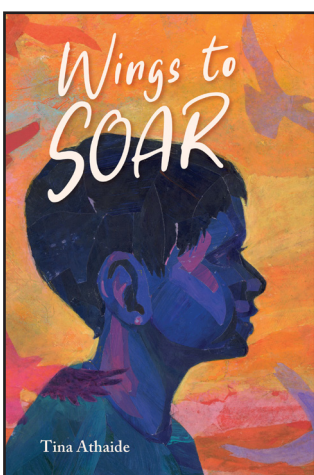


Wings to SOAR

READER'S GROUP GUIDE



978-1-62354-431-7 HC

About the Book

"A supreme heart-changer."

—Rita Williams-Garcia, Newbery Honor, National Book Award, Boston Globe–Horn Book Award, and Coretta Scott King Award Winner

It's 1972 and Viva's Indian family has been expelled from Uganda and sent to a resettlement camp in England. Her father is supposed to meet them in London before they finish moving to Canada—but he never shows up. As they wait for him, Viva and her mother and sister must grapple with hatred for brown-skinned people in their new community.

New words, new friends, and a love of Diana Ross and the Supremes carry Viva through the turbulent waters of a refugee childhood in this gorgeous novel in verse.

About the Author



Tina Athaide is an educator and children's book author who writes stories to capture the texture and richness of a wide scope of cultural experiences, recent or distant, with the hope to open readers' hearts. Her debut middle-grade novel, *Orange For The Sunsets*, was awarded the Geoffrey Bilson Award by the Canadian Children's Book Council, and her picture book, *Meena's Mindful Moment*, is a nominee in the Forest of Reading. Tina was born in Uganda and emigrated to London and then Canada. Nowadays you can find Tina in Southern California where she lives with her family.



Find fun activities and more at
www.charlesbridge.com/WingsToSoar.

Wings to SOAR

Reader's Group Guide

- *Wings to Soar* is a novel in verse. Why do you think the author chose to write this story in poems instead of prose? What are other examples of stories told through poetry?
- This book starts with a quote from the poem "Dreams" by Langston Hughes. Who is Langston Hughes? How does the rest of the poem go? Why do you think it's important to hold on to dreams?
- *Wings to Soar* starts in October 1972. What was happening in the world at this time? What was daily life like in England and the US?
- Why does Viva hate being called a refugee?
- Viva is a big fan of Diana Ross and the Supremes. What does their music sound like? Why do you think Viva likes them? How does music help her get through hard times?
- Viva keeps a word book where she writes down the definitions of new words. How do you learn new words? What do you do when you encounter a word you don't know? What are some of your favorite words?
- Why do you think Officer Graham opens up to Viva about his life in "Leroy's Story"? How are his experiences with race and racism different from Viva's? How are they similar? Consider the setting (US vs. UK), their specific backgrounds (biracial white and Black vs. Asian Ugandan), gender, age, etc.
- How does Viva make friends with Maggie and Mark? What do they have in common? Have you ever been friends with someone you find a bit annoying, like Viva sometimes finds Mark a bit annoying? What was the "good side" of that person that made them a good friend anyway? What is the "good side" of Mark?
- What is Guy Fawkes Night? How is it like or unlike other holidays you know?
- Some of the poems in this book use different type sizes and fonts. How does that change the way you read those poems?
- What is a telegram? How did telegraphy work technologically? Why do you think telegrams are no longer widely used? How would Viva's story be different if her family had cell phones, email, or social media?
- What does Viva learn when she and Anna visit their mother's new workplace in the UK? How is this job different from their mother's job in Kampala? Why do you think she didn't find work in a similar profession in the UK?
- What does the shape of the concrete poem "School Project" express? Some of the other poems in this novel use creative shaping or line placement; do you think those should count as concrete poems, too?
- Do you think Viva's mother made the right choice when she hid the NF propaganda from her children? Why did she decide to hide it? What do you do when someone you love makes a decision that upsets you, but they have a good reason?

Wings to SOAR

Reader's Group Guide

- This story portrays racism in the UK in the 1970s towards Asian immigrants (and Brown people more generally). What words and actions do the characters use to express this kind of hatred? How does this impact Viva and her family? What have you learned through this element of the story?
- What do we learn about Viva's mother in the poem "Mummy Is Disappearing"? Do you think a modern reader and a person from the 1970s might interpret her behavior differently? What do we know about mental health—specifically depression and trauma—today that we might not have known fifty years ago?
- Do you have a "courage well"? What kinds of things do you do to fill the well? Have you ever felt like you needed more courage and the well was dry?
- Is there a drink or food that serves the same purpose for you and your family that masala chai serves for Viva's family? What does that drink or food mean to you?
- Why does Viva feel like she has a "lava mouth"? Have you ever felt like your feelings were so big, you couldn't control your words?
- Viva often prays and thinks about God. Why is her religion important to her? Does religion play a role in your life?
- What do you learn about Viva and Anna's relationship in the poem "Helping Anna Pack"? Does their relationship remind you of other sibling relationships?
- What is Viva's brilliant idea expressed in the poem "Light"? Would you volunteer to do something similar? Why do you think her parents agree to this plan?
- Where did the historical photographs in this book come from? If you were to write a story about a historical event you lived through, what images would you include, if any?
- Read the author's note at the back of the book. What are some of the differences between Viva's story and Tina Athaide's experience of the expulsion of Asians from Uganda? Why do you think Tina Athaide chose to write a novel in verse about this experience rather than a nonfiction account of her family's story?
- Who is the character of Officer Graham inspired by? Why do you think authors sometimes take inspiration for fictional characters from real people? Is there someone in your life who you think could inspire a character in a story?