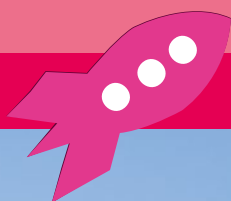


THE WHOLE WORLD IN SCHOOL 2018

THE
**READING
ROCKET**



IN JORDAN



GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION
www.campaignforeducation.org



OXFAM
IBIS

THE READING ROCKET

2018



Welcome to the Reading Rocket 2018 / **4**
A quick guide to Jordan / **6**

LEVEL 1 AND READING ALOUD

Weekend in the desert / **8**
By Line Agerlin Trolle

LEVEL 2

We come from Syria / **20**
By Line Agerlin Trolle

You need a good wind / **28**
By Line Agerlin Trolle

Santa's special place / **34**
By Line Agerlin Trolle

LEVEL 3

The brothers can see home / **40**
By Line Agerlin Trolle

Forefathers, Facebook and future / **48**
By Line Agerlin Trolle



Welcome to the Reading Rocket 2018



The Reading Rocket forms part of an annual teaching material within the Danish Education Campaign called “The Whole World in School”. It is produced by the Danish NGO Oxfam IBIS. Oxfam works in over 90 countries with the overall goal of ending poverty in the world.

The Whole World in School is Oxfam IBIS’s teaching material for pupils in primary and lower secondary school. It comprises the Danish contribution to the “Global Campaign for Education”. Together with organisations in more than 100 countries, we shine a spotlight on children’s right to go to school and to receive an education of good quality. By using our materials, you take part in highlighting global education in schools.

Every year, the book has a new focus country. This year, Jordan has been chosen. The book portrays children and young people from that country. Its pages bring the world into the classroom, engage students in global affairs and stimulate the pleasure of reading. The texts are divided into three levels targeting children from pre-primary to grade 8.

In 2015, world leaders adopted new goals for global development. These 17 Sustainable Development Goals apply to all countries in the world, rich as well as poor. The goals are set to be achieved by 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals set the framework for our teaching series. Main focus is on quality education for all, ending poverty, reducing inequality, combating climate change, achieving equality between women and men, and bringing about more peace and justice in the world.

Quality education for all creates development and is the path to a more equal world. When you set out to explore the texts in the Reading Rocket, you help draw attention to all children’s right to attend a good school.

Enjoy the reading!



Mie Roesdahl

General Secretary, Oxfam IBIS





IT IS AROUND 3200 KM IN A STRAIGHT LINE FROM COPENHAGEN TO AMMAN, WHICH IS THE CAPITAL OF JORDAN.



A QUICK GUIDE TO Jordan

AMMAR AND MOHAMMAD FROM IRBID



LEBANON

MUNA FROM ZA'ATARI



SYRIA

IRAQ

NIDAL FROM BAQA'A



ISRAEL

DET BESATTE PALÆSTINENSISKE OMRÅDE

- IRBID
- ZA'ATARI
- BAQA'A
- AMMAN

• ADIR

SANTA FROM ADIR



JORDAN

SAUDI-ARABIA

SHAHED FROM AMMAN



HAMAD FROM WADI RUM



• WADI RUM

Jordan lies in the Middle East. It covers about 90.000 square kilometres, which makes it about twice as large as Denmark. The population of Jordan is around 10 million people. Almost one third of them live in the capital, Amman.



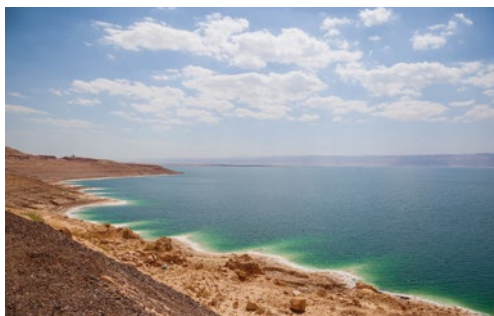
Jordan is one of the driest countries in the world. The summer is very dry and hot. The winter is short and mild. The northern part of the country has mountains and green valleys. There is desert with rocks and sand to the east and the south.



Throughout the millennia, many people have come to the area called Jordan today. Islam is the most dominant religion, but other religions are also found in Jordan, for example Christianity and Judaism.



To the west is the Jordan Valley, where the Jordan River runs into the Dead Sea. There is so much salt in the Dead Sea, that hardly anything can live there, and you float on the water, when you swim.





HAMAD

Weekend in the desert

 LINE AGERLIN TROLLE  WILLIAM VEST-LILLESØE

Hamad is sitting in the big car, close to his brother and two sisters. It is hot. The car is rattling along through the loose sand. Hamad looks out of the window. The town behind them has gone. There are rocks and sand in every direction. Hamad is looking forward to this. It is weekend, and they are on their way into the desert.



Hamad is six years old. He has two homes. One is a house in a small village, the other is a large tent in the desert. His family spends weekends in the desert. Both the village and the desert are called Wadi Rum.

