About the book
In 2011, the peace of the Syrian city of Homs is disturbed by protests and shelling. A young girl, Nour, is forced to flee across the Levant and North Africa in search of safety.

800 years before, Rawiya, disguised as a boy and apprenticed to a famous map maker, set out on an epic quest to chart the globe, following the very same route.

In *The Map of Salt & Stars*, the tales of these two heroines coming of age in perilous times interweave, and shine a light on a country in turmoil, human resilience and the power of stories.

About the author
Zeyn Joukhadar is a Syrian American author, and a member of the Radius of Arab American Writers (RAWI). Originally from New York City, Zeyn was born to a Muslim father and a Christian mother. After earning his PhD in the Pathobiology Graduate Program at Brown University, he worked as a biomedical research scientist before switching careers to pursue writing full time.
Discussion points

• How much did you know about the Syrian refugee crisis before reading the novel? What else has it taught you?

• How do the two stories of Nour and Rawiya fit together? What similarities are there between the two characters?

• What relevance do maps play in the story?

• Nour grew up in America but has now moved to Syria. What struggles does this move create?

• What makes this book adventure writing?

Suggested further reading

Exit West by Mohsin Hamid

Sea Prayer by Khaled Hosseini

The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives by Viet Thanh Nguyen

Prisoners of Geography by Tim Marshall

The Pianist of Yarmouk by Aeham Ahmad

Useful links

Zeyn Joukhadar – website

New York Times – In a novel, Mystical Maps and Intertwined Journeys in Syria

Book Reporters – The Map of Salt and Stars Review

The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation – Q&A with Zeyn Joukhadar

The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation

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