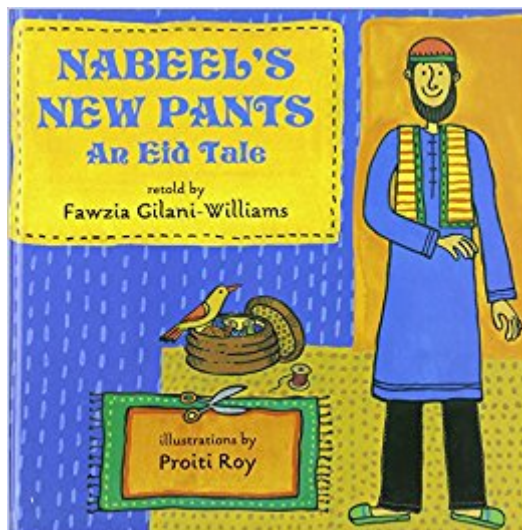


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# Nabeel's New Pants: An Eid Tale



## Synopsis

Ramadan has come to an end. The fast is over, and tomorrow the celebration of Eid will begin. Nabeel decides to buy each of his family members something special to wear for the holiday. But while he's choosing, the shopkeeper persuades him also to buy a gift for himself—a pair of new pants that are too long! Nabeel asks his wife, his mother, and his daughter to hem them, but no one has the time—everyone is busy preparing for the festivities. Will Nabeel be able to wear his new pants to celebrate Eid? Only a pair of scissors can tell. A glossary and pronunciation guide are also included.

## Book Information

Age Range: 3 - 5 years

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Kindergarten-Grade 2 •Nabeel's dilemma with his new pants is a familiar sort of predicament borne by simple, good-hearted folks in many strains of folklore. He's a shoemaker whose business has gone well on the eve of Eid, the holiday culminating Ramadan. Purchasing gifts for his family, he also buys new pants to replace his patched trousers. However, they are "four fingers too long." Though his wife, mother, and grown daughter are appreciative of the finery he has bought for them, all are too busy with holiday preparations to shorten the pants. Roy's cheerful folk views, the figures drawn in ink and painted in warm tones of gold, brown, green, and blue, pair beautifully with the economical, repetitive scheme, which soon becomes predictable.

Nabeel shortens the pants himself, only to be followed by the three women, each of whom cuts off four inches and hems them again in gratitude for his goodness. The author and illustrator are both from India; the tale is ostensibly Turkish and is sprinkled with Arabic terms, listed in an opening glossary. A fine choice for read-aloud fun, the story is a simple introduction to Muslim culture that will evoke empathetic chuckles when the mishap is discovered as Nabeel dons his knee-length pants on the morning of Eid. The damage is soon repaired in a tale that will pair nicely with Simms Taback's *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* (Viking, 1999) and countless other tales of shoemakers and tailors or domestic errors. —Margaret Bush, Simmons College, Boston (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Family life is the heart of this upbeat picture book about the Muslim celebration of Eid, which takes place after the fast of Ramadan. Turkish shoemaker Nabeel buys Eid gifts for his family, including a burqa (a garment with a veil) for his wife, a dupalla (long scarf) for his mother, and bangles for his daughter. The shopkeeper also persuades Nabeel to buy himself new pants, but the pants are too long. His wife, mother, and daughter are all too busy cooking for Eid to shorten his pants, so he cuts a few inches off them himself. Later, the women in the house feel guilty, and each secretly trims the pants more, not realizing the trousers' increasingly shortened length. When Nabeel finally puts them on, they only reach his knees. Roy's cheerful gouache, watercolor, and ink illustrations show the bonds among family members as they follow their traditions together. Kids will laugh right along with the loving characters, who sew the missing pants pieces back together to give Nabeel perfectly fitting trousers in the end. Preschool-Grade 3. --Hazel Rochman

I can't say enough about this wonderful book. The theme, meaning, ideas, colors, and pictures are splendid. I would recommend to anybody who wants to learn more about the Islamic Eid celebration. Cutest book ever!

My children and I really enjoyed this book. In a sweet way, it truly captures how everyone's busy preparing the night before Eid and still trying their best to be kind to one another and appreciate the people in their lives. My 3yo son asks me repeatedly to read this to him. The drawings are culturally correct and not busy. A very enjoyable book overall, I would definitely recommend this to kids of all ages.

