



Save the Children

ASIF AND THE SONGBIRD



A journey of friendship and finding home.



This book is inspired by
the real-life journeys of
Syrian refugee children.

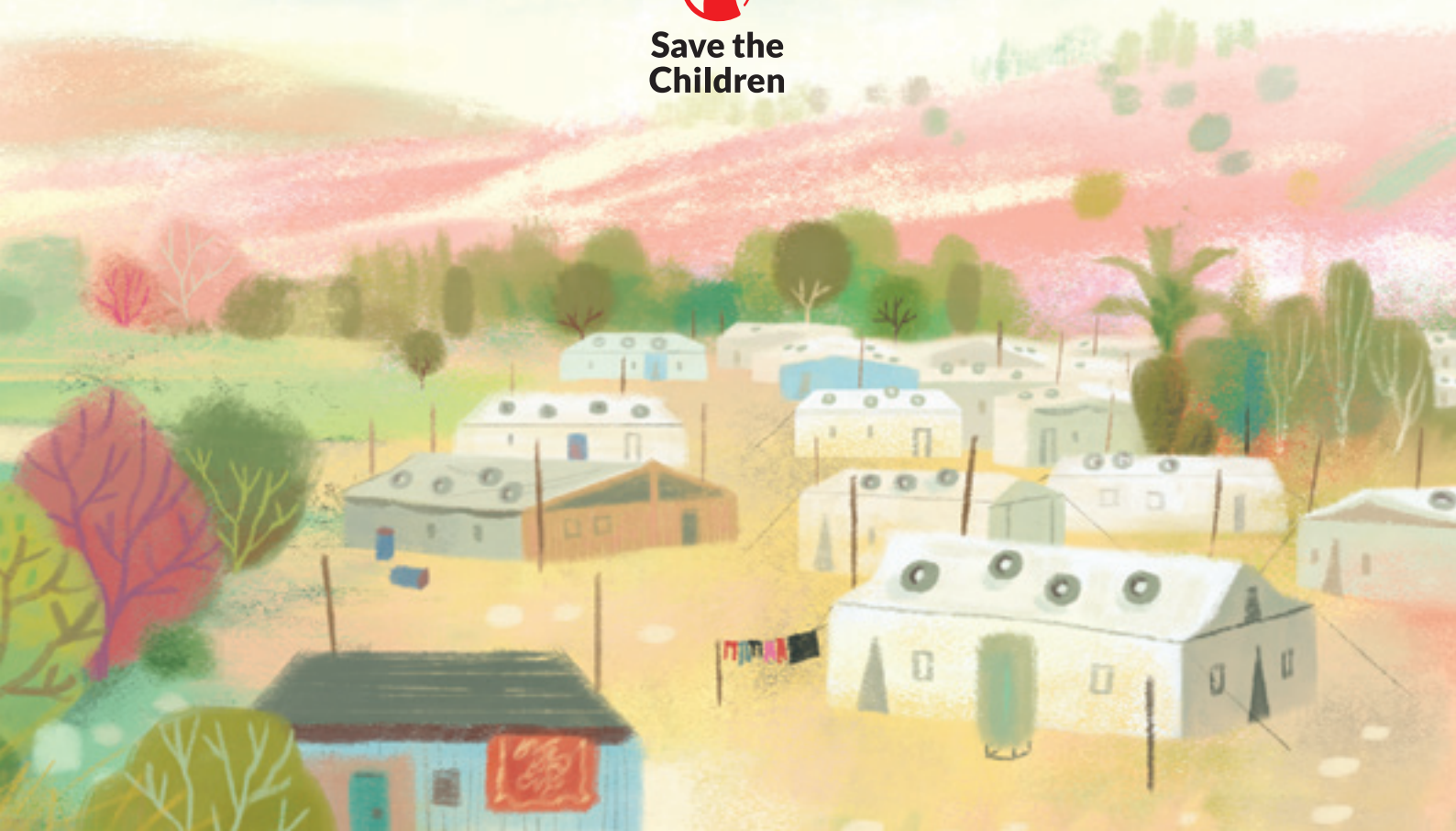
WONDERBOOKS

Told through the eyes of a young boy, *Asif and the Songbird* explores the experiences of children forced to leave behind their homes and friends to find safety in new places.

