

Teachers' Notes

Written by Susan La Marca

Walk in My Shoes

By Alwyn Evans

Overview

This novel is the harrowing tale of an Afghani refugee, Gulnessa, and her struggle to establish a life for herself, and her family, away from persecution in her homeland. It is the result of extensive research; Evans states that it is a story '*derived from...composite true experiences...told by a fictitious sixteen-year-old girl*' (p348).

The novel is told retrospectively as Nessa (Gulnessa) strives to record the journey that has brought her family to a new life in Australia. Through her memories and her recurring dreams we are shown the persecution suffered by her family, and her community, in Afghanistan, as members of the Hazara minority group. Upon fleeing the country, without her father, the family and friend Abdul must overcome a hazardous trip over the border, a plane trip to Indonesia and then a nightmare-like experience on a small fishing boat before finally landing in Australia. The family's life savings, and that of their grandparents, pays for this horrendous journey that eventually ends in a detention centre in outback Australia. Their life, once in detention, is one of waiting until they are granted temporary visas.

Throughout this trauma the task of holding the family together falls to Nessa as detention causes a depression to descend upon her mother Fatimeh and the family are continually plagued with bad memories and a desperate concern for their future. Nessa's life is hard, but hope is kept alive through her own personal strength and her growing, reciprocated feelings for Abdul.

This is both a personal story of survival in adversity and a political statement on the Australian governments' detainment of refugees, as well as a cry for compassion.

Structure

The cover of the book is effective. Consider the barbed wire, the Arabic script, the haunting eyes, the dry grasslands and the bird in flight.

- What do each of its components symbolise?
- What feelings do the colours evoke?
- What other images evoke Nessa's story for you?

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The book is divided into two parts.

- What do you make of the illustrations for the front pages of each section? (p1 and p188-9)
- The work is almost two books, as part two opens a whole new world for Nessa's family. If the cover of the book better represents part one of the text what images would you use to illustrate part two?
- What 5 words would you use to describe the emotions and / or experiences in each part?

Nessa's story is constructed as if it were an autobiography. As it is written in the first person we are given her view of the world around her.

- What are the limitations/advantages of this style?
- Compare a section of Nessa's life to a section from a text which deals with a similar issue. The boat crossing of Jamal as he flees Afghanistan in *Boy Overboard*, or the experience of fleeing Sarajevo in the crowded car in *No gun for Asmir* by Christobel Mattingley could be compared to similar scenes in *Walk in My Shoes*. (boat trip p172 and 234-6, car journey p88). How do they compare?
- Discuss similarities and differences in language and style.
- What factors ensure the reader has a different view of events? For example the age of the character telling the story, their worldview, etc.

In *Walk in My Shoes* we see events through the eyes of Nessa. Consider the viewpoint of another character and rewrite a particular scene with their perspective uppermost in your story. That is, attempt to 'walk in their shoes' with your words.

Language

This text is full of emotive language. Consider the language of the detention camp:

- 'process' (p105, p182)
- 'closed compound' (p54)
- the use of numbers instead of names (p13, and in camp school p113)

This is a dehumanising use of language.

Mess, officers, exercise time, compound – what is this the language of?

Language is also a barrier for Nessa's family as they strive to understand those around them and fit into their local community.

- p241 answering 'yes, *thank you*' to everything
- p261 Nessa hears the word 'camp' and thinks she is being returned to detention.

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On pages 49 to 51 Nessa remembers her *'lighthouse night'*, *'her golden treasure'* (p51), a safe, contented memory that she recalls in times of stress.

- On page 51 of this description she remembers the sunrise. What feelings do the words evoke – *'blood-orange'*, *'golden sliver'*, *'crimson'*, *'glowing, golden peach'*, *'luminous'*.
- Compare this passage with the description of the death of Abdul's father (p74-75). Words and phrases such as *'Terror'*, *'her face an ashen mask'*, *'eyes frozen wide'*, *'raspy'*, *'fear lurches from my belly'*, *'huddle'*, *'sobbing'* and *'a spreading red halo'*; what do these words evoke in the reader?

Analyse the sentence structure in these two passages. The description of the sunrise uses longer sentences with commas whilst the attack on Abdul's father utilises very short sentences. Why?

