



# World Refugee Day 2013 – Children & Youths' booklist

## Read a Book About Refugees

*There is a great variety of books written about refugees - including award-winning fiction – and books by refugees themselves. Why not borrow one of these from your local library or buy one from your local book shop?*

*Do you have a book club? Maybe you would consider adding one of these titles to the reading list.*

### **Older Children/Teenage Fiction/Autobiography:**

**A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Child Soldier** *Author: Ismael Beah. Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Age: 14+.* Beah tells of how he fled his community in war-torn Sierra Leone after seeing his family massacred and his village destroyed. At 13 he was coerced into joining the government army, where young soldiers were forcibly given drugs, indoctrinated with ideas of revenge and forced to commit atrocious crimes. Now 25, Beah lives in New York.

**Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees** *Author: Deborah Ellis. Publisher: Groundwood Books. Age: 12+.* This frank and harrowing account of young victims of the Iraqi war involves interviews with 24 young people, most of them refugees living in Jordan. Their resilience is inspiring.

**Under the Persimmon Tree** *Author: Suzanne Fisher-Staples. Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Age: 12+.* An outstanding novel exploring the relationship between a young American

woman and a refugee girl. Northern Afghanistan, 2001. When the Taliban takes her brother and father to be soldiers and the bombing of her tiny village kills her mother and baby brother, Najmah makes a dangerous journey over the mountains to Pakistan. Here she meets Elaine, an American woman waiting for her doctor husband to return from the front. Najmah joins Elaine's refugee school under the persimmon tree, until, sure that both their families are dead, Elaine tries to persuade her to go to America. But when Najmah's brother arrives at the school, still alive, she bravely decides to return with him to the village of their birth.

**The Go-Away Bird** *Author: Warren Fitzgerald. Publisher: HarperCollins UK. Age: 12+.*

Clementine Habimana – A Rwandan child refugee who witnesses the 1994 genocide at first-hand and lives to tell her story. Delivered into the hands of an abusive uncle in the UK, Clementine remains undeterred in her hope for a brighter future. Ashley is a 39-year-old English man living in a rough housing estate in central London in 1994, is trying to make ends meet by teaching singing to a bizarre string of clients. These two disparate lives that seem destined to run parallel eventually collide offering both a kind of salvation they never imagined possible.

**The Kite Runner** *Author: Khaled Hosseini. Publisher: Bloomsbury. Age: 14+* The Kite Runner is a deeply moving debut novel. The book tells the story of boyhood friendship cut across class boundaries. Their relationship is imaginatively told against the backdrop of social upheaval in Afghanistan.

**Kiss the Dust** *Author: Elizabeth Laird. Publisher: Perma-Bound Books. Age: 12+.* Because the Iraqi secret police are looking for her father, Tara Hawrami and her family must flee the only home they have ever known and live in a brutal refugee camp. "An important contribution to the growing number of refugee stories." - Kirkus Reviews. An ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

**Just the facts: Refugees** *Author: Steve Maddocks. Publisher: Heinemann Library. Age: 13+.* Just the Facts is a series for children over 13 years of age that provides clear information on a range of global issues. This book describes the history of refugees, development and contemporary relevance and how these issues are currently being solved or dealt with.

**The Other Side of Truth** *Author: Beverley Naidoo. Publisher: Harper Collins/Puffin. Age: 12+.* After the murder of their mother, 12-year-old Sade and her younger brother are smuggled out of Nigeria by their journalist father to escape the corrupt military government and growing violence. They are sent to their uncle in London, but when they arrive, he is missing and they are abandoned, passed between foster homes. Their father escapes to England to find them -- but he will be sent back to Nigeria unless Sade can find a way to tell the world what happened to her family.

**What you wish for, short stories and poems for ages 12+** *By a variety of celebrated authors. Publisher: Penguin. Age: 12+.* Some of the world's best-selling and most highly honoured writers for young people and children share stories and poems that captivate, inspire, and offer hope about things we wish for. The writers all contributed for free so as the proceeds could be used to fund libraries in Darfuri refugee camps in Chad.

## **Younger Children's Fiction/Autobiography (Age 7-12)**

**Where the Streets Had a Name** *Author: Randa Abdel-Fattah Publisher: Scholastic Press Age: 11+*. Hayaat is on a mission. She believes a handful of soil from her grandmother's ancestral home in Jerusalem will save her beloved Sitti Zeynab's life. The only problem is that Hayaat and her family live behind the impenetrable wall that divides the West Bank, and they're on the wrong side of check points, curfews, and the travel permit system. Plus, Hayaat's best friend Samy always manages to attract trouble. But luck is on the pair's side as they undertake the journey to Jerusalem from the Palestinian Territories. Humorous and heartfelt, *Where the Streets Had a Name* deals with the Israel-Palestinian conflict with sensitivity and grace.

