



Photo by Marium Shakeel

**Reem Faruqi** is the acclaimed author of *Golden Girl*, *Unsettled*, *Anisa's International Day*, the ALA Notable Books *Lailah's Lunchbox* and *Amira's Picture Day*, and the award-winning *I Can Help*. In her free time, Reem loves to doodle, write, and take photos. Of Pakistani descent, she lives in Atlanta with her husband and three daughters. Visit her online at [www.reemfaruqi.com](http://www.reemfaruqi.com).



Photo by Tahmineh Hadadi

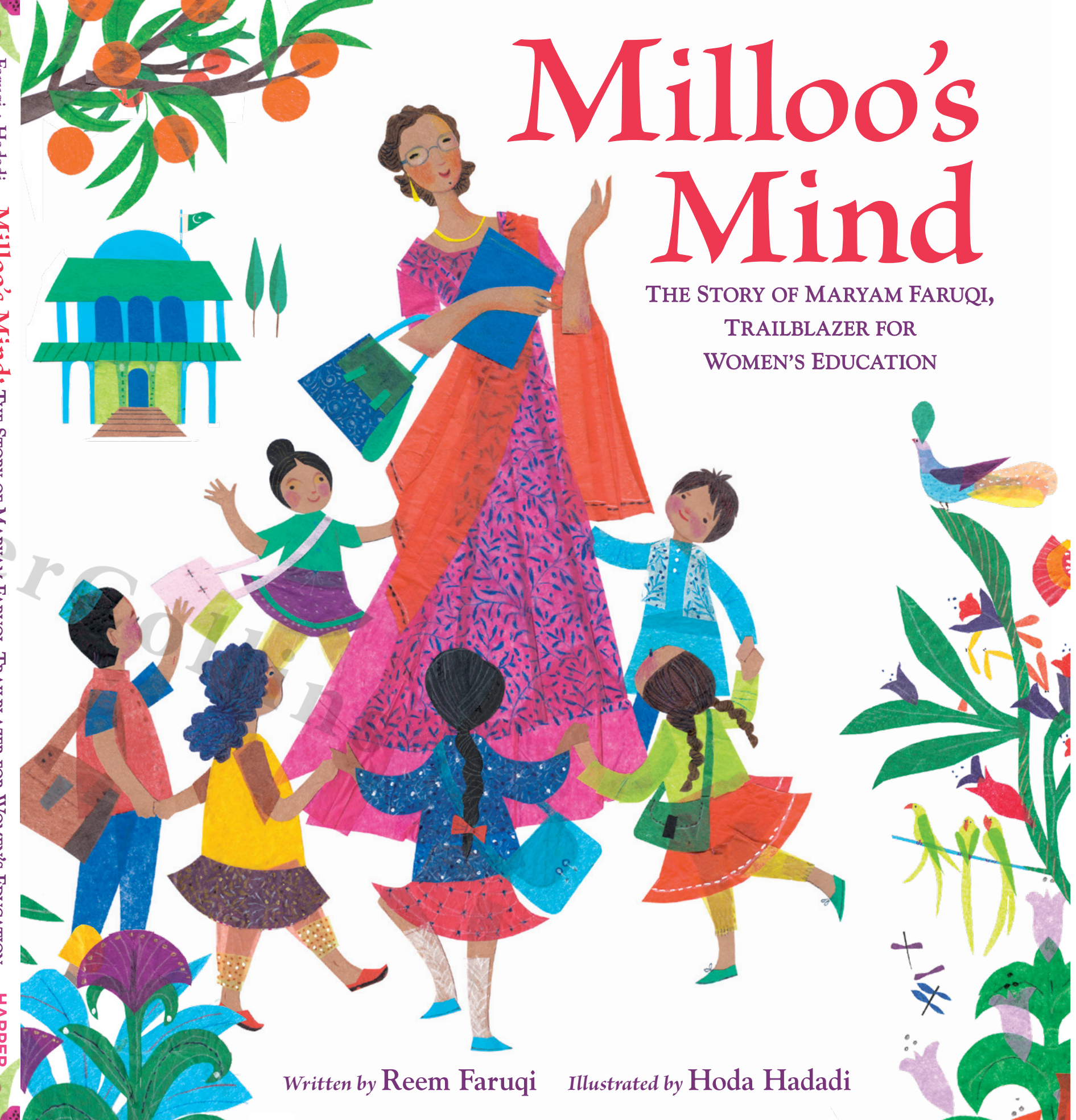
**Hoda Hadadi** is a multiaward-winning illustrator with more than sixty books to her name. Hoda is also a poet and author. Her intricate artwork, created by hand, is recognized worldwide. Her awards include the Best Picture Book, the International Book Award 2018, and the gold medal for Best Illustrator at the 2017 Literary Classics Awards for *Drummer Girl*. Her list of accolades speaks to her immense creativity.