Nessa's account of the horrible toilet on the fishing boat is vivid. Tara expresses the feeling *'I felt I was with you'* (p172). Why?

Landscape

The landscape surrounding Nessa is vastly different in the two parts of the story. In part one it is the dry, hot Australian outback, in part two it is suburban Perth. Contrasting with both of these landscapes we have the village life in Afghanistan of Nessa's memories.

What are Nessa's reactions to the world she sees around the camp?

- Nessa carefully watches the natural world around her (p76- 77)
- sighting a thorny devil (p98 – 99)
- *'empty, wide, red land'* (p97)

What does the natural environment mean to Nessa?

From page 194 onwards, Nessa describes her view from the bus as they move away from the camp and towards settled areas. She is most encouraged by the realisation that she can see *'no tanks or guns, anywhere'* (p195)

- What else is new to Nessa? (fences - p194, roads - p194, markets, transport - p195, picnic - p214, etc.)
- Consider how your own life might appear to others? Would someone from another part of the world find your life, or your neighbourhood, unusual?
- Despite these differences, are there always things we share? As a tourist we can experience cultures that are vastly different to our own. Discuss.
- Do you think you would have felt similar emotions to Nessa if you had been in her situation?

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Characters

Gulnessa

(for a discussion of Nessa's romance with Abdul see the heading Love/Romance under Themes)

Gulnessa is a very strong and resourceful character. She continually shows the ability to rise above her situation and display strength in adversity. Her reaction to the landmine near her home is evidence of this (p60).

She also suppresses many of her own concerns in an attempt to support her family during her mother's illness, (p156-7).

Despite this, Nessa is still only a young girl and the life she is leading does have an impact.

- Nessa throws up when her mother explains their need to flee (p64 –5)
- The physical effects of the interview process (p94)
- Still frightened by battle noises - cannons – scars run deep (p215)
- Sessions with counsellor – despite relative safety Nessa is haunted (p269)

Nessa's youth is evident in her continued 'annoyed' state with her mother's illness. While she is frightened for her mother she is also irritated by the imposition of her need for continual care (p276- 7)

- Is it right that such a young girl should bear so much responsibility?

On page 320 Nessa discovers that she has more in common with the Australian girl in her class that she expected. It is often external differences that set us apart. Discuss.

Abdul says to Nessa: '*Nessa, you see so much that other people don't.*' (p78)

- Do you think this is true?
- Are there parts of her family's story that Nessa doesn't reveal to us that you are curious about?

Fatimeh

On first arriving at the camp Fatimeh (Gulnessa's mother) is relieved that they have sanctuary. She is pleased to have made a connection with one of the camp nurses, Joanne, and delighted that Joanne has provided her with sewing materials (p36) and nail polish (p38).

But as time progresses, Joanne is 'relocated', the family's plight appears interminable and Fatimeh slips into depression. (see section titled 'Mental Illness')

Even after they are out on temporary visas, Fatimeh remains fragile. To Nessa she '*was like a glass person who'd break if she was squeezed too hard*'. (p237) Fatimeh has left behind her husband, parents and friends; she is uncertain of her family's fate. She is a single adult responsible for five children in a foreign

country where she doesn't speak the native language and has no contacts. Her tears on the plane (p140) are for a life and people she may never see again. On the local streets she is abused (p242), though she also experiences kindness and welcome.

- How must she feel during all of this?
- Do you feel that her depression is understandable or a sign of weakness?

Abdul

Our view of Abdul, as with all of the other characters in the novel, is through the eyes of Nessa.

On page 46 Nessa's feelings for Abdul are becoming apparent: *'His quiet presence since leaving home had helped and reassured me. And more and more I'd found I liked being near him'*. (46)

- Why does Nessa care for Abdul? Apart from her family, he is her only link with home. Does she truly care for him in a romantic sense? (see discussion below under 'love and romance')

What is Abdul really like?

- His distress after interview (p100)
- Guilt over leaving family behind (p103)

Abdul has watched his father being shot, knows nothing of the fate of his remaining family members and, when Nessa's family's temporary visas come through, he remains behind in detention.

