
GOOD NEIGHBORS
A FOUR CORNERS COMIC
FOUR CORNERS

GOOD NEIGHBORS

A Four Corners comic

Version 1, Color Edition

WHO IS IN THIS STORY

Yusuf Rahman, Amina Rahman, Layla Rahman, Bilal Rahman, Grandma Fatima, Tom Whitfield, Grace Whitfield, Nora Whitfield, Eli Whitfield, Mr. Kowalski, Rosa Vega, Hana, Imam Karim

HOW TO READ A COMIC

1. Read each page from left to right, top to bottom.
2. Words in boxes tell the story.
3. Words in round balloons are people talking.
4. ***Slanted words are from the Qur'an (Pickthall). The small line under them*** gives the surah and ayah.

Four Corners, a publishing ministry of 508 Ministry

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Qur'an quotations: Marmaduke Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Koran (1930), public domain. Each one is checked word for word against the translation before this book is printed.

Lettering: Comic Neue and Bangers (SIL Open Font License).

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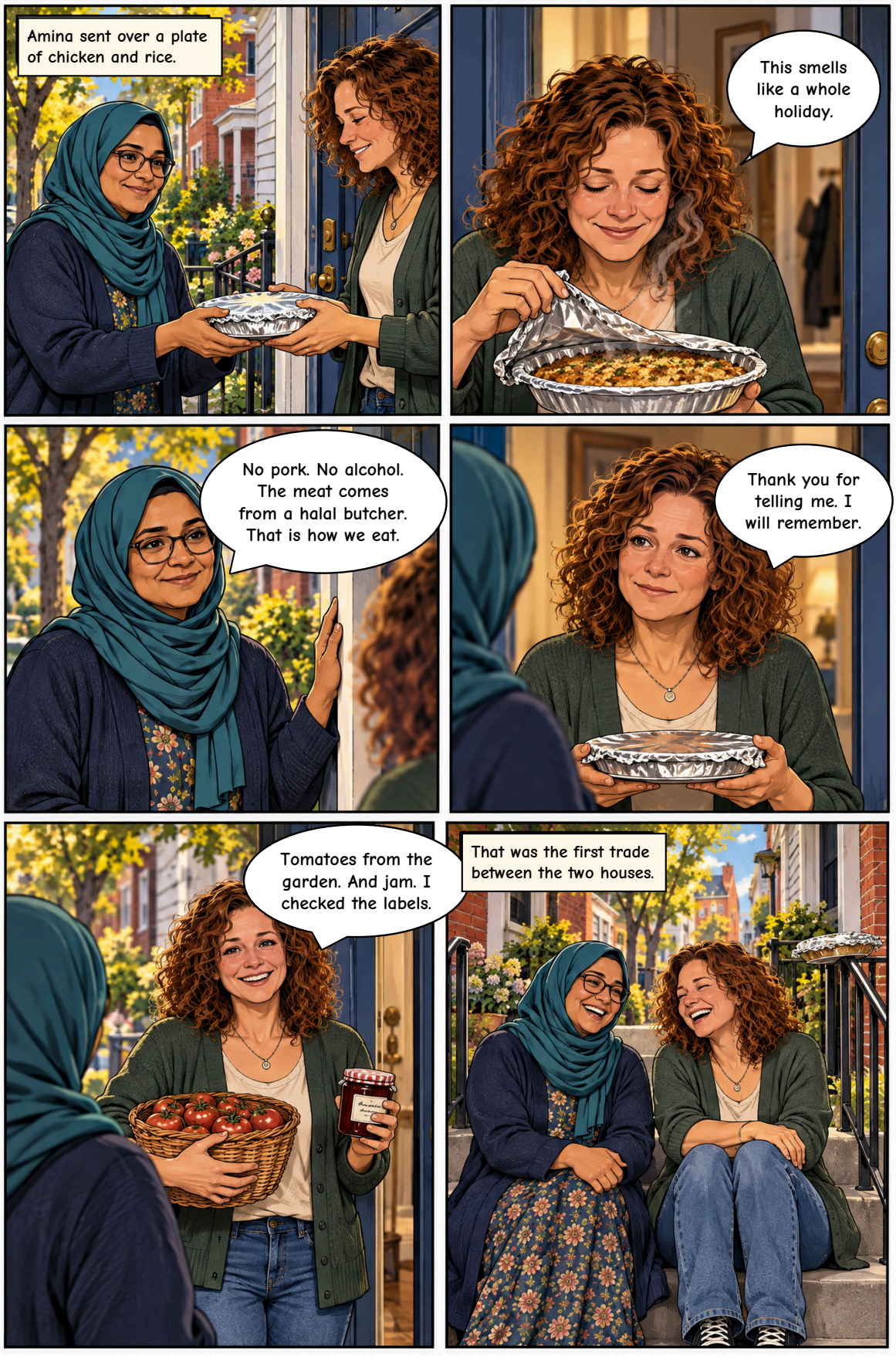
Sycamore Street. Two houses, one driveway apart.
I will be home by six, insha'Allah.
Drive safely. Call if the shop runs late.
Morning, neighbor! Furnace weather.
First one to the corner is champion!
You always say that!
The two boys had not met yet. That took four minutes.