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Faruqi • Hadadi  
**Milloo's Mind: THE STORY OF MARYAM FARUQI, TRAILBLAZER FOR WOMEN'S EDUCATION**  
HARPER



# Milloo's Mind

THE STORY OF MARYAM FARUQI,  
TRAILBLAZER FOR  
WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Written by Reem Faruqi Illustrated by Hoda Hadadi

*Enough is enough!*

Milloo lives in a time when school is considered unnecessary for girls. But to Milloo, education is essential. When Milloo reads, her thoughts dance. Milloo courageously dreams of becoming a teacher, but in fifth grade, her parents tell her she has had enough school. Milloo is heartbroken but finds a way to achieve her educational goals, graduating high school and college with honors. When she's married, Milloo's husband tells her to stay home, but she does not let that stop her. She decides to open a school in her house, then later opens more schools around Karachi, Pakistan, fulfilling her dreams.

Reem Faruqi, author of *Lailah's Lunchbox* and *Unsettled*, has written a stirring biography about Maryam Faruqi, the founder of the Happy Home Schools. Maryam was a trailblazer for women's education and inspired the author, her granddaughter, to tell her story of challenges and triumph.

To mark the publication of this book, a donation has been made to the Happy Home Schools in Karachi, Pakistan.



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# Milloom's Mind

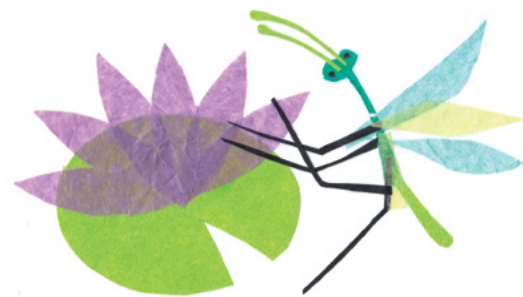
THE STORY OF MARYAM FARUQI,  
TRAILBLAZER FOR WOMEN'S EDUCATION

For all the Happy Home School students and staff  
from the past, present, and future . . .

–R.F.

To Karim Nasr,  
who taught me the names of colors.

–H.H.



Milloom's Mind

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Written by Reem Faruqi Illustrated by Hoda Hadadi

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As the sun swallowed the last part of the night, children in Poona, India, rubbed sleep from their eyes. Not Milloo. Milloo woke up early to read. When she read, her thoughts danced, her mind breathed, and her heart hummed.



“Milloo! Time for school!” yelled her brothers.



danced through the dusty alleys,



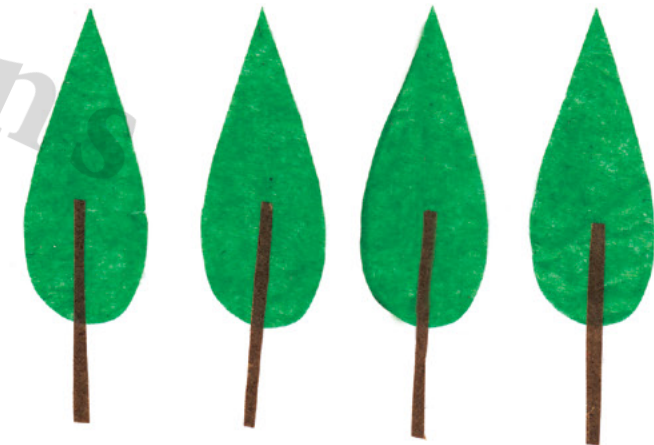
Milloo snaked past the sabzi wala,



cha-chaed past  
the chai wala,



all the way to school.





Although Milloo knew every answer, she didn't raise her hand. She looked down at the floor.

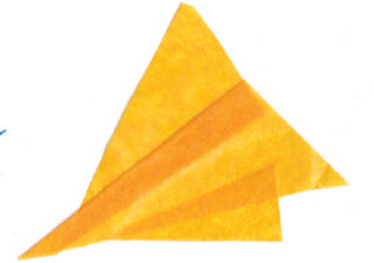




One day Milloo's teacher didn't come.



Miloo wanted to read, but it was too noisy.



Children drew on the chalkboard.

Children stood on chairs.  
Children threw paper airplanes.