Hamad's grandparents were Bedouins. His family still has tents and animals. They have sheep, goats and camels. Bedouins come from the desert. Some make a living from their animals. They move around to let their animals find food and water. Hamad should know about life in the desert. That is what his father says.





Early in the morning, Hamad loads the donkey. The donkey carries water, food, cups and a teapot. Then Hamad and his brother, Thaher, herd the animals along. They are going out to find plants for the animals to eat.



Hamad is taking care of the many goats and sheep. "I am always learning new things in the desert. I've just learned to ride our donkey. It's more fun than walking. I often sit on it the whole day. I'm also looking forward to riding the camels. I'm allowed to do that, when I'm seven."





In the evening, the animals drink water at home by the tent. They have brought the water in the big car. Hamad turns on the hose. The animals are very excited. He must be careful they do not step on him.



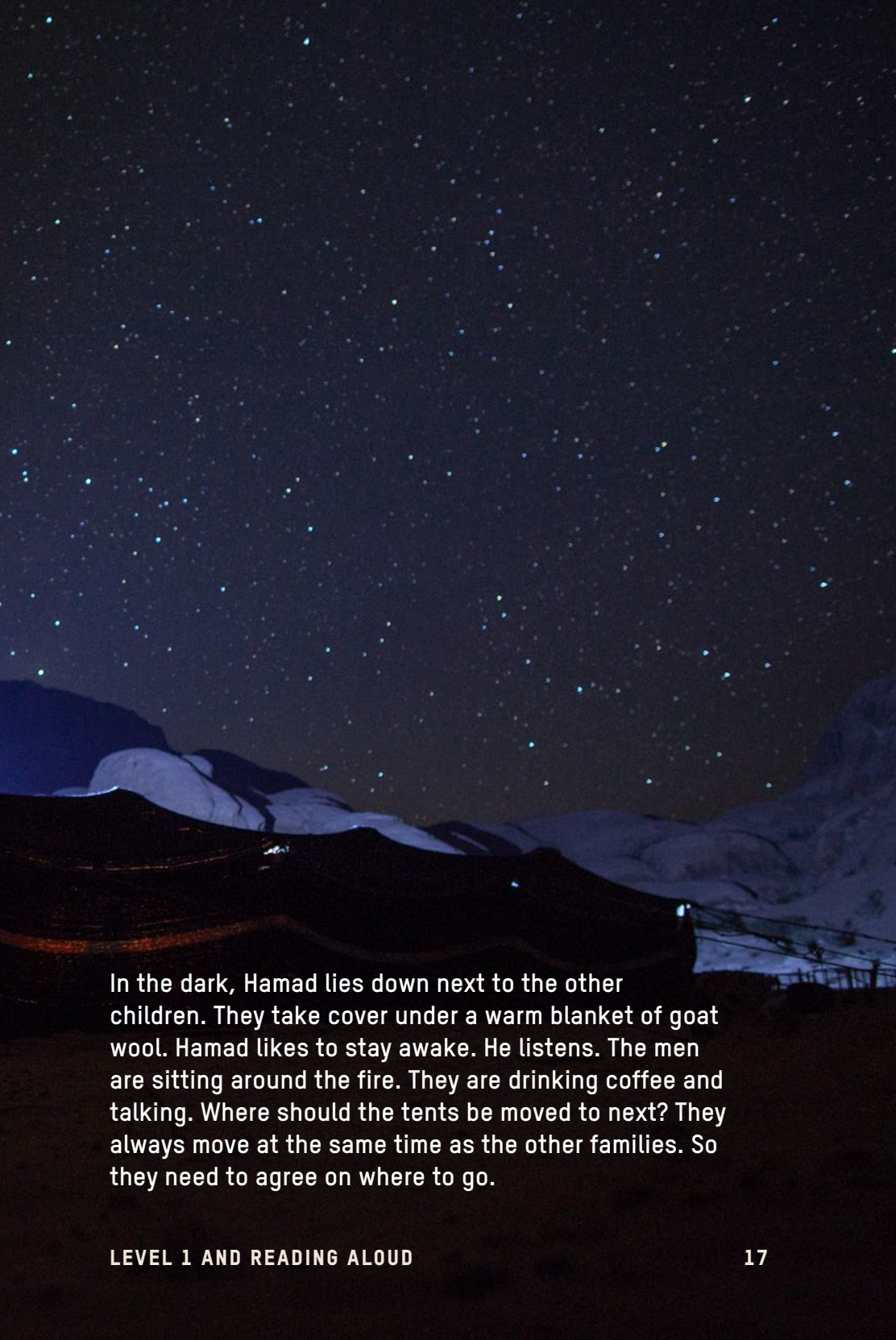


In the last light of day, Hamad and Thaher play with their sister Naseem. They play with the lambs and jump around in the sand. "I like the sand. We can play as much as we want. We have this fun game. It's called seeja. You have to take the other player's stones away."



As soon as the sun sets, it gets cold. Very cold. They run back to the tent. They can smell the shrak. That is the flatbread baked by Hamad's mother. They eat shrak and meat. It tastes delicious, and has a whiff of smoke from the fire.