That is a fence problem.
Got it! I am Eli. I live there.
I am Bilal. I live there. Do you like soccer?
THUMP! THUMP!
As-salamu alaykum. Peace be with you.
What does that mean?
It means peace. We say it when we meet.


Amina sent over a plate of chicken and rice.
This smells like a whole holiday.
No pork. No alcohol. The meat comes from a halal butcher. That is how we eat.
Thank you for telling me. I will remember.
Tomatoes from the garden. And jam. I checked the labels.
That was the first trade between the two houses.

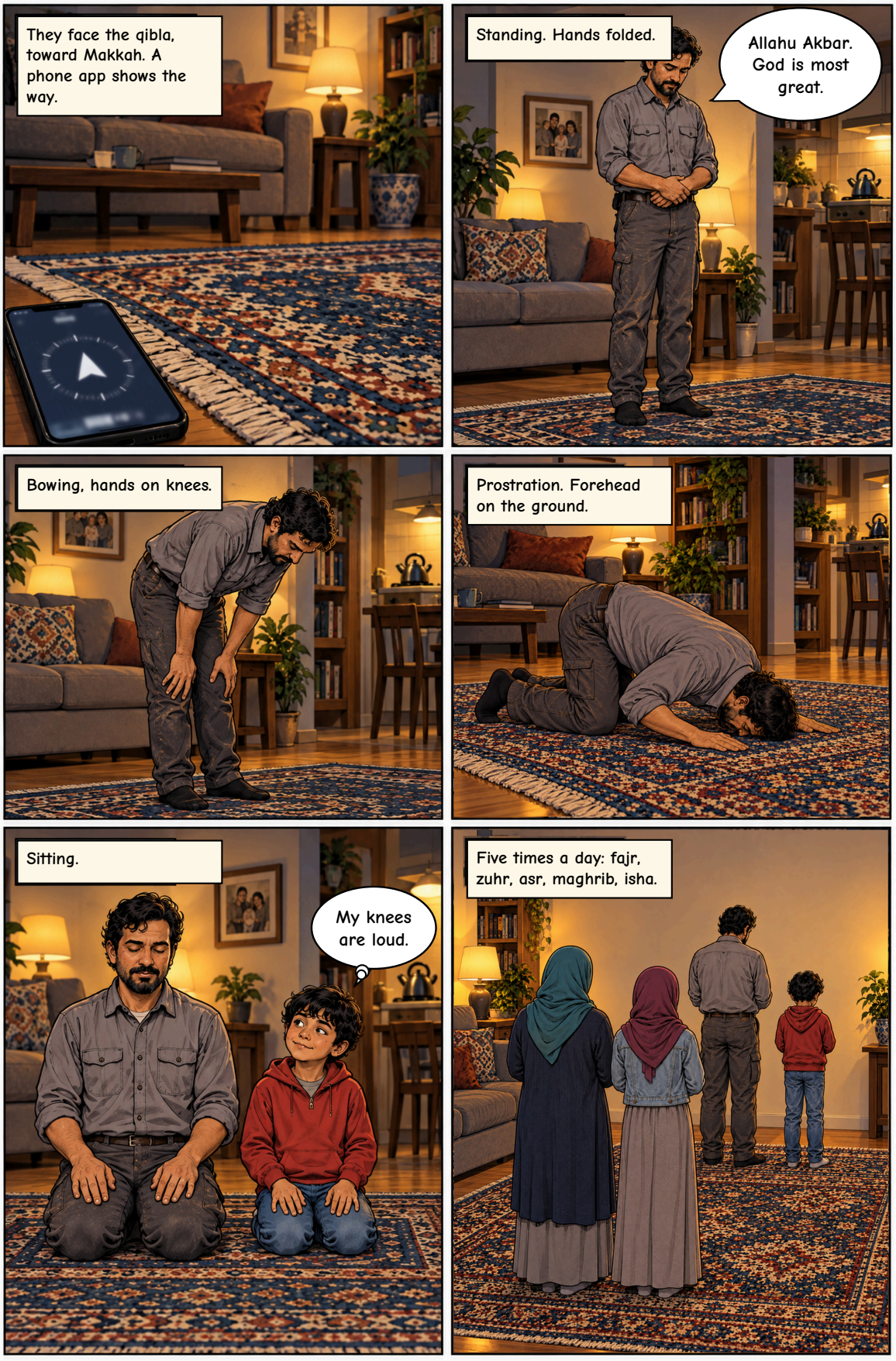

The first snow came on a Tuesday.
Before work, Yusuf cleared the walk across the street.
I did not ask you to do that.
I know. It is easier with two.
Bread. My sister sends too much.
The boys built a snowman with two hats. One for each yard.


In December, Tom's truck would not start. Yusuf fixed it in the driveway.
What do I owe you?
The light. You held the light.
In January, the shop closed.
No warning. No next week.
I will find work. Insha'Allah.
I know. Tonight, eat first.
He sent eleven applications that night.

