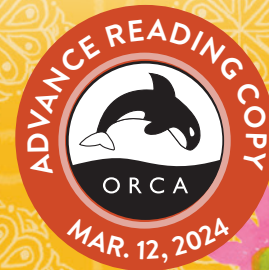


Meena Can't Wait



written and illustrated by
Farida Zaman

Tea always tastes better when you make it together.

MEENA IS EXCITED because today she's going to Nanu's house for a tea party. When Meena arrives, she's ready to get started...but her nanu tells her it's not time yet. Today they're going to have a very special Bengali tea called *doodh cha*, and they are going to make it together.

While they prepare the ingredients and let them steep, Meena's tummy grumbles...But Nanu tells her it's not time yet! To help pass the time, they look at old photos, paint pictures and set the table. And when the doodh cha is finally ready, it's just as delicious as Nanu had promised. Nanu was right: "It always tastes better when we make it together."

This sweet story is inspired by the author's own visits with her grandmother and includes a special family recipe for doodh cha.

Farida Zaman is a multi-disciplinary artist and writer who is well known for her whimsical, uplifting designs. She has illustrated fourteen picture books, including *When Mom's Away*, *Ta-Da!* and *The Yoga Game*, and is the author/illustrator of *I Want To Be... A Gutsy Girls' ABC*. Born in Bangladesh, and having called many different countries home, Farida describes herself as a global citizen with a flair for illustrating stories related to different cultures. She trained in fine art and illustration at the Chelsea School of Art and the Wimbledon School of Art in London, England, where she graduated top of her class with honors. Farida lives in Toronto.

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Meena Can't Wait

Author/illustrator: Farida Zaman

March 12, 2024

Today Meena and her nanu (grandmother) are having a tea party with a special Bengali tea called *doodh cha*, and even though Meena is impatient, she learns that it's worth the wait to make the special tea together.

FORMAT	Hardcover	PDF	EPUB
9 x 9"	9781459836396	9781459836402	9781459836419
32 pages	\$21.95		

KEY SELLING POINTS

- A young girl goes to her grandmother's house for a tea party and soon discovers her grandmother expects her to help make the tea—a special Bengali tea called *doodh cha*.
- Shows the passing down of a family tradition in a lighthearted way, including how food is linked to culture, and the bonding that happens when people share their traditions. These themes are also intertwined with a story about how being patient can pay off.
- This story mirrors the author's lived experience, as it was inspired by her visits with her own grandmother, and includes her family *doodh cha* recipe in the back matter.
- Farida Zaman was born in Bangladesh but now lives in Canada. She is both author and illustrator, bringing this personal story to life with her charming and bright illustrations.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Farida Zaman is a multidisciplinary artist and writer who is well-known for her whimsical, uplifting designs. She has illustrated fourteen picture books, including *When Mom's Away*, *Ta-Da!* and *The Yoga Game*, and is the author/illustrator of *I Want To Be... A Gutsy Girls' ABC*. Born in Bangladesh, and having called many different countries home, Farida describes herself as a global citizen with a flair for illustrating stories related to different cultures. She trained in fine art and illustration at the Chelsea School of Art and the Wimbledon School of Art in London, England, where she graduated top of her class with honors. Farida lives in Toronto.



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Meena Can't Wait



FARIDA ZAMAN

ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS

Today I'm visiting my grandmother.

"SALAAM, NANU. I'm ready for our tea party!"

Nanu's bangles clink as she puts down her trowel to give me a hug.





“Patience, dear Meena.” She smiles. “Today we’re going to make a very special Bengali tea called doodh cha, and it takes time to prepare.”

“Oh,” I say. My stomach grumbles softly.

“Tea always tastes better when we make it together,” Nanu replies. “Let’s start with ingredients from the garden.”

“Is this where we’ll get the tea leaves?” I ask.

“No, the tea comes all the way from Bangladesh,” Nanu replies.

“From a tea garden in a place called Sylhet.”



Nanu’s windows are open. From here I can smell her fresh homemade samosas and yummy orange spice cake.