Save the Children exists to help every child reach their full potential. In the UK and around the world, we make sure children stay safe, healthy and keep learning, so they can become who they want to be.



**Save the
Children**



My name is Asif. And this is Samee, my songbird.
Wherever we go, we go together.
This is where we live.





But we didn't always live here.

We used to live in a beautiful country called Syria. We had a small house, but to us and our family, it was perfect. The outside was covered with flowers, the walls were painted bright colours, and the sun was always shining.



In the morning, we'd all eat breakfast together.
Then I'd sweep the floor with my mum, making
sure the house was always ready for visitors.
There were so many!



During the day, I went
to school with my best
friend, Karam.

He had a bird too, named Adela.
Adela was the brightest red, and
Samee loved her so much.



In the evening, we played in the forest near our village.
We raced our bikes through the trees until nightfall.



I knew we'd always be friends.

In our village, Samee was famous because he had the most beautiful voice of any bird anyone had ever heard.



It was especially beautiful when he sang with Adela.



Samee and Adela could sing happy songs to lift your spirits.
They could sing sad songs to show how much they cared.
They could sing soft songs to help you to sleep. And they
could sing loud songs to wake you up in the morning.



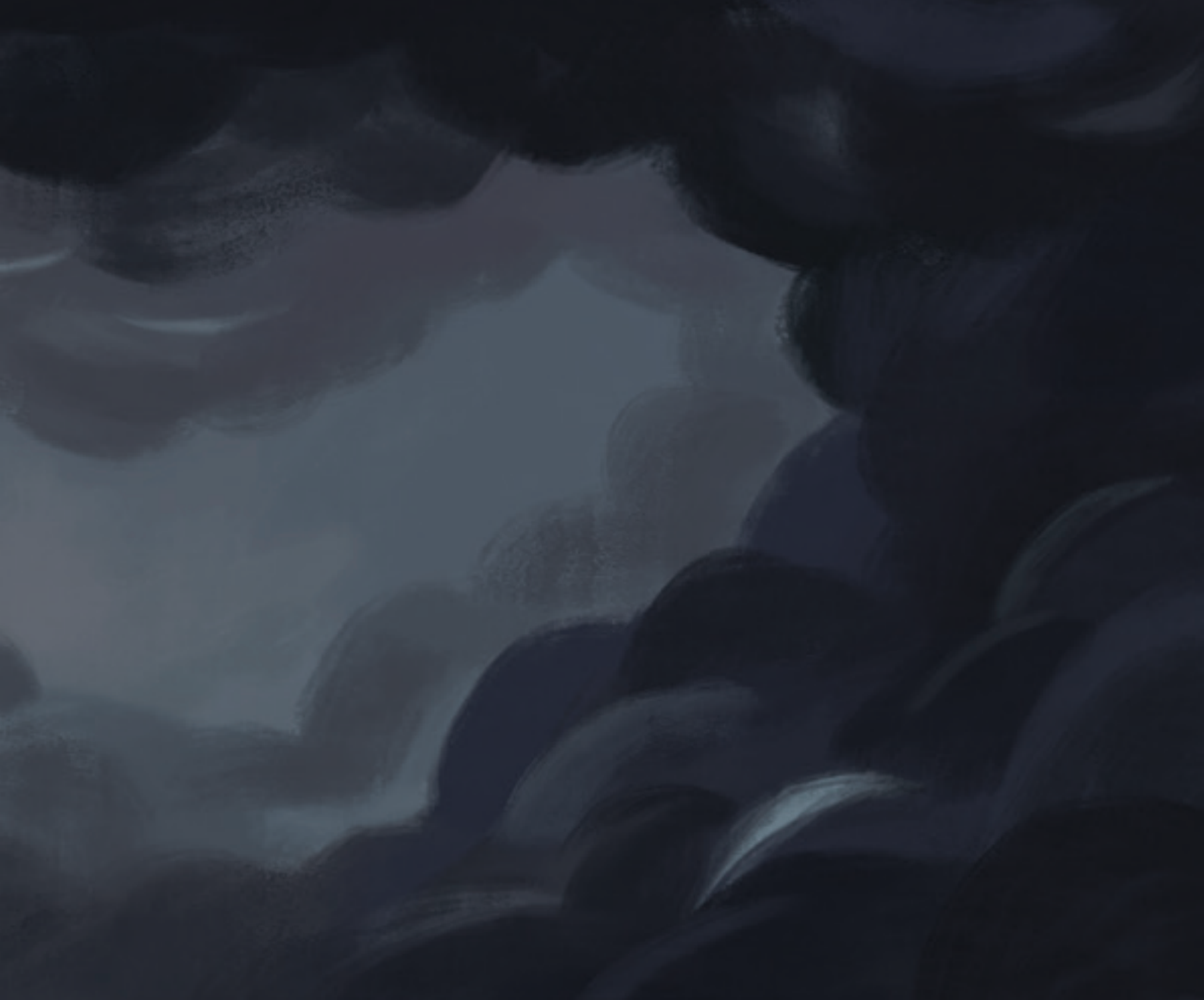
But one day, something strange happened.