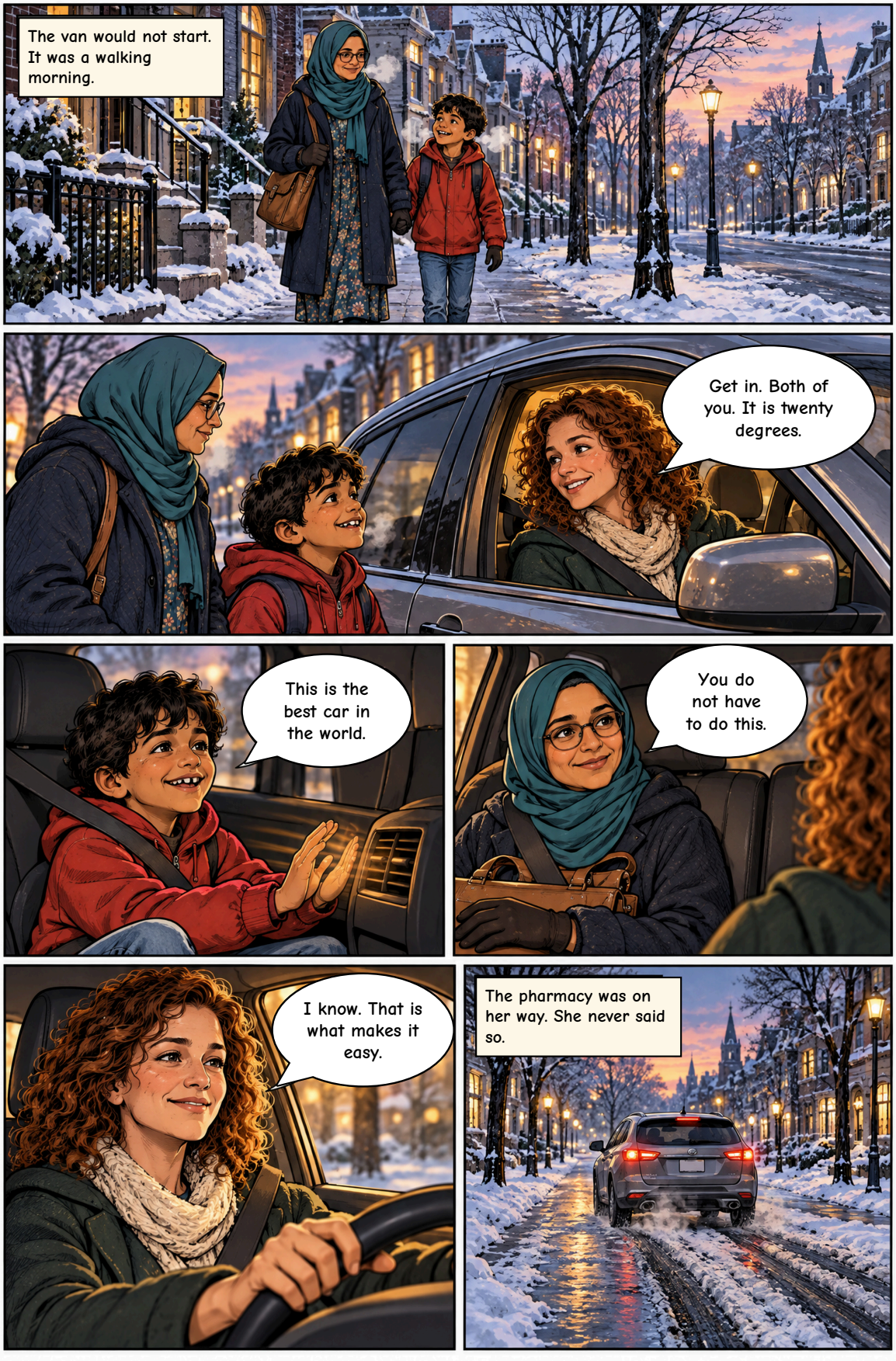

Ramadan begins with the new moon.
There. Right of the tree.
I see it! Or that is a street light.
Our center will announce it tonight. If not, we start the day after.
Sawm is the fast. No food, no water, from dawn to sunset.
Two alarms. One before dawn. One at sunset.