**Christophe's Story** *Author: Nicki Cornwell. Publisher: Frances Lincoln. Age: 10-12*. This is the story of a young Rwandan refugee now living in the UK. Christophe is having trouble getting used to his new life. His teacher persuades him to share his story with his classmates - so he tells them of the terrifying day the soldiers came to his house and killed his baby brother. His classmates are spellbound but when his teacher asks him to write it down and read it out in assembly, Christophe is horrified fearing that the story will lose its power once written.

**The Unforgotten Coat** *Author: Frank Cottrell Boyce Age 9+* Two refugee brothers from Mongolia are determined to fit in with their Liverpool schoolmates, but bring so much of Mongolia to Bootle that their new friend and guide, Julie, is hard-pressed to know truth from fantasy as she recollects a wonderful friendship that was abruptly ended when Chingis and his family were forced to return to Mongolia. Told with the humour, warmth and brilliance of detail which characterizes Frank Cottrell Boyce's writing, this magical and compelling story is enriched by stunning and atmospheric Polaroid photos. "Funny, sad, haunting and original...A tricky, magical delight." - Kirkus Reviews

**Mud City** *Author: Deborah Ellis. Publisher: Groundwood Books. Age: 10+*. Fourteen-year-old Shauzia dreams of seeing the ocean and eventually making a new life in France, but it is hard to reconcile that dream with the terrible conditions of the Afghan refugee camp where she lives. Shauzia dresses like a boy to earn money to buy passage out. But her journey becomes a struggle to survive as she's forced to beg and pick through garbage, eventually landing in jail. *Mud City* paints a devastating portrait of life in refugee camps, but it also tells movingly of children's resourcefulness and strength.

**Diary of a Young Girl** *Author: Anne Frank Age: +11* Discovered in the attic in which she spent the last years of her life, Anne Frank's remarkable diary has since become a world classic. In 1942, with Nazis occupying Holland, a 13-year-old Jewish girl and her family fled their home in Amsterdam and went into hiding. For the next two years, until their whereabouts were betrayed to the Gestapo, they and another family lived cloistered in the "Secret Annex" of an old office building. Cut off from the outside world, they faced hunger, boredom, the constant cruelties of living in confined quarters, and the ever-present threat of discovery and death. In her diary Anne Frank recorded vivid impressions of her experiences during this period. Her account offers a fascinating commentary on human courage and frailty and a compelling self-portrait of a sensitive and spirited young woman whose promise was tragically cut short.

**In the Sea There Are Crocodiles** *Author: Fabio Geda. Publisher: Random House. Age: 10+.* Geda recounts the true story of 10-year-old Enaiatollah's 5-year ordeal from Afghanistan to Italy, where he seeks political asylum at age 15, having endured dangerous border crossings, trekking across bitterly cold mountain pathways for days or being stuffed into the false bottom of a truck. "A remarkable, heart-warming story of courage and endurance in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles... truly inspirational" -The Irish Examiner.

**Boy Overboard** *Author: Morris Gleitzman. Publisher: Puffin. Age: 10+.* When it is discovered that Jamal's mother has been secretly running a school, the family must leave their home immediately and begin a long and dangerous journey to Australia. The children survive separation from their parents, hunger, and violent smugglers only to find that Australia isn't as welcoming as they had thought. However, even though they face an uncertain future, Jamal, Bibi and their parents know that as long as they are together, that is all that matters.

**Girl Underground** *Author: Morris Gleitzman. Publisher: Puffin. Age: 10+.* This exciting sequel to "Boy Overboard" introduces Bridget, a quiet girl who is trying to fit in at a posh new school. Then she finds out that her new friend, Menzies, has a penpal called Jamal, a refugee boy from Afghanistan held in a detention centre. When daring appeals to the government and the prime minister himself fail to set Jamal and his sister free, Bridget and Menzies decide to take matters into their own hands. Sometimes the only way to make things happen is to do them yourself.

**The Once Trilogy: Once, Then and Now** *Author: Morris Gleitzman. Publisher: Puffin. Age: 10+.* Felix is lucky. Unlike the other children in the orphanage, he's certain his parents will come back for him one day. And whatever the Nazis do and however many books they burn, Felix's imagination provides him and his companions with an endless supply of stories - stories that protect them when they're on the run, shield them from the violent madness all around, give them hope when all seems lost, and one day may even save Felix's life. "Haunting . . . dangerous and desperate, but also full of courage and hope" – Guardian

**My Childhood Under Fire: A Sarajevo Diary** *Author: Nadja Halilbegovich. Publisher: Kids Can Press Ltd. Age: 10+.* Nadja was only 12 when war broke out in Bosnia. In this book she shares pages of her diary in a powerful first-hand account of the life of a child living through conflict. Later Nadja flees Sarajevo, arriving in America where she starts a new life, despite the deep scars left behind by the war.

