

## Further Reading

**Skylark and Wallcreeper**  
**Anne O'Brien Carelli (2018)**  
**HIST J CARELLI**

While helping her granny Collette evacuate to a makeshift shelter in Brooklyn during Superstorm Sandy, Lily uncovers secrets of her grandmother's past as a member of the French Resistance during WWII.

**Our Castle by the Sea**  
**Lucy Strange (2019)**  
**HIST J STRANGE**

England is at war. Growing up in a lighthouse, Pet's world has been one of storms, secret tunnels, and stories about sea monsters. But now the clifftops are a terrifying battleground, and her family is torn apart.

**Illegal**  
**Eoin Colfer (2018)**  
**GRAPHIC J ILLEGAL**

Resolved to join the siblings who left months earlier, 12-year-old Ebo ventures through the Sahara and the dangerous streets of Tripoli before embarking on a hazardous voyage from Ghana to a safe haven in Europe.

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Kent District Library Ideas.  
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www.kdl.org

## Book Discussion Guide



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## About the Book

JOSEF is a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world . . .

ISABEL is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety in America . . .

MAHMOUD is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe . . .

All three kids go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers, from drownings to bombings to betrayals, but there is always the hope of tomorrow. Although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, shocking connections tie their stories together in the end.

This action-packed novel tackles topics both timely and timeless: courage, survival, and the quest for home.

~[www.bookmovement.com](http://www.bookmovement.com)

## Discussion Questions

1. Why do Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud's families leave their homes? What circumstances force them to flee? How are their situations similar and how are they different?
2. What is the theme of this book? What do you feel is the most important idea in each of these stories?
3. Discuss the personalities of each character: Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud. In what ways do they take charge of their families' plights at different points in their story? Describe the points at which each has to act as an adult.
4. How do the parents change in the course of their journeys? Compare the fathers and mothers of Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud, and discuss the ways that events in each story shape their responses to their situation.
5. Compare the method of travel for each refugee family. How does Josef's sea voyage compare to those of Isabel and Mahmoud? What is the most threatening part of each voyage and how do those threats create obstacles for the families as they travel?
6. Josef says, "It was like they were invisible . . . people chose not to see them." (p. 18) How does this simple statement reflect his experience on the train in Nazi Germany? Why do the people ignore them? Compare his experience to Mahmoud's when he says, "They only see us when we do something they don't want us to do." (p. 214)
7. Why do you think the author chose to tell these three stories in alternating chapters? What is the effect on the reader of moving back and forth between the stories from different periods of history?
8. Who are the helpful people in each story? Why do others treat the refugees with meanness and disrespect? How do these experiences affect the families and lead to the survival of certain family members?
9. What is the impact of seeing how many days each character has been away from home at the start of each section?
10. How do the stories of these three children intersect in the end, even though they are separated by many years?

*Courtesy of [scholastic.com](http://scholastic.com)*