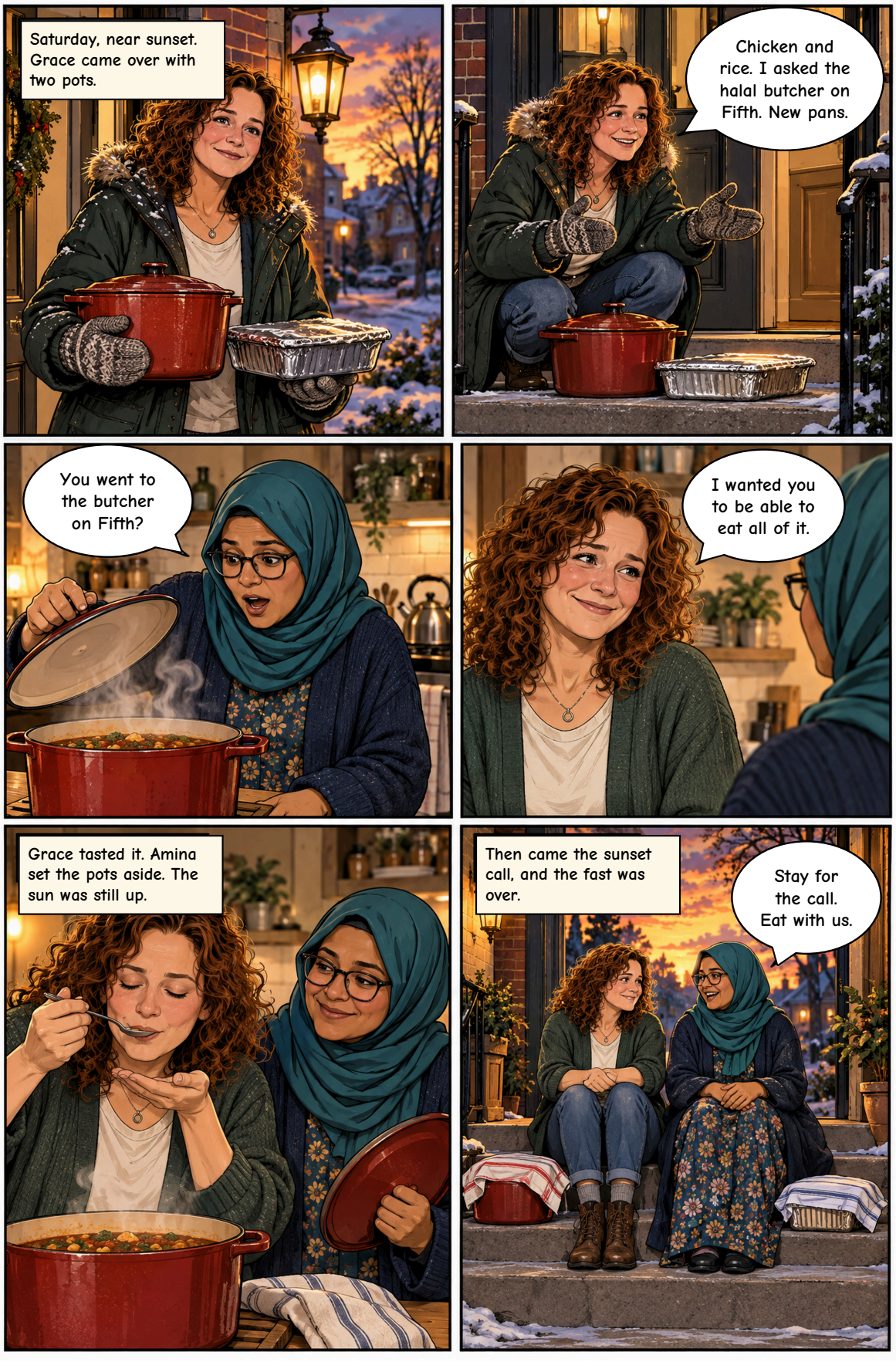

Suhoor. The meal before the fast.
Eat, both of you. The day is long.
Eleven hours.
The rent is paid. The rest, we will see.
He did not say he was worried. She knew anyway.


Before prayer, Muslims wash. It is called wudu. They begin with Bismillah, 'in the name of God.'
Hands first. Right, then left.
Mouth. Nose. Got it.
Face. Then the arms, up to the elbow.
Wipe the head once. Then the ears.
Feet are the best part. They get warm.
Right foot, then left.


They face the qibla, toward Makkah. A phone app shows the way.
Standing. Hands folded.
Allahu Akbar. God is most great.
Bowing, hands on knees.
Prostration. Forehead on the ground.
Sitting.
My knees are loud.
Five times a day: fajr, zuhr, asr, maghrib, isha.


CLANK. CLANK.
It is the blower motor. That is a real part.
Nine hundred dollars.
We have the space heater from upstairs.
So they lived in one room for a week.
I am a snowman now. A very smart snowman.


The van would not start. It was a walking morning.
Get in. Both of you. It is twenty degrees.
This is the best car in the world.
You do not have to do this.
I know. That is what makes it easy.
The pharmacy was on her way. She never said so.


Saturday, near sunset. Grace came over with two pots.
Chicken and rice. I asked the halal butcher on Fifth. New pans.
You went to the butcher on Fifth?
I wanted you to be able to eat all of it.
Grace tasted it. Amina set the pots aside. The sun was still up.
Then came the sunset call, and the fast was over.
Stay for the call. Eat with us.


The envelope had no name. Sixty dollars.
We give. We do not take.
Charity is for whoever needs it. This year, that is us.
The hand that gives is quiet. Do not make it loud.
Zakat is one part in forty of what you keep. Not a tip. A share.
He put the money toward the furnace. Then he fixed a neighbor's gate for free.


The ice storm took the power on a Thursday.
My fingers have retired.
We have a gas fireplace and a spare room. Come over.
We would need a place to pray.
I will clear the living room. Tell me what you need.
Nobody argued about whose house was whose.


Tom moved the table and rolled up the rug.
Will this work? It is clean. It has not been on the floor.
It is perfect. Thank you.
The compass says this way.
We will be in the kitchen. Take your time.
For eight minutes, the living room was a place of prayer.


After sunset, once the fast was broken, the grown ups sat at the kitchen table.
Five things we do.
We say: there is no god but God, and Muhammad is God's messenger.
Five prayers. Zakat for the poor.
Fasting in Ramadan. And hajj, the trip to Makkah, once in life if we can.
And what do you believe, besides the doing?
One God. His angels. His books. His messengers. The Day of Judgement. His decree.
That is six. You asked.
His books include the Torah, the Psalms and the Gospel as God first sent them.


