

Books with classroom activities for primary schools

Across the Dark Sea / written by Wendy Orr; illustrated by Donna Rawlins

Trung's family is tragically separated during their attempt to escape to a new country. A raid by soldiers means that only Trung and his father make it onto the boat headed for freedom. Trung's mother and little sister are left behind in Vietnam. Trung's journey, in the hull of a crowded fishing boat, is fraught with danger and full of loneliness. His estranged father is too sad and desperate to offer much comfort.

Even when Trung arrives in Australia, his difficult journey continues. He has to contend with strange foods, streets, buildings and a new language. He begins school but feels alienated from the other students and staff. He is left alone with many hours to fill.

And throughout his journey he desperately misses his mother and sister in Vietnam. He writes them letters at first in his head and then on paper but a reply does not arrive.

Trung starts to develop a friendship with Andrew, who is also grieving the loss of his home. And, finally, one day a letter arrives from his mother in Vietnam. Trung's dark journey does not end, but he begins to hope again.

See <https://www.nma.gov.au/learn/classroom-resources/making-tracks/across-the-dark-sea> for discussion questions and classroom activities

Ali the bold heart / written by Jane Jolly ; illustrated by Elise Hurst

Ali is a magician. Life in Ali's own country becomes dangerous so he travels to a new land that he thinks will be safer. There, he is locked up in a place surrounded by wire as sharp as tiger's teeth. Ali entertains others in the camp with his magic. Everyone is amazed. One evening Ali is left alone in the grounds. He looks up at the tiger's-teeth wire and walls. Can Ali's magic bring him a better life?

This book is based on the true story of an Iranian refugee, who performed as a magician in his own country.

See <http://www.janejolly.com/wp-content/uploads/Ali-the-Bold-Heart.pdf> for teacher's notes and classroom activities