



Looking at the Stars

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Reviewer:

[Hannah Love](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

A beautiful novel for children that highlights the importance of story for bringing people together and offering hope, **Looking at the Stars** is a gem, introducing children to the concept of wars happening in different countries.

Amina has always been the troublesome one in her family. Whilst her sisters do as they are told and attend to their work, Amina is easily distracted and caught up in stories. When the foreign soldiers arrive in the country Amina believes everything will change for the better. But the soldiers are too far from her village, and her family's situation worsens as people start being coded accorded to their family. When her father is shot and Amina and her older sister Jenna are separated from her mother and younger sister, they become refugees and have to adjust to life in a camp, which at times seems worse than their situation before.

This novel cleverly crafts a fictional society which can show UK children an insight into how others may be suffering elsewhere, without making a comment on any particular country or government. The story is also a challenge to our morality. Amina considers herself to be a kind child, but when all of her choices become about survival she has to decide at which point she has to think only of those she cares about, forcing us to wonder how we would react in a similar situation. But it is also a story of hope, and of kindness, and of the power of stories to unite and comfort. As Amina's skills for storytelling become a way of bringing the community together rather than being an annoyance, the night stars are recast as soldiers that the refugees can truly believe in. This book is often brutal, but the threads of courage and love that run through it make it beautiful.

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