We believe Jesus is the Son of God, that he died for us and rose again.
We honor Isa, Jesus, peace be upon him, as a great messenger of God.
Born of Maryam. We do not say he is God or God's son.
And we are still eating.
Pass the cookies.
One question. The word Allah.
It is Arabic for God. Arab Christians say it too.
Nobody tried to win. Nobody had to.


The power came back on Saturday.
Your family fasts all day? No water?
No water, no food, dawn to sunset.
Sick people, travelers and little children do not have to fast. Missed days are made up.
I would be terrible at it.
You would be surprised. The first week is the loudest.
The boys helped by dropping things.
CLATTER!

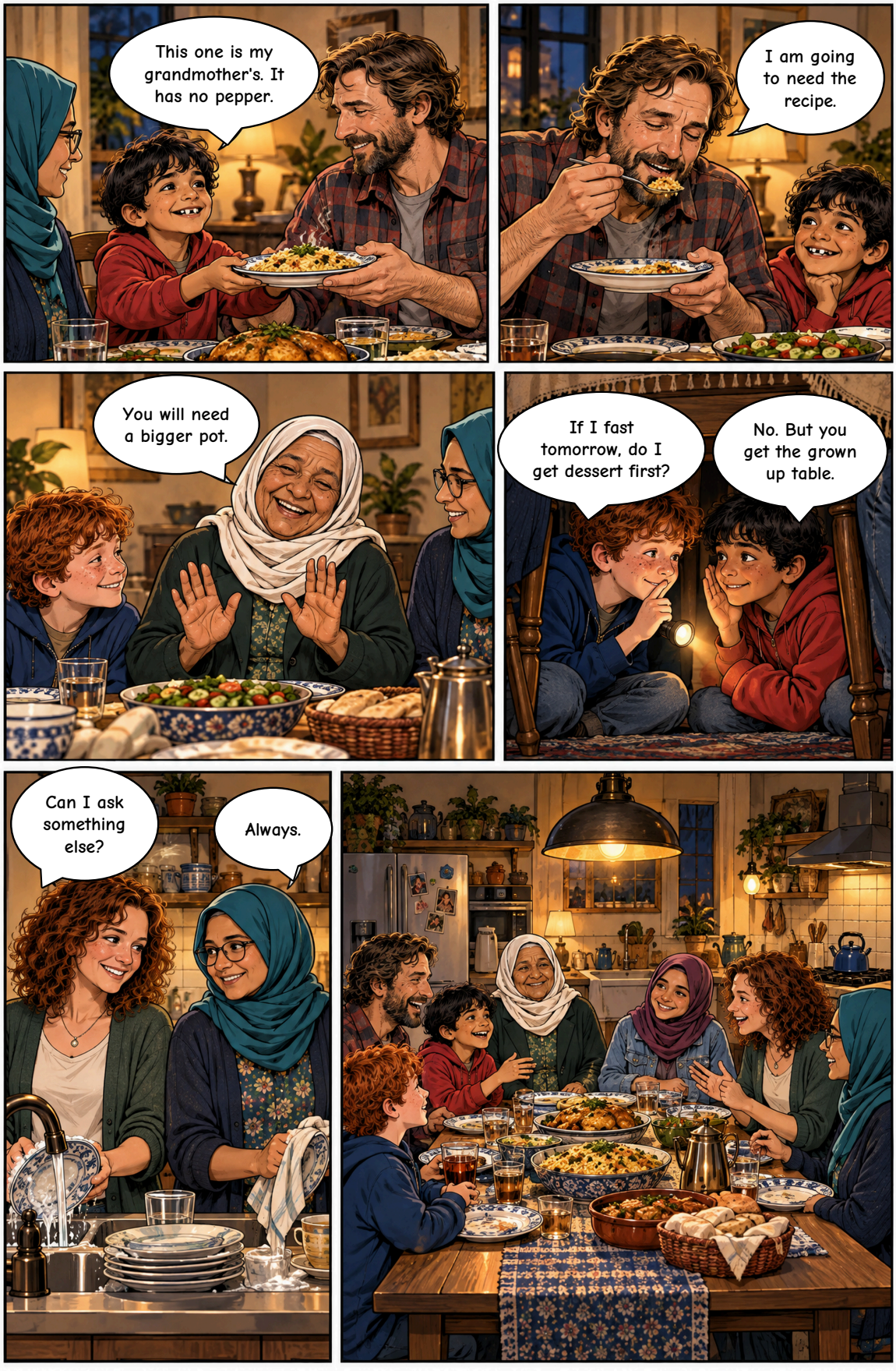

A new job started in two weeks. A garage on Ninth.
Rent first. Then whatever is extra can be sadaqah.
Quiet. No name on it.
Mr. Kowalski's heater had died in the storm.
Who sent this?
That was the whole answer.
It was extra.