In the dark, Hamad lies down next to the other children. They take cover under a warm blanket of goat wool. Hamad likes to stay awake. He listens. The men are sitting around the fire. They are drinking coffee and talking. Where should the tents be moved to next? They always move at the same time as the other families. So they need to agree on where to go.



Hamad is listening to music. It is his cousin, Mohammad, playing the rababah. It looks a bit like a guitar. But it only has one string. Mohammad sings about the wolf. It cries in the night, because it is hungry. Hamad shudders. Perhaps the wolf is prowling about in the dark. He has never seen it. Only its footprints. But the lambs are safe, because the dogs are on guard by the tent.



Hamad loves the desert. But he is also looking forward to returning to the village. There he can watch television and buy sweets at the corner store.





MUNA

We come from Syria

 **LINE AGERLIN TROLLE**  **WILLIAM VEST-LILLESØE**

The streets are deserted, and there is quiet between the white container houses. Most of them are fenced in, using sheet metal to prevent people from looking inside. A large water tank is in front of each house. It is the middle of the day, and the sun beats down from above. The wind stirs up the dust, blurring the line between earth and sky. Almost everyone is indoors right now. But not Muna.

Actually, she was only supposed to buy a few things for her mother in the market street. A cup and a bowl. She has got them in the plastic bag already. But then she could not help having a look at the other shops too. Muna likes to take a peek at the shop with the beautiful wedding dresses. Now she must hurry home.

Muna is ten years old and lives with her grandmother, aunt, mother, brothers and sisters in Za'atari in the northern part of Jordan. Za'atari is a big refugee camp located close to the border to Syria. Everybody in the camp have fled from Syria. Muna's family arrived here when Muna was six. At first, they got a tent to stay in. Back then her father was still alive. He died three years ago in an accident. In the early days in the camp, Muna struggled to fall asleep at night. She was afraid somebody would enter the tent in the dark while they were asleep. Thankfully, this never happened.

Now Muna is living in a container house. Muna's mother would like to live in a real house outside the camp. But if they move out, they can no longer be with Muna's aunt and grandmother. That is why the family is staying together in the camp for the time being.

"My mum would prefer to return back home to Syria. But that's not possible yet. My girlfriend from Syria is still there. We talk on

the phone. She's not allowed to tell me what it's like in Syria now. Because perhaps the phone is tapped. But she says they'll soon come to Jordan. Everyday I hope they will. Then we can play together again."

Muna's school

There are schools in the camp too. Muna's school is made up of many large containers. In the morning, it fills up with girls. And in the afternoon, it is the boys' turn to go to school. Muna's class has 24 girls, and Muna almost always sits next to her cousin. Muna's favourite teacher is called Wafa. She teaches the Arabic lessons. Today Wafa told them about the Dead Sea. She said there is so much salt in the water, it makes you float on top. Muna imagined going there with her family. It would be so much fun to swim in the salty water. Muna would like to be like Wafa when she grows up.

In the breaks, Muna and the other kids play outside in the yard surrounded by a large fence. Today three fighter planes flew low over the camp, filling the sky with noise. Muna and the other girls quickly hunched down.

Muna and her cousin Arwa like the Arabic classes at school.





Muna lives with her family. They have brought some photos of Muna's father from Syria.



They screamed and laughed nervously. Though nothing happened, Muna still does not like the planes.

We came here from Syria

Muna does not remember everything from Syria. But she knows they had a big house with two bathrooms. Muna remembers the wide garden full of fruit trees. Whenever the bombers flew over, they would hide under the trees, because only houses were targeted.

One day a rocket came crashing through the window of their house, right into the room where Muna was playing. But it did not explode. It was then the family decided to flee. They hastily packed some photographs and a few pieces of clothing. Muna's mother thought they would return after a month, two at most. Some of the photographs are of Muna's father. Muna misses him every day. He was the one who helped her during her first time in Jordan, when she was afraid of going outside.

Muna helps her mother cook and fetch water from the large tank. It stands in front of their house.







The refugee camp Za'atari is one of the biggest refugee camps in the world. It gives shelter to about 80,000 people. All of them have fled from Syria to Jordan.

“My dad would take my hand. We’d go for walks together every day. He used to point at the sky, saying: look, no planes, there’s peace here.”

A new friend

When Muna comes home, her mother is still at work. Her mother teaches other camp dwellers to recycle and sort their household waste. She gets a little money for that, which the family spends on things for the home and sometimes on toys. Muna does her homework. Then she helps her grandmother sweep between the containers, prepare lunch, and wash the dishes. Muna also fetches water from the tank in front of the house. Muna’s mother has a little garden, which she waters. Saffron flowers and other spices grow there and are used in their cooking.

After Muna has finished helping her grandmother, she and her sister Maha walk to the playground. Muna catches sight of a girl she does not know. The girl stands by the swings in a pretty pink dress and a headscarf of the same colour. Muna sits down on a swing. She looks at the girl and asks if she would like to play. The girl says yes. They swing up high, and play on the little merry-go-round until they get all dizzy.

