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# The Journey



## **Synopsis**

With haunting echoes of the current refugee crisis this beautifully illustrated book explores the unimaginable decisions made as a family leave their home and everything they know to escape the turmoil and tragedy brought by war. This book will stay with you long after the last page is turned. From the author: The Journey is actually a story about many journeys, and it began with the story of two girls I met in a refugee center in Italy. After meeting them I realized that behind their journey lay something very powerful. So I began collecting more stories of migration and interviewing many people from many different countries. A few months later, in September 2014, when I started studying a Master of Arts in Illustration at the Academy of Lucerne, I knew I wanted to create a book about these true stories. Almost every day on the news we hear the terms "migrants" and "refugees" but we rarely ever speak to or hear the personal journeys that they have had to take. This book is a collage of all those personal stories and the incredible strength of the people within them. Francesca Sanna is an Italian illustrator and graphic designer who moved to Switzerland to follow her dream to work as an illustrator. She graduated in 2015 from the Lucerne School of Art and Design with a Master of Design with focus on Illustration. The Journey is her first picture book.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 630 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 48 pages

Publisher: Flying Eye Books (September 13, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1909263990

ISBN-13: 978-1909263994

Product Dimensions: 11.2 x 0.5 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 41 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #28,531 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying #45 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Emigration & Immigration #68 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction

Age Range: 3 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 2

## Customer Reviews

Gr 1-4 •The crisp blend of realistic and fantastical illustrations in Sanna's debut picture book impart as much content and emotional depth as its carefully woven text narrated by an anonymous child. This title chronicles the unexpected, grueling migration of a family whose lives are forever changed by war. A contrasting palette with the startling use of black effectively depicts the father's death, the grasping hands of worry, and the fear, sadness, and exhaustion experienced during the arduous escape. Protagonists' pale faces and dark hair call to mind Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel *Persepolis*, although the setting is not specific in terms of region or country. Readers follow the family with bated breath from the beginning end pages, which foreshadow the plot, and then as they travel by car, trucks, bicycle, foot, boat, and train. The narrator notes that "the farther we go, the more we leave behind." Simple words. Profound meaning. Books and storytelling provide a measure of emotional stamina for the family throughout their journey, and final end pages offer a small sense of hope for this unfinished tale. **VERDICT** Based on a compilation of immigrant interviews, this selection is timely and beautiful, appropriate for use with young children given the continuing situation of refugees around the world made particularly visible in recent years. •Ruth Quiroa, National Louis University, IL

SELECTED AS AN ALSC NOTABLE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF 2017  
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USBBY OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL BOOKS LIST  
INCLUDED IN CCBC CHOICES 2017  
NEW YORK TIMES' NOTABLE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF 2016  
ONE OF THE WALL STREET  
JOURNAL'S BEST CHILDREN'S BOOKS OF 2016  
ONE OF PUBLISHERS WEEKLY'S BEST  
BOOKS OF 2016  
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SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL'S BEST PICTURE BOOKS OF 2016  
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ONE OF LET'S TALK PICTURE BOOKS' BEST PICTURE BOOKS OF 2016  
ONE OF CHICKADEE LIT'S  
PICTURE BOOKS TO CELEBRATE KINDNESS "Given the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe and immigration debates in the U.S. and abroad, Sanna's story is well poised to spark necessary conversations about the costs of war." •Publishers Weekly, STARRED  
REVIEW "Simultaneously heartbreaking, scary, and brightly hopeful, this timely tale with simply captivating artwork will spur little ones to ask questions that lack easy answers." •Booklist,  
STARRED REVIEW "A necessary, artful, and searing story." •Kirkus Reviews, STARRED  
REVIEW "Gorgeously stylized, spare and powerful" •Shelf Awareness, STARRED

REVIEW"The crisp blend of realistic and fantastical illustrations in Sanna's debut picture book impart as much content and emotional depth as its carefully woven text narrated by an anonymous child. [¶] Based on a compilation of immigrant interviews, this selection is timely and beautiful, appropriate for use with young children given the continuing situation of refugees around the world made particularly visible in recent years."(School Library Journal,