She closed her book.  
**SNAP!**

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She put her hands on her hips. She stomped to the front of the class. She whistled loudly.

*“Enough is enough!”*

Milloo grabbed a piece of chalk and began to teach her class.

When the teacher returned, Milloo raised her hand the highest.

Milloo spoke the loudest.

Because Milloo decided she wanted to be a teacher.







When Milloo finished fifth grade, her parents told her: “You don’t need to go to school anymore. You need to stay home like other girls and do housework.” It was 1930, and this is what was expected of her.

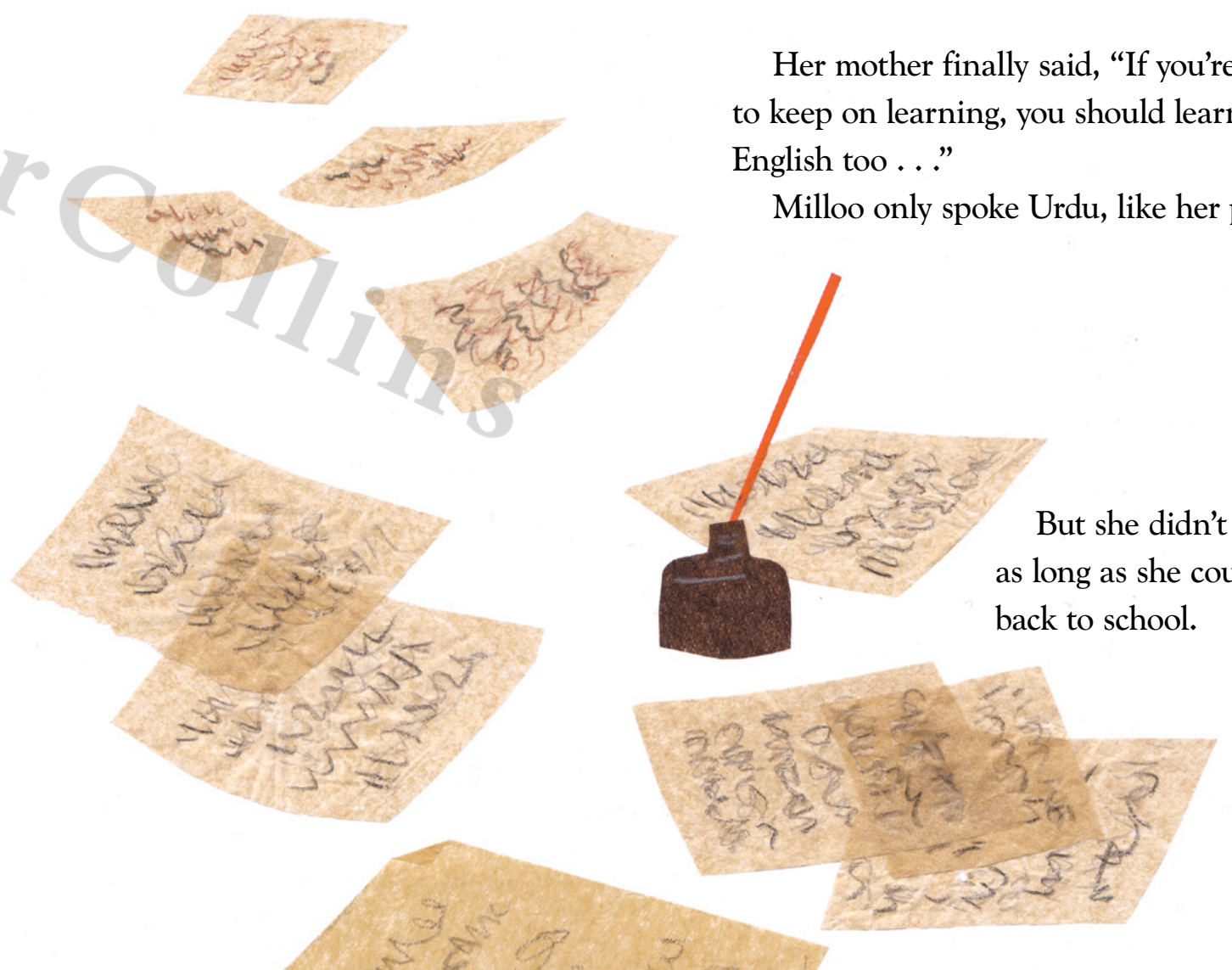
“How will I become a teacher if I don’t finish school?” wailed Milloo.



