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Ban lauds Jordan's Queen for children's book on cross-cultural understanding



Cover of *The Sandwich Swap* by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah

27 April 2010 – A cultural food fight between “gooey” peanut butter and jelly and “icky” hummus sandwiches leads to global acceptance – at least at the grade-school level – in a colourful picture book [launched](#) today by Queen Rania of Jordan and United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) Eminent Advocate for children.

“I commend Her Majesty Queen Rania for her longstanding commitment to raising awareness about the importance of mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding,” said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the launch of [The Sandwich Swap](#) at the [UN Bookshop](#) in New York.

“Tolerance and peaceful coexistence are core United Nations values and essential to progress in the twenty-first century,” added Mr. Ban, who was joined at the launch by Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Kiyo Akasaka.

The book tells the story of best friends Lily and Salma who play together until one day Lily blurts out that Salma’s hummus sandwich looks yucky, and Salma says her friend’s peanut butter and jelly looks and smells gross.

“The peanut butter versus hummus story had spread, and everyone began choosing sides,” the story continued, culminating in mutual name calling “dress dumb” and “look weird,” and a massive food fight.

The story ends, spoiler alert, with a visit to the principal's office. Shamed, the girls taste each other's sandwiches, only to discover the strange sandwiches are quite tasty, and organize a special international event at the school, illustrated with a special three-page fold-out.

The book, co-written by Kelly DiPucchio and illustrated by Tricia Tusa, is inspired by the usually hummus and pita sandwich-toting Queen's own introduction to peanut butter and jelly by a peer in nursery school.

"She asked if I would like to try it and because I didn't want to hurt her feelings, I braced myself and tasted it. Well, I thought it was heavenly," the Queen explains in the book's author note.

"It's easy to jump to conclusions when we come across something new or foreign or strange," the Queen wrote, adding that if we get to know each other, "we learn something wonderful about someone else and about ourselves."

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