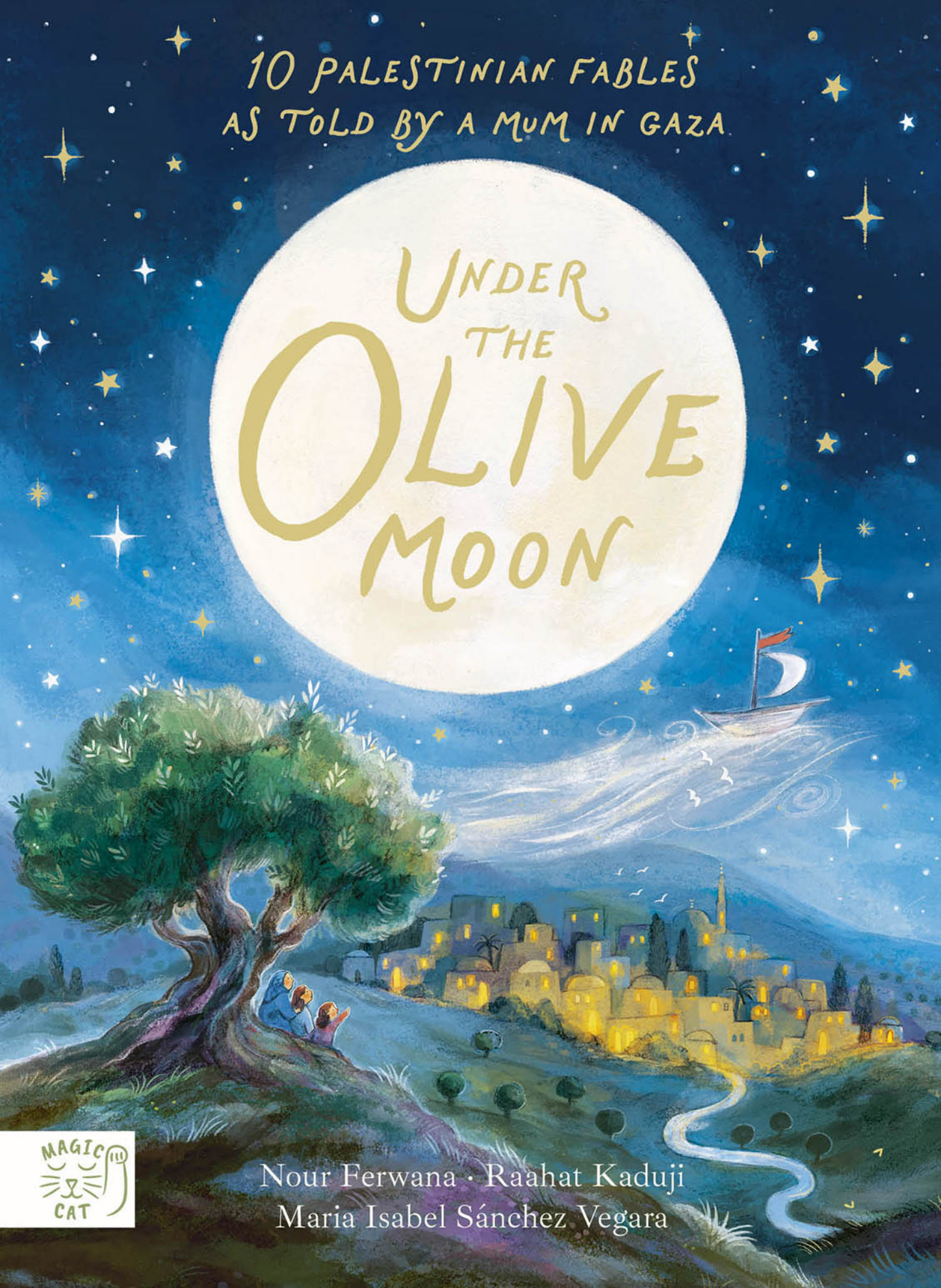
10 PALESTINIAN FABLES AS TOLD BY A MUM IN GAZA

UNDER THE OLIVE MOON



Nour Ferwana · Raahat Kaduji
Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara

MAGIC CAT

UNDER THE OLIVE MOON

MAGIC CAT PUBLISHING

Under the Olive Moon © 2026 Lucky Cat Publishing Ltd
Text © 2026 Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara and Nour Ferwana
Illustrations © 2026 Raahat Kaduji
First Published in 2026 by Magic Cat Publishing, an imprint of Lucky Cat Publishing Ltd,
1st Floor Baird House, 15-17 St Cross St, London EC1N 8UW
EU Authorised Representative Magic Cat Publishing, an imprint of Lucky Cat Publishing Ltd,
PAKTA svetovanje d.o.o., Stegne 33, Ljubljana, Slovenia

The right of Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara and Nour Ferwana to be identified as the author of this work and Raahat Kaduji to be identified as the illustrator of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988 (UK).

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electrical, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-911766-31-5

The illustrations were created digitally
Set in Ibarra Real Nova, Lovers in New York, and Wild Flower Peach Creme

The Publisher would like to thank Professor Sonia Nimr from Birzeit University in Ramallah, Palestine, for her cultural contribution and insight.

