

**Escape. Connect. Relate.**

# Refugee Experience

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee might be vulnerable to persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, gender, sexuality, or membership of a particular social group. Most likely, refugees are unable to return home, or live in fear of doing so.

Officially, people fleeing their country start out as asylum seekers and are then granted refugee status when a new country decides that they are allowed to stay there. Official refugees have more rights than asylum seekers. However, the terms are often used interchangeably.





# ECR Suggested Reads

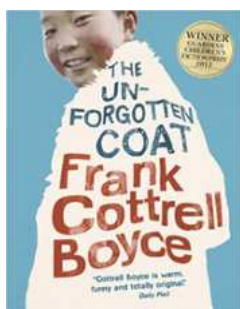
Many of our suggested reads are available from your school library and from [Edinburgh Libraries](#). Some books may contain triggering or upsetting content. Please use the age ratings as guidance and ask your school librarian for help. Books are listed in alphabetical order by author's surname.



## **Internment, by Samira Ahmed**

Rebellions are built on hope. Set in a horrifying near-future United States, seventeen-year-old Layla Amin and her parents are forced into an internment camp for Muslim American citizens. With the help of newly made friends also trapped within the internment camp, her boyfriend on the outside, and an unexpected alliance, Layla begins a journey to fight for freedom, leading a revolution against the internment camp's Director and his guards.

**S3+**



## **The Un-forgotten Coat, by Frank Cottrell Boyce**

"My brother believes he is being chased by a demon... a demon that makes things vanish." Two refugee brothers from Mongolia are determined to fit in with their Liverpool schoolmates, but bring so much of Mongolia to Bootle that their new friend and guide, Julie, is hard-pressed to know truth from fantasy. Told with humour and warmth, readers will be transported from Liverpool to the steppe of Mongolia.

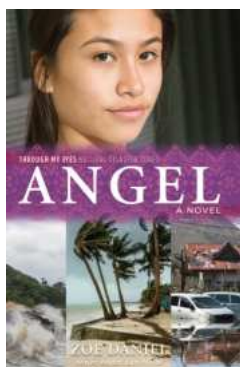
**S1+**



## **The Bombs That Brought Us Together, by Brian Conaghan**

Hamish has lived in Little Town, on the border with Old Country, all his life. He knows the rules: no going out after dark; no drinking; no litter; no fighting. You don't want to get on the wrong side of the people who run Little Town. When he meets Pavel, a refugee from Old Country, the rules start to get broken. Then the bombs come, and Little Town changes forever. Hamish wants to keep everyone happy, even if it kills him. But he's got to kill someone else first.

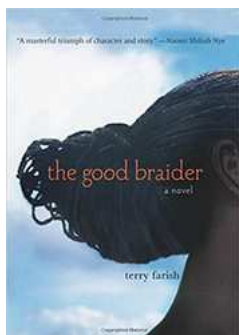
**S3+**



## **Angel: Through My Eyes, by Zoe Daniel**

An engaging and suspenseful survival story about Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013. Angel's family has seen many typhoons - violent storms that bring drenching rains and strong winds to the central Philippines. Lately they seem to be stronger, more destructive, but Angel's family and their neighbours know how to batten down. However, when a super typhoon comes to Tacloban, will Angel be able to withstand the greatest challenge of all?

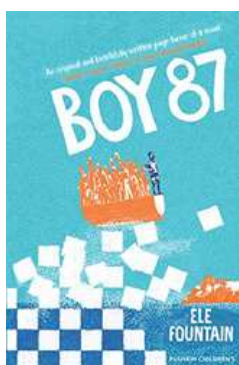
**S1+, Climate Refugees, Series**



### **The Good Braider, by Terry Farish**

The story of Viola's family's journey from war-torn Sudan, to Cairo, to Portland, Maine. In Portland's Southern Sudanese community, she dreams of Africa while she tries to navigate America, where girls can wear short skirts, get tattoos and date boys; a world that is in conflict with her mother who, like Viola, is struggling to braid together the strands of a displaced life.

