

Y9: The Beekeeper of Aleppo

Why?

Studying this novel gives us the chance to experience life from a different perspective. Through the eyes of Nuri, our Syrian protagonist, we can see the tribulations that asylum seekers from all over the world face on their journey to safety.

We will learn to empathise with people outside of our immediate sphere whilst exploring the writer's craft and narratology of this harrowing dual narrative.

Key Concepts:

Narratology

The narratology of this text adds heavily to its meaning.

The **1st person narrative** voice allows us to experience the journey through the eyes of a refugee.

The **dual narrative** allows the reader understand the stark juxtapositions between the safety of the UK and the danger of the journey.

The **motifs and structural choices** allows the reader to fully connect with the themes and underlying ideas of this text.

Language patterns

The range of **figurative language** in this text through **metaphor** and **vivid description** are what truly allows us to empathise with these characters and their perspective.

Symbolism

Symbols are used to create meaning throughout the text. Motifs such as the keys and the marble allow the reader to connect with bigger abstract ideas such as freedom and imprisonment.

Empathy

Lefteri's characterisation and **1st person narrative** paired with the **harrowing yet realistic events** of Nuri and Afra's journey allow a privileged Western reader a frightening but necessary insight into a world that some must deal with every day.

Hope and Love vs. Conflict and Oppression

This narrative, in spite of its sometimes upsetting content, allows us to see that love, family, hope and resilience can conquer conflict and oppression.

Characters

Nuri—The protagonist. He is from Aleppo, married to Afra, and narrates the story of their journey to England. He suffers PTSD from the horrors of his journey.

Afra—Nuri's wife. She is blinded by the bomb that killed her soon and has never been the same since his death. She paints vivid images from her imagination.

Sami—Nuri and Afra's son who is killed at the start of the novel.

Mohammed—An orphaned boy who Nuri takes under his wing on the journey.

Mustafa (Dahab and Aya) - Nuri's best friend (and family) who he works with at the apiaries. They also lost a son and have managed to make it to the UK safely.

Plot:

Nuri and Afra - husband and wife - have suffered great loss. Their beloved home, Aleppo, is in the middle of a civil war and they must flee to survive. They make it to England, but what horrors will the story of their journey reveal?

Setting:

The novel is written in **dual narrative form**. Each chapter is split in two. The first half of each chapter is set in England; the second half is relayed from various countries as we journey across Europe, starting with Aleppo.

Context:

- Modern novel based on modern warfare in Syria and Assad's regime.
- Lefteri has experienced first-hand the tribulations refugees suffer through her voluntary work.
- Lefteri has written this harrowing novel to illuminate the suffering of refugees and create empathy.
- PTSD is caused by trauma and can display itself in many ways impacting on mental and physical health.

Vocabulary

Motif	A repeated element with symbolic significance.
Flashback	To suddenly recall a previous time.
Dual Narrative	A narrative form where the story is told from two different perspectives. Person/place/time.
PTSD	A condition of persistent emotional stress after trauma.
Symbolism	The use of symbols/objects to represent wider ideas.
Narratology	The study of narrative and their structure; specifically, how structure adds to meaning.
Bereft	Someone sad and lonely through loss.
Adversity	A difficult or unpleasant situation.
Asylum Seeker	A person who has left their country as a refugee to seek safety.
Perspective	A point of view/attitude towards something.
Tribulation	A cause or state of great suffering
Harrowing	Something which is extremely distressing.
Exploitation	Using a situation to gain an unfair advantage.
Resilience	Showing mental or physical toughness.