

SADIO

and the
Desert Star



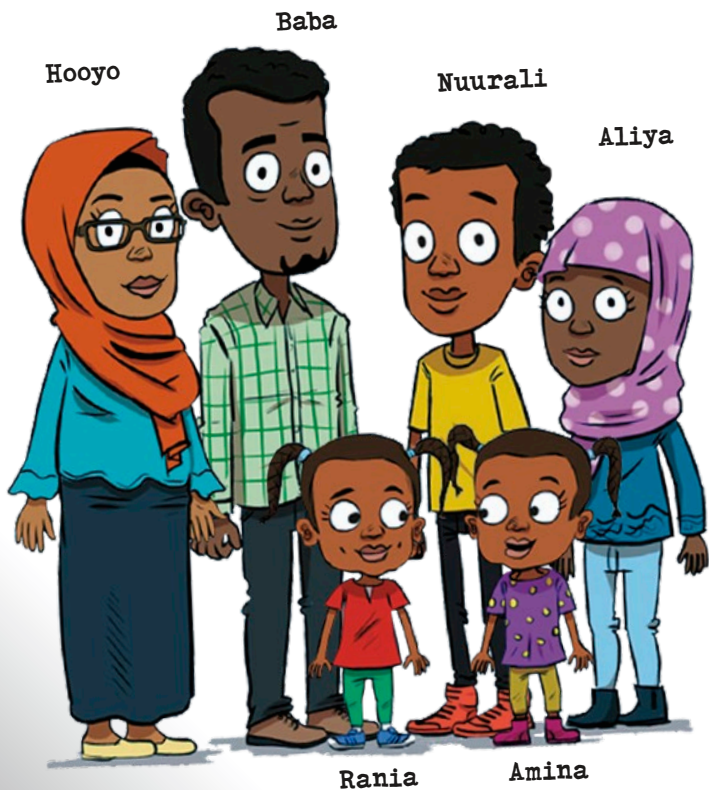
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HI, I'M SADIQ!
MY FAMILY AND I LIVE IN
MINNESOTA, BUT MY PARENTS
ARE FROM SOMALIA.
SOMETIMES WE SPEAK
SOMALI AT HOME.

I'D LIKE YOU TO
MEET MY FAMILY
AND LEARN SOME
INTERESTING FACTS
AND TERMS FROM
OUR CULTURE.



FACTS ABOUT SOMALIA

- Somali is a coastal country in the Horn of Africa. It is about as big as Texas.
- Many Somalis are nomadic. That means they travel from place to place. They search for water, food, and land for their animals.
- Somalia is mostly desert. It doesn't rain often there.
- The camel is an important animal to Somali people. Camels can survive a long time without food or water.
- Around ninety-nine percent of all Somalis are Muslim.

SOMALI TERMS

awoowe (ah-WOH-weh)—grandfather

baba (BAH-baah)—a common word for father

haa (HA)—yes

hooyo (HOY-yoh)—mother

salaam (sa-LAHM)—a short form of Arabic greeting, used by many Muslims. It also means “peace.”

sambuus (sahm-BOOS)—fried pastries that are filled with spicy ground beef, chicken, fish, or vegetables

wiilkeyga (wil-KAY-gaah)—my son

CHAPTER 1

THE DESERT STAR

Sadiq squirmed in his chair. Recess was in five minutes. It was the first warm day of spring. The rest of the class was finishing a journal activity. Sadiq couldn't wait to play soccer with his friends!

"I have something special to share," Sadiq's third-grade teacher, Ms. Battersby, said. "Next weekend is our school's Spring Festival!"

Excited whispers went around the room.

“The festival is open to all,” Ms. Battersby went on. “It’s a chance for our school’s teams and clubs to raise money. If you have a club, you can sign up to have a table. In the past, clubs have sold baked goods or crafts. See me if you need help thinking of something!”

Sadiq frowned. He wasn’t part of a club.

Ms. Battersby looked around the classroom. “Now, before recess, I have one more announcement,” she said. “On Thursday we’ll be going to an observatory for a field trip!”

Sadiq sat up straight. He put his pencil down. He loved field trips!

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

RULES!
WORK HARD
BE KIND

Homework

Choose a planet from our solar system. Research your chosen planet and present what you find as a poster or piece of writing.



“This week, we’re beginning a unit on space. We’ll learn all about planets and stars. At the observatory, we’ll view them in the night sky.”

Sadiq looked over at his friends Zaza and Manny and grinned. He loved space! In the summertime he liked to look at the stars with his baba.

“Our field trip will be in the evening,” Ms. Battersby said. “We’ll need an adult at home to sign a special permission slip.”

The teacher had just finished passing out the papers when the bell rang.

Sadiq, Zaza, and Manny raced to get to the soccer field first.

* * *

That night, Sadiq was brushing his teeth. He suddenly remembered the permission slip.

Still brushing, Sadiq went to his bedroom and found the paper. He hurried to his parents' room.

Baba was in the middle of packing for a business trip.



“Baba, can you sign this?” Sadiq asked. “My class is going to an observatory on Thursday!”

“Are you learning about space in school?” Baba asked. He took the permission slip and signed the paper.

“*Haa*, Baba,” said Sadiq. “Today we learned about Saturn. Did you know it has sixty-two moons?”

“I would like to hear about it, *wiilkeyga*,” Baba said as he handed the form back to Sadiq. “But you should finish brushing your teeth first!”

Sadiq hurried back into the bathroom and finished brushing.

“Make sure they are brighter than the white sands of Berbera!” Baba said.

Baba had been born and raised in the city of Berbera, Somalia. Sadiq loved hearing stories from his dad's childhood.

After brushing, Sadiq went to the bedroom he shared with his older brother, Nuurali. Nuurali went to bed much later than Sadiq, which sometimes made Sadiq jealous. He put the form in his backpack. Then he hopped into bed just as Baba was coming into the room. "How long will you be gone, Baba?" Sadiq asked.

"Just a few days, little one. Let me tell you a story about the stars," Baba said. He sat on Sadiq's bed and tucked him in. "Do you remember how bright they were in Berbera?"

Sadiq nodded. He loved visiting Berbera. But he had only been twice because it was so far away. “They were bright like the streetlights!” Sadiq said.

Baba laughed. “Brighter than even your T-shirt!” He poked Sadiq’s shoulder. Then he said, “But there is one star that was brighter than the rest. It is a star your **awoowe** calls the desert star.”

“What’s the desert star?” Sadiq asked.

Baba said, “When I was a boy, your awoowe would travel in his camel caravan through the desert. He sold bales of cloth and bought goods for our family. Whenever my baba left, I was sad. But as long as I could see the desert star, I knew he’d return safely.”



“Where is the desert star?” Sadiq asked. “Can you show it to me?”

Baba shook his head. “We can’t see it in the city because of all the light here. It’s part of a cluster of five stars. The stars are in the shape of an arrow. The desert star is the largest and brightest star. It is at the very tip of the arrow. Next time we’re in Berbera we’ll look for it,” Baba said, smiling.

“I can’t wait!” Sadiq said.

“Now, you need to get some sleep, and so do I,” Baba said. “My plane leaves early in the morning. Sleep well, Sadiq.”

Sadiq took off his glasses and closed his eyes. He counted shooting stars until he fell into a deep sleep.