in the family? What role do you think the hat and keys have in the story?
- Ranya seems confused by the meaning of the Arabic phrase “Insha’ Allah.” Point to the page in the story when Mama realizes she confuses Ranya. Why does Ranya think the phrase means “no”? How often does Mama use the phrase? Discuss how Mama explains the meaning of the phrase to Ranya. Debate whether Ranya has a full understanding of the phrase by the end of the book.
- Mama says “Insha’Allah” is a powerful word. Discuss the power behind the word. How does Mama explain hopes and dreams to Ranya? What are Ranya’s hopes and dreams? How does Mama rephrase her answer when Ranya asks her about going to Disneyland?
- Setting is when and where the book takes place. Where do you think the book is set? In what season? Point to the illustrations that support your thoughts.



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ABOUT THE CREATORS



Rhonda Roumani is a Syrian American journalist who has written about Islam, the Arab world and Muslim American issues for more than two decades. She is the author of the middle grade novel *Tagging Freedom* and picture books *Umm Kulthum: Star of the East* and *Insha'Allah, No, Maybe So*. Visit her at RhondaRoumani.com.



Nadia Roumani is a social entrepreneur, coach, consultant, and cofounder of the University of Southern California's American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute and Stanford University's Effective Philanthropy Learning Initiative. She is also a senior designer with Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design, and coauthor of the picture book *Insha'Allah, No, Maybe So*.



Olivia Aserr is the half Egyptian, half Irish American illustrator of *A Mermaid Girl* by Sana Rafi, *Mama in Congress: Rashida Tlaib's Journey to Washington* by Rashida and Adam Tlaib and Miranda Paul, and *Insha'Allah, No, Maybe So* by Rhonda and Nadia Roumani. She works as a background painter at Disney Television Animation and enjoys swing dance and costume making in her free time. Olivia lives in Los Angeles with her dog, Bonnibel. Visit her at OliviaAserr.com.