- Can we understand how he might be feeling?

On pages 322 to 24 Abdul expresses his negative feelings about Nessa playing netball and going swimming. Why does he feel this way?

Hassan

Hassan, Nessa's older brother, is, from Nessa's viewpoint, almost impenetrable. As an older male he spends a great deal of time away from the family with others of his gender and age and, towards the end of their time in detention, secures work that takes him away from the family.

- What is his relationship with Nessa like? Consider the scene (p71-2) where Hassan returns from his first interview and is comforted by Nessa. They share a bond that transcends their obvious differences.
- Why does Hassan say, according to Nessa, that *'Muslim women should dress traditionally and wear a scarf, even though he always wore western gear'*. (p283)

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The two Z's – Zahra and Zainullah

The youngest members of the family are very young. How does the trauma of leaving, the journey and detention affect them?

- Zahra comforts Nessa, as she is all too aware herself of *'night-scares'* (p129)
- Continuing *'night scares'* and difficulty going to sleep (p144)
- Zahra reacts with withdrawal, Zainullah with anger (p155)
- *'sat quietly in a kind of daze'...far from my bubbly little sister'* (p213)
- Zainullah's 'first' birthday party (p246)
- Zainullah is bullied at school (p317)
- Zainullah is able to 'bounce back' (p319)
- How does their mother's illness affect them?
- What role does the 'thermie' blanket play for Zahra?
- Will the children suffer lasting effects from their ordeal?
- What does the future hold for them? (p345)

Annie

We see very little of Annie except through Nessa's eyes. She is described as a *'woman with short, red hair and wide smile'* (p201).

She becomes an integral member of the small group who help the family to settle into their new life.

What can you tell of her character and beliefs, etc, from her interaction with the family on the following occasions?

- Annie takes them to temporary accommodation (p205)
- Misunderstanding over yoghurt and fences (p210)
- First Aussie picnic (p214)
- Her reaction to Nessa's fear of cannon fire (p216)
- Allocating birthdays (p224)
- Annie's house (p228)
- Computer (p230)
- Christmas at Annie's house (p284)

Themes

The refugee experience

Please see the extensive list of related resources. Many of these could be read, analysed and discussed in relation to the text to offer additional views of the refugee/asylum seeker experience.

The conflict

On pages 58 to 67 Fatimeh, Nessa's mother, discusses with the older children the background to their escape from their country, attempting to give them background information that they might not have been exposed to and may need to be aware of in case they are pressured during the interview process.

What kind of life is it that Nessa's family, and local community, have been leading?

- The 'Terror', dragging a young boy away (p47-8)
- *'they take away our people's lives'* (p64).
- What Fatimeh has to say causes Nessa to vomit. (p65)

- Why are Nessa' people being persecuted?
- Do you think the family were justified in leaving their home?

The journey

The journey that the family takes is fraught with danger at every turn, the only bright space being Nessa's *'lighthouse night'* (p49). As Nessa is writing her story, once she is in Australia, the journey is told to the reader in a piecemeal fashion, out of order and disconnected, requiring the reader to interpret and compose the story as new information is provided. Does this affect our understanding of their story?

Nessa's reflective pieces relating to the journey to Australia occur on the following pages:

- Father is taken away (p31 –33) (the initial impetus for the journey)
- The *'lighthouse night'* in Indonesia before leaving on the fishing boat (p49)
- The burial of Asad's baby at sea (p69-70)
- Nessa describes the plane journey (p137 – 41)
- Horrible nightmares related to the boat journey (p142 – 143)
- Nessa describes the toilet on the boat (p169-172)
- Remembering the storm during the boat journey (p172 – 176)
- The sea reminds Nessa of the boat journey (p214)
- Deception of a promised larger boat (p234 –236)
- Nessa's nightmares mix the horrors of the journey with present horrors (p237)

Significant trauma is suffered by the family throughout their journey and during the story Nessa thinks - *'It's not possible to be this frightened and to stay alive'* (p174).

- What must it feel like to have endured this journey only to find oneself in detention?
- Research similar journeys by refugees and asylum seekers (see reading list). Look for similarities and differences to Nessa's fictional story. Do you feel her story is accurate?

