



دار بلومزبري - مؤسسة قطر للنشر
B L O O M S B U R Y
Q A T A R F O U N D A T I O N
P U B L I S H I N G

Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Author Wins Etisalat Award for Arabic Children's Literature

Doha, 6 November: *Mah and Me*, published by Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing (BQFP), has won Best Story from the Arab World's premier children's literature prize, the Etisalat Award for Arabic Children's Literature. The winners of the 7th edition of the annual awards were announced during the opening ceremony of the Sharjah International Book Fair (SIBF) on the 4th of November.

Written and illustrated by Ibtihaaj Al-Harthi, *Mah and Me* is a sensitive exploration of life and loss, as seen through the eyes of a beloved grandson, Azzan. "As a first time author, I was very happy to hear that *Mah and Me* received the award," remarked Al-Harthi. "I feel encouraged that both the judges and my publisher believed in the story even though it handles a sensitive topic that is normally avoided in children's literature. My biggest hope now is that children will read the story and that it opens up a safe space for parent-child discussions of deeper, more sensitive topics."

"This award exemplifies the very best that Arabic children's literature has to offer," added Arend Kuster, Acting Director of Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation. "We are thrilled that our author was recognized for her work and proud that BQFP was able to help launch her incredible story to the world".

In *Mah and Me*, we read along as Azzan's mother tries to answer his questions with both honesty and sensitivity. Children dealing with loss and caregivers guiding their little ones through these emotions will find this book a wonderful companion that will soon become a treasured friend. "This is a book that won our hearts at BQFP from the very first time we read the submission," remarked Hala Saadani, Head of Children's and Young Adult books at BQFP. "It was a true joy to work with such a creative person as Ibtihaaj, who brought out the best of all our team efforts".

The story has been published in both Arabic and English by BQFP.

The Etisalat Award for Children's Literature main aim is to develop Arab children's books by motivating publishers to release high quality books in terms of both content and design and to inspire, educate and motivate the next generation of young Arabs.

This year's edition saw strong competition between 97 entries in both children's book and young adult categories from 10 Arab countries, namely the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine, in



دار بلومزبري - مؤسسة قطر للنشر
B L O O M S B U R Y
Q A T A R F O U N D A T I O N
P U B L I S H I N G

addition to the UK and Canada. Sixty-two books were in the children's book category and 35 books in the young adult category.

Based in Oman, Al Harthi is an illustrator, artist and an author of children's books. She focuses on fairytales using the graphic novel format and traditional Omani folktales. Her artwork is inspired by magical realism and infused by the everyday magic seen in the local life in Omani villages. *Mah and Me* is Ibtihaj's first book as both an author and an illustrator. She lives and works in Muscat.

About Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation

Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation (BQFP) launched its publishing program in 2010 as a world-class publishing house founded on international best practices, excellence and innovation. BQFP strives to be a cornerstone of Qatar's knowledge-based economy by providing a unique local and international platform for literature, literacy, scholarship, discovery and learning. Publishing titles in English and Arabic, BQFP is owned by Qatar Foundation and managed by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Headquartered in Doha, Qatar, BQFP publishes fiction and non-fiction titles for adults and for children in addition to educational books for schools, academic books for universities and researchers, and information and reference titles. Aiming to promote the love of reading and writing, BQFP is helping to establish a vibrant literary culture in Qatar and the Middle East and to cultivate new talent in the region.

For media inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact Helene Theros at htheros@qf.org.qa