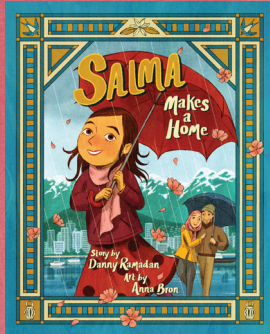




Salma is determined to be the best sister ever.  
But will she be ready in time?

What does it mean to be a big sister? Salma can't find the answer in any of her books, so she decides to write her own guide to being a great sibling. But when she sees Mama get angry with her own brother about who he loves, Salma is confused. Is it okay to be mad at your sibling? How do you fix things after a fight? And if Salma doesn't know now, how will she find all the answers before the baby arrives?

Praise for Book 1:



"A forthright, tender perspective on childhood immigration."

—Kirkus Reviews

Coming soon:  
Book 3!

# SALMA

Joins  
the Team

US \$7.99 / CDN \$9.99

ISBN 978-1-77321-803-8



9 781773 218038

Also available as an e-book

 annick press  
annickpress.com

2

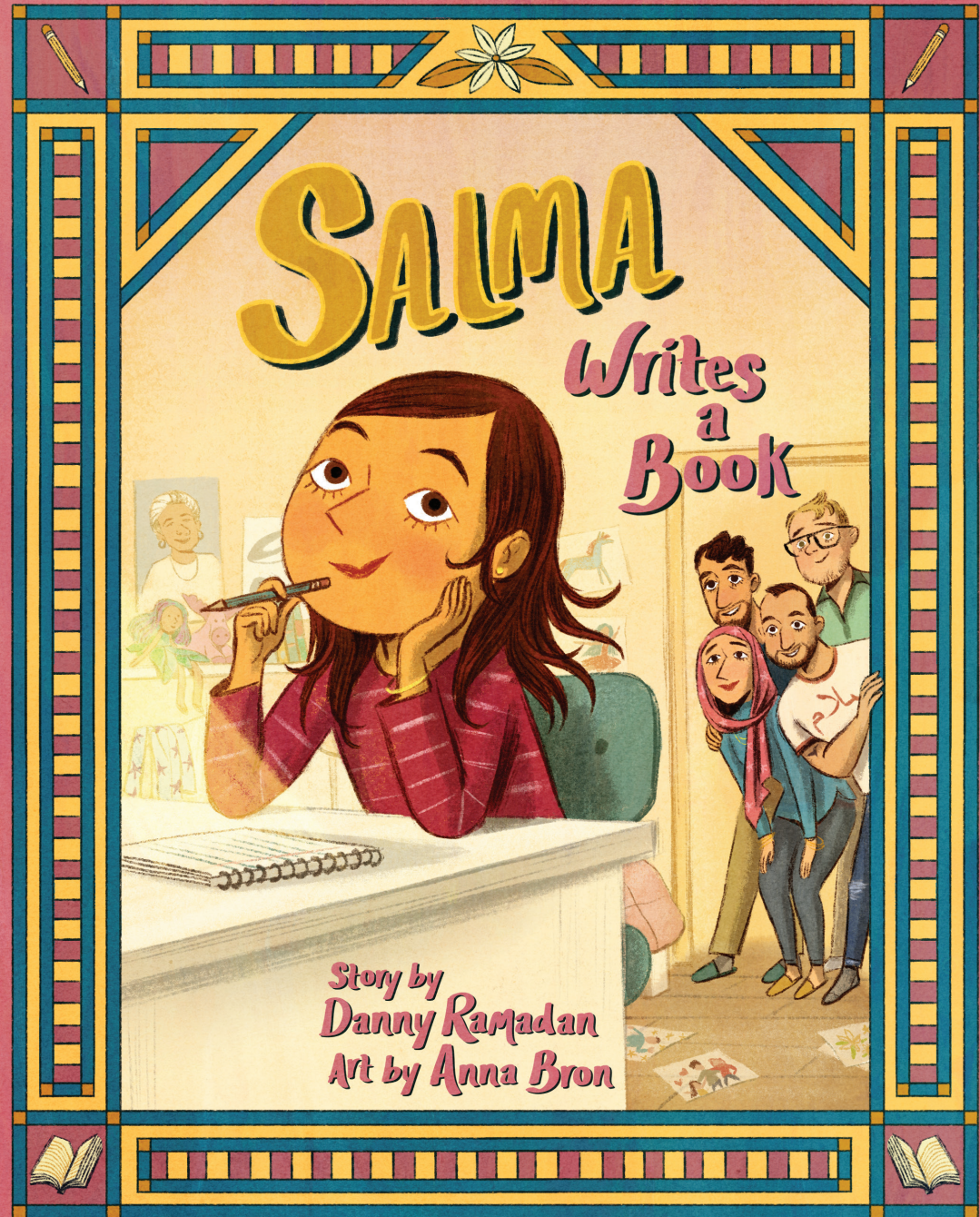
Salma Writes a Book

Ramadan



Bron

annick press



# SALMA

Writes  
a  
Book

Story by  
Danny Ramadan  
Art by Anna Bron





# SALMA

## Writes a Book

Story by  
Danny  
Ramadan

Art by  
Anna  
Bron



© 2023 Danny Ramadan (text)  
© 2023 Anna Bron (illustrations)

Cover art by Anna Bron, designed by Sam Tse  
Interior design by Sam Tse  
Cover and interior based on the series design by Paul Covello

Edited by Claire Caldwell  
Copy edited by Kateri Couture-Latour  
Proofread by Eleanor Gasparik

Annick Press Ltd.

All rights reserved. No part of this work covered by the copyrights hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical—without the prior written permission of the publisher.

We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council, and the participation of the Government of Canada/la participation du gouvernement du Canada for our publishing activities.

Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

### Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: Salma writes a book / story by Danny Ramadan ; art by Anna Bron.  
Names: Ramadan, Ahmad Danny, author. | Bron, Anna, 1989- illustrator.  
Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20230154867 | Canadiana (ebook) 20230154875 |  
ISBN 9781773218021 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781773218038 (softcover) | ISBN  
