

Book Knowledge Organiser – The boy at the back of the class by onjali q Rauf

Important Information

Plot

Alexa is a typical K-year-old girl who attends school in London with her friends. One day, a new boy turns up in the class and sits at the back of the class in the spare chair with his red bag. Initially, he does not communicate with anyone and there is a lot of speculation about who he is. Gradually, Alexa manages to make friends with him and learn his plight. She, and her friends are determined to help him and his family to be reunited once again, no matter the cost.

Themes

Determination, Courage Vs Fear, Loss, Survival, Friendship and Hope.

Setting

The book is generally set at Alexa school, which is located somewhere in London and at her home. Along the way the children visit other areas of London and also learn about Ahmet's journey across Europe from Syria.

Characters

Alexa	K-year-old girl who befriends the new boy in her class.
Tom	Her best friend. Short, spiky hair. Small, funny and American.
Josie	Her best friend. Large brown eyes and a million freckles. Very fast.
Michael	Her best friend. Neat, puffy afro. Ingenious and quiet. Rich parents.
Ahmet Saqqal	Refugee child who joins the school from Syria.
Mrs Khan	The children's teacher.
Brendan Brooker	The class bully.
Mum	The girl's mum. She works as a librarian and a carer.
Dad	The girl's dad. He was a carpenter, liked stories and music.
Ms Hemsi	Ahmet's teaching assistant who is also from Syria.
Mr Irons	Upper School teacher. One of the strictest teachers in the school.
Uncle Lenny	Her mum's brother who likes playing scrabble.
Aunt Christina	Uncle Lenny's wife.
Syrah	Ahmet's sister.
Mrs Sanders	The school Headteacher.
Stan	Stan-the-taxi-man – he drives the children to Buckingham Palace.
Mr Fry	The local MP who does not want any more refugees in the area.
Grandma Jo	The girl's grandma who escaped the Nazis and helped others to.
Chris Taylor	Lieutenant in the Queen's guard.
Walter Kungu	Second Lieutenant in the Queen's guard.

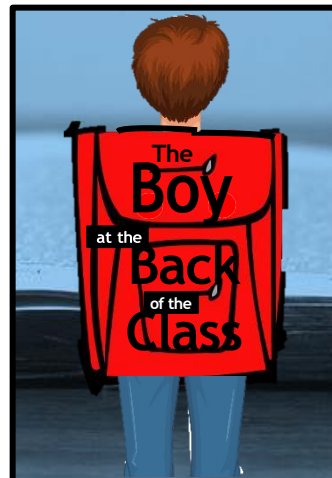


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Name of Book: The Boy at the Back of the Class

Date Published: 2018

Author: Onjali Q Rauf Illustrator: Pippa Curnick

A.R Level: 5.4 A.R points: 9

Genre: Contemporary Fiction

The Big Questions

Should we allow everybody to come into a country if they want to?

Should you break a school rule to help out a friend?

Quotes

My dad used to say that if you really, really want something, you have to keep trying for it.

Then I come here...and come to school. I like here...no bombs. It safe and I like new friends and teacher and play football.

But refugees are different, because they do not just look for a home. They look for peace too.

Key Vocabulary

ingenious	a person who is clever, original, inventive
insightful	showing an accurate and deep understanding
refugee	a person who has been forced to leave their country
pomegranate	a spherical fruit with sweet red gelatinous flesh
turban	a long length of material wound around a head
ministers	a head of a government department
tyke	a small child, especially a cheeky or mischievous one
asylum	the protection granted by a country to someone who has left their home for political reasons
plight	a dangerous or difficult situation
seclusion	a sheltered or private place
Kurdish	the Iranian language of the Kurdish people
High Court	the top most court in England and Wales
Blow fish	a fish that is able to inflate its body when alarmed
concussion	temporary unconsciousness
chauffeur	to drive someone around as a job
pests	an annoying person or thing
despicable	deserving hatred
scruples	a feeling of doubt concerning the rights and wrongs of action

Context – The author is the founder of 'O's Refugee Aid Team', an organisation that raises money, goods and awareness to help refugees. She was inspired to write the book because of a newspaper article (2nd September 2015) about Alan Kurdi, a young boy who had died, aged 3, trying to cross the Aegean Sea with his family. Syria, a country in Western Asia, is home to a diverse number of religious groups. The Syrian civil war began in 2011 with various factions fighting against each other aided by external powers. By 2013, some 11,000 children are reported to have been killed. As of 2023, fighting has greatly subsided.