

The logo features the text "PLANET OMAR" in large, bold, yellow letters with a thick black outline. The letter "O" is replaced by a cartoon illustration of a boy's head with brown hair and a slight smile. Below "OMAR" is the word "ACCIDENTAL" in smaller, black, sans-serif capital letters. Below that is the word "TROUBLE" in large, black, stylized letters with a thick white outline. At the bottom right is the word "MAGNET" in black, sans-serif capital letters. The entire logo is set against a solid blue background.






Themes: Family Dynamics, Islamophobia, Friendship, Imagination, Bullying

The questions in this guide were written by Sara Ahmed, Mahasin Abuwi Aleem, Ariana Hussain, and Hadeal Salamah. Sara, Mahasin, Ariana, and Hadeal are librarians in public and school libraries. They are co-founders and bloggers at *Hijabi Librarians*, which examines Muslim representation in youth literature.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan, from dawn until sunset (p. 116). Can you give an example of a different kind of fast that you or someone you know does?
 2. Omar's dad thinks that Mrs. Rogers may have been mean to their family because content she read in tabloid newspapers led her to believe that Muslims were not good people (p. 113). Mrs. Rogers believed a stereotype, an idea that makes a generalization or judgment about a group of people, often based on someone's race, gender, religion, or appearance. Stereotypes are a type of prejudice and are harmful. How could Omar's family be hurt by the stereotypes Mrs. Rogers believed about them? How could Mrs. Rogers have been hurt by continuing to believe stereotypes about Muslims? Do you think it is okay to judge people before getting to know them?
 3. Daniel bullied Charlie and Omar and was mean to other classmates. Why do you think Daniel acted the way he did? Have you ever seen someone be bullied, or have you been bullied? What did it feel like to see or experience this? How do you think it feels to be bullied? Get into groups of three and think of ways to respond to unkind behavior and be an upstander (someone who stands up against bullying). Discuss why it is not okay to bully others.
 4. Daniel says that he was mean to Omar because... "I didn't think he'd want to be my friend" (p. 201). How can you make friends with others? What do you think makes you a good friend? What are some examples of how to be a good friend?
 5. Omar's mom taught him to spit toward his shoulder three times when he has a bad dream. What is something that was taught to you by your culture, religion, or family members that may seem strange to others?
 6. Omar's Muslim Pakistani British family celebrates Ramadan, Eid ul-Fitr, and Eid ul-Adha. They also have special foods to eat during Ramadan and on Eid. What holidays are important to your family? Why? Do you have any special food or things that you do with your family on those holidays? Draw a picture of what your family does during one of your holidays.
 7. Omar and his family do Science Sundays because science is important to his parents. What is something that your family does that brings you all together?
- 



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Continued)

8. Omar doesn't tell his parents or his sister, Maryam, about what is happening at school. Why do you think he does not say anything? Have you ever had a problem that you felt you had to deal with alone? What are some ways that you dealt with it? Do you think it would have been easier to talk to a friend, a sibling, or an adult?
9. Being kind and looking out for neighbors are important values in Islam. Omar's mom keeps trying to be nice to Mrs. Rogers, even when Mrs. Rogers is mean to their family. What does this tell you about Omar's mom and her character? Why do you think she kept being nice to Mrs. Rogers?
10. Both Daniel's cousin Brian and Omar's cousin Reza believe that Muslims will be kicked out of the country. Omar and Daniel both believe them because their cousins are older and they trust them. Have you ever heard someone in your family say something scary, unkind, or unsettling? How did this make you feel?
11. Omar and Daniel ran away from Eddy because they thought he was a zombie. Eddy, who was homeless, just wanted to help them. What did Daniel and Omar learn about Eddy when they got to talk to him? Have you ever judged someone based on their appearance? Do you think anyone has judged you or someone you know based on their appearance?
12. Prayer is important to Omar's family. His family performs salat (a type of prayer often performed with others) five times a day, either at home or in the mosque. At the mosque, Omar's brother, Esa, blows a whistle and counts really loudly while others are praying. Omar's mom and sister are embarrassed, but the people in the mosque are kind to them. Have you or a sibling ever done something embarrassing in an important place? How did others react?
13. Omar's mom, like many Muslim women, chooses to observe hijab, which means that she covers her hair and dresses modestly in front of men who are not related to her and when she's out in public. Omar and Maryam joke that people probably think that their mom wears her scarf in the shower (p. 157). What are some other religious symbols that you can think of? Have you noticed how these symbols are viewed by others? How do you think Omar feels when Daniel says that his mom looks like a witch (p. 89)?



Omar imagines that he has a dragon and protector that he calls H₂O. H₂O lives in the clouds, blows steam on people that are mean to Omar, and plays with him when he is bored. Drawing or using arts and crafts, design your own imaginary creature friend. What is their name? Does your imaginary creature have any special abilities? How does your creature help you when you are feeling scared, sad, or even bored?

The story ends with Omar celebrating Eid ul-Fitr with new friends. What do you think Omar will imagine next? Write a new journal entry for Omar and imagine what adventures Omar will have with H₂O, his family, or his friends.

What kinds of foods are important to your family either in everyday meals or around holidays? Bring in a picture, a recipe, or a special dish to share with your class or even with a neighbor. Tell us why this dish is important to your family.



Praise for **PLANET OMAR** A Global Read Aloud Choice for 2020!

★ “In their #OwnVoices debut, Mian and Mafaridik create a relatable and hilarious story . . . Exploding with personality and imagination, Omar is an easy character to love.”—*Booklist*, starred review

“A very kid-friendly and appealingly honest story about being different, being labeled ‘other.’ ”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

“The playful text is bolstered with illustrations throughout that show off [Omar’s] creativity and imagination. A great #OwnVoices story for children to learn more about connection and empathy.”

—*School Library Journal*

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Zanib Mian was a science teacher before launching a small independent publisher, Muslim Children’s Books. Passionate about representation in children’s publishing, she is on the panel of judges for the prestigious Young Muslim Writers Awards.

Nasaya Mafaridik is based in Indonesia. Self-taught, she has a passion for children’s books and bright, colorful stationery.



PenguinClassroom.com

 @PenguinClass

 @PenguinClassroom

 PenguinClassroom