“Could I pick some mint?” I ask.

“Of course,” says Nanu.

I nibble on a leaf. It tastes green.

“And now we need some ginger to make the tea flavorful,” says Nanu.



I crush the cloves and cardamom while Nanu grates the ginger. Then we put all the spices in the water. Soon we'll add the tea, milk and sugar.

"First we need to let the spices steep," says Nanu.

"There are a lot of steps," I say.

"The time is what makes it tasty," says Nanu.



It's so hard to wait. My tummy is rumbling like thunder now, and my nose is tingling from the sweet spices.

I look around Nanu's kitchen at all the beautiful teapots. The blue one is my favorite.



"When I was a little girl, I used to make doodh cha just like this," says Nanu. "But that was a very long time ago and in a very different kitchen."

Nanu brings out some old photos.

"You have to imagine all the rich colors," she says.



DRIIIING!

A timer sounds from the kitchen. I jump up.

“It’s time to add the other ingredients,” says Nanu.

Nanu shows me how to add the tea and sugar to the water and pour milk into the saucepan.

“Gently, gently,” Nanu says. “And now we let it simmer.”



“That’s a wonderful idea,”
says Nanu. “I’ll get the supplies.”



IT'S SO HARD TO WAIT!

I hear the milky tea bubbling on the stove and my tummy growling like a bear.

I look around Nanu's house and see all her beautiful paintings.

“Can we paint together?” I ask.



I've made a fancy card for Nana. But my legs are jiggling with impatience.

"Is the tea ready yet?" I ask.

"Almost," says Nana. "It tastes even better when you wait for it."



“When I was little, I didn’t like to wait either,” Nanu says with a wink. “My nanu would make me go outside and play in our yard.”

I nod. It’s hard to picture Nanu being little.

“Is it time to lay the table?” I ask.



“IT’S TIME!”

says Nanu.







Five...four...three...two...
Drrriing!
"DOODH CHA TIME!"
we say together.

Nanu brings in the tea. I watch the warm steam as she shows me how to pour the cha into pretty glasses. The spices swirl up my nose and I sip the creamy, sweet tea.

Nanu looks at me.

“Hmm,” I say with a frown, as if it tastes bitter.



Then I can't help but grin.

