

AN EASY GUIDE TO TAKING A SIMPLE ACT

READ A BOOK ABOUT EXILE

Reading about exile is not the first thing that springs to mind when you're looking for some light entertainment on a Tuesday evening. And rightly so. For books about exile will do exactly the opposite. They will move and unsettle you; challenge you to leave the comfort of your old convictions and permanently change both you and your Tuesday.

They will not necessarily tell you the things you want to hear, but the ones you don't; the necessary things that can't remain unsaid. They might make you witness some heartbreaking moments which lie beyond our language, comprehension and humanity. Sounds tough and unsettling? Yes, but isn't that precisely what good books are for?

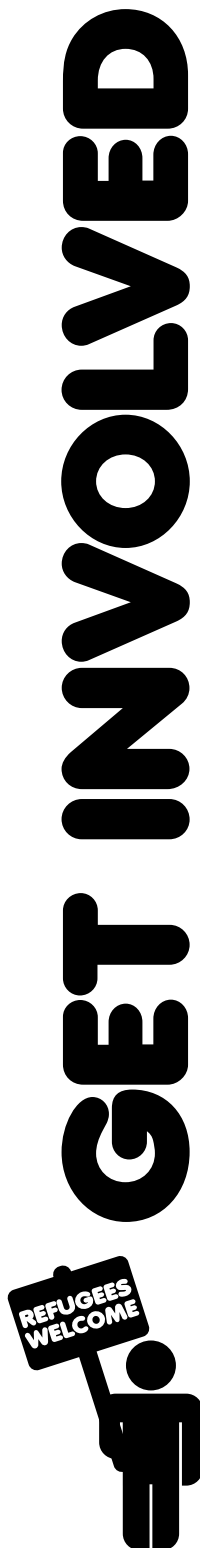
So whether you like reading alone on the bus or airing your views in a bookclub, this action should be easy-peasy.

GO IT SOLO

- During Refugee Week, many local libraries and bookshops such as Waterstone's will have special displays on refugee authors and books about exile, so if you simply want to get your hands on a book to read during the daily commute or at bedtime, this Simple Act should be a piece of cake. If you'd like some tips from the Refugee Action team, see our recommendations below. There's also a huge array of suggestions at: www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/twenty-acts/Read-a-book.htm.

READ WITH CHILDREN

- If you want to inspire a whole generation to do a Simple Act, then there are lots of books aimed at children and young people that you can read at bedtimes or at school. Some of our faves are listed below, and you can also check out www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/twenty-acts/Read-a-book.htm or the recommendations for teachers at www.gtce.org.uk/publications/asylum_resources1008 for more extensive suggestions.
- For younger children, it may be more appropriate to do the Simple Act of 'reading a child a story from another country'. Telling children stories from other countries widens their horizons and boosts their ability to link distant things with what they see around themselves. You can find a heap of short tales and tall stories from around the globe at www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/twenty-acts/Read-a-book.htm.



[acts/tell-a-child-a-story.htm](https://www.refugeeaction.org.uk/acts/tell-a-child-a-story.htm).

GO BOOKCLUBBING

- From Richard and Judy to Oprah, everyone seems to be out bookclubbing these days. If you're already a fully signed-up bookclub enthusiast, then your task is pretty easy. All you have to do is heckle your fellow book club members until they agree to choosing a book about exile as your bookclub book for June. You can choose from one of our Refugee Action staff picks below, or hunt down something different from the list at www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/twenty-acts/Read-a-book.htm.
- If you don't already belong to a bookclub but want to do something bigger and bolder than just reading in the bath, you could always organise a one-off Refugee Week bookclub. All you need to do is:
 1. Email or call round some friends and let them know that as a supporter of Refugee Action, you'd like them to help celebrate Refugee Week by reading a book about exile and coming over to your place to have a chat about it. We always find it helps to lure them in with the promise of some fantastic nibbles.
 2. Tell them the book you've picked and the time and date you'd like them to come over. Ideally you want about four to ten people there to have a lively debate.
 3. The night before, get out your pinny out and whip up some snacks. Or if cooking isn't your thing, pop down the shops and forage for something delicious. If you want to show off by doing two Simple Acts for the price of one, you could always cook a dish from another country too and encourage your friends to bring a dish as well. Have a gander at the recipes at www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/twenty-acts/cook_a_dish and see what takes your fancy.
 4. If you have a spare ten minutes before everyone arrives, you may want to give your front room that Refugee Week wow-factor by decorating the walls with posters and balloons (we'll pop some in the post to you).
 5. Once everyone has assembled on the night, exchanged pleasantries and tussled over the best snacks, it's time to open up a discussion about the book.
 6. Make sure you have some booklets on hand for people to take home and read more about refugees and the issues facing them in the UK. Refugee Action can send you a goodie bag stuffed full of facts, figures and fun stuff like badges and stickers.

GET INVOLVED



7. We'll also send you some of our new action cards for people to sign and let the Minister for Asylum and Immigration know that they support the UK's tradition of providing sanctuary to people fleeing persecution. Make sure people sign them and give them back to you on the night as once people are back home the card will probably get buried under the mail or sat on by the cat and never quite reach us.

TELL THE WORLD

- Once you've done this action, don't forget to let everyone know by ticking the 'read a book about exile' action off at www.simpleacts.org.uk. If you've organised a bookclub night, make sure you count how many friends attended and tick off the action that many times. With your help, we hope to get thousands of actions done by 2010. Remember small actions x lots of people = big change...

THANKS FOR THAT

- Thanks so much for taking part in the Simple Acts campaign. Refugee Action is really proud of every supporter that takes action to make our communities more welcoming places for refugees. If you have a spare moment to tell us more about what you've done or send us some photos from the event you hosted, Refugee Action would also love to hear from you at giving@refugee-action.org.uk or on 020 7654 7705. The more we know about what've you been up to, the prouder we'll be! And you never know, we may even add your photos to our online gallery of special supporters...

BOOKS ABOUT EXILE

- The Other Hand, Chris Cleave
- What is the What, Dave Eggers
- Forest Gate, Peter Akinti
- Children of the Revolution, Dinaw Mengestu
- Human Cargo, Caroline Moorehead
- What is she doing here? A refugee story, Kate Clanchy
- Voyage of the Damned: A Shocking True Story of Hope, Betrayal and Nazi Terror, Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan-Witts
- Fugitive Pieces, Anne Michaels
- Harbor, Lorraine Adams
- Half of a Yellow Sun, Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi
- By the Sea, Abdulrazak Gurnah

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BOOKS BY REFUGEE AUTHORS ABOUT EXILE

- Bluebird, Vesna Maric
- A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, Ishmael Beah
- The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini
- Sudanese Refugee to International Supermodel, Alek Wek
- Warchild, Emmanuel Jal

BOOKS BY REFUGEE AUTHORS (BUT NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT REFUGEES!)

- The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Victor Hugo
- Two Caravans, Marina Lewycka
- Women Without Men, Shahrnush Parsipur
- Death and the Maiden, Ariel Dorfman
- Have A Nice Day: From the Balkan War to the American Dream, Dubravka Ugresic
- The House of Spirits, Isabel Allende

BOOKS FOR TEENS/OLDER CHILDREN

- The Breadwinner, Deborah Ellis
- I am David, Anne Holm
- The Other Side of the Truth, Beverley Naidoo
- Kiss the Dust, Elizabeth Laird
- Refugee Boy, Benjamin Zephaniah

BOOKS FOR LITTLE ONES

- Elmer and the Stranger, David McKee
- Paddington Here and Now, Michael Bond, Peggy Fortnum and R. W. Alley

GET INVOLVED