Published by Rachel Williams and Jenny Broom
Designed by Olivia Cook
Edited by Rachel Williams

Manufactured in Estonia

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



10 PALESTINIAN FABLES
AS TOLD BY A MUM IN GAZA

UNDER THE OLIVE MOON

Nour Ferwana · Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara
Illustrated by Raahat Kaduji

MAGIC CAT PUBLISHING

Sometimes children live in places where
life is not easy. Gaza is one of those places.

In Gaza, many families have had to leave their homes.
They live in tents or crowded rooms, and every day
they must wait in long lines for bread or water.
The nights are often noisy, and sometimes
the grown-ups look worried.

But even in Gaza, children are still children.
They laugh, play and dream. Their parents tell them
stories to keep their hearts full of wonder.

I'm one of those parents.

My name is Nour and the stories in this book are the ones
that my husband Majed and I tell to our little girls –
Malak and Joud.

Some are old fables that have been told in Palestine
for many years. They are gifts passed from one
generation to the next, like treasures carried in our
pockets – treasures that can turn our little tent into
a palace, a garden, or a ship. They remind us that
kindness and courage always exist, even when the
world feels hard.

We share them now with you because every child, everywhere,
deserves to grow up with stories, love, and hope.

And tonight, as you open these pages,
the stories are yours too.

Nour Ferwana

Gaza Strip. August 2025.



Contents

The Fisherman and the Starfish 8

The Olive Tree That Would Not Bow 15

The Guest's Cup of Coffee 20

The Well That Never Runs Dry 27

The Olive Moon 32

The Goat and the Well 37

The Secret Garden 40

The Boy and the Strange Fruit 47

The Brightest Pomegranate Flower 50

A Journey in the Moon's Boat 56

About the Book 64

The Fisherman and the Starfish

It was our first night sleeping in the tent. The ground felt bumpy, the wind whistled all around us and the light of the lamp seemed to tremble. When Majed stepped outside, Joud whispered, "What if Baba can't find his way back?" I held her close and began a story about a fisherman, lost at sea, and how he found his way home.

Long ago, a fisherman rowed out under the moon.

He cast his net again and again,
but caught only starfish
clinging stubbornly to the ropes.

He sighed as he loosened them,
their arms curling in the night air.
They are not the catch I hoped for,
he thought,
but the sea is their home.



One by one…



he placed them back into the water,



watching them drift away safely.



Before dawn, a storm swept in.
The wind howled. Rain stung his face.
Waves rose higher and higher
until the boat pitched like a toy.
The fisherman could not see the shore.

He was lost at sea.



Then, below the water, something began to glow.
Dozens of starfish lit up, their lights creating a path.
One after another they shone, like lanterns on the waves.

The fisherman followed, stroke by stroke, until the glow carried him home.
From that day, he told his children: “Sometimes, kindness returns
as a light in the storm.”



The Olive Tree That Would not Bow

Early in the morning, Malak found a thyme plant
growing beside our tent. Its stem was thin, its leaves
a little dusty, but it stood straight in the sunlight.
"It's so small," she said, "but it stands tall." I smiled,
thinking of a story my grandmother used to tell.

In a small village by the sea, an olive tree grew.
Its roots gripped the earth like a giant's hands,
and its leaves shone silver under the sun.

Every winter, fierce wind
rushed down from the mountains.
It bent the fig trees. It shook the pines.
But the olive tree stood straight.

"Bend with us," whispered the fig tree.
"I cannot," said the olive tree.
"My roots keep me standing."



Nour Ferwana is a writer who lives in Gaza. Shaped by a lived experience under siege, Nour began to co-write this book as a way of offering comfort and resilience to her two small children.



Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara is a Spanish children's author best known for creating the *Little People, BIG DREAMS* series, which has now sold more than 14 million copies worldwide. *Under the Olive Moon* began when Isa started to talk with Nour.



Raahat Kaduji is an artist and writer based in Oxford, UK. Her award-winning picture books are deeply rooted in fable and nature. Raahat supports many charitable organisations working in Palestine.

About the Book

This book began with a mum's message. When food, medicine, and other aid stopped entering Gaza, families were left trapped in their own land with little help from the outside world. I found a way to support five of these families through a group called Coffees for Gaza. The day after I sent my first donation, I received a thank-you message from Nour. She is mum to two girls, Malak and Joud, and wife to Majed. Like many families, they had lost their home and had to move again and again, leaving behind the little they had. Since then, Nour and I have written to each other almost every day, whenever the internet worked. I ask if they are safe, and she tells me how she tries to keep her girls' spirits up. Sometimes she invents recipes with the food she can find, makes up games among the rubble, or tells them the old stories she remembered from when she was their age. They are Palestinian fables, passed from parents to children for generations. Nour and I decided to gather them into this book so they would never be forgotten. My part has been to write down the tales she told me, along with the small moments of light she shared, so the stories could travel further than the walls of her tent and reach children everywhere.

Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara