

Commended

Silent Night by Rachel Forbes, Cawdor Primary

My family was gone. So was hope. I longed to see them again with their happy faces. My sister hardly had a life – she died at the age of 3. My parents were the ones who saved me but they couldn't save Riley (my sister). As soon as I was saved, they died. The waste inside me felt the same as the wasteland around me. You're probably wondering what happened to me. Let me take you back to 2 years ago when my country was at war...

Most people in Syria hated President Basher al-Assad. My family agreed, but never dared to say. The day started normally on a scorching hot day walking to school, but as I got there the gates were shut. What was going on? The gates were never shut. Suddenly I realised no one was about. Deserted. Not a fly to be seen. Not a mouse to be heard. I ran back to my house in fear, confusion, and curiosity. When I got back my whole family was there. I asked what was going on. My dad said an attack was very likely. I froze. My heart stopped.

2 hours went by. No one panicked but I knew we all were inside. Then the first ambulance went by. That was when we panicked. It got a whole lot worse. The block just down from us got bombed. The boom was ear-piercing, so were the screams. Riley was wailing by the end of this and I was about to start too. Aunt Lalo, mum, dad, and Uncle Louis told us both not to worry, which of course we were going to do.

Aunt and uncle said they would go and get food but they never came back. The shop was bombed too. We then discovered why the war started. President Basher al-Assad's supporters got so annoyed at the people who did not support him they started a civil war. Then we saw trouble. Soldiers were barging into our neighbours and then it was almost us. Dad rushed me into the cupboard where no one would find me. Then I heard deathly screams from my family. Everything was quiet and still. After a while I crept out of the cupboard. Everything had been destroyed.

I wailed, by my dead family's side. My eyes started to burn from the devastation around me. Then a group of rescuers came and grabbed me, shoving me in the ambulance. What was going on? The rescuers said that there was a toxic gas in my house and they had to take me away to the hospital. I was relieved, yet still destroyed. They said I would be ok but I would need to move country. But who was going to take me in? I got to a car at the borders of Syria. They took me to an airport. The driver said nothing. Neither did I. The only sound was the engine underneath us. Britain was waiting for me.