

Joha Makes a Wish: A Middle Eastern Tale

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When Joha's curiosity causes him to open a mysterious jar, he discovers a wooden stick wrapped in parchment. The note reads, "Stranger, you have found a wishing stick. Use it wisely. It can make your wishes come true." Joha thinks it's his lucky day, but he soon discovers that all of his wishes result in the opposite of what he wants! Instead of being granted a new pair of slippers, his worn-out sandals disappear from his feet! So when a procession is headed down the main street, Joha refuses to wish the sultan a long life, for he fears that the opposite will be true. The sultan is furious, and Joha runs for his life. Suddenly, he spies a shopkeeper, who helps him hide and informs him that he has been holding the stick upside-down! "Joha stories" are a fixture of Arabic folklore; this particular rendition is filled with words and illustrations that will teach children about ancient Middle Eastern culture while surely making them laugh. For ages five to eight.

LYDIA BELANGER (July / August 2010)

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