9781773218045 (HTML) | ISBN 9781773218052 (PDF)  
Classification: LCC PS8635.A4613 S27 2023 | DDC jC813/.6—dc23

Published in the U.S.A. by Annick Press (U.S.) Ltd.  
Distributed in Canada by University of Toronto Press.  
Distributed in the U.S.A. by Publishers Group West.

Printed in Canada

annickpress.com  
dannyramadan.com  
annabron.com

Also available as an e-book. Please visit [annickpress.com/ebooks](http://annickpress.com/ebooks) for more details.



# Chapter 1

Salma fills in the last bits of sky in her family portrait. The blue goes nicely with Vancouver's green forests stretching in the background; the Fraser River twirls throughout. The mountains, tall and capped with white snow, tower over the scene. She adds a beautiful mosaic border around her drawing, then decorates it with jasmine flowers and little birds. In the center, Salma draws her mama and baba holding hands.



Salma adds herself beside Baba, with a big smile on her face.

Beside Mama, Salma draws her uncle, Khalou Dawood.

“Salma, can you go downstairs and help your baba?” Mama says from the kitchen. Salma leaves the coloring pencils scattered around her, takes a final look at her work, and rushes out of her room.

“I am really excited for my khalou’s visit,” she says as she pulls on her rain boots.

“Me, too!” Mama holds Salma’s jacket open so Salma can get her arms into the sleeves. “I haven’t seen my brother in so long!”

Salma slips into the hallway and runs to the elevator.

Salma has heard about her uncle, Khalou Dawood,

for as long as she can remember. He left Syria and came to Canada years before she was born. He studied at a university in a faraway city called Toronto, then found a job and stayed. But Khalou Dawood moved to Vancouver recently, and now he's finally visiting them in their new home.

The elevator opens on the garage level. Salma spots Baba pulling the last bag out of the trunk of their car. He hands it to Salma, and she is surprised it's not full of groceries like all the others. The cloth bag has Salma's favorite bookstore logo on it.

"Wow!" Salma says. "Did you buy me new coloring books?"

"No, Salma, these books are for your mother and me."