STARRED REVIEW"Sanna's stylized illustrations, with gargantuan villains and swirling inky black, are both captivating and unsettling."(The Horn Book, STARRED

REVIEW"[Francesca Sanna's artwork] is both realistic and fantastical, done in a striking, graphic style. (The Journey) will be a wonderful teaching tool for those who are welcoming refugees into their community. For those who have escaped war, this book might prompt them to share their own stories."(New York Times)The anguish of a family seeking refuge from war and trying to reach safer shores unfurls with heartbreaking directness in The Journey, a beautiful picture book by Francesca Sanna."(Wall Street Journal)The Journey offers a beautiful message to readers ( young and old alike ) about the difficulties of finding a new home, and the value of welcoming strangers once they arrive."(The Washington Post)A book that explores the heart wrenching need to abandon one's home amid war."(Associated Press)startling, poignant [¶] It's a story that has lingered in my mind since I first read it, and I think it will be there a long while."(Julie Danielson for Kirkus Reviews)Through

beautiful and powerful illustrations, The Journey vividly explores the universal story of all those who have had to leave behind the place and people they love."(The Guardian, The Best Children's Books of 2016)[The Journey] is a brightly colored and beautifully illustrated tale on a dark and frightening topic. [¶] The contrasting pictures and words are likely to inspire conversation, asking children and adults alike to discuss the topic of conflict and the plight of refugees the world over. I'd highly recommend the use of this book in an educational setting. Francesca

Sanna is an illustrator to keep an eye on."(Portland Book Review)Haunting illustrations chronicle one refugee family's harrowing escape from the darkness of war. A tale of love, courage, and perseverance."(The New York Public Library)This powerful look at flight follows one family from their homeland. Traveling by bike, by car, even hidden in a truck bed, they eventually

reach their destination only to face a looming guard and an insurmountable wall. While the time and place are never definite, the sadness and uncertainty are real."(St. Louis Post-Dispatch)The potent, matter-of-fact narrative becomes even more powerful set against striking illustrations that are stylized, beautiful, and harrowing. [...] Over and over the emotional weight of the story is conveyed through affecting, sometimes heart-rending images juxtaposed with the voice of

innocence.">Cooperative Children's Book Center, CCBC's Book of the Week"5 STARS [...] Hauntingly beautiful [;] emotionally charged [;] This is the perfect book to read to kids, to teach them about what is going on in the world today.">Youth Services Book Review"What a beautiful and haunting book. This story of a family that loses its home and father to war and must set out for a safer home might not be a soothing bedtime tale, but for a child curious about the word >refugee,> I can hardly think of a more delicate and powerful introduction.">NW Book Lovers"[The Journey] is a powerful book that is sure to encourage conversations with young readers about the struggles children living in unsafe environments currently face.">Bookish"This story was created to bring light to the recent refugee crisis in our world, and approaches the issue with incredible grace and metaphor. Debut Italian author/illustrator Francesca Sanna weaves a heartbreakingly hopeful tale with her beautiful words and illustrations.">Wild Rumpus"An honest and engaging portrait of what a refugee family goes through to get to a safe place to live.">Spirituality and Practice" MUST-READ PICTURE BOOK OF THE YEAR [...] Not only is it an important work in children's literature, but it's an important story that needs to be read to people of all ages. [;] It's a story that serves as both a mirror and a window into an epic adventure of strength and fortitude unlike any picture book you may ever read.">Sturdy For Common Things"A beautifully illustrated picture book that deftly explores the unimaginable decisions made as a family leave their home and everything they know to escape the turmoil and tragedy brought by war.">Children's Bookwatch"The story we read about in The Journey is universal and timely" >Let's Talk Picture BooksSanna's prose is lyrical yet sparse enough to emphasize the harsh and abrupt changes that the family experiences, and she has created a beautiful interplay of words and pictures. [...] All of the illustrations are beautifully layered and textured with color, pattern, and meaning.">Chickadee Lit"Francesca Sanna creates images that evoke the cost of war to all who are threatened by it. [;] Emotional, often stark, yet also hopeful, they will allow readers to share the emotions felt by the many refugee families looking for shelter and safety.">Sal's Fiction Addiction"[The Journey] is a powerful look at the refugee experience" >Mindy Rhiger, Proper Noun Blog"This beautifully universal refugee story is essential reading.">Suzanna Hermans, Oblong Books & Music"What a beautiful, heartbreakingly hopeful, necessary book.">Hannah DeCamp, Avid Bookshop"Chilling, haunting, and hopeful, this book will resonate with readers long after they've closed the cover.">Marika McCoola, Porter Square"I am so grateful for this candid, colorful and graceful telling of a family's fleeing of home that transcends any specific time in history or place on earth to welcome us all into its pages and its

