

Half of a Yellow Sun by: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Book Review by Patrick Munguti

Half of a Yellow Sun is a novel whose setting is in Africa. The author has brought out the effects of war in Nigeria during the late sixties. During this time Biafra wanted to form an independent state from Nigeria. The war was fueled by tribal animosity among the northern tribes and the Igbo community. Through her characters, Odenigbo a university professor with his mistress Olanna and Ugwu their house boy, the author brings out difficult situations that are brought by civil war. The book depicts what happens in African countries where different communities fight to control resources and power.

I was moved by Ugwu the house boy who despite not having any educational background was determined to be like his master. He tried to read his master's books while cleaning the shelves. Though they did not make sense at the beginning, his master was moved by his determination to learn and enrolled him in school. When the war came Ugwu and his master fled from the university of Nsukka. The fighting did not stop him from learning and he helped teach students at the refugee camp.

Through the book I have learned that though we may be derailed by our circumstances that we find ourselves in, determination and consistency can move us out of such situations. Ugwu who never knew how to read and write ended up writing about the war.

This is quite a fascinating novel that can help one realize the possibility to accomplish one's desire in life through the right way. It also teaches on making right choices as leaders. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to learn about African communities and also the importance of peace.

When Stars Are Scattered

By Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed

Review by Sharon Runge

The graphic novel, ***When Stars are Scattered*** by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed, was a heartwarming, and at times, gut wrenching story about two brothers living in a refugee camp in Kenya for Somalians. As the story unfolds, the readers learn what led to the brothers living in the refugee camp and the daily struggles they encountered. Without parents, the two boys are under the guidance of an elderly widow named Fatuma. They all struggle with the lack of food and water, and since the younger brother, Hassan, had cognitive challenges and didn't speak, Omar initially did not go to school. After a local village organizer urged him to go, Omar begins going to school and starts to excel.

This powerful story opened my eyes to the plight of refugees living in camps. These boys were escaping horrific violence after their mom urged them to run when their father was slaughtered. Although they initially believed they would be reunited with their mom and returned to Somalia, their dreams become faint as the years dragged on. I found the story compelling and I was distressed learning about the deplorable conditions at the camps. My stomach ached when I read about the boys going to bed hungry on many nights and feeling hopelessness for them as a path out seemed impossible. The rich story, coupled with the

cartoons of the boys and the camp, gave me a better insight and clearer picture of their lives. I could hardly put the book down wondering what would become of them. I also liked how the author wove in stories of their friends, especially of girls who were forced to marry at young ages, despite being the top students at their schools.

This graphic novel is based on a true story and at the end of the book there were photographs of the author and his brother. I don't want to expose the ending since I highly recommend middle, secondary school and adults to read this book. As with many stories, it brings the reader to a different reality and provides the opportunity for greater understanding of the plight of many refugees from a child's perspective. It's well worth the time reading.