

The Reading Agency's June Booklist for Adults Around the World (Refugee Week, 20-26 June)

This month, we have compiled a booklist focusing specifically on books written by and about refugees or former refugees. This is to mark Refugee Week, which takes place from 20-26 June 2022. Here you will find a range of fiction and non-fiction books that explore the struggles, achievements, bravery, resilience and strength of refugees around the world.

Tell us what you think about these books or any others you have read by tagging us on social media: @readingagency.



***The Orphanage: A Novel* by Serhiy Zhadan, translated by Reilly Costigan-Humes and Isaac Stackhouse Wheeler (Yale University Press)**

ISBN: 9780300243017

When hostile soldiers invade a neighbouring city in eastern Ukraine, Pasha, a thirty-five-year-old Ukrainian language teacher, sets out for the orphanage where his nephew Sasha lives, now in occupied territory. Venturing into combat zones, Pasha realizes where his true loyalties lie in an increasingly desperate fight to rescue Sasha and bring him home. *The Orphanage* is a searing novel that excavates the human collateral damage wrought by the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine.

***In Every Mirror She's Black* by Loĵá Ākínmádé Ākerström (Head of Zeus)**

ISBN: 9781801108607

Three very different women are desperate for their lives to change. Though strangers, they are drawn to the same place: Stockholm, a city famed for its egalitarianism. But beneath the city's glittering surface lurk challenges old and new. Challenges that threaten to tear them down once and for all...

***The Lightless Sky: My Journey to Safety as a Child Refugee* by Gulwali Passarlay with Nadene Ghouri (Atlantic Books)**

ISBN: 9781786497154

Gulwali Passarlay was sent away from Afghanistan at the age of twelve, after his father was killed in a gun battle with the US Army. He made a twelve-month odyssey across Europe and endured a desolate month in the camp at Calais. Somehow, he survived, and made it to Britain, where he was fostered, sent to school, and won a place at a top university. One boy's experience is the central story of our times. This powerful memoir celebrates the triumph of courage over adversity.

***The Island of Missing Trees* by Elif Shafak (Penguin General)**

ISBN: 9780241988725

Two teenagers, a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot, meet at a taverna on the island they both call home. The taverna is the only place that Kostas and Defne can meet in secret, hidden beneath a fig tree. The fig tree witnesses their hushed, happy meetings. The fig tree is there, too, when war breaks out and when the teenagers vanish. Decades later, Kostas returns - a botanist, looking for native species - looking, really, for Defne. Years later, the fig tree in the garden is their daughter Ada's only knowledge of a home she has never visited, as she seeks to untangle years of secrets and silence and find her place in the world

***Voices of the Lost* by Hoda Barakat, translated by Marilyn Booth (Oneworld)**

ISBN: 9781786077226

In an unnamed country torn apart by war, six strangers are compelled to share their darkest secrets. Taking pen to paper, each attempts to put in writing what they can't bring themselves to say to the person they love - mother, father, brother, lost love. Their words form a chain of dark confessions, none of which reaches the intended recipient. But their consequences will ripple through other lives, affecting strangers in ways the writers could never have anticipated...

***The Long Walk with Little Amal* by Good Chance Theatre Company and Handspring Puppet Company (Welbeck)**

ISBN: 9781914495281

From July to November 2021, Little Amal, a 3.5m-high puppet created by Handspring Puppet Company ('War Horse') travelled 8,000km from the Syria-Turkey border along the established refugee route through Europe to the UK, ending at the Manchester International Festival. Its aim is to celebrate the contribution that migrants and refugees make to the cultures and communities through which they pass and to the countries in which they find a new home. *The Long Walk with Little Amal* is the official companion book to a cross-border collaboration on a magnificent scale.

***Peach Blossom Spring* by Melissa Fu (Headline)**

ISBN: 9781472277534

China, 1938. The Japanese are advancing. A young mother is forced to flee her burning city with her four-year-old son, Renshu. For comfort, they turn to their most treasured possession - a beautifully illustrated hand scroll. Years later, Renshu has settled in America as Henry Dao. His daughter is desperate to understand her heritage, but he refuses to talk about his childhood. How can he keep his family safe in this new land when the weight of his history threatens to drag them down?

Spanning continents and generations, *Peach Blossom Spring* is a bold and moving look at the history of modern China, told through the story of one family. It's about the power of our past, the hope for a better future, and the search for a place to call home.