The girl’s name is Mariam. They talk and talk all the way back home, and find out they are almost neighbours. Muna and Mariam also discover they come from the same place in Syria. It is a good feeling. And now Muna and Mariam can play together every day.





NIDAL

You need a good wind

 **LINE AGERLIN TROLLE**  **WILLIAM VEST-LILLESØE**

“NOW!” shouts Nidal. Mahmoud jumps as high as he can and launches it. Ibrahim has had to pick up the kite over and over, but they try once more. The three brothers are standing on a small hilltop behind the house. They are trying to get the kite to fly, but the wind is no good today.

Nidal is 13 years old and lives in the town Baqa’a with his mother, father, two brothers, and two sisters. They live in a small house outside a Palestinian refugee camp. The houses in the camp are packed close together, and the streets are narrow, but otherwise it looks like an ordinary town. Nidal’s mother would rather live inside the camp, but the rent there is too high. She often worries when the boys are playing. In some places, shreds of rusty cables stick out from the soil. They must be careful not to step on them. There is a sweltering stench of bird droppings and household waste, and the ground is littered with plastic bags, old shoes and things that no longer work. Nidal’s mother is also afraid the wild dogs will bite the children, or that they will go missing.

A massive V-shaped figure moves across the sky. Nidal tilts his head upwards. He looks at the pigeons flying in amazing formations: an arch, a circle, a W. He often climbs up on the roof of their shed. When he stands there and whistles, it is as if the pigeons react to it. Nidal’s neighbour has many different animals, but Nidal likes the pigeons best. Sometimes he imagines that he himself can fly. He would fly high above and look down on the town – on the many sand coloured houses perched on the slopes, on children playing in the streets, and on people lining up at the falafel shop.

Nidal and the school

Nidal must leave the kite behind, because it is time to go to school. He is on the afternoon shift. The family used to have a bicycle, but they had to sell it. So now he has to walk for 30 minutes to attend classes. He grabs his schoolbag and runs off with his friends Mohammad and Abdullah.

Nidal likes to go to school. But even though he is a sixth grader, he struggles to read and write. His mother says it is because the school is not very good. There are many students in each class and the teachers are not always there. Nidal is fond of maths, and he would like to become a doctor when he grows up. Then he could help his father, who suffers from back pain. But it is expensive to go to university. The family can barely afford to buy notebooks, pencils and a schoolbag. Fortunately, the school is free of charge, and they give out school books there. If he cannot become a doctor, Nidal has thought of becoming an electrician, because that can be studied

Nidal's brothers attend school inside the refugee camp. Nidal and his friends go to school further away from home.





Nidal's grandmother is called Zakeye. He visits her almost every day. They sit on the floor in the living room, while she tells stories from her childhood.

for free, and then he could repair lots of things in the house. Last winter, a part of the roof collapsed under the snow, and the family received help to rebuild it. An electrician paid them a visit. He knew how to pull together the coloured wires with his little pair of pliers, and he got the switches to work again.

Grandmother's stories

On his way home from school, Nidal visits his grandmother. At her place, he can play with all his cousins, girls as well as boys. Nidal's grandmother lives inside the Baqa'a camp. She came to Jordan 70 years ago, and all her grandchildren love it when she tells about her childhood.

She sits on a mattress, reclined against the wall, in her embroidered Palestinian dress, recounting: "When I was a child, we had sheep and cattle, which we milked. We'd make our own cheese and yoghurt. It was a good life in that little village. Everybody knew



Nidal's brothers Mahmoud and Ibrahim are twins. They always come along and help out when Nidal is flying his kites.

everybody. We used to take the animals out to find food for them, and then we'd return in the evening. There were always lots of visitors. The house was full of chatting and laughing and friends sharing a meal with us."

Nidal is what is called Palestinian Jordanian, and he is proud of being both. He'd like to visit his grandmother's childhood village some day.

A kite is built

The children run to play outside. Nidal wants to build a new kite. The others are gathered around him, watching. He has taught himself to make kites, and today he is going to make one in the shape of a star. He imagines it will look like a shooting star in the sky when it flies. Nidal's fingers move nimbly. They know exactly where to wind the strings around the sticks at the right angles to get the plastic tight against the frame. It is great to be a good kite maker, Nidal thinks. He has also taught his friends how to do it.

Now the kite is ready to take off. Nidal gets a bit nervous, with all the other kids watching. Ibrahim throws the kite into the air, and Nidal pulls hard. The kite rises a little, but then comes crashing to the ground. Mahmoud picks it up, while Nidal winds the string up. They try again. The kite dives behind a wall. Nidal holds his breath, pulling the string in jerks. Then it happens. The kite comes into view. With each little pull the kite goes higher. Now he can steer it. At last the wind is good. The kite veers to one side and then to another. Its black plastic tail glitters in the sun, as it draws huge arches in the sky.