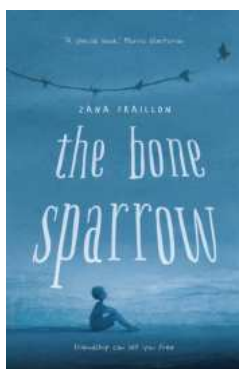
**S3+**



### **Boy 87, by Ele Fountain**

Shif is just an ordinary boy who likes chess, maths and racing his best friend home from school. But one day, soldiers with guns come to his door - and he knows that he is no longer safe. Shif is forced to leave his mother and little sister, and embark on a dangerous journey; a journey through imprisonment and escape, new lands and strange voices, and a perilous crossing by land and sea. He will encounter cruelty and kindness; he will become separated from the people he loves.

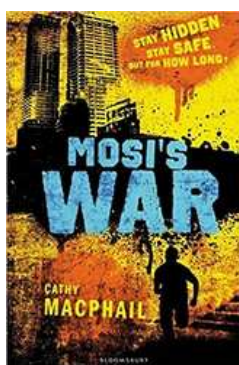
**S1+**



### **The Bone Sparrow, by Zara Fraillon**

Born in an Australian permanent detention centre for refugees, Subhi has only known life behind the fences - but his imagination threatens to burst beyond the limits of the centre. Then Jimmie appears on the other side of the fence with a notebook written by her lost mother. Unable to read it herself, she relies on Subhi. They might both find comfort—and maybe even freedom—but not until each has been braver than ever before.

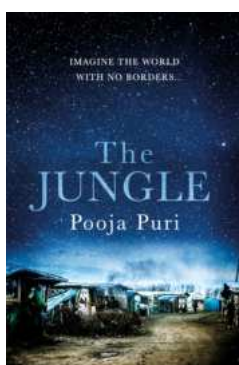
**S3+**



### **Mosi's War, by Cathy MacPhail**

Patrick's Mum lets him do what he wants, and it's only when his granny comes to stay that he has to get down to his homework and go to bed early. Then Patrick meets Mosi, a boy who, along with his parents, is waiting for his asylum application to be processed. Patrick and Mosi strike up an unlikely friendship. In trying to help each other, both boys will face terrifying situations - and Patrick will find out that there is much, much more to Mosi than at first appears.

**S1+**



### **The Jungle, by Pooja Puri**

Mico has left his family, his home, his future. In search of a better life, he instead finds himself navigating the Jungle. For Mico, just one of many 'unaccompanied children', the Calais refugee camp has a brutality all of its own. But when Leila arrives at the camp, everything starts to change. Outspoken and fearless, she shows Mico that hope and friendship can grow in the most unusual places, and, just maybe, they'll show you the way out as well.

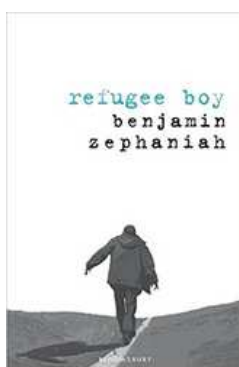
**S1+**



### **The Boy at the Back of the Class, by Onjali Rauf**

There used to be an empty chair at the back of my class, but now a boy called Ahmet is sitting in it. He's 8 years old (like me), but he's very strange. He never talks or smiles and doesn't like sweets! But the truth is, Ahmet isn't strange at all. He's a refugee who's run away from a War, with bombs and bullies. And the more I find out, the more I want to be his friend. That's where my best friends come in. Because you see, together we've come up with a plan.

**S1+**



### **Refugee Boy, by Benjamin Zephaniah**

Alem is on holiday with his father in London. They have a great few days together until one morning Alem wakes up in the hotel and finds his father has left him. Alem's father admits that both he and Alem's mother felt Alem would be safer in London - even though it is breaking their hearts. Alem is now on his own, in the hands of social services and the Refugee Council. Even worse, back in Ethiopia his mother has gone missing...