We are not a Muslim family and we live in the United States in a mostly white area. We want our

child to be familiar with other cultures and traditions and thought this book would be a good book for that. Our child is four. We thought it was mostly an interesting book, but our son was not super-impressed with it. I think with four year olds, mostly, it is a matter of whim what they love or don't love so I am not sure that it is reflective of the book. There were also some gender stereotypes in the book that were not ideal, for instance, the expectation that the women were the people to go to in order to sew his pants. All in all, I am very glad we have this book on our son's shelf. For families that are Muslim, it might be a nice book to have since so many mainstream children's books are traditional white U.S. American books. All in all, some positive things about the book but not quite a five star book. Just fyi, from another review, "The author and illustrator are both from India; the tale is ostensibly Turkish and is sprinkled with Arabic terms, listed in an opening glossary."

This story about a husband's attempt to get a new pair of pants hemmed for the Eid celebration is a cute fable, but a child born in a Christian faith may not understand what Eid is and what the significance is. Ramadan is a month-long feast practiced by devout Muslims and it ends with a three-day celebration of Eid, where people stay up late and drink, eat and be merry. It's the Muslim equivalent of Christmas, which in the olden days was a three-day celebration as well. If readers don't understand this, though, what do they get from the story? It sounds sexist for one thing, with the husband asking his wife, mother and daughter to hem his pants "four fingers long." None of the women have time for that as they are all preparing for Eid, but then guilt gets to them and they grab the pants and each cuts off "four fingers long." Poor Nabeel ends up with pants too short! The illustrations are colorful but then again, without historical background the Christian child sees women covered in burqas and the bearded men with head wrappings that are not traditional to American society. It's good that Muslim traditions are introduced in this book. Perhaps the author meant to target this for Muslim readers. It would score higher. This fable could be used as an introduction of the USA's many religions and practices.

This is a charming book about Eid, the name for holiday for Muslims. Nabeel goes the tailor and buys gifts for his wife, mother and daughter for Eid. The tailor invites him to buy something for himself but he only has one pair of pants which are 4 fingers too long. The tailor says he is too busy and suggests Nabeel's wife might be able to shorten them. It seems the women in Nabeel's life are too busy readying the house for Eid to help him so he decides to do it himself. What happens then is very sweet and fun. A wonderful book for Muslim children and other children as well. The book portrays Eid as a happy day that many people could relate to and the Muslim characters in the book

are happy, kind people, very different from the way Muslims are portrayed in America most of the time. Very nice book.

If you are hoping to educate your children about another culture or religion, you will find little help in this simplistic fable. A man buys a pair of pants that are too long on the eve of Eid, an Islamic holiday. The women are busy cooking so they don't have time to hem them. So Nabeel finally does it himself. But then the women relent and apparently are too stupid to see that the pants have already been hemmed and are significantly shorter. It all ends happily as the woman put the pants back together. There is no explanation of this holiday or just what they are celebrating. Other than cooking, there is no detail of what the preparations entail. The women are clearly subservient, relegated to household tasks and wearing burqas. The glossary is limited and not terribly descriptive. The writing is unexciting and simple. There is no rhyme. The illustrations have some charm, depicting scenes from an undefined country. It lacks the information and style necessary to educate, intrigue or engage. In the final analysis it is just a rather silly story about pants. Pass.

NABEEL'S NEW PANTS AN EID TALE would make a nice addition to a school or community library's collection of holiday tales from diverse cultures. The story occurs at Eid the celebration after Ramadan in Muslim tradition. A poor shoemaker goes out to buy some gifts for his mother, wife and daughter for the special day and also buys some pants for himself. The pants are too long and at first no one in the family has time to shorten them but in the end all four family members individually decide to do the task leading to a comical result and an eventual happy ending. Along the way different traditional food and clothing are introduced and the short tale has cyclical elements as well as the predictable finale. The love of the family members for each other is very apparent and easy for children (and adults) to relate to their own experience. The illustrations are bright and appealing and apparently culturally accurate. A glossary of terms with pronunciation guide is helpfully included. As the story is retold by author Fawzia Gilani-Williams the tale is apparently a traditional folk tale from Turkey.

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