SANTA

Santa's special place

 LINE AGERLIN TROLLE  WILLIAM VEST-LILLESØE

Santa and George are climbing up into the tall tree. They sit down on a branch and tell secrets to one another. George is a little nervous. He is about to start at the big school in the bigger town. Santa thinks it will be exciting, even though she is going to miss him. She is looking forward to hearing about the new school, because in one year, that is where she is going too.

Santa is eight years old and lives with her mother, father and little brother Elias in the village of Adir. It has a school that teaches grades 1 to 3. Santa is a second-grader, but when she becomes a fourth-grader, she will take the bus to the big school in Karak.

George is Santa's cousin and best friend. They are neighbours. Some 50 members of their family live close to one another. Between their houses is a big lush garden with bushes and some great climbing trees. The garden also has some old wagons and tools that were once used to work the land. Santa and George can spend hours climbing in the trees and on the big wagon. They get butterflies in their stomachs when they go up high, so they compete to see who can get highest.

Church is important

Santa and George always stick together. They did that too the first time they helped the priest do his service. They had practised many times before, but when they stood there next to the priest in front of all those churchgoers, Santa got very nervous. Her job was to pour water and oil for the priest. Suddenly, she got scared that she would spill it on her pretty white dress. Her hands were shaking, as she had to pour the oil. She managed.

“Thank Goodness George was there. When we had to walk around with the church box to collect coins, I missed a row. It made me blush! But then George and I went back together. Then it was fine. Now I love helping the priest in church on Sundays. What I like most is to light the candles.”

In Jordan, most people are Muslims, but Adir also has many Christians. Santa recalls a fire that happened in the town some time ago. When they arrived to the church next morning, a part of it had burned down. It looked eerie. The walls were black and the roof was gone. Before long, a lot of people, Christians as well as Muslims, gathered to help each other rebuild the church.

A Christian school for all

At school, Santa’s class is learning a new song, called “The Green Field”. It is about nature and the seasons. Santa twirls her arms and laughs to the pupil sitting next to her, while all the children sing as

When Santa and George have had enough of climbing trees, they play basketball. Santa has to convince George to play, because she is quick and good at getting the ball in the basket.





Santa and all of her family are Christians.
They go to church every Sunday.

loud as they can. The teacher sings first, gesticulating, and then the whole class does the same. They sing the song again and again, until they have memorised it.

Everyone in Santa's school wears a white shirt and blue trousers, both girls and boys. This is their uniform in the Christian school. Santa's classmates are both Muslims and Christian. It is not so important who follows which religion. Santa and her friends just like to play together.

When it is time for a break, Santa and the others run down to the schoolyard. The sun is beating down, and it is already hot. Santa and her girlfriend Yana sit down under a tree. Santa grabs the lunchbox prepared by her father. Santa's father works hard to be able to afford her school. He owns a garage in the big town of Karak. He works six



days a week, and often comes home after Santa has gone to bed. Every morning, he gets Santa's lunch ready.

Today is Thursday, and Santa is bringing home two camels from school. Well, they're two stuffed animals called Jamal and Jamal. And Jamal means camel in Arabic. She proudly presents them to her mother, because she has been a good student that week. She has to bring them back to school on Saturday. Because at Santa's school, their two days off are Friday, the Muslim holiday, and Sunday, the Christian holiday.