Samee and Adela were only seconds into one of their favourite songs when a loud noise interrupted them. It sounded like thunder. They started singing again, but there was another **boom**,

this time much **louder.**



After the noises came bright flashes like lightning.
But they weren't thunder and lightning. It was people fighting.
An ugly war had started in our beautiful country.



I had to stop going to school because it wasn't safe any more. We couldn't leave our house. We couldn't have visitors – not even Karam and Adela. Without her, Samee sang only his sad songs. They were much quieter than before.



Then one day, Samee stopped singing altogether.



Mum decided it was too dangerous for us to stay in Syria.

We had to pack our things and leave in the middle of the night.

We left everything we loved behind.

We were so sad to say goodbye.

We got in a van with other families. It was pitch black, and we couldn't turn on the lights because we were scared someone would stop us and send us back to the fighting.



After the longest night, we arrived in a safer country.

We could turn on the lights,
and we could see again.



We knew the war was behind us.

In our new country, we lived in a tent, not a house. It was made of wood and plastic, and sometimes rain came in through the cracks. We missed the flowers and the bright painted walls of home. And we missed Karam and Adela.

As the weeks passed, life got better. My mum made new friends.



We made new friends, too.



I even went back to school.



But still, Samee would not sing.

One day, Samee and I were walking home from school when we saw a bright red shape soaring in the sky.



The shape got **bigger and bigger**
and brighter and redder
as it moved towards us.
We both recognized that red shape...

Adela!

I ran as fast as I could, and Samee flew
in front of me. I could see
Karam running towards us, too.



Samee and Adela filled the air with their singing.





Everyone in our new country smiled at the sound of their happy songs. They had never heard anything so beautiful.

It's good to be here with our best friends.
We still dream of going back to Syria when it's safe.
It will always be home.



But for now, Samee's song fills this place instead.



THE REAL STORY



This story is inspired by Syrian child refugees who Save the Children meets in camps in Lebanon.

Like Asif's family, a war in Syria meant many families had to leave their homes. Thousands of children and their parents have made the journey to safety in Lebanon, often in the dark, many travelling for hours on foot.

While safer, their new life in a refugee camp can be very hard. Some children have to work to support their families instead of going to school.

To help them recover from everything they've been through, Save the Children sets up special safe spaces where refugee children get the chance to play, sing, learn and just be kids again. And we help children go to school by giving their families cash for food and clothes, so they don't need to send their kids to work.

Thank you for being part of Wonderbooks. Your support helps children like Asif keep safe, healthy, and learning. It gives them the chance of a future they deserve.

To find out more about our work and the children you're supporting, visit [savethechildren.org.uk](https://www.savethechildren.org.uk)



WONDERBOOKS

Every Wonderbook offers a chance for children and families to make their world a little bigger, and a little better. Donations from the books are already helping Save the Children keep children safe, healthy and learning.

As adults, we don't always have the answers to tough questions, especially those beginning with 'why'. Wonderbooks – along with our Grown-Up's Guides (available at wonderbooks.org.uk/books) - are designed to help children talk and learn about important issues, and inspire them to ask big questions about the world they're growing up in.

We hope you have amazing conversations about the issues explored in the stories, and maybe learn something from your little ones too.

If you have any questions or feedback for us,
email wonderbooks@savethechildren.org.uk.



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Our heartfelt thanks goes to all the children and families who have shared their stories with us over time.



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