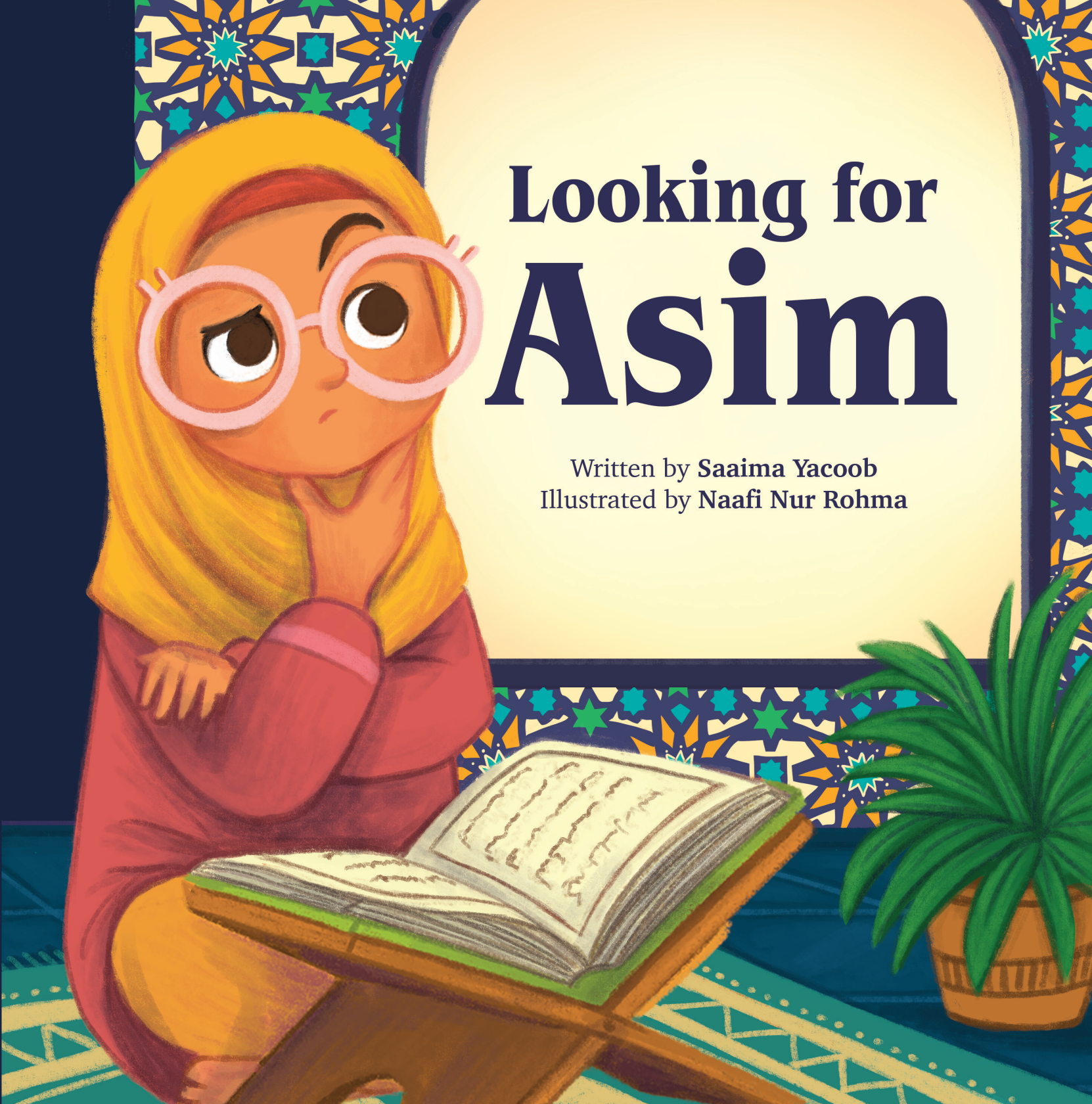




Looking for Asim

Written by **Saaima Yacoob**
Illustrated by **Naafi Nur Rohma**

Bismillah

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Recite With Love

Bismillah al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm

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A special thank you to Zainab Khan, Sulma Baddudduja and Habeeba Husain for their valuable suggestions.

Dedicated to my uncle, Dr. Yaqub Mirza, who even after his passing, continues to serve the dīn through all the people that he inspired. - SRY



Looking for Asim



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“I’m reciting in the reading of Imam Asim,” said Ustadha Ayesha to one of the other teachers.

Fatima was practicing her Qur’an lesson when she heard that, and she couldn’t help but wonder who Asim was.

“Imam Asim?” thought Fatima, “but our Imam’s name is Yousuf.”



