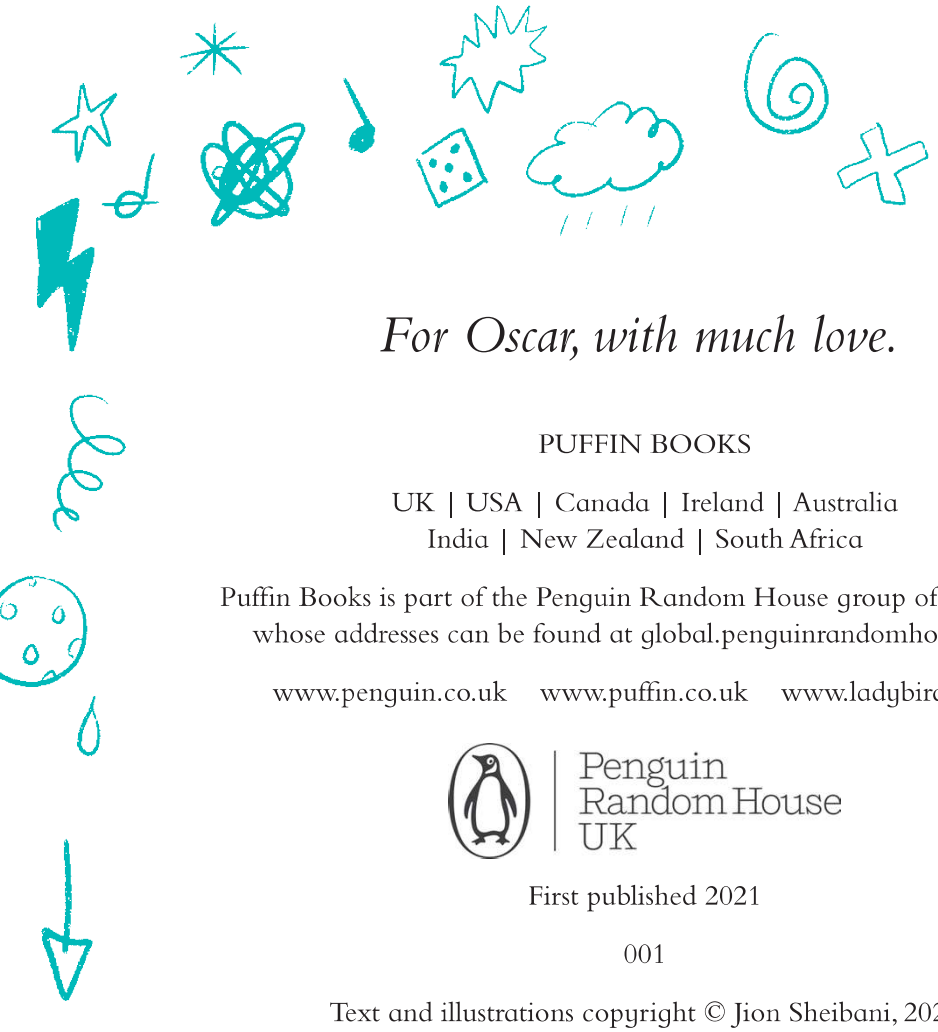


For Oscar, with much love.

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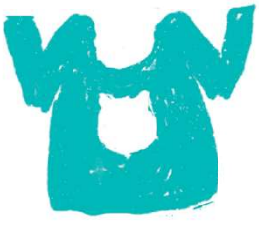
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THE WORRIES

SOHAL FINDS A FRIEND



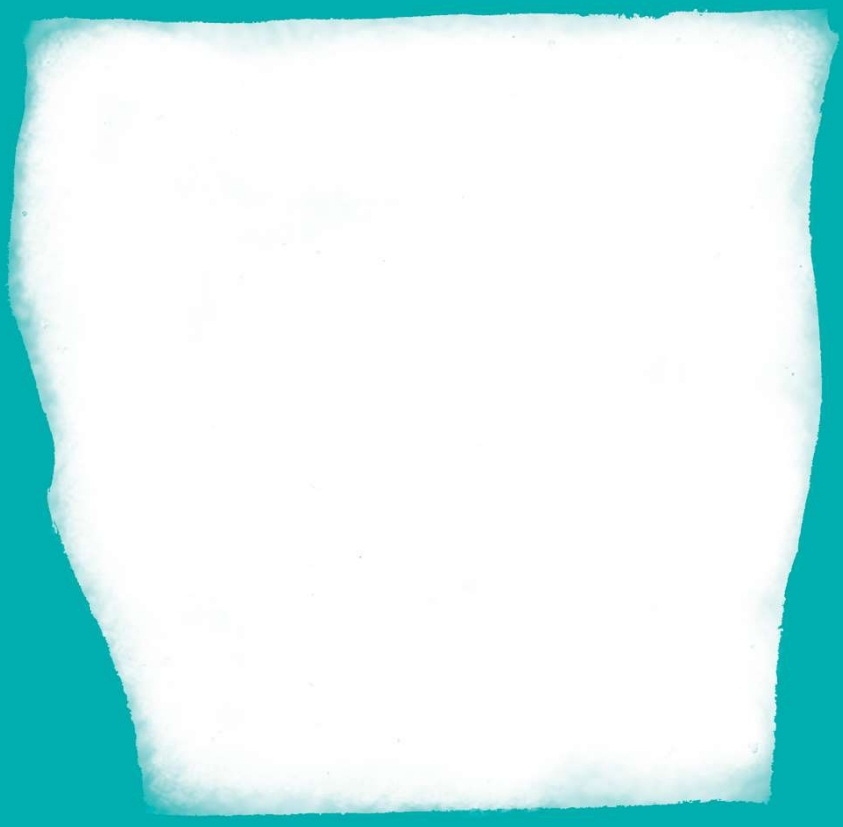
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JION SHEIBANI

