

The Journey

by Francesca Sanna



Flying Eye Books
(Primary/lower secondary)

This beautifully illustrated picture book introduces a powerful and moving perspective on migration for readers of all ages. Told through the eyes of a young girl, the story explores the unimaginable decisions made as a mother and her two children are forced to flee their home and everyone they know to escape the turmoil of war.

The book's inspiration came when author and illustrator Francesca Sanna met two girls in a refugee centre in Italy. She then began interviewing more refugee families in Europe, and created this book as a tribute to their plight and strength.

A simple narrative and dramatic and meaningful graphics offer ways for teachers to open discussions about refugees and what it would be like to live through such a harrowing journey. The book also addresses many other questions about home, war, fear, change and safety, which can only help to change perceptions of the current refugee crisis.

The questions in this resource encourage discussion and critical thinking as you read through the text. We have chosen several spreads to examine closely. Start each with 'What can you see?' in order to give the reader space to respond freely. The questions can be used with individuals, small groups or whole classes if the book can be projected.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 14

If someone hurts us, we have the right to go to another country and ask for protection.

Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 22

You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (someone who has been forced to flee their own country because of persecution, war or violence)



Questions for discussion



FRONT COVER:

- What do you notice about the front cover?
- What do you expect the story to be about?
- Why has the author drawn some of the people small and some big?
- How do you feel when you look at it?



'I LIVE WITH MY FAMILY IN A CITY CLOSE TO THE SEA'

- Would you like to be playing on the beach?
- Are the family happy?
- Why is the sea black?
- Who do you think is telling the story?
- What do you think happens next?



'THE WAR BEGAN'

- What is happening?
- What does 'chaos' mean?
- Where has the girl gone?
- What might the big black hands be?



‘AND ONE DAY THE WAR TOOK MY FATHER’

- What can you see? What can't you see?
- What does the black represent?

- There is only one sentence. Why?
- ‘The war took my father’. What does that mean?



‘SINCE THAT DAY...’

- What is difference between the two pictures?
- Who is missing?
- How is the family feeling now?
- What is coming in through the window?
- Why has the author drawn big black hands?
- What does the author mean by ‘everything became darker’?



‘THE OTHER DAY...’

- The mum and her friend are talking about escaping to another country. What do they think it will be like?
- Why has the author used light colours for the mountains?

- Why are the people running?
- Why can't you see their faces?



We don't want to leave but our mother tells us it will be a great adventure. We put everything we have in suitcases and say goodbye to everyone we know.



'WE DON'T WANT TO LEAVE'

- How do you think the mother feels about packing everything they have?
- The children have to say goodbye to everyone they know. How would you feel if you had to do this?

- Their mother says it will be 'a great adventure'. What do you think?
- What would you miss about your home if you had to leave?



We leave at night to avoid being seen...



and keep moving for many days.

'WE LEAVE AT NIGHT'

- What is happening on the right? And on the left?
- What has changed in the two pictures and why?

- Who is the driver?
- Why are they hiding?



The further we go...



the more we leave behind.

'THE FURTHER WE GO'

- What is happening?
- What are the bright and dark colours trying to tell us?

- Why do they have to leave things behind?
- Look at their faces. How are they feeling?



'WE FINALLY ARRIVE AT THE BORDER'

- Why is it dark?
- How does this place make you feel?
- What is a border?
- Why are the family so small?
- How would you feel faced with that wall?



'BUT, OH NO!'

- The guard is big and looming, and the family small and looking up. Why?
- Why are they not allowed to cross the border into another country? Should they be allowed?
- 'We have nowhere to go.' What will they do next?



'IN THE DARKNESS THE NOISES OF THE FOREST SCARE ME'

- Point out the differences between the two pictures.
- The little girl says mother is never scared. Is this true?
- Why does the mother wait until the children are asleep to cry?
- Can you see the hands and eyes in the forest? What do they mean?
- How would you feel if you were here?



‘SHOUTING WAKES US UP.’

- In a fairy tale, a forest can be a place of magic but also danger. Which is it here?
- What do the guards want to do with the family?
- What do you think of the guards and dogs?

- It looks like the family are running in the direction of something or someone. What or who? Why does he blend in with the forest?
- What do you want to happen next?



‘WE RUN AND RUN’

- The man helps them climb the wall/go over the border. Who is he? Why did mother give him money?

- Are the family safe now?
- Is darkness good or bad in this story? Or both?



‘OUR JOURNEY IS NOT OVER YET.’

- What does this picture make you feel?
- It's a large number of people for a small boat. Do you think they'll all get on?

- Are the family safe or still in danger? Of what?
- Where are the birds going?



'WE HAVE BOARDED A FERRY WITH SO MANY PEOPLE!'

- What can you see under the sea?
- What does capsize mean?
- How would you feel if you were in the boat?
- What would you do to make yourself feel better?



The boat rocks and rocks as the waves grow bigger and bigger. It feels like the sea will never end. We tell each other new stories. Stories about the land we are heading to, where the big green forests are filled with kind fairies that dance and give us magic spells to end the war.

'THE BOAT ROCKS AND ROCKS'

- Why are the waves dark and the fairies bright?
- The boat is tiny but the waves and the fairies are big. Why?

- 'We tell each other new stories.' Why?
- What do you think the new land will be like?



'AS THE SUN RISES'

- Where are they?
- Why can you only see the mother's face?
- What is a lighthouse and what does it symbolise?
- Does the mother feel safe yet?





'WE TRAVEL FOR MORE DAYS'

- How long do you think they have been travelling for now? What emotions are the characters feeling? How would you be feeling in their position?
- How do you feel about them being on a train rather than a boat?
- Where are the birds flying to?
- Why is the train bright and red? What mood do the colours convey?



'THEY ARE MIGRATING JUST LIKE US'

- What does migrating mean?
- There are variety of birds all flying in the same direction but they do not have to cross borders as people do.
- Why has the author drawn the family riding on the neck of a bird?
- The story ends without telling us if the family find a safer life. Why?
- Do you like this ending?
- If you were telling the story, how would you end it?

After reading the book



Explain that this book is based on true stories of refugees that the author met. This kind of journey really happens.

What does refugee mean?

Someone who has to leave their home because they are not safe there. The mother and the two children did not choose to leave their home and take this long and dangerous journey.

- What do you now think about the title?
- How do you feel about people going on journeys like the one in this book?
- What parts made you feel happy or sad?
- Do you know anyone who is like the character in the story? How have people treated them? What do you think they might miss about their home?
- What have you learnt about refugees?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Draw a picture or write down words to express how you'd be feeling if you had to leave your home and travel to a strange country to start a new life.
- Write down any questions you have for the author.



FIND OUT MORE

For a full version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights go to www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr

For more free teaching resources from Amnesty International go to www.amnesty.org.uk/education