The whole summer, Milloo wrote letters to her parents. But only her father could read them because her mother never went to school.

Her mother finally said, “If you’re going to keep on learning, you should learn English too . . .”

Miloo only spoke Urdu, like her parents.



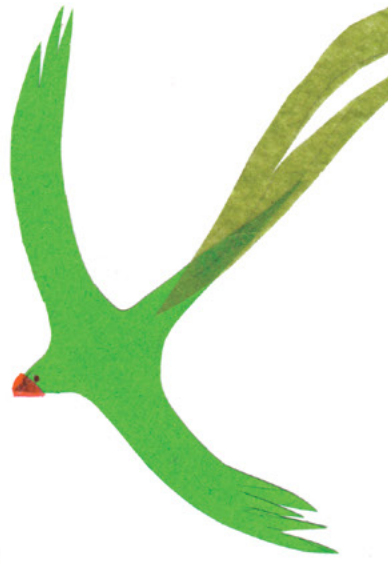
But she didn’t care, as long as she could go back to school.



On the first day of sixth grade, Milloo yelled to her brothers, "Time for school!"



tiptoed past  
the tonga wala,



Miloo spun past  
the samosa wala,



cha-chaed past  
the chutney wala,



all the way to her new school.





But when she got to her classroom . . .  
the children were tiny.  
They wrote nonsense.  
They talked gibberish.



Milloo's new teacher said, "We've put you  
back in third grade to learn English . . ."

Milloo's cheeks felt hot.  
She made her feet move to her desk.  
One step after the other.

Some children stared at her.  
Some children laughed at her.  
Some children stuck their tongues out at her.  
But Milloo kept her eyes on her new teacher.





At home, Milloo whispered,  
“Enough is enough!”

Every morning, Milloo got  
up early.



She sounded out English letters.



She practiced writing new words.  
Slowly, her heart started to hum again.