story of common courage and hope."&#151;Joanna Parzakonis, Bookbug"Sanna met refugee children and combined their stories to create this brilliant book told from a child's perspective &#150; but with an awareness of an adult's perspective too. [&#133;] The story has darkness, and fear, and worry, and shows the heartbreaking decisions families have to make when they're trying to stay alive. There are also moments of strength and hope."&#151;Vine & Figtree"It's not just children who require stories like these in order to better understand current events and the world around us. Politicians, and bigots, and other grownups with hardened hearts who've forgotten how to be human&#151;these are the readers who need to read these books in order to remember that people are people, some things are universal, and also that books are amazing."&#151;Pickle Me This"The Journey will make you appreciate your life and think about ways you can help others who are not as lucky."&#151;Momma's Bacon

This book made me tear up. This story puts the humanity back in the words refugee and immigrant. It should be read by everyone. The art is every bit as stunning as the story.

Brilliant, haunting and breathtakingly beautiful

An honest and heartbreaking journey alongside a refugee and her family. Illustrations are incredible! As the title suggests, you are taken on a journey toward peace and the hope that one day all will be well. Highly recommend introducing young children to the plight of refugee kids through this stunning book!

Great for the kids!

Love the story and the illustrations!

I have two refugee students in my ESL class. When I saw this book, I thought it would be something I could share with them. Given that their English proficiency is quite low (absolute beginners), this book was a bit of a challenge to them. Even though there were only a couple of sentences per page, it's actually still quite wordy. The texts were a little small as well, so reading together as a group was not as convenient. I do wish the pages were more sturdy, perhaps thicker or with some sort of coating. Anyway, the students seemed interested as some of it may have echoed their own

experiences. I know it's probably not the happiest experience, thinking about what they've gone through, but the discussion of the book, I think, made them realize that they are not alone. Since they're high school students, I found that using this in my ESL class was appropriate. I'd probably not use it with younger children, especially if their refugee memories are quite recent.

As I lay down on the ground with my 7 and 10 year old boys to read this book I considered the reasons for doing so. This book is not your typical children's book with an upbeat and happy story. This is a story about war, death, destruction, fear, migration and refugees. Why should I read this to my young boys? Because I want them to understand the crisis and to empathize with those who have lost almost everything. Empathy is so powerful and it's so lacking in the world today. We took turns reading the beautifully illustrated pages about the war (obviously Syria based on the starting point and the journey). The reading level was higher than my first grader but fine for my fourth grader. As we finished, I took a minute to unpack this for them. We discussed what happened and what it would be like to live through this. I explained that this is a true story and it really happens. I showed them before and after pictures of the destruction in Syria (careful to avoid pictures of casualties and injuries). "Why don't we stop this?" they asked. I said it wasn't that easy. In language they could understand I told them about the crisis and encouraged them to care and to pray for these people. Hours later when they told mom about this story they were still upset that we couldn't save these people - the nearly 6 million displaced, the over 4 million refugees, and the nearly half a million deaths. My hope is that thanks to a book like this children and their adult readers can come to empathize and care. That this isn't just a news story that can be ignored.

Brilliant. Beautiful.

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