**S3+**

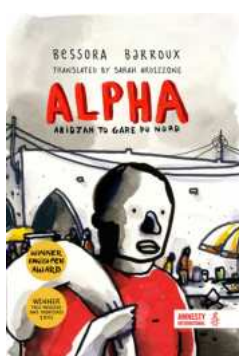
## **Picture Books and Graphic Novels**



### **Welcome, by Barroux**

Life is quiet and peaceful on the ice for three polar bears, until, "CRACK!" The ice breaks, and they drift away. The sea is dangerous, so they need to search for a new home. But no one wants to let them stay! Will they ever find somewhere new to live - and will they help others in need when the time comes?

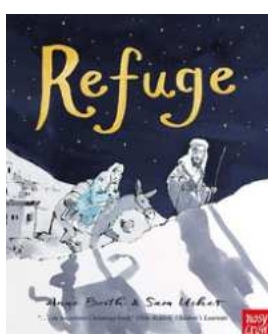
**Junior, Picture Book**



### **Alpha, by Barroux**

Alpha's wife and son left months ago to join family in Paris, but Alpha has heard nothing from them since. With a visa, Alpha's journey to reunite with his family would take a matter of hours. Without one, he is adrift for over a year, encountering human traffickers, refugee camps, overcrowded boats, and an unforgettable cast of fellow travellers. Throughout, Alpha stays the course, carrying his loved ones' photograph close to his heart as he makes his perilous trek across continents.

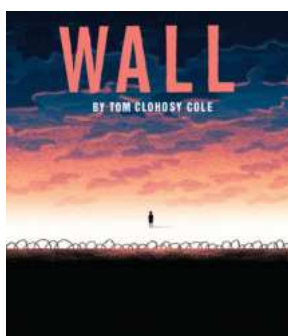
**S1+, Graphic Novel, Dyslexia-Friendly**



### **Refuge, by Anna Booth**

A timely and timeless retelling of the Christmas story, inspired by refugee children everywhere. This powerful and evocative picture book retells the Christmas nativity story from the perspective of the donkey, and then continues with the next part of the story: the fleeing of Jesus, Mary and Joseph from Herod's soldiers to Egypt. The book was published in support of refugees and the charity War Child.

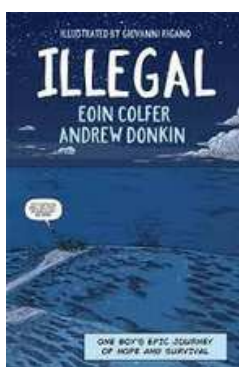
**Junior, Picture Book**



### **Wall, by Tom Clohosy Cole**

A young boy and his mother and sister were separated from their father when the Berlin Wall was built between East and West Germany. This story shows the family's struggle as they try to cross the wall so they can be together again. This spectacular book is based on true stories about the Berlin Wall. The wall is symbolic of separations around the world, whether it be between whole communities or two individuals.

**Junior, Picture Book**



### **Illegal, by Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin**

Ebo is alone. His sister left months ago. Now his brother has disappeared too, and Ebo knows it can only be to make the hazardous journey to Europe. Ebo's epic journey takes him across the Sahara Desert to the dangerous streets of Tripoli, and finally out to the merciless sea. But with every step he holds on to his hope for a new life, and a reunion with his sister. This is a powerful and timely story about one boy's epic journey across Africa to Europe.

**S1+, Graphic Novel**



### **The Day War Came, by Nicola Davies**

Imagine if, on an ordinary day, war came to your town and turned it to rubble. Imagine if you lost everything, and you had to make a dangerous journey all alone. Imagine that there was no welcome at the end, and no room for you to even take a seat at school. And then a child, just like you, gave you something ordinary but so precious.

**Junior, Picture Book**



### **Sea Prayer, by Khaled Hosseini**

A letter, from a father to his son, on the eve of their journey as refugees. Watching over his sleeping son, the father reflects on the dangerous sea-crossing that lies before them. It is also a vivid portrait of their life in Homs, Syria, before the war, and of that city's swift transformation from a home into a deadly war zone. A short, powerful, illustrated book written in response to the haunting images from the current refugee crisis.