Santa wants to be a painter

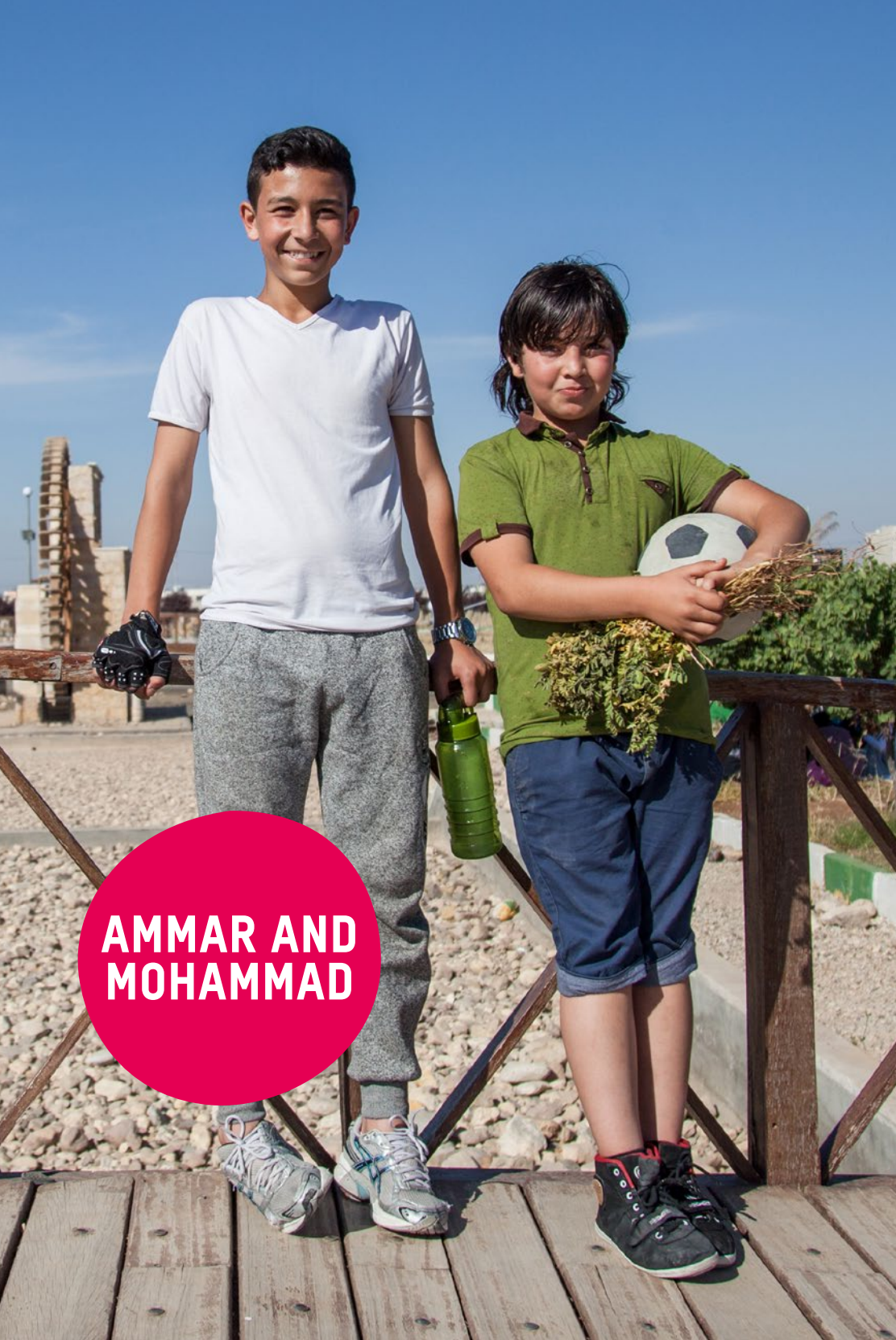
Santa is fond of drawing. She would like to become a painter. She always tries her best to make the drawings really beautiful. She makes up all kinds of patterns and pretty things in her mind, and then she draws them.

"Whenever I draw, I get to decide what the world should look like."

When Santa's father comes home that night, Santa is still awake. He enters her room. They lie belly down on the floor next to one another with paper and colours in front of them. Santa loves to draw with her dad. They draw a very special place together on the paper.

"This is my dream place. There are many trees with fruits on, and a garden where the family can always be. There are lots of chickens too. That's because I'm good at drawing chickens."



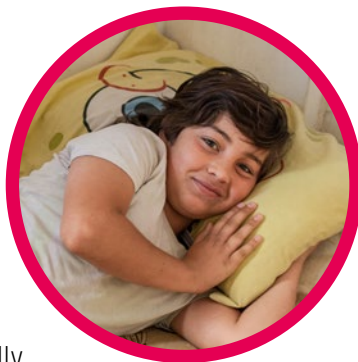


**AMMAR AND
MOHAMMAD**

The brothers can see home

 LINE AGERLIN TROLLE  WILLIAM VEST-LILLESØE

Mohammad is lying down, looking at the ceiling. It's Friday morning, so there is no school. His brother and two male cousins are still asleep, each on their own mattress. Mohammad woke up in the middle of a dream. For a long time, he suffered nightmares about bombs raining down, and about buildings on fire. Thankfully, this a long time ago now. He does not remember last night's dream very clearly, but it was a nice one. He was at home in Syria in their big house, where he played with their cat and two dogs on the terrace. He used to take care of all the family's animals. His mother and father were in the dream too. He has not thought of them for a while.



Ammar, Mohammad's brother, is yawning loudly. The night before, the two brothers lay whispering together for a long time. They talked about Syria and how they used to celebrate Eid with the whole family and play outside from sunrise to sunset. Ammar remembered how they used to collect coins in the streets and compete with the other children about who could do the longest shots with little plastic shooters.

Mohammad is 12 and Ammar is 14 years old. They live together with their three aunts, two uncles, two male cousins and four female cousins in a small apartment in the town of Irbid. Their father died of cancer in Syria before the war began. Their mother accompanied them when they arrived in Jordan, but she returned to Syria soon after. Because of the war, it was safer for the boys to stay in Jordan. They do not often talk about their mother, because it makes them sad.

The escape from Syria

Ammar and Mohammad arrived in Jordan in 2012. It feels like a long time ago now. Ammar remembers they had a good house in Syria, where each of them had their own room. They had both a PlayStation and a computer. The school was right next to their house, and they had many friends in town. But then the war broke out.

Ammar has thought a lot about the people who remain in Syria. And about their own escape.

“We said goodbye to our friends, but back then it wasn’t that sad, because we were looking forward to visiting a new country. We packed our stuff quickly, taking just a few clothes with us, because we believed we’d return after a week.”