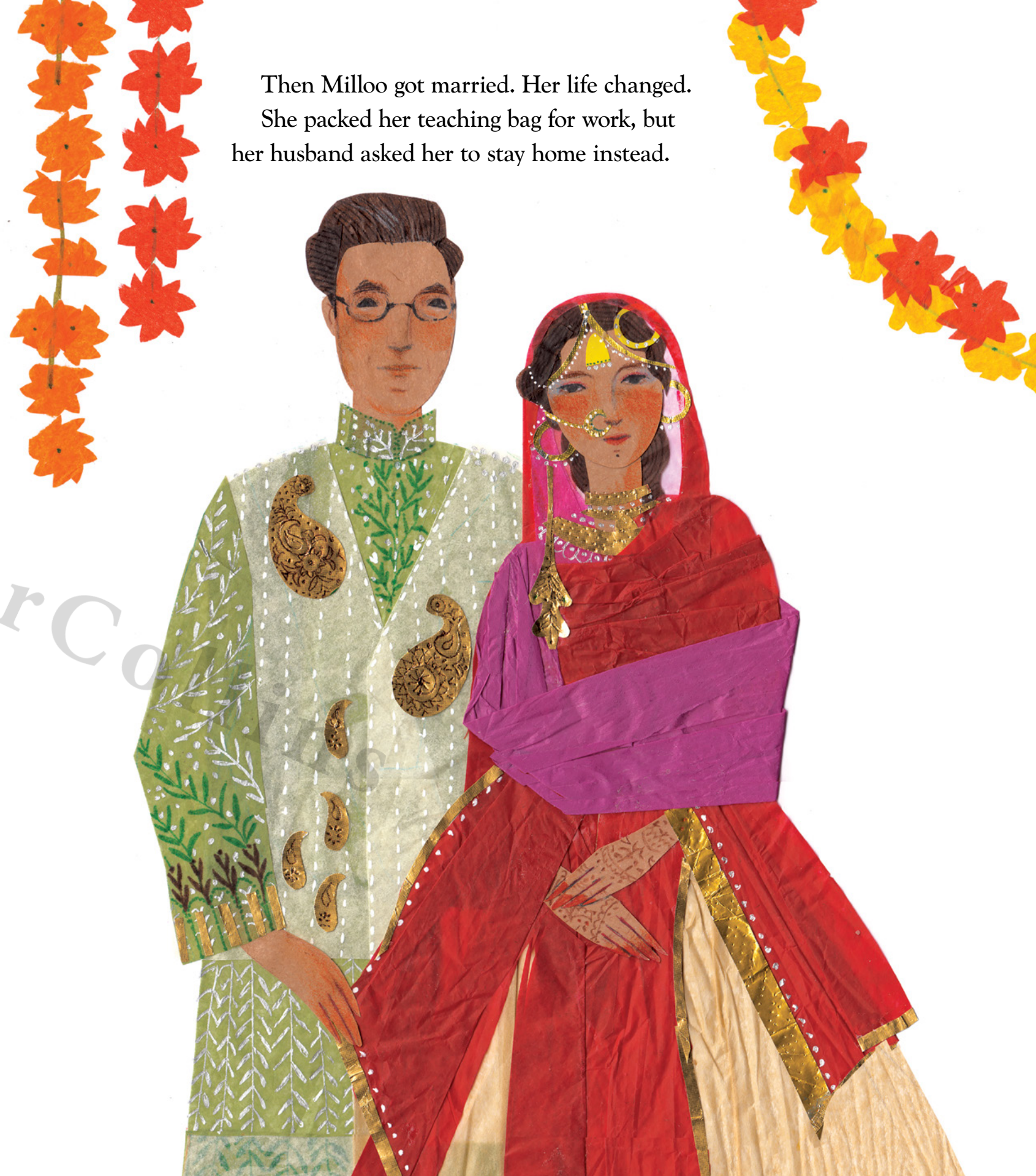


Miloo went on to high school *and* college. She graduated with the highest grades.

Miloo bought books, sharpened pencils, and wrote lesson plans, dreaming of her own classroom.



Then Miloo got married. Her life changed. She packed her teaching bag for work, but her husband asked her to stay home instead.





But when Milloo cooked, her head stewed, and when she sewed, her mind got tangled.



Miloo went for a walk. She noticed girls scrubbing pots, sweeping dusty floors, and hanging up laundry . . . girls who should be going to school.

Miloo stopped her walk, put her hands on her hips, and headed to the bazaar.  
*“Enough is enough!”*

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Miloo bought chairs and tables and put them in her kitchen.  
She bought swings and a seesaw and put them in her backyard.  
She bought a piano and put it in her family room.  
She bought juice and lots of cookies.  
She opened her doors wide and soon enough . . .  
Children were singing songs in the family room.  
Children were reading rhymes in the dining room.  
Children were tracing trapezoids in the kitchen.



Miloo's husband looked around . . .  
"Enough is enough!" he said.





So Milloo opened a school.  
Children filled every classroom.



Miloo opened another school.



And another.




And another.



Because of Milloo's dream, thousands of girls went to school.







And just as the moon swallowed  
the last part of the day, and the clouds  
floated to sleep, Milloo's students in  
Karachi, Pakistan, stayed awake reading.

Their thoughts danced, their minds  
breathed, and their hearts hummed.





## GLOSSARY

**sabzi wala:** vegetable seller

**chai wala:** tea seller

**Urdu:** Pakistani language

**samosa wala:** samosa seller. A samosa is a fried savory triangular pastry containing spiced vegetables or meat.



**tonga wala:** tonga driver. A tonga is a light carriage drawn by a horse, used for transportation in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.



**bazaar:** a marketplace in Pakistan and India and the Middle East.



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

My grandmother, **Maryam Faruqi** (December 13, 1920–April 9, 2012), affectionately called Milloo by her father, is famous for founding Happy Home Schools in Karachi, Pakistan. These schools are still thriving today. As a young child, she had a love for education. Many girls did not go on to middle or high school or college and instead stayed home. In fact, Maryam's older sister stayed home to help with the family and chores while Maryam fought to keep on staying in school. Maryam graduated at the top of her class from Bombay University in 1946. In her own words, she would say, "I never stood second." When she was featured in the newspaper for her accomplishments, many young men wrote to her asking for her hand in marriage. An educator at heart, she married the man with the neatest handwriting and most elegant Urdu language, my grandfather. After the Partition of India in 1947, the division that created two separate countries, India and Pakistan, Maryam moved to Karachi, Pakistan, with her husband and taught there. In Pakistan, she was trained by Maria Montessori.



When Maryam took a class for cooking and stitching, she said it was "a course in which I was least interested." Unfulfilled, she opened a school in her home: she said, "My happiness knew no bounds, as I wanted to use my education."

In 1960, Maryam Faruqi won the Fulbright scholarship to study educational administration and supervision in the United States, where she met and garlanded President John F. Kennedy.

She won scores of lifetime achievement awards, including the President's Award for Literacy (1987) as well as awards from the prime minister and the president of Pakistan. She educated thousands of students, students who have flourished in various professions in life.







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