The detention centre

When Gulnessa's family get to the detention centre they are unaware that their stay may be long and the novelty of new things is exciting.

Toast is a new, unappreciated food (p24) and the experience of sleeping on the top bunk is something none in the family wish to try (p27). The shower though, is appreciated (p19).

- Why are these things unusual?
- Why are they not made to feel more comfortable with a style of living that resembles what they have left behind?

During this period what things comfort them?

- Singing (p22)
- Blanket (p30)
- Knucklebones (p33)

What do these items have in common?

'Prison?'

Nessa asks – *'Why do they keep us behind high wire fences like we're criminals?'* (p54) On page 47 Nessa says the way they are checked during exercise and bedtime *'made her feel like an animal – or some sort of criminal'*.

This analogy, of the detention camp as prison, runs strongly throughout the text.

Other examples include:

- the replacement of their names with numbers (p13)
- *'felt caged'* (p35)
- the wearing of these numbers on the chest in camp school (p113)
- the handcuffs placed on detainees when they are transported to court (p150)
- the head count in the middle of the night when a bed is found empty in which the guards use guns and force (p46)
- the use of sirens to signify change of activity (p68)
- they are given nothing to eat during day long interviews (p72)
- sanitary products are not made available (p120)
- camp referred to as a 'prison' by Nessa (p123)
- the routines, the boredom (p130 – 1)
- unable to follow religious beliefs due to camp rules (p131)

The time in the detention centre affects each of the family, who also suffer a form of depression to which they react in different ways. See page 155:

'Not weak, not strong. Different...Zainullah's angry now. Zahra's withdrawn. She used to be so bright and bubbly. But I think it's making Hassan get some sense. Everyone gets nightmares.' (p155)

- Why do we each react differently to trauma?
- Can we foresee how someone might react to a given situation? Consider Nessa's reaction to her family's plight and her actions with the landmine (p60)

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The community debate

Discuss these quotations in relation to the text and the issues that it raises:

*In dwelling, live close to the ground,
In thinking, keep to the simple,
In conflict, be fair and generous,
In governing, don't try to control,
In work, do what you enjoy,
In family life, be completely present.*

Tao Te Ching

*Washing ones hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless
means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.*

Paulo Freire

*If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy,
practice compassion.*

The Dalai Lama

The issues of refugees/asylum seekers/detention centres and the treatment of other cultures in our society have dominated the front pages of our newspapers off and on for a number of years. They have been divisive issues, causing a great deal of debate both between, and within, political parties and in the wider community. A good school library will have access to vertical file clippings, factual texts, online newspaper databases and newspaper and magazine collections that will contain an enormous number of possible sources for research. (see also the list of related resources below)

- Research could be conducted on a particular issue for the production of a report, a presentation or a debate in conjunction with a study of the text.
- A guest speaker from one of the many support organisations or asylum seeker advocacy groups could be invited to address the class.
- After classroom research, discussion and debate, encourage the students to respond to the issue in a form that helps them to express their feelings. Encourage all forms of expression (art, drama, music, etc) and community involvement.

The 'Issues in the News' section of the *Education Age* has focused on various aspects of these related issues on a number of occasions. These pages contain background details, editorials, links to other articles, public opinion, student opinion and CSF links. They are available online through the *Education Age* 'Issues in the News' Archive at www.education.theage.com.au

Pages worthy of note are:

- 'Family left in Limbo' October 27th 2003
- 'Truth Overboard' August 30th 2004
- 'The fear of Muslims' December 4th 2002

A comprehensive search through this archive would yield many useful background pieces to support discussion.

Nessa's family are exposed, as soon as they reach Australia, to a variety of messages in relation to community opinion about their presence.

