

Y7 MODERN NOVEL: THE BONE SPARROW – KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

Key Words

- **Refugee** – a person who has been forced to leave their home because of war, persecution, or natural disaster
- **Parallel narrative** – a story structure in which a writer includes two or more narratives linked by a character, event or theme
- **Imagery** – description which creates a picture in the mind of a reader by comparing something to something else
- **Multisensory description**- Use of the senses, such as sight, sound, taste, smell and touch, to describe something (usually setting).
- **Dual perspective**- Two different uses of narrative voice (1st person for Subhi's sections, 3rd for Jimmie)

Key Skills

- **Read and understand** a challenging novel
- **Understand** the **context** of the events in the plot
- Develop **comprehension skills** by listening to an experienced reader and following own text
- Develop **empathetic** thinking and writing skills
- Consider **effects** of text on reader – how does a writer use a story to make a point about society?

Key concepts

- **Human Rights** – rights and freedoms that every person should be able to enjoy regardless of situation or background
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** – a 1948 document setting out fundamental human rights to be universally protected
- **Burma/Myanmar** – South East Asian country bordering India, Bangladesh, China, Laos and Thailand
- **Rohingya** – a group of people, predominantly Muslim, who faced persecution in their home country of Burma/Myanmar

Essential information

First published: 2016

Author: Zana Fraillon

Born: Melbourne, Australia

Book Overview

Born in a **refugee camp**, all **Subhi** knows of the world is that he's at least 19 fence diamonds high, and that the nice Jackets never stay long. But his world is far bigger than that—every night, the magical Night Sea from his mother's stories brings him gifts, the faraway whales sing to him, and the birds tell their stories. And as he grows, his imagination threatens to burst beyond the limits of his containment.

The camp is in **Australia**, where Subhi, a **Rohingya Muslim** from **Burma (Myanmar)** waits to see if he will ever experience the freedom he dreams of. He lives in a tent with many other refugees, including his mother, and his sister, **Queeny**; his friend **Eli** lives in another of the tents. He has the support of one of the **Jackets** (camp guards), **Harvey**, but has to look out for **Beaver**, who is particularly mean towards the residents. He dreams about one day talking to his **ba** (father), who he has never met.

The most vivid story of all, however, is the one that arrives one night in the form of **Jimmie**—a scruffy, impatient girl who appears on the other side of the wire fence. She carries a **notebook** that she's unable to read and wearing a **sparrow** made of **bone** around her neck - both talismans of her family's **past** and the **mother** she's lost. Jimmie strikes up an unlikely **friendship** with Subhi beyond the fence. As he **reads** aloud the tale of how Jimmie's family came to be, both children discover the importance of their own **stories** in writing their futures.

Subhi and Jimmie might both find comfort—and maybe even **freedom**— as their tales unfold. But not until each has been braver than ever before.

Key Characters

Subhi – a 10-year-old boy who was born in a refugee camp in Australia; his family are Rohingya Muslims from Burma (Myanmar)

Maá – his mother; she suffers from PTSD

Queeny – Subhi's older sister; she protects him, and tries to get a message to the world about conditions in the camp

Ba – Subhi's father; Subhi, having lived his whole life in the camp, has never met his father, who is a poet and storyteller

Eli – Subhi's best friend; an older boy who also lives in the camp. Eli looks out for Subhi, his 'little bruda'

Harvey – one of the 'Jackets' (camp guards); Harvey is kind and thoughtful towards Subhi

Jimmie – a girl who lives in the town outside the camp. Her mum died a few years ago. Jimmie and Subhi become friends and share stories from her mum's family history through a special notebook

Beaver – another of the camp guards, he is bitter and cruel towards the residents of the camp. He lost an eye in a disturbance and seems to hold this against all residents

Jimmie's dad – following the death of Jimmie's mum, Jimmie's dad sometimes struggles to look after himself and the family, but he loves his children and is always looking for a better job to help them as much as he can

Jonah – Jimmie's older brother is fun and protective of Jimmie. He steps in to help look after her and bring her up, although he is not always around so Jimmie spends time alone

Oto – a character from Jimmie's mum's stories, he lives in a small village which becomes occupied by soldiers. He is the original owner of the Bone Sparrow necklace

Anka – another character from the stories; she is born from an egg and found in a well, and eventually falls in love with Oto. Anka is unable to see and has a lovely singing voice

Mirka – an older woman who lives in Oto's village; she organised the villagers into rescuing Anka from the well

Guntis – an older man in the village; he isn't as kind as Mirka

Iliya – Mirka's grandson is a healer, and he helps Oto escape when the soldiers arrive at the village