Before the escape, from their house they could sometimes hear rockets and bombs exploding. The family was warned that bigger bombs would follow, and that the town would be surrounded. That

Ammar and Mohammad share a room with their cousins, Saif and Mohammad. They sleep on a madras each on the floor, and they enjoy to sleep in.





Ammar helps aunt Nahla by buying bread for breakfast in the store across the street.

was why they decided to flee. Mohammad recalls how they had to be smuggled out in a dark van without windows, because public buses were being fired upon.

“The van dropped us off in a valley, and then we had to cross the border by foot. We were so scared of being discovered. It was a long walk, and the slope was very steep. When we finally made it to the other side of the valley, we met some Jordanians who had brought dates for us. They had been told we were arriving, and they drove us to a camp. We spent one night there in a tent, and then we moved on to stay with our family.”

Friday is special

Friday is a very special day, because Ammar and Mohammad go to the mosque to perform the prayer. Friday is also their only day off from school in the week. Ammar is hoping for a visit to their uncle later in the day. If his uncle’s friend passes by, he might drive them



For breakfast they have *fatteh*, which is yoghurt with bread. They also have *foul* made of beans, and *makdous* made of aubergine.

to the park. They have been there a couple of times before, but it is far, and they cannot afford a taxi ride to get there.

The brothers' aunt Nahla has prepared breakfast. The whole family is sitting on the floor, passing the food around, while Ammar serves tea for everyone. After that, the boys wash themselves, comb their hair and put their *dishdashas* on. This is the long robe they always wear in the mosque. Mohammad and Ammar sit down with the *Quran* and take turns to read the verse of the day. It is called "*Al-Kahf*", which means "the cave". They don't read it out loud, but they move their lips as they read.

It takes five minutes to walk to the mosque. The brothers are followed by their uncle Abdalnasen. They have arrived late today, so it is full of people inside. They sit down outside with many other

men. The Imam's prayer rings out from the loudspeakers. The men are kneeling in rows, everyone facing the same direction towards Mekka.

After the prayer, crowds fill the streets. The sun is beating down from a blue sky. Some people are greeting, smiling and chatting, others are buying fresh chickpeas and water melons along the road.

Newcomer in Jordan

Ammar and Mohammad go to school six days a week, because they do not have that many hours each day. Their school teaches Jordanian children in the morning, and Syrian children in the afternoon. The brothers have fallen a little behind in their schooling, because they had to move several times when they had just arrived in Jordan. Last time they moved, it was to get away from some neighbours who did not like having Syrians living close to them. One day, Mohammad met one of the neighbours' boys in the park across the



**The men and boys go to the mosque on Fridays.
The women and girls pray at home.**





street. They pushed him and he fell. They held him on the ground, and one of them had a piece of broken glass in his hand. He tried to cut Mohammad with it. Ammar came running and helped him, so Mohammad got away with some scratches on his arm. But after that, he was afraid of running into them again. And he was angry. Aunt Nahla reported it to the police, but their advice was that the family should move somewhere else.

After returning from the mosque, the boys relax a little on a mattress in the living room. They play the game "Al-Qa'ed" – "Who's the leader?" – and a kind of "Hide the thimble". They play rough and tumble, do arm wrestling and have fun with uncle Abdalnasen. After drinking their tea, someone knocks on the door. It is their uncle's friend. He smiles from ear to ear and asks if they want to go out with him.

In the park, they play football. The boys win against Abdalnasen and his friend. At one point, Mohammad goes missing, but Ammar knows where to look. The park has some cages with various kinds of birds. Mohammad sits by the parrots and passes blades of grass through the net. He thinks the parrots are the prettiest of them all, as they fly around. Ammar picks some grass and gives it to his brother.

Ammar and Mohammad like to live in Irbid now that they have got many new friends and kind neighbours. Some of their best friends are Jordanians and live in the same building. Irbid is not far from home. Sometimes the brothers stand on the roof of their building and look north. They can see all the way to Syria. On some days, they hear bombs too. Ammar and Mohammad hope they can move home one day.





SHAHED

Forefathers, Facebook and future

 LINE AGERLIN TROLLE  WILLIAM VEST-LILLESØE

The schoolgirls are sitting in “the secret garden”. They enjoy spending their break in the shade. They laugh out loud, but quickly hush each other up. They usually play volleyball or football, but right now it is exam time. That means they have to be quiet during breaks, which is why they mostly sit in the garden, chatting away.



Shahed is 13 years old and attends 7th grade in a private school for girls only. Though it is a Christian school, Shahed only has five Christian classmates. Shahed is proud to be a Muslim, and she is looking forward to Ramadan, which begins in a couple of days.

“To me Islam is about peace. When I fast during the Ramadan, I feel on my body what it’s like to be without something. We swap night for day, eating nothing during daylight hours. If I get hungry, I sit down with the Mibaha chain, moving pearls while pronouncing certain verses. That makes me forget that I’m hungry. My religion makes me strong.”

Shahed would like to start praying five times a day, but right now school is more important. Shahed would also like to wear a headscarf at some point. One day when she decides to do so, she would like to keep her hair to herself only.