- '*officers try to prove we are lying*' '*Australians don't understand...*' (p53)
- '*I wouldn't have done it if I'd known people wouldn't believe us*' (p57)
- '*So we're in prison here because the government doesn't want us*' (p123-124)
- '*forgotten people*' (p130)
- '*guards kept telling us that no one wanted us in Australia*' (p163)
- '*While it is true there are people who don't want us here, there are others who welcome us, and are happy to share their country with us.*' (p185)
- The family is accosted on the street and treated rudely (p242)
- Questions are asked in parliament about the treatment of detainees in the camp (p300 onwards)
- Nessa's Mulla Nasrudin story is well received in class (p319)

On page 125, Nessa says: '*But that's like the Terror. Everyone who didn't do what they wanted was removed. Had we landed in a situation like the one we'd just escaped from?*'

- Is Nessa trying to suggest that the treatment they have received from the Australian government in detention is similar to the persecution that they experienced in their homeland? What do you think?

Family

Family is the only support each of the characters can count on during their horrific experiences both in leaving their homeland and in coming to Australia and also during detention. It is obvious, though, that family was also the centre of all of their lives during their early subsistence life in Afghanistan.

- It is a great sacrifice to sell belongings to help others flee yet remain behind yourself. Many of their relatives hear nothing for years, or never hear, about the new life of their loved ones. How might the family members who have remained in Afghanistan feel?
- The most important items to the family are the few things they are able to bring with them that have a strong connection to home, Zahra's woollen blanket '*thermie*' (p30), the simple toys – knucklebones (p33).

The stories of home, both of real, happy events, and traditional tales, are very important to the family – they sustain them and remind them of loved ones and

happier times. They also give them hope of a new life as they reinforce their knowledge that they are capable of living good and decent lives, that this period is an aberration.

Occasions where stories sustain the family:

"I usually tell the two Z's stories about home, and about Dad and our Bahkhuls and Arjays." "Yes, it's good they hear these stories. Not about things from here." (p177)

- The story of the lamb Dari (p28-9)
- Hiding the kid in Arjay Aquila's hideout (p43-5)
- The story of Abdul's ring (p192)
- A physical link - Treasures from home now that they are safe (p208)
- Nessa's Mulla Nasrudin story (p319)

Towards the end of the text (p343), Nessa expresses an interest in being a writer. Perhaps this is a manifestation of her need to keep stories alive, those of her family and her country, and convey them to others. Are you surprised that she would aspire to this career?

Mental illness

Fatimeh's depression descends quickly once the hopelessness of their detention becomes apparent:

- *'Mum seemed more and more often to sit gazing out of the window, oblivious to us.'* (p40)
- *'she was getting more and more headaches, and spending more time in our room'* (p42)
- *'she mostly lay on the bed'* (p118)
- Fatimeh worsening, lost interest in garden (p145)
- *'Any problem that arose was too much for Mum now'* (p151)

The camp doctor's solution for Fatimeh's depression is a supply of sleeping pills and the suggestion to *'drink more water'* (p120). She is told this on more than one occasion as are others for varied illnesses. It is almost a standing joke amongst the detainees.

- Is Fatimeh's treatment appropriate?
- Why is this the only help available to her?

On page 155, Shakela discusses with Nessa the nature of Fatimeh's illness. What is it that Fatimeh needs? She says *'I know I'll be alright when we get out'* (p157). Nessa forces the issue and Fatimeh sees the camp doctor for help. (p159)

Fatimeh is not the only detainee suffering from stress and displacement that is manifesting symptoms of illness.

- Banging head against wall (p121-2)
- Attempted suicide (p126)

Discuss in relation to the text:

'Dr Ramesh Nadir catalogued the rapid decline of asylum seekers from what he termed "Detention syndrome". After 60 days in detention, Dr Ramesh found that detainees were angry but manageable, "psychologically not much of a problem". But after 240 days, detainees developed "suicide idealisation and fantasies", and exhibited neurotic and deeply depressed behaviour. His research concluded that long-term detention causes serious, even permanent, damage.'

From 'It's time to admit we've created a Gulag' by Russell Skelton
The Age, Sunday 20th February, 2005

Love/Romance

While this story is a horrific tale of deprivation and sacrifice, on another level it is a love story.

Nessa finds herself attracted to spending time with Abdul (p46) - *'I'd found I liked being near him'*. It is obvious that her feelings are reciprocated, and their relationship offers them both a support, and a certainty, in an otherwise uncertain world.