As she walked down the hallway, she looked carefully at the teachers' names written on the door. "Miss Iman's first grade, Miss Khadija's second grade, Imam Yousuf's hifdh class..."

There was no Imam Asim.

Maybe it was a student and Ustadha Ayesha was talking about listening to his lesson. Maybe his first name was Imam?

Since Miss Ayesha only taught her class Qur'an, she decided to check her class list. And she did. But none of the children were named Asim!

Fatima could only conclude that Asim was not in the school.



As Fatima hurriedly packed her things at the end of the school day, she noticed something interesting written on her mushaf. Right there on the cover it said something, something and then “Asim,” ain, alif, saad, meem!

Maybe her mushaf explained who Imam Asim was? “But I can’t understand Arabic...” Fatima thought.



“Fatima’s mother had some warm milk and cookies waiting for her at home.

As her mother put Fatima’s things away, she noticed that Fatima wasn’t dunking her cookies in her milk today. She was barely eating them at all. Fatima kept writing the letters “ASIM” in her notebook.



“Fatima, what does ASIM stand for? A new math mnemonic?”

“No, it is someone who Ustadha Ayesha recites to, or recites in, or who recites to her, I think. I’m still trying to figure it out,” Fatima mumbled. “Maybe this question didn’t have an answer,” she thought.

Fatima’s mother laughed. “I know who Imam Asim is,” she said.

“You do! Have you recited to him or from him too?”

“Yes, I have, and most of us recite ‘from’ him.”



Fatima's mother brought a book in Arabic.

"These are the stories of scholars who were famous for their excellent recitation of the Qur'an. They learned the Qur'an from the companions of the Prophet ﷺ or from the students of the companions and then taught it to others.

Imam Asim was blind and was known for his beautiful voice. Once, when he stumbled on a rock because of someone else's carelessness, he didn't complain. His stepson, Imam Hafs, was his best student.

There were many other Imams, such as Imam Nafi, who had a sweet fragrance that would come from his mouth after he saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream.



And Imam Abu 'Amr, whose knowledge was vast and deep. One time, he was in the desert and needed to make wudu, but there was no water in sight. Allah caused a spring to burst out of the desert sand for him.

And Imam Hamzah, who would never accept help from his students. One time, when he fell into a ditch, Allah sent a lioness to pull him out because everyone in his city happened to be his student, and he never accepted help from his students.”



“Why were they so special to Allah?” asked Fatima.

“Because they dedicated their lives to learning and teaching the Qur’an and Allah honored them by attaching their names to His book forever,” Mama said.

“Can I meet them?” asked Fatima.

“In Jannah, in sha Allah,” Mama said.

“I need to learn a lot of Qur’an, Mama. Then, maybe Allah will send a lioness to save me too in case I’ve taught everyone in Charlotte.”

“Allah can make anything possible,” said Mama. “Even a lioness in Charlotte.”

Fatima raised her hands and made dua, “Ya Allah, make me like these people too, and let me meet Imam Asim in Jannah. I want to tell him that I was looking for him. Ameen.”



Word Search

S	D	Z	C	H
N	J	O	P	A
Q	A	S	I	M
R	B	F	L	Z
W	U	V	I	A
Y	A	M	R	H

Words to Find:

Nafi

Abu Amr

Hamzah

Asim

Look at the name of the Imam and draw a line
to an important word in his story.

