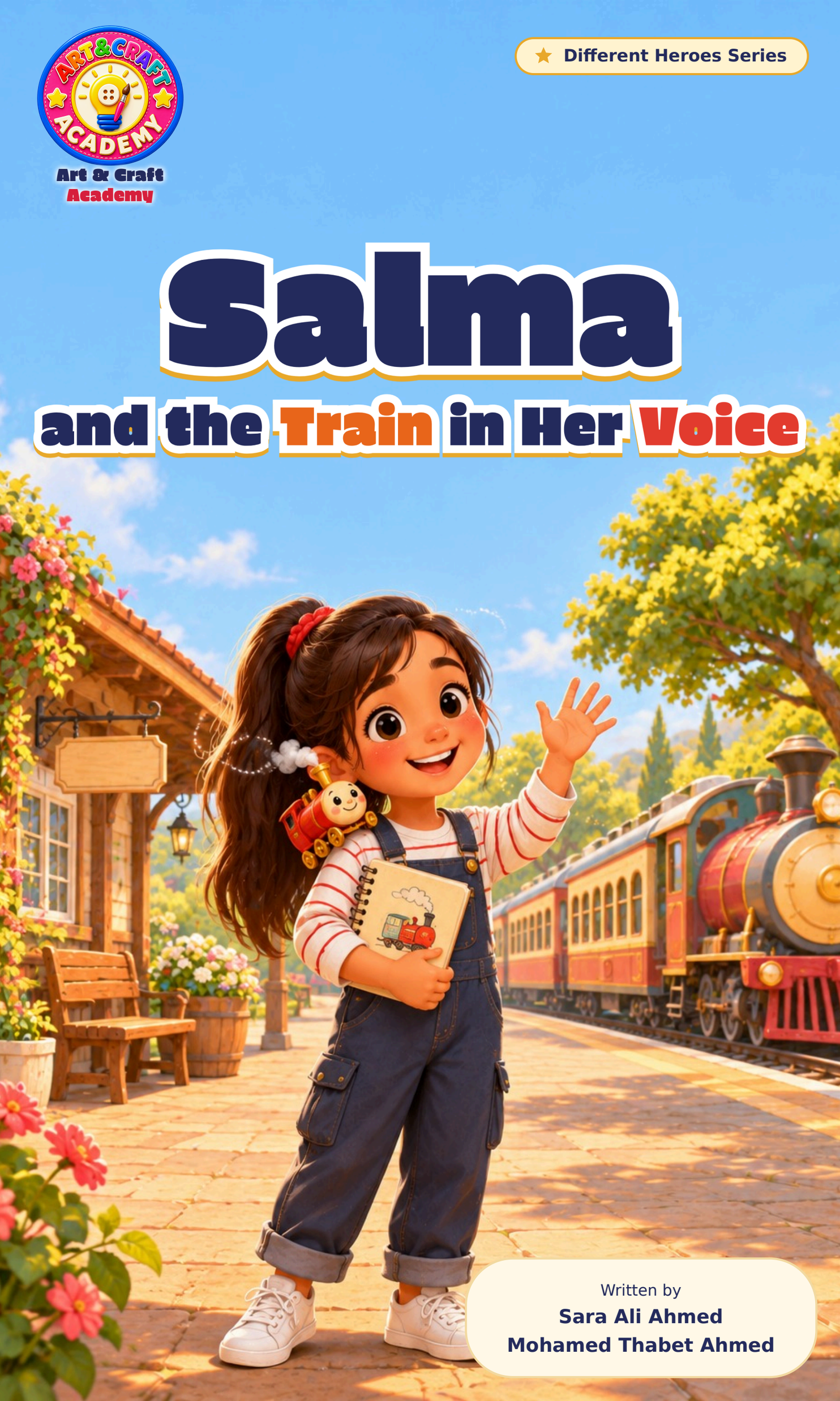
Art & Craft Academy

Different Heroes Series

# Salma

## and the Train in Her Voice



Written by
**Sara Ali Ahmed**
**Mohamed Thabet Ahmed**

To every child with a train in their voice

that sometimes stops,

and to every grown-up who guides them and

trusts them,

**and waits until it arrives.**

# Salma
# and the Train in Her Voice


**Prepared, written, and produced by**

**Sara Ali Ahmed**

**Mohamed Thabet Ahmed**

Illustrations and design: **Art & Craft Academy**



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1

This is Salma. She is seven years old, and she loves trains more than anything. She always carries a little notebook with pictures and names of trains.