- Their friendship helps them both cope (p81)
 - Nessa helped by Abdul after being hit by guard (p149)
 - Abduls voice *'soft as snow'* (p153)
 - Temporary visa comes through but not for Abdul (p179)
 - Nessa gives Abdul hope and strength (p185)
 - Their farewell when Abdul must remain in detention (p186)
 - Abdul's family ring (p192)
 - Nessa defiantly shows feelings for Abdul during phone call (p303)
 - On hearing Abdul is to be released - *'I might just fly!'* (p331)
 - Planned engagement (p344)
- Do you think Nessa and Abdul would have formed a relationship if they had never left home? If there had been no conflict within their country?
 - Do you see a future for them as a couple?
 - Are they hindered, or helped, by the past they share?

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Related/Further Reading

The Refugee Experience

- Al-Windawi, Thura (2004) Thura's Diary. Penguin.
The diary of an Iraqi teenager during the bombing of Baghdad.
- Anderson, Rachel (2001) Warlands. Penguin.
The story Of Ho, a Vietnamese war orphan, and his resettlement in Britain.
- Ashley, Bernard (1999) Little Soldier. Orchard Books
Kaninda is an East African child victim of war. He joins a rebel army, but becomes an unwilling refugee when he is 'saved' by the Red Cross.
- Baillie, Allan (1986) Little Brother. Nelson, Melbourne.
- Breckler, Rosemary (1996) Sweet Dried Apples: A Vietnamese wartime childhood. Houghton Mifflin, Boston. (Picture book)
- Catran, Wendy (2001) Not Raining Today. Lothian.
The story of two young Tibetan Buddhist nuns in danger after hanging a poster of the Dalai Lama.
- Cha, Dia (1996) Dia's Story Cloth: the Hmong people's journey of freedom. Lee & Low, New York. (Picture book)
- Edwards, Hazel (1990) Boat Boy. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Marrickville. (Picture book)
- Ellis, Deborah (2001) Parvana. Allen & Unwin.
When Parvana's father is arrested by the Taliban, she must transform herself into a boy so her family can survive. Also: Parvana's Journey (2002) and Shauzia (2003)
- Filipovic, Zlata (1993) Zlata's Diary. Penguin, Camberwell
- Flynn, Warren (1996) Different Voices. Fremantle Arts Press, Fremantle.
- Gavin, Jamila (1994) The Wheel of Surya. Mammoth, London.
- Gleitzman, Morris (2002) Boy Overboard. Penguin.
Soccer-mad Jamal and his family escape Afghanistan.
- Gleitzman, Morris (2004) Girl Underground, Penguin.
Jamal's family is now in an Australian detention centre.
- Heffernan, John (2000) More Than Gold. Margaret Hamilton Books.
Raiko, a Bosnian refugee, lives in a small Australian country town. He dreams of being an Olympic runner.
- Heffernan, John and Andrew McLean (2001) My Dog. Margaret Hamilton Books.
Short listed for both CBCA Book of the Year (Younger readers) and Picture Book of the Year in 2002. *My Dog* is the sad and moving story of a young boy fleeing his home in Kosovo. (picture book)
- Hest, Amy (1997) When Jessie Came Across the Sea. Walker Books, London. (Picture book)
- Hicyilmaz, Gaye (2000) Smiling for Strangers. Dolphin.

Fourteen-year-old Nina is forced to leave her village in Yugoslavia and escape to England. Her only hope, the name and address of a complete stranger.