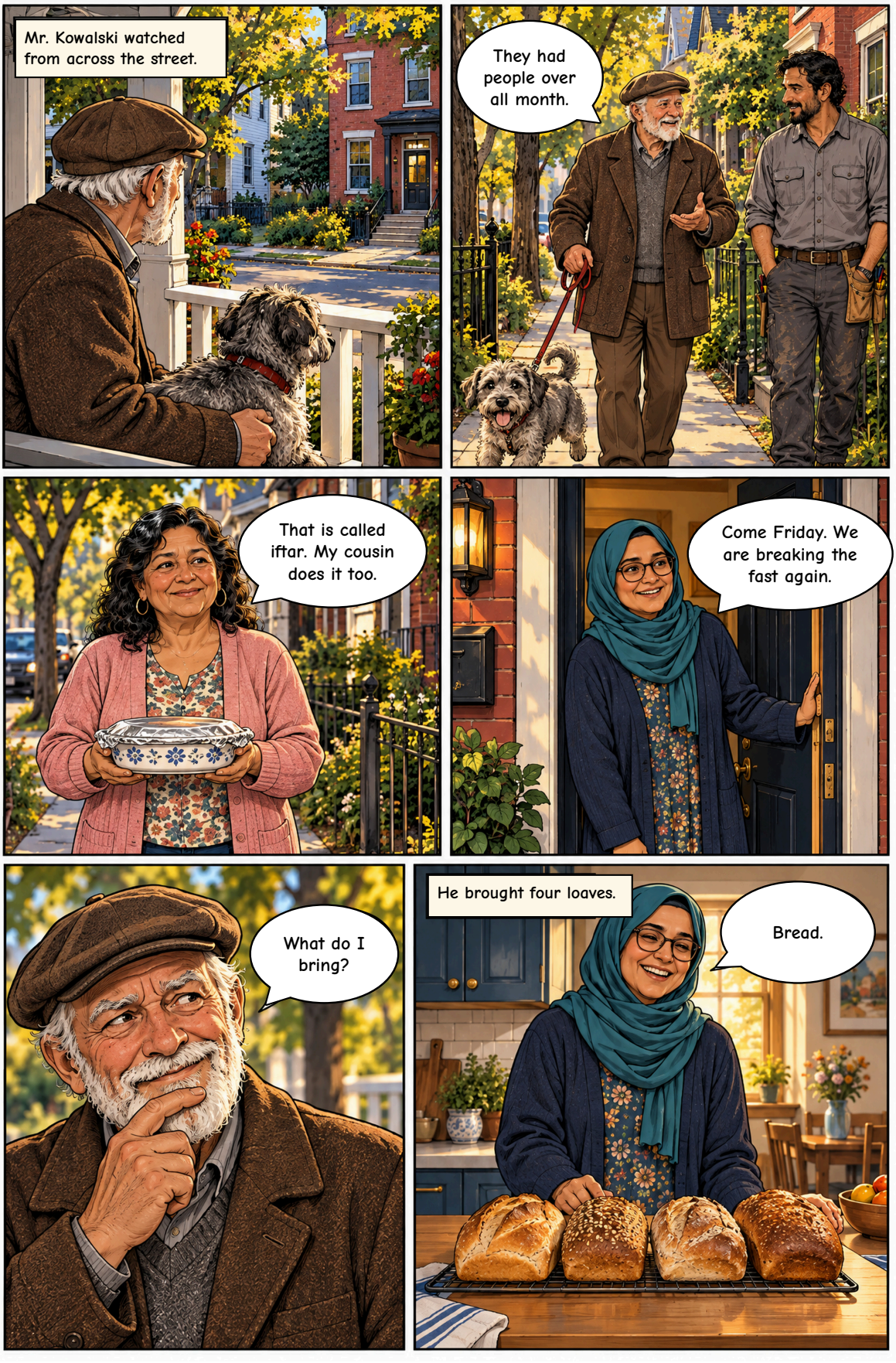

Friday, Yusuf showed Tom the Islamic center on Ninth.
Shoes off. I can do that.
Welcome. Come in. Sit anywhere.
Men in front. Women in a section behind them. Same prayer, same words.
What does the Qur'an say about neighbors?
The Qur'an says:
A lot. Here is one.
And serve Allah. Ascribe no thing as partner unto Him. (Show) kindness unto parents, and unto near kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and unto the neighbour who is of kin (unto you) and the neighbour who is not of kin, and the fellow-traveller and the wayfarer and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess. Lo! Allah loveth not such as are proud and boastful,
Qur'an 4:36