**I am David** *Author: Anne Holm. Publisher: Methuen Young Books. Age: 9+* This is the tale of a young boy who has spent all of his known life in a concentration camp and the story begins as he is helped to escape by one of the guards. David struggles to cope in this strange new world, where his only resources are a compass, a few crusts of bread, his two aching feet, and some vague advice to seek refuge in Denmark.

**When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit** *Author: Judith Kerr. Publisher: HarperCollins. Age: 9+.* In 1933 a young Jewish girl is forced to flee to Switzerland with her family as Hitler is elected to office. The story tells of their struggle to adapt to a new life as a refugee family.

**A Horse Called El Dorado** *Author: Kevin Kiely. Publisher: O'Brien Press. Age: 10-12.* In the commune at the edge of a forest in Colombia, life is blissful. Until the Guerrillas come. Then Pepe must flee with his mother to the city, leaving behind his favourite horse El Dorado. His

future looks grim until his Irish grandparents offer him another chance. But can thirteen-year-old Pepe go all on his own to this strange, cold land, the birthplace of his father? And what future awaits him there? Will he ever have the chance to ride his beloved horses again? “The hazardous journey from Colombia to Ireland: a story of dreams and our need to fulfill them.” - Robert Dunbar, *The Irish Times*. Bisto Honour Award Winner 2006. Shortlisted for Scottish Highland Children’s Book Awards (Scotland) 2006.

**Shadow** *Author: Michael Morpurgo Publisher: Harper Collins* Never have Aman and his mother needed a friend more than when a Springer Spaniel appears - thin and war-ravaged - in the mouth of their Afghan cave. Nursed back to health by Aman, the dog becomes a constant companion, a shadow, and that's what Aman decides to call her. But life in Afghanistan becomes more dangerous by the moment. Eventually, Aman, his mother and Shadow find the courage to embark upon the treacherous journey from war-torn Afghanistan to the safety of a relative's home in Manchester, England. But how far can Shadow lead them? And in this terrifying new world, is anywhere really safe...?

**Child of Dandelions** *Author: Shenaaz Nanji Publisher: Namelos Age: 11+* In Uganda in 1972 when President Idi Amin announces that he has received a dream from God and that Foreign Indians must be “weeded” out of Uganda in 90 days, 12-year-old Sabine’s life is changed forever.

**Gervelie’s Journey: A Refugee Diary** *Author: Anthony Robinson & Annemarie Young. Illustrator: June Allan. Publisher: Frances Lincoln. Age: 7+.* Gervelie was born in the Republic of Congo in 1995. When she was two, conflict tore her family apart so that over the next few years she was constantly moving around, living first with her father, then with her mother and step-father, and finally, with her grandmother on the Ivory Coast. When war also broke out there in 2001, Gervelie and her father fled to Europe. They stayed illegally with cousins before the final stage of their journey to England, using somebody else’s documents. Eventually Gervelie and her father were given a house in Norwich, where they now live.

**Mohammed’s Journey: A Refugee Diary** *Author: Anthony Robinson & Annemarie Young. Illustrator: June Allan. Publisher: Frances Lincoln. Age: 7+.* Mohammed, an Iraqi Kurd, fled with his mother after the family was beaten up by Saddam Hussein’s soldiers and his father taken away, never to be heard of again. They traveled via Iran to Turkey, from where they were taken by ship to Dover, England, hidden in the back of a lorry with other refugees: a week’s journey with no food and only a little water.

**Hamzat’s Journey: A Refugee Diary** *Author: Anthony Robinson. Illustrator: June Allan. Publisher: Frances Lincoln. Age: 7+.* This 3rd book in the Refugee Diary series follows the story of a boy from Chechnya.

**Meltem’s Journey: A Refugee Diary** *Author: Anthony Robinson. Illustrator: June Allan. Publisher: Frances Lincoln. Age: 7+.* This 4th book in the Refugee Diary series follows a Kurdish family from Eastern Turkey.

**The Silver Sword** *Author: Ian Serraillier. Publisher: Red Fox. Age: 9+.* This is a story about how the Balicki family is torn apart by the Germans from their home in Warsaw, Poland, in 1940, and how they succeed in reuniting themselves in Switzerland at the end of the war. Of course,  
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after five years of extraordinary deprivation, fear and grief, the Balickis are not much like the people that they were before the war started. The children have grown up. But, in time, they are all ready to make a new start.

