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Grandma Nafeesa

Written by Taghreed Najjar, illustrated by Alaa Murtada

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Grandma Nafeesa is a charming story about an unusual grandmother, by much-loved and multi-award-winning duo Taghreed Najjar and Maya Fidawi. Majid's parents are busy with work, so he goes to spend the day at his Grandma's house. He's delighted, because what could be more fun than a day at Grandma Nafeesa's place? After all, she's not your typical grandmother. She's an artist and an active grandma, and Majid has to work hard to keep up with her!

Sample translation

Translated from Arabic by Taghreed Najjar, edited by Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp

One morning, while getting ready for work, Mom said to me,

“Majid, *habibi*, I have a very important conference today at the ministry and will be very busy all day. Dad will be busy at the office, too. How about spending the day with your Grandma?”

I was so happy to hear this! I love spending time with Grandma.

Grandma Nafeesa is an artist and her house is full of strange and interesting things.

Grandma opened the door and said, "Come in, come in, *habibi*. We're going to have a wonderful time together!"

Grandma took me to the kitchen and said, "How about helping me make breakfast?"

She cut the fruits into small pieces and I put the pieces in the blender.

Finally, it was ready. I asked Grandma in surprise, "Is this breakfast, Grandma?"



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Grandma Nafeesa nodded and handed me a glass full of the fruit smoothie.

“Drink, *habibi* drink. It’s good for you, full of vitamins!”

I drank the smoothie and said, “Mmmmmmm, it’s delicious, Grandma!”

In the sitting room, Grandma switched on the TV.

“It’s time for my favourite program, ‘The Morning Workout’. Come on Majid, *habibi*, let’s jump! Up! Down! Up! Down! Now to the side! Jump with me! Jump! Jump!”

I soon got tired and threw myself on the rug, but Grandma carried on.

“To the right! To the left! Up! Down!”

After Grandma was done with her exercises, she said to me, “I have a surprise for you, Majid.”

The surprise was an easel just like the one she uses and a paint box. Grandma taught me how to mix the colours and then went to work on one of her own paintings.

What shall I draw? What shall I draw? I drew Grandma Nafeesa doing her exercises. Grandma laughed and said, “Is that me?”

We went to the bathroom to wash off the paint. I laughed. “Grandma, there’s paint on your forehead.

Grandma rubbed it off. “Oh, Majid! I just remembered I have to drop off my paintings at the Art Museum today.”

I grumbled to Grandma saying, “But Grandma, I am SO hungry!”

Grandma laughed. “Don’t you worry, Majid. There’s a park in front of the Art Museum with a very nice restaurant. We can have lunch there.”

“Great!” I said “I’ll have pizza!”

We put the paintings in Grandma’s old car and drove to the Art Museum.

At the Art Museum, Grandma said hello to the curator. “This is my grandson Majid. He’ll be an artist like me when he grows up. Won’t you Majid?”

“Hmm I don’t know,” I said. “Maybe I’ll become a pilot first.”



The curator laughed out loud. "You're always welcome here - whatever you choose to be!"

After we finished our meal, the phone rang. Grandma answered. "Yes... yes, of course, I'll come right away."

Then she turned to me and said excitedly, "That was Abu Saleem, the scrap shop owner. He called to let me know that a new shipment of scrap arrived yesterday."

I was puzzled at Grandma's excitement. "What does 'scrap' mean Grandma?" I asked.

"Scrap is stuff people throw away," Grandma explained. "It's usually old things that might be broken. I buy interesting looking pieces of scrap from Abu Saleem and turn them into art pieces in my studio. Hurry up, *habibi*, so you can help me choose."

We got into Grandma's old car and drove downtown through narrow winding roads. Finally, Grandma said, "Here we are, Majid. Hold on to my hand."

Abu Saleem's shop was small, dark and musty. I looked at Grandma Nafeesa and saw her eyes shining with excitement as though she were looking at a treasure.

Grandma chose several strange-looking pieces of wood and iron. I liked a small wooden box and Grandma bought it. "You can paint it and decorate it with your own designs."

We put all the stuff in the back of Grandma's small car and drove home.

When we got home, I asked Grandma, "Can I watch TV now?" Grandma nodded, then switched on the TV for me and lay down on the couch where she immediately fell asleep.

A little while later the doorbell rang. It was Dad coming to take me home.

"Shhh! Grandma Nafeesa is asleep," I whispered.

Dad looked at Grandma. "Poor old thing! She gets tired so easily."

I burst out laughing. "Gets tired easily? No way!"

Grandma woke up and said, "I feel great after that snooze. Let's go out to the garden for coffee and juice."

In the garden, I turned to Dad and asked him proudly, "Do you know what 'scrap' means?"