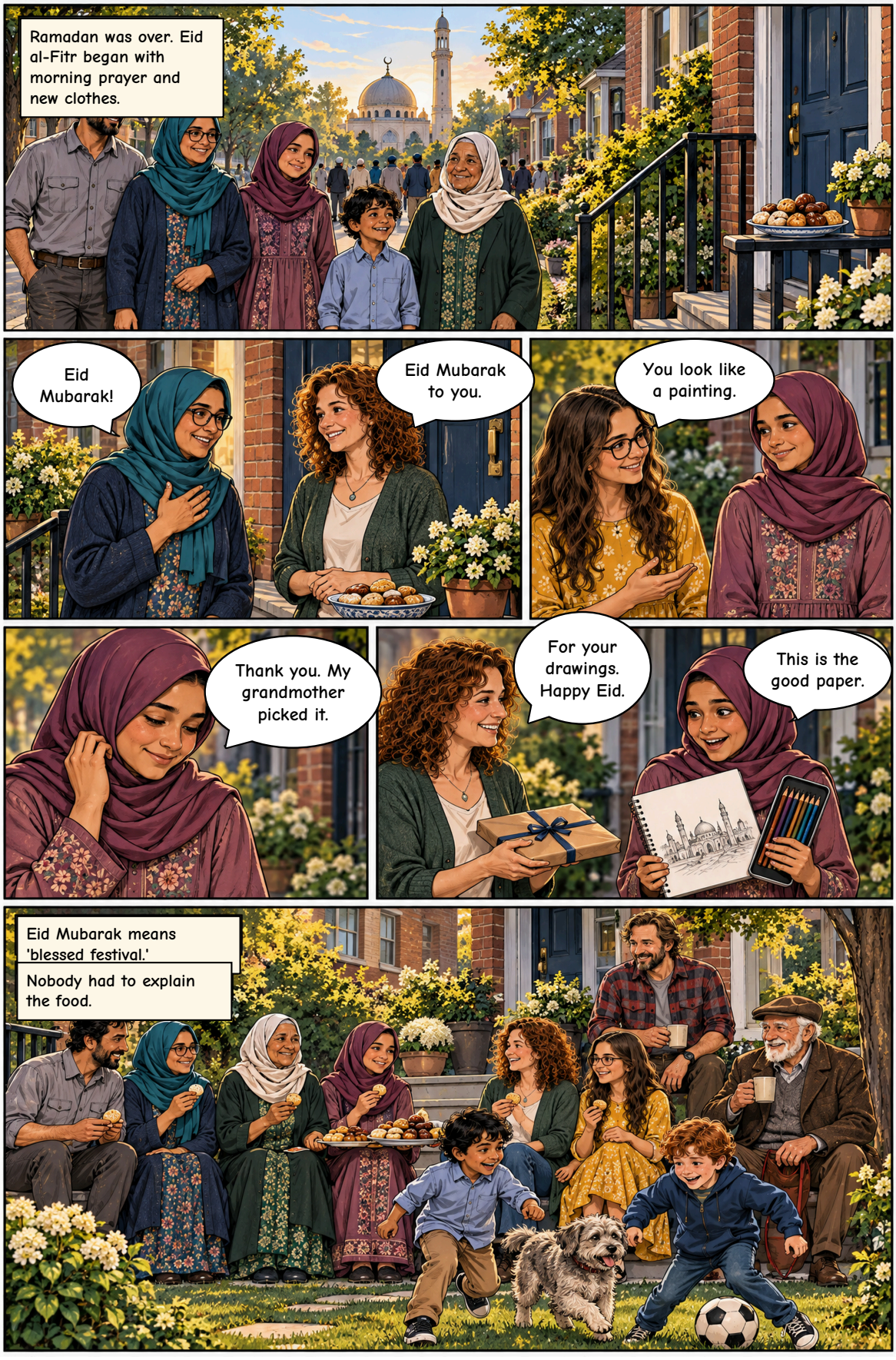

Even the neighbor you do not know. I have one of those.
Everyone has one of those.
His name is Mr. Kowalski. He is not so bad.
Sunday. The Whitfields walked to church.
By the last week of Ramadan, the fence was fixed.
I got a star! For the whole page!
Alhamdulillah. All praise is for God.

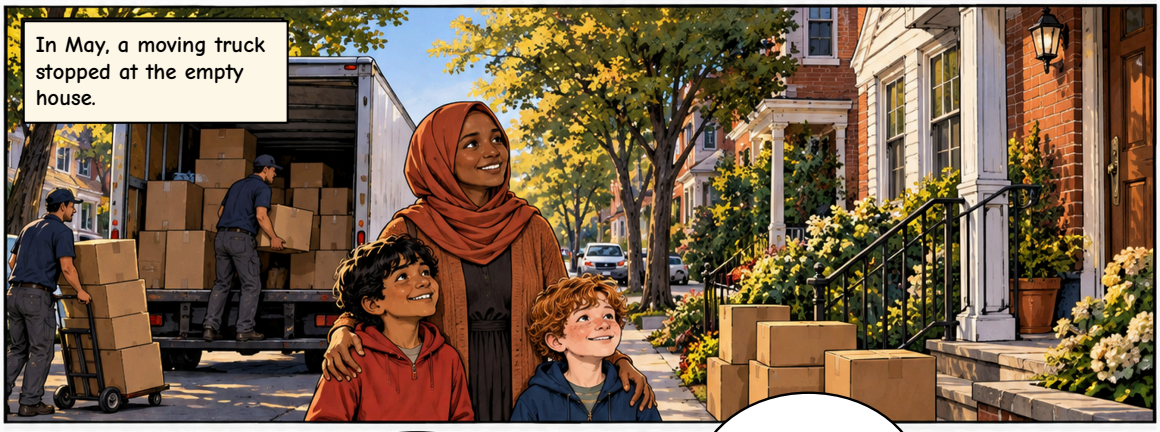

In the last week of Ramadan, Amina invited them to iftar.
Come at sunset. That is when we eat.
At sunset? Do we bring anything?
Bring your appetites. And your questions.
I have a lot of questions.
She had known that.