**Inside Out & Back Again** *Author: Thanhha Lai. Publisher: HarperCollins. Age: 8-12.* Growing up in Saigon, Ha is used to being the smart girl with luxuries not afforded by many, even during the Vietnam war. Given the opportunity, her mother gets herself, Ha and her three sons aboard a ship to safety, not knowing how long they will be aboard or where they will end up, only knowing that they will be safe. The five end up in America, safe until they have to face the perils of learning a new language and new cultures.

This story is told in verse, through the eyes of ten year old Ha and chronicles the trials & tribulations of being a new person in an even stranger land.

**One Day We Had To Run** *Author: Sybella Wilkes. Publisher: Milbrook Press. Age: 10+.* This text tells the story of children who were forced to become refugees. They fled from Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, leaving their families and homes, and faced many dangers before they reached the safety of the refugee camps.

**Out of Iraq: Refugees' Stories in Words, Paintings and Music** *Author: Sybella Wilkes. Publisher: Evans Brothers. Age: 10+.* This text tells the story of children who were forced to become refugees. They fled from Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, leaving their families and homes, and faced many dangers before they reached the safety of the refugee camps.

**Refugee Boy** *Author: Benjamin Zephaniah. Publisher: Bloomsbury. Age: 10+.* A powerful and popular novel telling the story of a young boy left in the UK by his parents to start a better life away from the political problems in Ethiopia. The story deals with his experience in a strange new country and how he adjusts to his new life in the UK.

## Very Young Children

**The Lotus Seed** *Author: Sherry Garland. Illustrator: Tatsuro Kiuchi. Publisher: Sandpiper. Age: 5+.* When she is forced to leave Vietnam, a young girl brings a lotus seed with her to America in remembrance of her homeland. "Exquisite artwork fuses with a compelling narrative ... to produce a moving and polished offering." - Publishers Weekly

**Muktar and the Camels** *Author: Janet Graber. Illustrator: Scott Mack. Publisher: Henry Holt and co. Age: 4+.* As a Somali refugee living in an orphanage in Kenya, Muktar yearns for his parents and his former nomadic life-style. A surprise visit from a three-camel convoy delivering books to the orphanage gives Muktar the chance to demonstrate his skills in caring for camels and his desire to work with them. This book brings to life the plight of child refugees from Somalia and the challenges they face in adjusting to a new way of life away from home.

**The Colour of Home** *Author: Mary Hoffman. Illustrator: Karin Littlewood. Publisher: Phyllis Fogelman Books. Age: 4+.* This moving book follows recently arrived Hassan through his first few days at school. Hassan's family were forced to flee Somalia, and he deeply misses the colorful landscape of his former home in Africa. But with the help of his parents, an understanding teacher, and a school art project, Hassan finds that by painting a picture of his

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old home and sharing his story, his homesickness and the trauma of leaving a war-torn country are lessened. And he finds that there are many things to like about his new home in America.

**Petar's Song** *Author: Pratima Mitchell. Illustrator: Caroline Binch. Publisher: Frances Lincoln.*  
*Age: 5+.* Petar loves music, and his violin keeps the whole village dancing. When war breaks out, Petar, his mother and his brother flee across the border to safety, leaving his father in the village with the other men. Petar is so sad that he can no longer play his music - until one day a song of peace, spring and new beginnings starts to form in his head.

**The Silence Seeker** *Author: Ben Morley. Illustrator: Carl Pearce. Publisher: Tamarind Books.*  
*Age: 4+.* When a new family moves in next door, Joe's mum explains that they are asylum seekers. Joe hears that they are silence seekers, especially as Mum adds that they need peace and quiet. When he sees a young boy from the family sitting disconsolately on the steps, Joe decides to help him find a quiet place in the noisy and chaotic city.

**Four Feet, Two Sandals** *Author: KL. Williams. Illustrated by Doug Chayka Publisher: Erdmans Books. Age: 4+.* When relief workers bring used clothing to the refugee camp, 10-year-old Lina is thrilled to find a sandal that fits perfectly, until she sees that another girl has the matching shoe. But soon Lina and Feroza meet and decide that it is better to share the sandals than for each to wear only one. As the girls go about their routines washing clothes in the river, waiting in long lines for water, and watching for their names to appear on the list to go to America the sandals remind them that friendship is what is most important. *Four Feet, Two Sandals* was inspired by a refugee girl who asked the authors why there were no books about children like her.

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