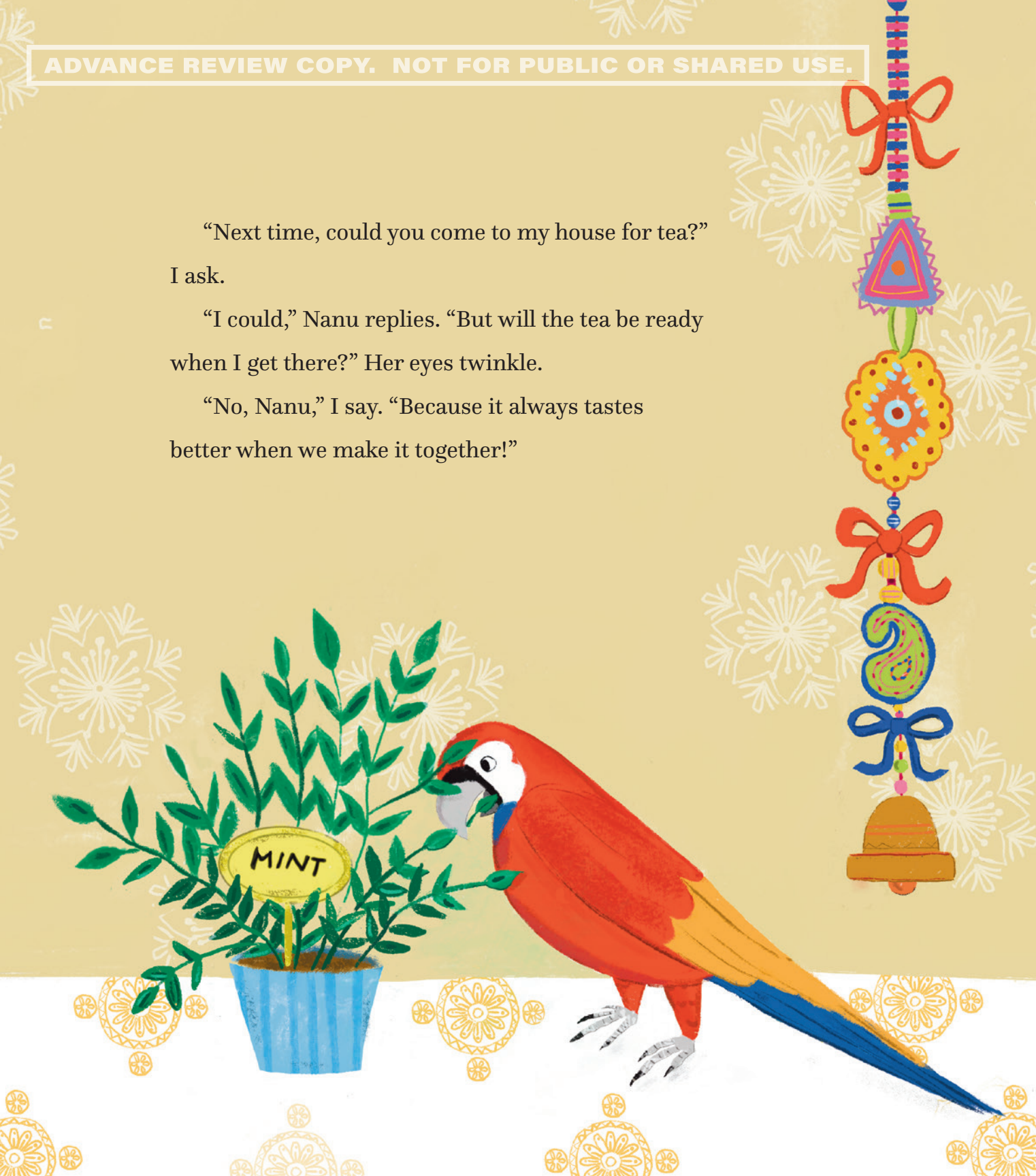
“IT'S DELICIOUS!” I say.





After our tea, Nanu says, “I have something special for you.”

“THANK YOU, NANU! It’s my favorite,” I say, tracing its pattern with my finger. “And I have something special for you too.”



“Next time, could you come to my house for tea?”
I ask.

“I could,” Nanu replies. “But will the tea be ready
when I get there?” Her eyes twinkle.

“No, Nanu,” I say. “Because it always tastes
better when we make it together!”



HOW TO MAKE DOODH CHA (SPICED MILK TEA)

When making this recipe, be sure an adult is around to supervise.

When I was little, my nanu (whom I called Api) introduced me to doodh cha, just like Meena's nanu did. Our tea parties for two were so much fun! Api made my favorite snacks—samosas, dal puri and banana bread—and she was a great cook. She would tell me stories of her childhood as we drank our cha, and she introduced me to aspects of Bangladeshi culture I wasn't familiar with (such as certain tasty snacks that are popular there, like paratha and egg halwa). I learned so much about my country of origin through her and remember our visits very fondly now... especially when I have a cup of cha. Try out my family recipe below.



INGREDIENTS:

3 cups (710 mL) water
4 pods cardamom, crushed
6 cloves
2 cinnamon sticks
1 teaspoon (5 mL) fresh ginger, grated
1½ cups (355 mL) milk
3½ teaspoons sugar (17 mL) (add more as needed to taste)
4 teaspoons (20 mL) strong black tea leaves

DIRECTIONS:

1. Add water to a medium-sized saucepan.
2. Add the spices. Bring water to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes, to let them steep.
3. Remove from heat. Add milk, sugar and tea.
4. Stir and bring mixture back to a boil over medium-high heat. Then reduce heat to very low and let simmer for 25 minutes.
5. Pour into a teapot and then strain into mugs or pour over a strainer directly into cups.

Enjoy! Makes 4 cups of tea.





*To my Nani (aka Api),
Who shared my love of doodh cha*

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