- Ho, Minfong (1991) The Cay Marble. Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, New York.
- Hoffman, Mary and Littlewood, Karin (2002) The Colour of Home. Frances Lincoln, London.
Hassan's family flees Somalia and settles in England. (Picture book)
- Huynh, Quang Nhuang (1982) The Land I Lost: adventures of a boy in Vietnam. Harper & Row, New York.
- Kidd, Diana (1989) Onion Tears. Collins, Sydney.
- Kilborne, Sarah S. (1999) Leaving Vietnam: the true story of Tuan Ngo. Aladdin, New York.
- Knight, Margy Burns and O'Brien, Anne Sibley (1993) Who Belongs Here? an American story. Tilbury, Gardiner, Me. (Picture book)
- Laird, Elizabeth (1991) Kiss the dust. Mammoth, London.
- Lingard, Joan (1991) Between Two Worlds. Hamilton, London.
- Latifa (2002) My Forbidden Face: growing up under the Taliban, a young woman's story. Virago.
The true story of Latifa, a young Afghani woman, who is 16 when the Taliban take control.
- Mattingley, Christobel (1985) The Angel with a Mouth-organ. Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton. (Picture book)
- Mattingley, Christobel (1993) No Gun for Asmir. Puffin, Ringwood, Vic.
- Mattingley, Christobel (1995) Asmir in Vienna. Puffin, Ringwood, Vic.
- Mattingley, Christobel (1996) Escape from Sarajevo. Puffin, Ringwood, Vic.
- Munsch, Robert (1995) From Far Away. Annick Press, Buffalo, N.Y. (Picture book)
- Nye, Naomi Shihab (1999) Habibi. Simon Pulse.
Liyana's father moves the family from St Louis to Jerusalem.
- Sendak, Maurice (1994) I Dream of Peace UNICEF, New York. (Picture book)
- Shea, Pegi Dietz (1995) The Whispering Cloth: a refugee story : Boyd Mills, Honesdale, Pa. (Picture book)
- Strachan, Ian (1984) Journey of a Thousand Miles. Methuen, London.
- Strachan, Ian (1992) The Second Step. Mammoth, London.
- Tolbert, Steve (1991) Channeary. Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.
- Tolbert, Steve (2005) Dreaming Australia Ginninderra Press.
Soraya flees Aghanistan and after a difficult journey finds herself in Australia's Woomera detention centre.
- Whelan, Gloria (1993) Goodbye Vietnam. Random House, New York.
- Zephaniah, Benjamin (2001) Refugee Boy. Bloomsbury.
Half Eritrean, half-Ethiopian, Alem becomes an asylum seeker when his father takes him to England and leaves him to struggle with the bureaucratic hurdles faced by asylum seekers.

- Zhang, Song Nan (1993) A Little Tiger in the Chinese Night: an autobiography in art. Tundra Books, Montreal. (Picture book)

Human Rights in Literature

- Ashley, Bernard (1999) Little Soldier. Lane Cove, NSW: Orchard Books.
- Grificoli, Ann. (2002). The Village that Vanished. New York: Dial. (picture book).
- Hiçyilmaz, Gaye. 1998. Smiling for Strangers. London: Orion.
Refugee from former Yugoslavia.
- Mankell, Henning (2000) Secrets in the Fire. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
Effect of land mines in Mozambique.
- Naidoo, Beverley (2000) The Other Side of Truth. Puffin Books.
Freedom of speech in Nigeria.
- Sisulu, Elinor Batezat (1996) The Day Gogo Went to Vote. New York: Little, Brown. (picture book)
Thembi and her great-grandmother go together to vote in post-apartheid South Africa.

Anthologies of short stories and Poetry

- Ajidarma, Seno Gumira (1995) Eyewitness. Potts Point, NSW: Imprint.
Protest stories from Indonesia.
- Breaking Free: An Anthology of Human Rights Poetry (1994) Hove: Wayland.
- Dare to be Different: A Celebration of Freedom in Association with Amnesty International. 1999. London: Bloomsbury.
Illustrated stories and poems for young people.
- Flattley, Kerry & Wallace-Crabbe, Chris (1992) From the Republic of Conscience: An International Anthology of Poetry. Aird Books.
- Goode, Katherine (1997) Jumping to Heaven: stories about refugee children. Wakefield Press.
Short stories based on interviews with Australian refugee children.
- Hyde, Michael & Parr, Helen (1995) Same Difference. Carlton, VIC: Curriculum Corporation. Access Asia series.
Stories about teenage experience in Vietnam, Korea, Thailand, Nepal, Indonesia and Australia.
- Mitchell, Dee (ed) (1993) Amnesty. Port Melbourne, VIC: Minerva Australia (Reed Books).
Stories by Australian writers for adults and children.
- Muse, Daphne (ed) (1995) Prejudice: Stories about Hate, Ignorance, Revelation, and Transformation. New York, NY: Hyperion Books for Children.
- Naidoo, Beverley (2001) Out of Bounds: stories of conflict and hope. Camberwell, VIC: Puffin Books.
One short story for each decade of Apartheid in South Africa.