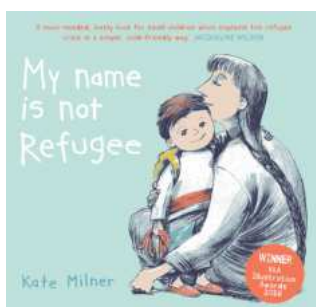
**S3+, Picture Book**



### **Lubna and Pebble, by Wendy Meddour**

An unforgettable story about a young girl who must decide if friendship means giving up the one item that gives her comfort during a time of utter uncertainty. Lubna's best friend is a pebble. Pebble always listens to her stories. Pebble always smiles when she feels scared. But when a lost little boy arrives in the World of Tents, Lubna realizes that he needs Pebble even more than she does. This emotionally stirring picture book explores a powerful act of friendship in the midst of an unknown situation.

**Junior, Picture Book**



### **My Name is Not Refugee, by Kate Milner**

A boy discusses the journey he is about to make with his mother. They will leave their town and it will be sad but also a little bit exciting. They will say goodbye to friends and that will be difficult. They will have to walk - a lot - and although they will see many new and interesting things, it will be difficult too.

**Junior, Picture Book**



### **The Journey, by Francesca Sanna**

With haunting echoes of the current refugee crisis this book explores the unimaginable decisions made as a family leave their home to escape the turmoil and tragedy brought by war. This book will stay with you long after the last page is turned.

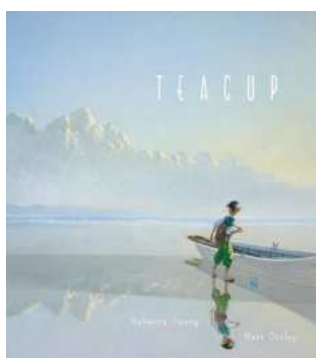
**Junior, Picture Book**



### **The Arrival, by Shaun Tan**

In a heartbreaking parting, a man gives his wife and daughter a last kiss and boards a steamship to cross the ocean. He's embarking on the most painful yet important journey of his life- he's leaving home to build a better future for his family. Because the main character can't communicate in words, the book has none. But while the reader experiences the main character's isolation, he also shares his ultimate joy.

**S1+, Graphic Novel**

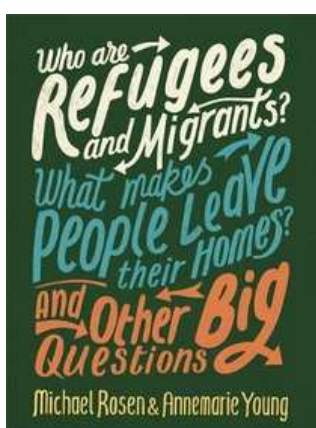


### **Teacup, by Rebecca Young**

A boy must leave his home and find another. He brings with him a teacup full of earth from the place he grew up, and sets off to sea. Some days, it's peaceful, and the skies are cloudless and bright. Some days, storms threaten to overturn his boat. And some days, a little bit of hope grows into something glorious. When the boy finds land, it doesn't feel complete... until another traveller joins him, bearing the seed to build a new home.

**Junior, Picture Book**

## **Information Books**



### **Who Are Refugees and Migrants? What Makes People Leave Their Homes? And Other Big Questions, by Michael Rosen and Annemarie Young**

This book explores the history of refugees and migration and the effects on people of never-ending war and conflict. It compares the effects on society of diversity and interculturalism with historical attempts to create a racially 'pure' culture. It takes an international perspective, and offers a range of views from people who have personal experience of migration.

**S1+, Series**



# Resources

Disclaimer: the ECR team does not take credit for these links, which are all offered and maintained by external providers

## **Scottish Refugee Council**

Providing support to refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland

<https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/>

## **Refugee Action**

Providing support to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK

<https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/>

## **Scottish Guardianship Service**

Provides support to unaccompanied children and young people in Scotland

<https://www.aberlour.org.uk/services/scottish-guardianship-service/>

## **The UN Refugee Agency**

Helps refugees globally

<https://www.unhcr.org/uk/>