There is a little train for words in her voice. Sometimes it zooms along: **“Good morning!”** And sometimes it stops at the station: **“G… g… Grandpa!”**



2

In class, Miss Mona said, **“On Thursday we’re going to the train station!”**

Salma opened her notebook and raised her hand fast, because she knows more about trains than anyone. But her train stopped: **“A… a… a…”**

Omar said, **“I know! You mean tickets!”** And Miss Mona moved on to another child.



3

Salma closed her notebook and put it in her backpack. She told herself, “It’s better to stay quiet.”

The next day she did not speak in class at all, and the train on her shoulder turned gray and silent.

But Miss Mona noticed.



4

At recess, Miss Mona sat beside her in the library corner and said softly, **“Your train of words is not a mistake, Salma. Some trains stay longer at the station. And I will wait for you every time.”**

Then she gave her a card with a little train on it, and said, **“When your train stops, hold up the card. Then everyone will know you need time, and that they should wait.”**



5

The next morning, Miss Mona told the class, **“From today on, we wait for our friends to finish their words. We don’t finish them for them.”**

Salma gave it a try. She held up the card and said to Layla, **“Please… p… p… pencil.”** Layla waited, and the word arrived!

Miss Mona said, **“Well done!”** The train on Salma’s shoulder smiled, and she took her train notebook out of her backpack again.



6

On Thursday, the class went to the station, and Salma carried her notebook. It was big and noisy, with real trains! Salma was so happy she almost floated.

She asked a worker where the Alexandria train was: **“Excuse me… p… p…”** He said in a hurry, **“Hurry up, kid!”** Salma froze, and the card stayed in her backpack.

Miss Mona knelt down to her level and said, **“Not everyone knows, Salma. And that doesn’t make what you say any less important. The card is there to let them know.”**



7

Suddenly an announcement came over the speaker: **“The train… platform… now…”** The words got lost in the noise. The class walked to Platform 2.

But Salma understood the whole announcement, because she knows its tune. She ran to Miss Mona, but her train stopped! Omar began to guess: **“Maybe you mean…”**

The train whistle blew! Salma asked, **“Can I say it myself?”**

Miss Mona said, **“Take your time.”** Then she told the class, **“We stay quiet and wait for Salma.”**



8

Salma held her card up high and said, **“The p… p… platform… changed! To platform… five!”**

The whole class ran after her, with Miss Mona by her side. They climbed aboard, and at that very moment the train whistle blew!



9

Omar said, **“I used to think that helping you meant finishing your words. Now I know that helping you means waiting.”**

That night, Salma told her dad, **“My train still stops sometimes, Dad… but now I know how to take my time, and how to tell grown-ups what helps me.”**

# The End

## Let’s Talk About the Story

1. What did Miss Mona do to help Salma?
2. What did Salma do when her train stopped?
3. Who do you ask for help when you need it?

# For Parents and Teachers

Some children stumble over their words. They repeat a sound, stretch it out, or pause for a moment before the word comes out. This is common in early childhood, and many children get better over time.

> **Good to know:** Stuttering is not the child’s fault or the parents’ fault. It does not mean shyness or low intelligence, and it can increase when the child is tired or rushed. Calm guidance from adults is what a child needs most: to understand them, to teach them one simple tool, and to trust them.

## What helps?

- Wait until the child finishes speaking. Do not finish the sentence for them.
- Avoid saying “slow down,” “take a breath,” or “think before you speak.”
- Look at the child, and listen to what they say, not how they say it.
- Speak calmly and simply yourself, without asking the child to do the same.
- Agree on a simple signal, like the train card, and teach the people around the child to wait.

If stuttering lasts more than six months, gets worse, or the child starts avoiding speaking or becomes afraid of it, it is best to talk with a speech-language pathologist.

# The Waiting Station Game

## Materials

Colored masking tape, a small toy train (or a small box), and five picture cards (a pencil, a moon, a train, a book, a ball).

## Steps

1. Make a train track on the floor with the tape, and place a card at each station.
2. The child moves the train to a station and says the name of the picture.
3. The grown-up waits and smiles until the child finishes, then says, “The train has arrived!”
4. Switch roles: the grown-up talks, and the child waits.
5. Make a “waiting card” together by drawing a train, for the child to use when needed.

Do this activity with a grown-up, and without any rush.



There is a little train for words in Salma’s voice.

Sometimes it zooms along, and sometimes it stops at the station.

What will she do when her train stops in the middle of a crowd?

A warm story about words that need time, and about the grown-ups who wait.

## Different Heroes Series

**Ages 5 to 8**


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