

When Stars are Scattered

This story of hope and perseverance chronicles the lives of two Somali orphans while in a UN refugee camp. It is an engaging graphic novel that gives readers a first-hand account of the struggle of refugee children. A story of struggle and survival, this novel is suitable for students in Grade 4–9, and lends itself particularly well in classrooms studying government, immigration, refugees, diversity, and world views. Teachers may use this resource for research, to initiate discussions, or for a reader’s theatre or drama production.

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum?

Extensively

THIS PRODUCT SUPPORTS THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF THE BC CURRICULUM:

- Communication
- Creative Thinking
- Critical thinking
- Positive Personal and Cultural Identity
- Personal Awareness and Responsibility
- Social Responsibility

This text supports the Grade 4–9 English Language Arts Big Idea that “exploring stories helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and the world.” The text also supports the Big Idea for Grade 10–12 Literary Studies that “the exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others and the world.” This text supports the Grade 5–6 Social Studies Big Ideas that “immigration and multiculturalism continue to shape Canadian society,” and “systems of government vary in their respect for human rights and

freedoms.” It supports the Social Studies 5–12 Curricular Competency for the inquiry process and skills.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

This novel could be used as an independent novel, to create a drama production, or used for a reader’s theatre. It could also be used as a resource for research projects and discussions on government, immigration, refugees, diversity, and world views.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Gender Roles, Identity & Sexual Orientation:

The two central female characters, Nimo and Maryam, are at the top of their class. However, Maryam is forced into an arranged marriage by her family, and as a result, has to quit school to stay and perform chores for her husband and raise their family. Jeri's father criticizes schools for “teaching girls and tell[ing] them they can be anything they want.” As well, the boys partake in games such as soccer while the girls stay home and do chores.

Ability:

Omar's brother, Hassan, has an intellectual disability, suffers from seizures, and cannot speak. Omar is overprotective of his brother, which has led to learned helplessness. However, through the support and encouragement of his friend Nimo, he learns to support Hassan in becoming more capable. Omar's friend, Jeri, walks with a limp and is bullied for his disability.

Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning?

Moderately

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS COMMENTS:

The social considerations support student learning. This novel explores the hardships endured by refugees who are caught between modern conflicts and cultural expectations that are further exasperated by disabilities.

GENERAL CONTENT

CONTENT

Is the resource engaging?

Extensively

Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?

Extensively

Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?

Extensively

Is the content timely and important for student broad understandings?

Extensively

AUDIENCE:

Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

Extensively

Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?

Extensively

Is the level of detail appropriate?

Extensively

Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

Extensively

This graphic novel is an engaging first-hand account of the struggle of refugee children in trying to survive and find a better life after being forced from their homes due to war. The content is accurate for multiple grade levels, and provides an approachable and relatable account of a horrific scenario.

TECHNICAL DESIGN

Does the resource make effective use of the medium?

Extensively

Is the location of illustrations appropriate?

Extensively

Is the resource easy to use?

Extensively

Is the use of font, text size and presentation uniform?

Extensively

Are extraneous elements/illustrations kept to a minimum?

Extensively

The resource is a graphic novel. Font and word bubbles are legible and consistent. Illustrations are clear and contribute to the story. Frames and word bubbles vary in size and shape throughout the story, contributing to reader engagement.

PRINT NOVEL

Does the text show insight into the complexity of the human condition?

Extensively

Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?

Extensively

To what degree is this text stylistically rich?

Moderately

PLOT DESCRIPTION:

Two Somali children are orphaned in a UN refugee camp after escaping a civil war that has claimed the life of their father; and they are also separated from their mother. They are provided a guardian by the UN, and the oldest brother begins to attend school. The younger brother is disabled, cannot speak, and suffers from seizures. The story chronicles his experiences through school and growing up in a refugee camp with a disabled brother. He is inspired to become a social worker after an encounter with a UN social worker during a school visit. Eventually, they are selected for asylum in America.

RELATED COMMENTS:

The story highlights themes of struggle, perseverance, and hope. The characters must overcome challenges and maintain hope that they will find a better life.

GENRE:

- Autobiography
- graphic memoir

LITERARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Well-developed themes
- Point of view

TYPE:

- Graphic Novel
- Autobiography

VISUAL HIGHLIGHTS:

- Graphic Novel
- Autobiography

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

READABILITY:

- At intended grade level(s)

Additional resources that support the novel can be found the author's webpage: <http://www.victoriajamieson.com/educato/>. The resources include audio and video clips that provide further insight into the struggle of refugees.

WHEN STARS ARE SCATTERED



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Recommended Grades & Subjects/Courses

4-12

Evaluation/Record Entry Date

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Subject

English Language Arts

ID

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