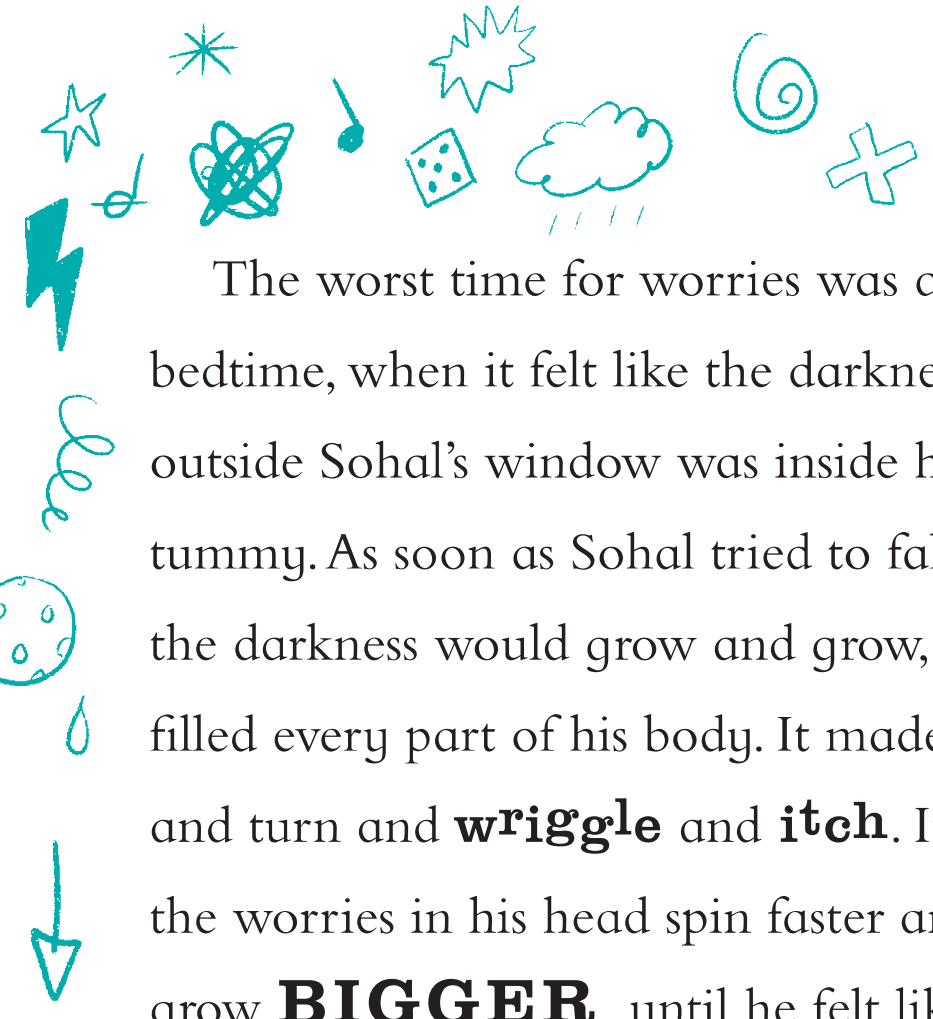


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Sohal was full of worries. He had been for as long as he could remember. His parents and teachers often called him ‘a worrier’, but he wasn’t really sure what that meant. It didn’t sound good, though, and this made Sohal worry even more.



The worst time for worries was at bedtime, when it felt like the darkness outside Sohal's window was inside his tummy. As soon as Sohal tried to fall asleep the darkness would grow and grow, until it filled every part of his body. It made him toss and turn and **wriggle** and **itch**. It made the worries in his head spin faster and grow **BIGGER**, until he felt like the only thing he could do was cry.

'Don't worry, darling!' said his mum one night. 'Relax! I'll sing you a song! *Twinkle, twinkle, little staaaaar* –'

'No! I don't want that song!' Sohal sulked. 'It's babyish! The only music I like is rap.'

‘Right . . . well, why don’t we try some calming breathing?’ Dad said in his chirpiest voice. ‘That’s what we do in my yoga class. Just breathe **in** . . .