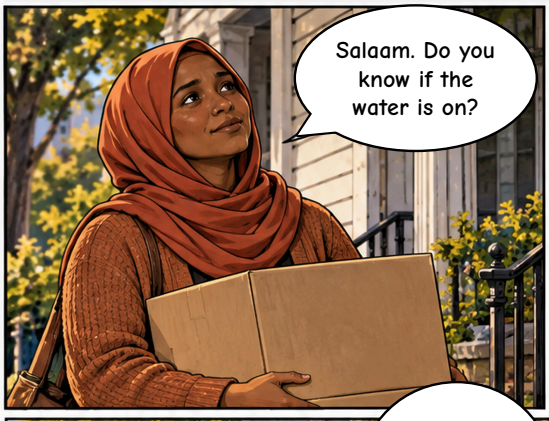

On the table: dates and water, first. Then soup.
Two minutes.
At sunset the adhan played. The fast was over.
Bismillah. In the name of God.
Then the Rahmans prayed maghrib. The guests waited with their hands in their laps.
Each family said thanks in its own words. Nobody hurried.


This one is my grandmother's. It has no pepper.
I am going to need the recipe.
You will need a bigger pot.
If I fast tomorrow, do I get dessert first?
No. But you get the grown up table.
Can I ask something else?
Always.


Mr. Kowalski watched from across the street.
They had people over all month.
That is called iftar. My cousin does it too.
Come Friday. We are breaking the fast again.
What do I bring?
He brought four loaves.
Bread.


Ramadan was over. Eid al-Fitr began with morning prayer and new clothes.
Eid Mubarak!
Eid Mubarak to you.
You look like a painting.
Thank you. My grandmother picked it.
For your drawings. Happy Eid.
This is the good paper.
Eid Mubarak means 'blessed festival.'
Nobody had to explain the food.

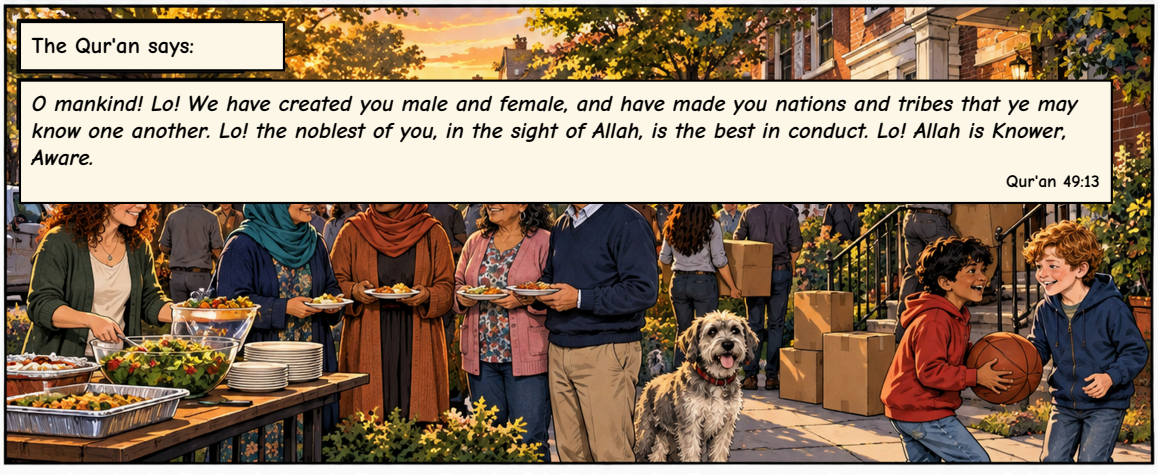

In May, a moving truck stopped at the empty house.


Salaam. Do you know if the water is on?


It is on. I will show you. This is Tom, from the blue door.


We brought dinner. It is halal. She checked.


The children found the chalk goals in four minutes.


The Qur'an says:
O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.
Qur'an 49:13


They put one long table between the two yards.
This is heavier than the fence.
Sit down, both of you. You are making me tired.
Ten people. Two faiths. One table.
Thanks was said twice. The bread went around once.
Good neighbors.
The End
It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the prophets; and giveth wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the Allah-fearing.
Qur'an 2:177

A NOTE FROM FOUR CORNERS

This book was made by Christians for their Muslim neighbors. Nothing here is for sale, and nobody is asked to change what they believe.

Four Corners believes every neighbor deserves to be understood. We are Christians. We made this comic to honor our Muslim neighbors, not to argue with them. We do not speak for Muslims, and one small book cannot hold a whole faith. If we got something wrong, tell us, and we will fix it.

LEARN MORE

1. Learn from Muslims themselves. Visit your local mosque or Islamic center. Most welcome visitors.
2. Ask an imam, or a Muslim neighbor, your questions. Then listen.
3. Read the Qur'an with a Muslim friend and ask what a verse means to them.

Please treat this printed book respectfully. It quotes the Qur'an, and these words are dear to many people.

Qur'an quotations are English translations of the meaning of the Qur'an by Pickthall (1930); the Arabic is the Qur'an itself. The translation is in the public domain.

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GOOD NEIGHBORS

Yusuf lost his job and the furnace died. Then the neighbors showed up with a pot of rice and a spare room.

When ye are greeted with a greeting, greet ye with a better than it or return it. Lo! Allah taketh count of all things.

Qur'an 4:86

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