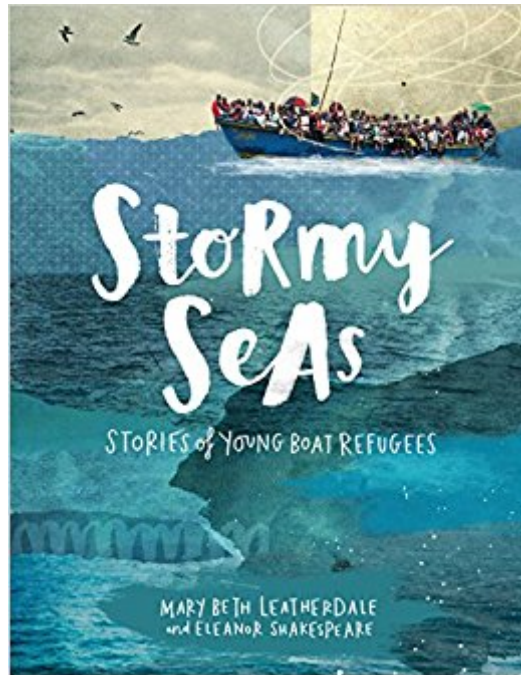




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# Stormy Seas: Stories Of Young Boat Refugees



## Synopsis

The phenomenon of desperate refugees risking their lives to reach safety is not new. For hundreds of years, people have left behind family, friends, and all they know in hope of a better life. This book presents five true stories about young people who lived through the harrowing experience of setting sail in search of asylum: Ruth and her family board the St. Louis to escape Nazism; Phu sets out alone from war-torn Vietnam; JosÃ© tries to reach the U.S. from Cuba; Najeeba flees Afghanistan and the Taliban; Mohamed, an orphan, runs from his village on the Ivory Coast. Aimed at middle grade students, Stormy Seas combines a contemporary collage-based design, sidebars, fact boxes, timeline and further reading to produce a book that is ideal for both reading and research. Readers will gain new insights into a situation that has constantly been making the headlines.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mary Beth Leatherdale writes, edits and consults on books, magazines, and digital resources for children and youth. Eleanor Shakespeare is an illustrator and designer specializing in collage and photomontage image making. She works across publishing, editorial and design, and is the artist-in-residence at a high school in South London.

If you're reading this, you've probably won the lottery. Not the

giant cheque, instant millionaire kind of lottery. The other lottery win is the really valuable one. That random, lucky break that means you were born in or immigrated to a relatively peaceful and prosperous place in the world. Along with all the other amazing things about you, that makes you pretty extraordinary. Sixty million of the world's seven billion people aren't so lucky. They have been forced to leave their homes because of war, persecution, or natural disasters. A staggering 19 million of these displaced people have no hope of ever returning home safely and are seeking asylum in another country. And, more than half of these refugees are children and teenagers. Even more upsetting is that many are orphans or "unaccompanied minors" traveling alone, sent by their family in the hope of finding a safe place to live and get an education. News reports in 2015 and 2016 have been full of stories of Syrian refugees who are risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea. The civil war that has been raging there for years has forced more than half of the country's population out of their homes. That's more than 11 million people in need of shelter, food, water, and medical care. And thousands of others are escaping wars, persecution, and drought in the Middle East and North and sub-Saharan Africa, also trying to find safe refuge in Europe. The influx of refugees has caused divisions across the European Union. Countless individuals and organizations have rallied to provide support to the refugees, and countries such as Germany, Hungary, and Sweden have welcomed hundreds and hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers. Yet, many peaceful and prosperous countries in Europe and North America are hostile to refugees and migrants. Anti-refugee and anti-immigrant policies are rising around the world, depriving refugees of the right to asylum guaranteed under international law. So in their quest for a safe and secure future, hundreds of thousands of refugees are forced to turn to criminal smuggling rings that have created a six billion dollar industry, overcharging for passage across the Mediterranean on overcrowded, unseaworthy boats. But boat refugees risking their lives at sea isn't a new phenomenon. For hundreds of years, through wars, famines, failing economies, and religious persecution, people have been pushed by circumstances and hope to leave behind all they know and board a ship for a country they've never seen. To help make sense of what I was seeing on the news, I set out to research and interview people who were boat refugees themselves as children. I quickly understood the magnitude of what I was asking and how traumatic it can be for people to tell their stories, particularly Syrian children who have recently crossed the Mediterranean and are still living under precarious circumstances in refugee camps in Europe. The five young boat refugees whose stories appear in *Stormy Seas* are lucky not only did they survive the treacherous ocean voyage, they persevered and prospered, even in the face of uncertainty, financial challenges, and discrimination in their new homes. Things got better. At

first glance, the refugees we see on the news and the hardships they endure may seem unrelated to us – not our problem. But like Ruth, Phu, Josef, Najeeba, and Mohamed, the conflicts, discrimination, and environmental challenges that force them to leave their homes aren't their fault or within their power to change alone. Either through action or inaction, we all play a role in the dire circumstances refugees face. Their courage in leaving behind everything they know in search of peace and security, and their resilience in overcoming horrific journeys, restores hope in what life can be – not just for them but for all of us.