Shahed’s best friend, Farah, is a Christian. The two girls like to share each other’s traditions. Farah usually fasts together with Shahed at school during the Ramadan, and last Christmas Shahed helped

decorate the Christmas tree at Farah's place. She had never done that before.

After school, Shahed is picked up by Ehab. He has been a private chauffeur for Shahed's family as long as she remembers. He drives Shahed to and from school every day. They often go out to explore Amman as well. They have their secret favourite places, which only they know about. They throw themselves into the busy traffic of the big city, which stretches across seven hilltops. They drive up and down steep streets between sand-coloured houses. Shahed stands up and sticks her head out of the sunroof. She feels the air whizz through her long hair.

Shahed's mother thinks it is better to eat with one's fingers, because it makes the food tastier. Today they are getting musakhan rolls, mahashi and kibbeh for lunch. Their kitchen worker serves the meal in the elegant living room, and Shahed's mother dishes it up on plates for the whole family. Shahed sticks out her tongue for a selfie.

For lunch they have mahashi, which is rolls made of olive leaves with courgette, and musakhan rolls stuffed with chicken. They also have kibbeh made from bulghur and sambosak, which are deep fried bread packages with meet and vegetables.





Shahed attends a Christian girls' school. Their school uniform is a white t-shirt and brown trousers. Shahed is reading her story aloud in Arabic class.

She sends the Snapchat message to Seema. The reply is immediate. A silly face. Shahed sends one of herself laughing. She is sitting on the floor in her own room, playing a zombie game on her PlayStation. She likes to sit in there, with nobody to bother her.

A few years ago, Shahed was more quiet and cautious than now. She still remembers what it was like to be bullied. A girl from her class set up a Facebook group about Shahed. She wrote to everyone in the group that Shahed was crazy and dumb. At first Shahed did not care, but when the girl addressed her directly saying "look, nobody likes you!" self-doubt began to creep in. Shahed's parents and the school had the group deleted, but after that, Shahed no longer felt like going to school. After the summer holiday, the pupils from her year were shuffled into new classes, and that helped. Today Shahed has many good friends.

Shahed collects good memories. She has a memory box full of things from special moments in her life. She has medals from track racing contests and photos from class excursions. There are also some



old black-and-white photos of her great grandparents, where all the men are wearing traditional beduin clothes. Shahed is what is called “Jordanian Jordanian”. She descends from the small group of Bedouins who have populated Jordan’s desert landscapes for many generations. Her parents tell fabulous stories about their forefathers. Shahed’s favourite story is about how her mother’s great grandfather decided that the Bedouin family should give up living as nomads. Then they settled down where Amman is located today.

“Memories are important to me. It means a lot to know my family’s history and to have good friends. It’s all part of me.”

One of Shahed’s fondest memories is from a day back in January. Shahed came home, and her mother asked her to go to the living room. Shahed wondered what it was about, but when she entered the living room a loud “surprise!” rung out, and all her girlfriends embraced her in one big hug. The room was full of balloons, and they had arranged to buy cake and soft drinks. Shahed does not recall the last time something made her so happy.

Shahed dreams of becoming a doctor. She finds it exciting to learn how the body works, and she would like to do research and discover cures for dangerous diseases. Shahed is aware it might not be easy. Her mother had to overcome many obstacles to become a skilful and well-reputed lawyer. There are many women in Jordan who have a good education, yet still live as homemakers instead of having a job. Shahed would like to be like her mother. She wants to have both family and work, and she looks forward to driving a car on her own. There is so much she wants to do. She can hardly wait.





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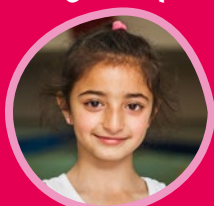
MUNA



NIDAL



SANTA



AMMAR AND MOHAMMAD



SHAHED



This year the Reading Rocket takes you to Jordan in the Middle East. This country has its name from the Jordan River, which flows into the Dead Sea. Much of Jordan is covered with desert. The desert is dry and hot, yet still teeming with life. Here Bedouins have lived with their animals for millennia.

Towards the south in Wadi Rum, you can join six-year-old Hamad on a trip to the family's tent out in the desert. Close to a Palestinian refugee camp lives Nidal, who is a skilful builder of something quite special. The countryside is where you will find Santa. You can come along with her to the Christian church, where she helps the priest. In Amman, the capital of Jordan, you can meet Shahed, who collects memories.

Several of Jordan's neighbouring countries have been at war. The Reading Rocket introduces you to some of the children who have fled the war in Syria by crossing the border into Jordan. You can read about 10-year-old Muna, who lives in a big refugee camp, and about how she finds a new friend. The brothers Ammar and Mohammad live with their uncles and aunts in northern Jordan. They will tell you about their escape from Syria and their hopes and dreams for the future.

World leaders have agreed on 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Goal number 4 is about all children's right to education of good quality. The Reading Rocket draws attention to all children's right to attend a good school.

Enjoy the Reading Rocket 2018.

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