



# The Journey

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Reviewer:

[Jill Bennett](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Told from a child's viewpoint, we first meet a family used to sharing happy summers at the beach together; their world's a happy place. We then share what happened when the whole world seemed to plunge into increasing chaos and darkness at the outbreak of war. The father is killed and the rest of the family embark on a journey - their mother calls it a 'great adventure' - towards a 'safe place' where they can live free from constant fear and danger.

Leaving under the cover of night, the three travel for several days, gradually letting go their material possessions, to reach the border, only to be stopped by fierce guards whom they eventually manage to elude. They then face a harrowing ferry journey during which the tales of dangerous monsters they tell one another gradually give way to stories of kindness, magic and the end of war.

Once ashore there are more borders to cross, by train this time; but now the sight of migrating birds flying free brings fresh hope and possibilities of starting a new story of their own in a new, safe land.

Such is the potency of the telling that it's impossible to read this book without having to blink back tears. Sanna's striking, haunting stylised illustrations, in dark and sombre shades, of Grimm-like forests, fortified borders, sinister guards and anonymous traffickers, at once distances and intensifies the pathos and sadness of this tale of the so many refugees fleeing war-torn countries.

The poetic, moving text, distilled from the stories told to the author by refugees, is one that strikes a special chord with me having taught in London schools where asylum seekers and refugees enriched our lives as they shared their personal stories with us.

Every child, and every adult should read and discuss this: it surely has the power to open hearts and minds to the ongoing worldwide refugee crisis.

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