Asim

Lioness

Abu Amr

Fragrance

Hamzah

Blind

Nafi

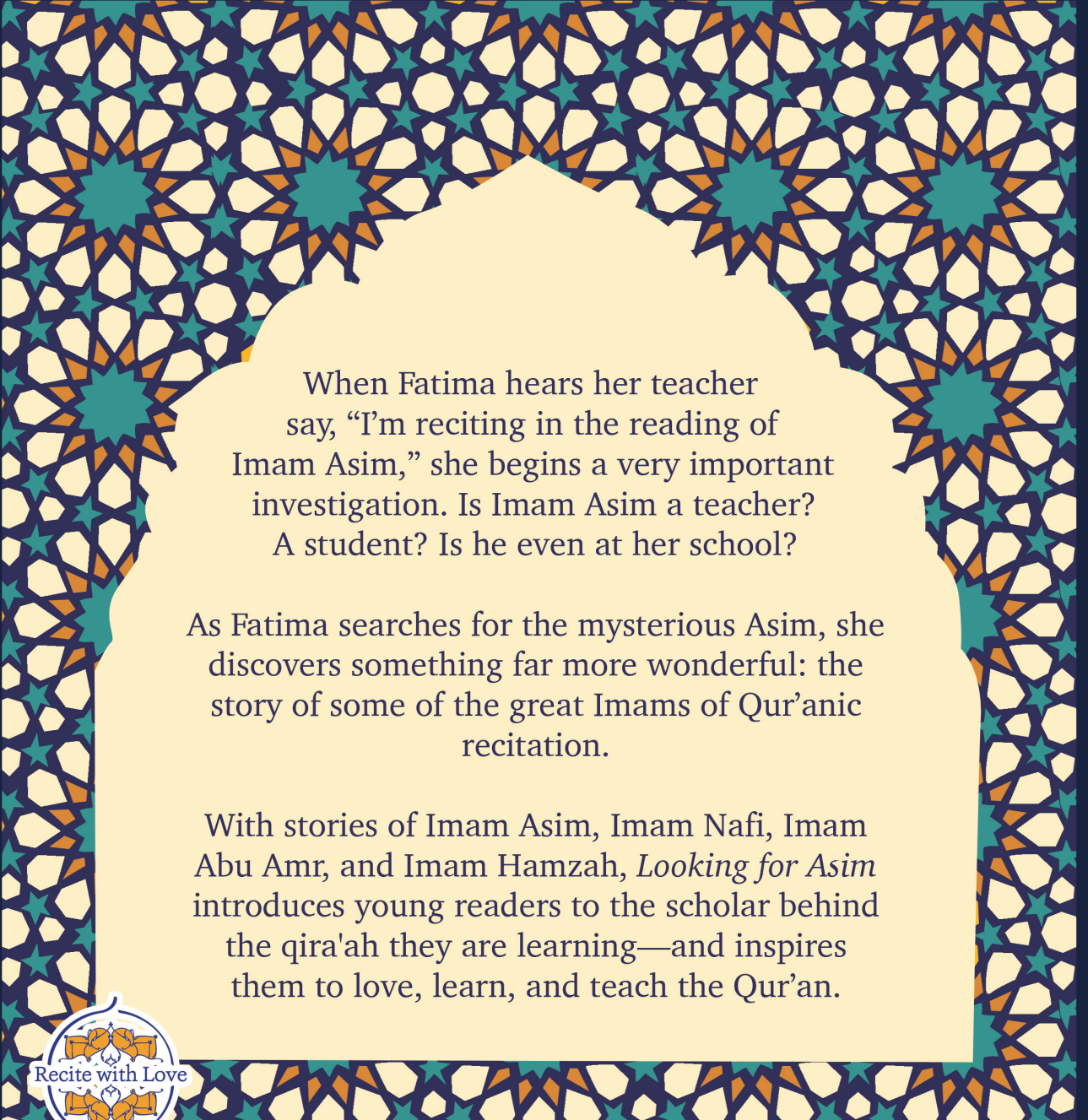
Spring

Author’s Note

Imam Ḥafṣ from ‘Āṣim’s reading is the most common reading of the Qur’ān in the world today as it was the reading recited by the Ottomans. As the empire spread, so did the *riwāyah* of Ḥafṣ from ‘Āṣim. The Ottoman’s followed the Ḥanafi school of thought, and generally, Ḥanafi lands recited in the *riwāyah* of Imam Ḥafṣ from ‘Āṣim as Imam Abū Ḥanīfa was Imam ‘Āṣim’s student in Qur’ān, and Imam Ḥafṣ held the strongest mastery in Imam ‘Āṣim’s reading. Another reason was that when copies of the Qur’ān were first published through early printing presses, Imam Ḥafṣ’s *riwāyah* was the easiest to print due to the lack of special markings for changes in *hamzah*, *imālah*, etc.

This book introduces young students to the Imams of Qur’ān recitation and what it means that they recite the Qur’ān in the *qirā’ah* of Imam Asim. For more on the biographies of the Imams of *qirā’āt*, please see the *Narratives on the Seven Great Reciters* by Qārī Muhammad Saleem Gaibie, The *Three Qurṛā’* and *Their Ruwāt* by Qārī’ah Sabah Shaikh, and *The Qurṛā’ Couplets* by Shaykh Munowar Harneker.

The author would like to thank Dr. Yaqub Mirza, Huzaifa Shoaib, Susilawati Samat and Latipah Binti Ibrahim for their generous contribution towards the cost of publishing this book. May Allah grant them and their families every single good that He has kept for the believers in this world and the next and elevate their ranks with Him in every moment that passes until the Day we meet Him. Ameen.



When Fatima hears her teacher say, “I’m reciting in the reading of Imam Asim,” she begins a very important investigation. Is Imam Asim a teacher? A student? Is he even at her school?

As Fatima searches for the mysterious Asim, she discovers something far more wonderful: the story of some of the great Imams of Qur’anic recitation.

With stories of Imam Asim, Imam Nafi, Imam Abu Amr, and Imam Hamzah, *Looking for Asim* introduces young readers to the scholar behind the qira’ah they are learning—and inspires them to love, learn, and teach the Qur’an.