***City of Jasmine* by Olga Grjasnowa, translated by Katy Derbyshire (Oneworld)**

ISBN: 9781786077035

Syria - a country at war. Amal, Hammoudi and Youssef are young and ambitious, the face of modern Syria. But when civil war tears through their homeland, they are left with a horrifying choice: risk death by staying in the country they love, or flee in search of a new life elsewhere? From one of Germany's most talented literary voices comes this intricately woven story of brutality, loss, and how hope can shine through when darkness feels overwhelming.

***The Road Before Me Weeps: On the Refugee Route Through Europe* by Nick Thorpe (Yale University Press)**

ISBN: 9780300241228

Based in Budapest for more than three decades, Nick Thorpe was perfectly placed to cover the birth of the route taken by millions of refugees into Europe and the attempts of numerous states to close it. This is his intimate account of the daily lives of those stuck or on the move and of the smugglers, border police, and political leaders who help, exploit, or obstruct them. He challenges those who demonize or glorify migration, visits the arrivals in their new environment, and studies their impact on the countries which welcomed them with open arms or hesitation.

***A Jigsaw of Fire and Stars* by (Head of Zeus)**

ISBN: 9781786695499

Sante was a baby when she was washed ashore in a sea-chest laden with treasure. It seems she is the sole survivor of the tragic sinking of a ship carrying migrants and refugees. Her people. Fourteen years on she's a member of Mama Rose's unique and dazzling circus. But, from their watery grave, the unquiet dead are calling Sante to avenge them: A bamboo flute. A golden bangle. A ripening mango which must not fall... are these the missing pieces of the jigsaw which will tell Sante's story?

***The Enlightenment of the Greengage Tree* by Shokoofeh Azar, translated by Anonymous (Europa Editions)**

ISBN: 9781787703100

Set in Iran in the decade following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, this moving, richly imagined novel is narrated by the ghost of Bahar, a thirteen-year-old girl, whose family is compelled to flee their home in Tehran for a new life in a small village, hoping in this way to preserve both their intellectual freedom and their lives. But they soon find themselves caught up in the post-revolutionary chaos that sweeps across their ancient land and its people. Bahar's mother, after a tragic loss, will embark on a long, eventful journey in search of meaning.

***Time is a Mother* by Ocean Vuong (Vintage)**

ISBN: 9781787333840

In this deeply intimate second poetry collection, Ocean Vuong searches for life among the aftershocks of his mother's death. Shifting through memory, and in concert with the themes of his novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, Vuong contends with personal loss, the meaning of family,

and the cost of being the product of an American war in America. At once vivid, brave, and propulsive, Vuong's poems circle fragmented lives to find both restoration as well as the epicentre of the break.

***The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* by Michael Chabon (Harper Perennial)**

ISBN: 9781841154930

One night in 1939, Josef Kavalier shuffles into his cousin Sam Clay's cramped New York bedroom, his nerve-racking escape from Prague finally achieved. Little does he realise that this is the beginning of an extraordinary friendship and even more fruitful business partnership. Together, they create a comic strip called 'The Escapist', its superhero a Nazi-busting saviour who liberates the oppressed around the world. 'The Escapist' makes their fortune, but Joe can think of only one thing: how can he effect a real-life escape, and free his family from the tyranny of Hitler?

***Freeman's Home: The Best New Writing on Home* edited by John Freeman (Grove Press)**

ISBN: 9781611855173

As the refugee crisis continues to convulse whole swathes of the world and there are daily updates about the rise of homelessness in different parts of America, the idea and meaning of home is at the forefront of many people's minds. *Freeman's: Home*, continues to push boundaries in diversity and scope, with stunning new pieces from emerging writers and literary luminaries alike.

***Refugee Tales* edited by David Herd and Anna Pincus (Comma Press)**

ISBN: 9781912697489

Two unaccompanied children cross the Mediterranean in an overcrowded boat that has been designed to only make it halfway across. A 63-year-old man is woken one morning by border officers 'acting on a tip-off'. An orphan whose entire life has been spent in slavery writes to the Home Office for help, only to be rewarded with a jail sentence and indefinite detention. Here, poets and novelists retell the stories of individuals who have direct experience of Britain's policy of indefinite immigration detention. All profits go to the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group and Kent Refugee Help.