

Brave Like the Stars



Lea Nammoura



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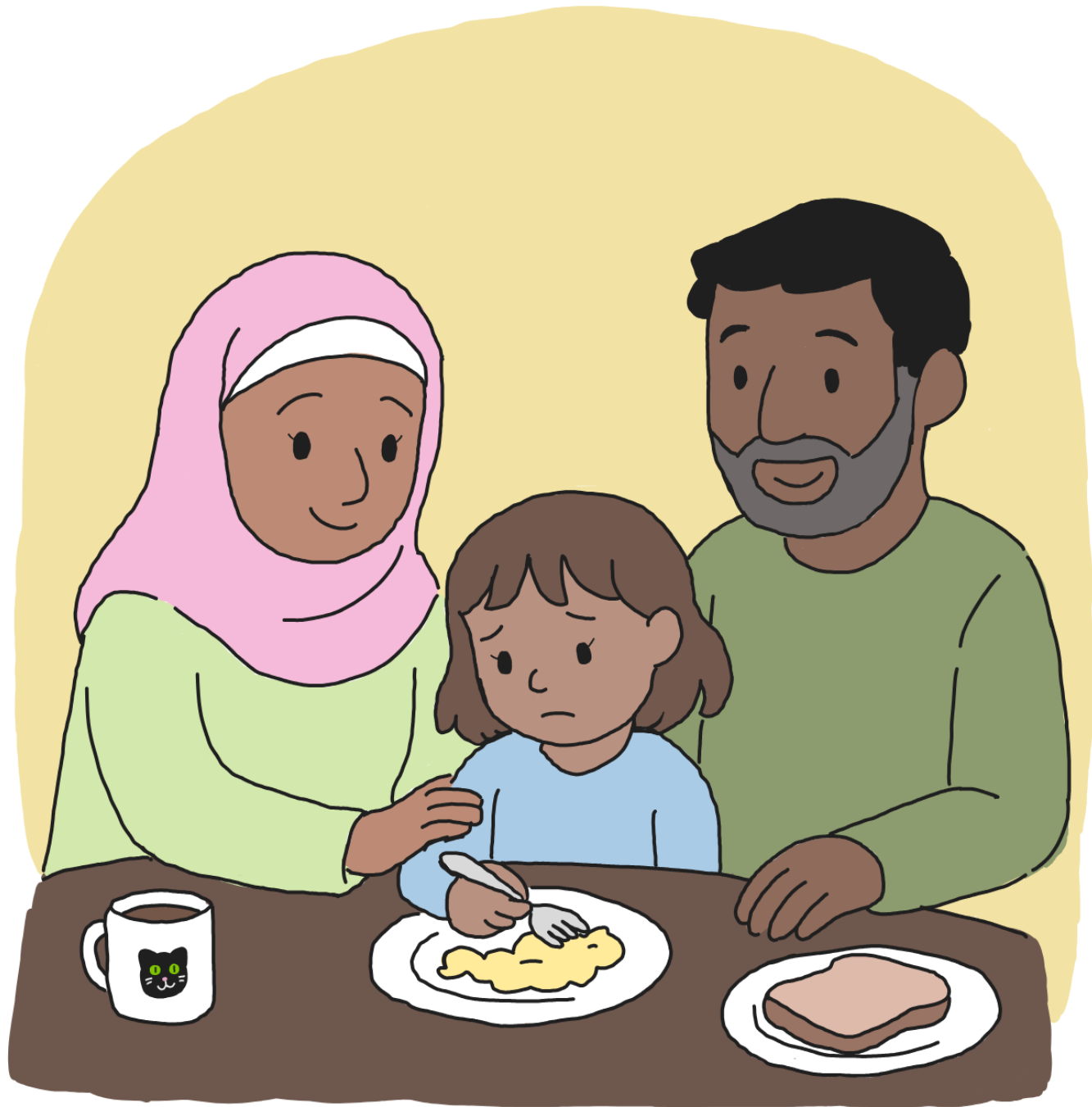
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Lea stood in front of the mirror, holding her new hijab. It was soft and blue, with tiny golden stars. She sighed. What if my friends don't like it? What if they think I look different?



"I don't know, Mama," Lea whispered. "What if I don't look nice?"
Mama knelt beside her. "Your hijab is special, my love. It shows kindness, strength, and bravery."
Baba nodded. "And you, Lea, are all those things."
Lea wasn't sure she felt brave.



At breakfast, Lea pushed her food around her plate. "What's wrong, habibti?" Baba asked.

Lea sighed. "What if my friends think I look strange?"

Baba smiled. "Sometimes being different feels scary. But being yourself is the bravest thing of all."



At school, Lea walked slowly. She kept her head down, hoping no one would notice her hijab. But she felt eyes on her. Are they staring? Are they whispering?



At recess, Emma ran up to her.

"Lea! Your scarf is so pretty! It looks like the night sky."

Lea blinked. "You... you think so?"

Emma nodded. "Yeah! Is it special?"

Their friend Adam walked over. "It looks awesome! My cousin wears a hijab too."

Lea smiled a little. "Really?"

Adam nodded. "Yeah! She says it makes her feel strong."



Lea hesitated. "It reminds me to be kind... and strong."

Emma grinned. "Like a superhero cape?"

Adam nodded. "Yeah! Superheroes wear capes, and yours has stars. That makes it extra cool!"

Lea thought for a moment. "Maybe... yeah."



Emma grabbed Lea's hand. "Then let's be superheroes together!" Adam grinned. "Yeah! We need a team name." Lea laughed. Maybe Mama and Baba were right. She was strong.



That night, Lea curled up in bed.

"Mama? Baba?" she whispered.

They sat beside her. "Yes, sweetheart?" Mama asked.

"My hijab makes me feel brave," Lea said.

Baba smiled and kissed her forehead. "Because you are brave."



And this time,
Lea believed it.