**Stormy Seas** By Mary Beth Leatherdale Illustrated by Eleanor Shakespeare Rating 5  
**Synopsis** The phenomenon of desperate refugees risking their lives to reach safety is not new. For hundreds of years, people have left behind family, friends, and all they know in hope of a better life. This book presents five true stories about young people who lived through the harrowing experience of setting sail in search of asylum: Ruth and her family board the St. Louis to escape Nazism; Phu sets out alone from war-torn Vietnam; Josef tries to reach the U.S. from Cuba; Najeeba flees Afghanistan and the Taliban; Mohamed, an orphan, runs from his village on the Ivory Coast. Aimed at middle grade students, *Stormy Seas* combines a contemporary collage-based design, sidebars, fact boxes, timeline and further reading to produce a book that is ideal for both reading and research. Readers will gain new insights into a situation that has constantly been making the headlines. This book is heart and gut wrenching. So much so, that I found myself in a quandary in how to begin. This is a story that needs to be told and told again and again. This is our world's history from the 1600s (and probably long before) to the present day...over 400 years of children and families seeking a safe place to live. I'm not going to get into the politics, ethical, religious and social issues of the circumstances involved. These are stories of five children out of how many???? I have absolutely no idea, too many to be sure. This book is not a fairytale and there is no princess. It is not fantasy or make-believe either. This is a story about real children who live in real danger every single day. It is a story about parents who are trying their best to save their children and to give them a chance at a better and longer life. First there is Ruth who was 8 when she had to flee Nazi Germany in 1939 and who, in a circumvented way, eventually ended up in the USA. Next is Phu who had to leave Vietnam at the age of 14. He arrived here in the USA in 1980. Jose had a much shorter journey; but by no means any safer. He fled Cuba for the USA in 1980. He was 13. Najeeba left Afghanistan at the tender age of 11. She arrived in Australia in 2000. Then there is Mohamed who found his way to Italy in 2006. He was 13. How these five children arrived at their final destinations is so vividly told that a

child of the same age as these child refugees would be able to understand their stories AND, I think, THAT is what is important. The art work by Eleanor Shakespeare is beyond amazing as it brings visualization to each story. It is important to read every single page from the introduction to all of the time lines to fully begin to grasp the seriousness, gravity and danger of each story. These are only five stories out of thousands, hundreds of thousands through out the years who have had to flee their homeland with their parents or alone to just stay alive. I can't imagine nor fathom such a situation or environment. Parental Note: This book is recommended by the publisher for children 10-12. I had to give this some serious thought as I have a 10 year old granddaughter. My recommendation would be to read this book WITH your 10 year old child. For children older, I suggest you read the book first in order to be prepared to answer any questions and for some serious discussions. Again, I reiterate, this is not a fairytale nor fantasy...this is real life for so many children. A story that our own children should know about.

Unfortunately Stormy Seas comes at an unsympathetic and ugly time for refugees in the United States and EU. It is a time where angry debates, pernicious laws and frankly hate speech and actions are directed towards them. Right now gates are closing to Syrian refugees and borders are tightening or closed to those who are desperate and fearful for their lives. It makes me heartsick. Fortunately we have Stormy Seas to remind us that this has been an historical struggle that has happened since the 1600's and probably before. She shows us how all over the country, yours and mine, children were turned away despite being in danger and this has happened over and over again. Her focus is on children who are young boat refugees. Some came with family and some did not. Their fear and suffering are evident yet these young children find a place and some peace as they become citizens in their new country. The book is visually arresting. Using collage, picture, paint and a myriad of styles the pictures show us the perils and promise of their harrowing journeys. Thank you to Netgalley who gave me this book to review for an honest opinion.

'Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees' by Mary Beth Leatherdale with illustrations by Eleanor Shakespeare follows the stories of 5 young refugees on dangerous sea journeys. The five journeys include a young lady fleeing the Nazis and sailing for Cuba, A 14-year old Vietnamese boy fleeing for life in the United States, and A young woman fleeing the Taliban for life in Australia. In all cases the journeys were complicated by things storms, overcrowded boats, or countries that wanted to turn them back. Each story tells what happened to the person. The book ends with an timeline of refugees from World War II to the present. There is also a list of references of groups that work with

refugees or have history about them. It's aimed at younger readers and it's done very well. The seriousness of the peril is there without going into graphic details. Historical context is given as well as timelines. I really appreciated getting to read this book. I received a review copy of this ebook from Annick Press Ltd. and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you for allowing me to review this ebook.

Refugees are a hot topic right now. This is not the first time people have been fleeing war or persecution, however, and not even the first time in our lifetime. Stormy Seas tells the stories of five different young people who have been forced to flee their homelands during the past 60 years. They came from Nazi Germany, Cuba, Afghanistan, Vietnam and Ivory Coast—places far apart across the globe, but with similar reasons. These short stories bring the plight of refugees to life for children. I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley and chose to review it.

Awesome book - great for educators discussing immigration, refugees, asylum seekers. Great for middle school!

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