Memoirs and Testimonies – novel length

- Jackson, Livia E. Bitton (1980) Elli: Coming of age in the Holocaust. London: HarperCollins.
Memoir of a young Hungarian Auschwitz survivor.
- Latifa (2002) My Forbidden Face: Growing up under the Taliban, a young woman's story. London: Virago Press.
- Lobel, Anita (1998) No Pretty Pictures: a child of war. New York, NY: Avon Books.
A refugee from WWII.
- Pilkington, Doris (Garimara, Nugi) (1996) Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence. St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press.
Book on which the film, '*Rabbit-Proof Fence*' was based. Stolen aboriginal children escape back to their families.
- Ung, Loung (2000) First They Killed My Father: a daughter of Cambodia remembers. Pymble, NSW: HarperCollins.
Living under the Khmer Rouge regime.
- Zable, Arnold (1991) Jewels and Ashes. Newham, VIC: Scribe Publications.
Australian-Jewish refugee family history.

Memoirs and Testimonies – anthologies of shorter pieces

- From Nothing to Zero: Letters from Refugees in Australia's Detention Centres. (2003) Footscray, VIC: Lonely Planet.
- Chee Soon Juan. To Be Free: Stories from Asia's Struggle against Oppression. Clayton, VIC: Monash Asia Institute.
- Tikvah: Children's Book Creators Reflect on Human Rights (1999) New York, NY: SeaStar Books (North-South Books).
Well known children's illustrators and writers present an image and accompanying explanation.
- Tyler, Heather (2003) Asylum: Voices behind the razor wire. South Melbourne, VIC: Lothian.

Strength against adversity – True stories

- Al-Windawi, Thura Thura's diary. Penguin.
- Cunxin, Li Mao's Last Dancer, Penguin
- Latifa My Forbidden Face: growing up under the Taliban, a young woman's story. Virago.
- Murray, Kirsty Tough stuff: true stories about kids and courage, Allen & Unwin
- Nazer, Mande & Damien Lewis Slave: the true story of a girl's childhood and her fight for survival, Penguin.
- Pryor, Boori Maybe Tomorrow, Penguin
- Tonkin, Daryl & Carolyn Landon Jackson's Track: memoir of a dreamtime place, Penguin
- Yen Mah, Adeline Chinese Cinderella, Penguin

In constructing these lists I found the expertise of the Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC) invaluable. They offer a large collection of materials relating to various cultures and the issues surrounding our multicultural country. They are also a resource centre for languages other than English and English as a second language. The material is available for loan to all Victorian schools and their knowledge of the field is extensive.

**LANGUAGES & MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRE
(LMERC)**

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www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/lmerc

Related Resources

Coalition for Asylum-seekers, Refugees and Detainees

www.carad-wa.org

The organisation referred to in the Author's note (p347–9). The website contains a vast number of useful resources.

Many school libraries have collected resources to support the study of this issue in various courses. The P.L. Duffy Resource Centre at Trinity College in Western Australia very generously shares its material with others. Their page of web resources on refugees and asylum seekers is excellent and can be found at:

www.trinity.wa.edu.au/plduffyrc/subjects/sose/refugee.htm

Doctors without borders

This site details what life is like in a refugee camp

www.refugeecamp.org

Australian Immigration fact sheets

www.immi.gov.au/facts/index.htm

Asylum Seekers Centre, Sydney

Includes a page on resources for teachers

www.asylumseekerscentre.org.au/html

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

Their page on Asylum seekers includes links to many formal reports and other resources

www.hreoc.gov.au/human_rights/asylum_seekers

The *Education Age* 'Issues in the News Archive' at www.education.theage.com.au has a number of excellent pages that relate to the issues raised in the text. Each offers a variety of opinions from diverse sources.

Please Note: This is a very short list of the enormous amount of material available on the Internet. An extended search would supply more than enough to stimulate discussion and encourage a deeper understanding of the issues.

WALK IN MY SHOES

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you will never forget*

ALWYN EVANS