Salma sneaks a look at the titles. She can read them but isn't sure what they mean.

“Have you ever met my khalou, Baba?” Salma asks as they ride the elevator back to their floor.

“I did, once, a long time ago—way before you were born,” Baba says.

Salma has never had an uncle before. At least not nearby. Her friends tell her of the adventures their favorite uncles take them on, like a day trip to the amusement park, or a night drive to a kids’ theater show, and the many candies and toys they offer. Riya’s uncle even lets her play her favorite songs loud in his car when he drives them somewhere. Now, Salma will get to do all of this, too. And it will be even more fun, because Khalou Dawood will be the best khalou in the whole wide world.

“Why hasn’t he visited us before?” Salma asks. Toronto might be far, but it’s not as far as Syria.



Ayman's uncle even visited once from Prince Edward Island, and that's so far away, the sun rises there four hours before it does in Vancouver.

"You will have to ask your mama." The elevator doors open, and she follows her baba out.

Salma takes the books to her parents' bedroom. Then, she sets the table while Mama organizes ingredients next to a big cooking pot, preparing for the big meal.

"Why hasn't my khalou visited us before, Mama?" Salma asks, but Mama doesn't answer right away. Salma looks over and sees Mama standing still, holding the lid of the pot. Her eyes look faraway and her lips quiver.

"Mama?" Salma says.

Mama snaps out of her trance. She takes a deep

breath, puts the lid down, then sprinkles some spices on the meal. But she still doesn't answer Salma. She is about to ask her question again when Mama finally looks her in the eyes.

“When we were young,” Mama says, “your khalou and I used to play pranks on your grandparents all the time.”

“Oh, so that's where Salma gets her pranks from!” Baba jokes from the couch.

“No. My pranks are all original,” Salma teases. “No one is a better prankster than me!”

Everyone laughs. Salma smiles, too, proud of her joke. But Mama still has not answered her question. There is something her parents don't want to talk about. She knows it's not polite to insist, but curiosity is overwhelming her.



A few hours later, the smell of fried eggplants and minced meat fills the apartment.

“I’ll get it!” Salma shouts when the doorbell rings. She swings open the door and finds her khalou on the other side. She recognizes him from photos: he is tall, with brown skin glimmering like sand on the riverbank, and wide black eyes. She jumps into his arms, and he gives her a big squeeze.

“Salma! What a big girl you are!”

“I am the tallest girl in my class!” she announces proudly.

“I am sure you are also the smartest.” He pats her hair.

“Dawood!” Mama passes Salma and hugs her brother. She kisses him on both cheeks, then pulls him in for a second hug.

“It has been too long.” Khalou shakes Baba’s hand. The family gathers in the living room, and Salma sits right by her khalou’s side. She listens as the family chitchats, laughs at her baba’s jokes, and watches her mama dote on her brother.

“I wish I’d met you years ago, Khalou,” Salma says, and Khalou pulls her in for a hug. Finally, Salma asks the question that’s been on her mind. “Why haven’t you come to visit before?”

The grown-ups go silent. Baba’s face is concerned, and Mama’s has the same look she had earlier: like she’s remembering something sad. Khalou hesitates, then finally says, “You see, Salma, your mama and I had a big fight.”

“We don’t talk about this anymore,” Mama interrupts. Her voice is a bit too loud.

“Salma is growing up in Canada, sister,” Khalou insists. “I won’t be the last man she meets who is married to another m—”

“No. Please stop talking.” Mama interrupts again. This time, there is anger in her eyes, as if Khalou broke her favorite vase or spilled rice all over the



living room floor.

Khalou takes a deep breath. He looks at Mama as if he is about to say something, then rests his eyes on Salma and gives her a small smile. “Yes, you are right,” he says to Mama. “We won’t talk about this.”

“Let’s eat, then,” Mama says quickly.

At the dinner table, it’s as if someone broke glass dishes all over the floor, and everyone is afraid to step on a sharp piece. Salma wiggles in her seat. She imagined her first meeting with Khalou to be filled with happy moments, but instead it’s tense. What are the grown-ups not telling her?