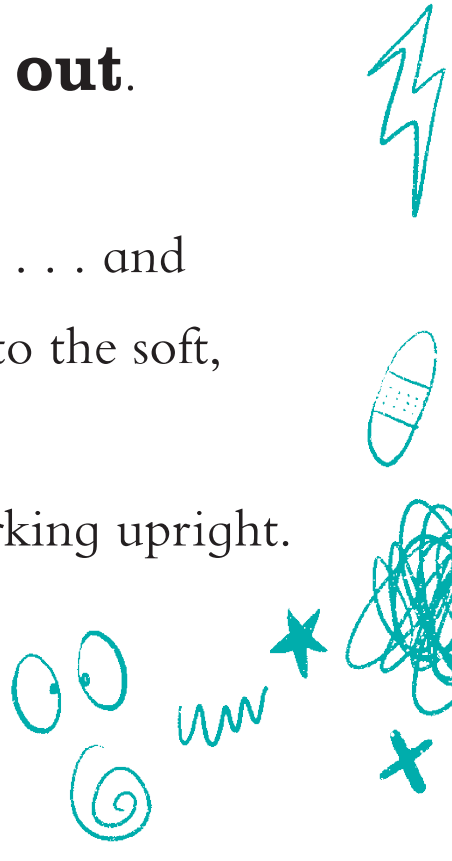
Breathe **out** . . .

Breathe **in** . . .

Breathe **out**.

Now spread out like a starfish . . . and imagine . . . you’re sinking into the soft, golden sand . . .’

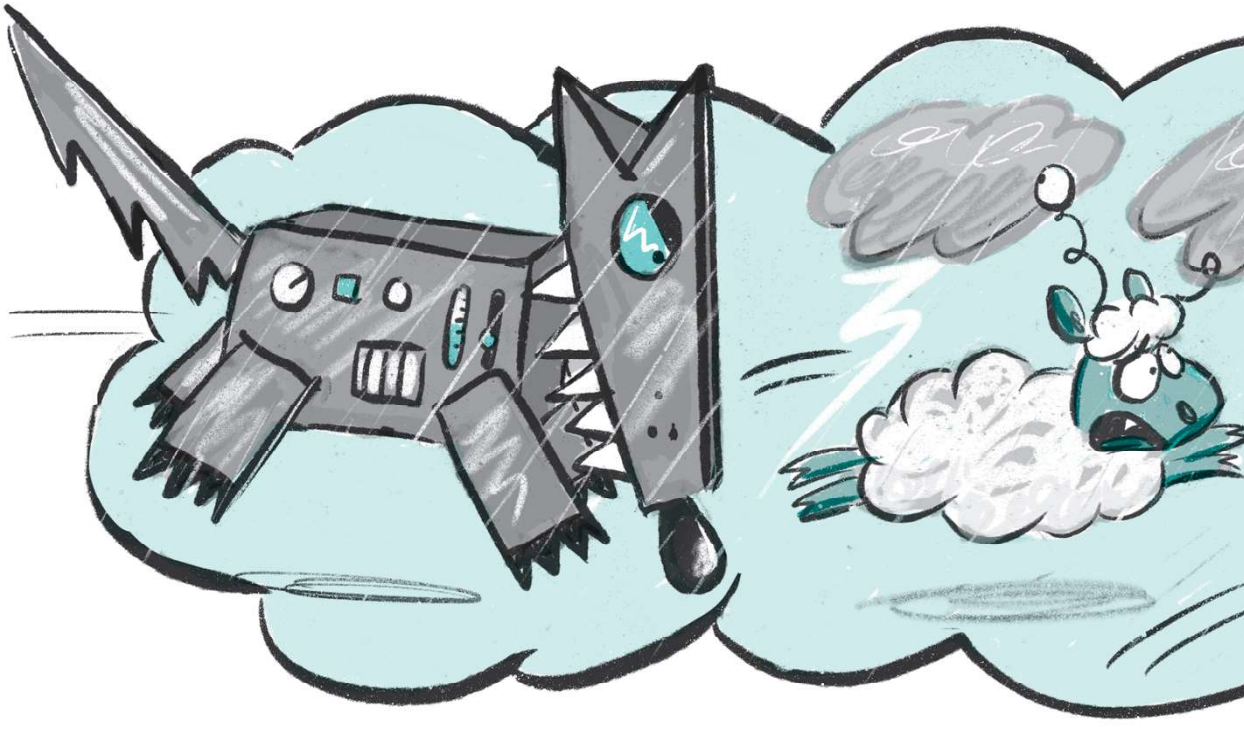
‘Sinking?!’ Sohal yelped, jerking upright.



‘I don’t want to **SINK!**’

‘OK, OK, let’s just . . . count some sheep instead,’ Mum said quickly. ‘One, two, three . . .’

Sohal closed his eyes and imagined some nice fluffy sheep jumping over a fence in a sunny green field. However, the nice fluffy sheep quickly turned into . . .



MUTANT
ALIEN SHEEP!

And they were running from a

GIANT
ROBOT WOLF!

In a storm!

