

Refugee

Alan Gratz

Reviewed by: Rishi Chillara, 14 Years Old

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Refugees were there since the time of war itself. They get caught in the skirmishes of war and try to escape their homeland, a very hard task to do. This incredible book details the risky journeys of three such refugees, each from different times and places, yet sharing the common goal of escaping the only place they have called home. They will face hardships along the way, ranging from boat deflation all the way to the other country's resentment of refugees. All three of these kids will strive to make their way to their new homes, but more importantly, learn new things about themselves that they have never knew, concepts such as visibility, resilience, courage, but most especially, hope and love. They will witness loss and darkness, but with their temerity will they only persevere. Shocking connections between the refugees are revealed at the conclusion, and revelations on how all these stories surprisingly connect to one another, in this adventurous book about refugees.

This book is fantastic. Many people rated this book as one of their top books, and for good reason. It is very action-packed with adversaries appearing left and right, and the characters finding ways to steer around, or through, them. The descriptions in this novel were so vivid, that it directly transported me to their surroundings, as if I were on their boats and I was holding on along with them. The splitting up of pages at some parts would usually be a bad omen for a book, but for this book, it works! The chapters always end at histrionic cliffhanging moments that I just had to keep on reading to find out what happens to them! Three main characters with their own stories usually does not fare well, but in *Refugee*, the characters have so much memorable, clear qualities that I kept track of them very suitably. In summary, *Refugee* is so thrilling; it is hard to put down.

The only complaint that I have with this book is that the connections in this book felt a bit rushed and not so fleshed out. Some connections were made, in my opinion, a bit too early and kind of downplays the suspense. However, there are only few parts that have this, and hence only affects the book in a minor way. This book made me relieved when the characters find refuge, somber when some in the characters families get captured, and enraged at how the governments mistreat the refugees. This book is more than a story, it is also a device to show people the struggles that millions of people go through every day to escape the one place they have called home, due to war, destruction, and corruption. The book has a presence of violence (one of the character's legs get bitten and they die) and there is brief language, yet it is nothing too severe and more up to the imagination of the reader. Hence, this book would be great for people ages 10 and up. This book should be very common in libraries, as it is a book that provides an empowering, necessary message about the nature of war and the harrowing causes of it.

Other books I would recommend:

Prisoner B-3087, by Alan Gratz

Night, by Elie Wiesel

The Breadwinner, by Deborah Ellis