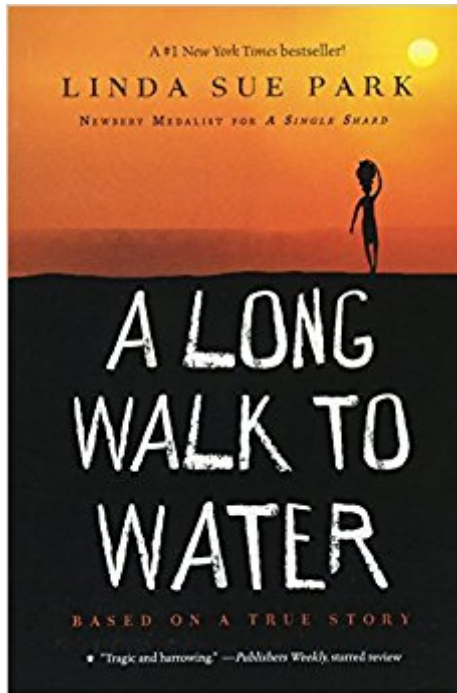




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A Long Walk To Water: Based On A True Story



Synopsis

The New York Times bestseller *A Long Walk to Water* begins as two stories, told in alternating sections, about two eleven-year-olds in Sudan, a girl in 2008 and a boy in 1985. The girl, Nya, is fetching water from a pond that is two hours' walk from her home: she makes two trips to the pond every day. The boy, Salva, becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan, refugees who cover the African continent on foot as they search for their families and for a safe place to stay. Enduring every hardship from loneliness to attack by armed rebels to contact with killer lions and crocodiles, Salva is a survivor, and his story goes on to intersect with Nya's in an astonishing and moving way.

Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (October 4, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0547577311

ISBN-13: 978-0547577319

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 5 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 1,306 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #119 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa](#) #1 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Military & Wars](#) #1 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Africa](#)

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

Customer Reviews

Gr 5-8—Salva and Nya have difficult paths to walk in life. Salva's journey, based on a true story, begins in 1985 with an explosion. The boy's small village in Sudan erupts into chaos while the 11-year-old is in school, and the teacher tells the children to run away. Salva leaves his family and all that is familiar and begins to walk. Sometimes he walks alone and sometimes there are others. They are walking toward a refugee camp in Ethiopia, toward perceived safety. However, the camp provides only temporary shelter from the violent political storm. In 1991-'92, thousands are killed as they try to cross a crocodile-infested river when they are forced out of the country; Salva survives

and gets 1200 boys to safety in Kenya. Nya's life in 2008 revolves around water. She spends eight hours a day walking to and from a pond. In the dry season, her family must uproot themselves and relocate to the dry lake bed where they dig in the mud until water eventually trickles out. Nya's narrative frames Salva's journey from Sudan to Ethiopia to Rochester, NY, and, eventually, back to Sudan. Both story lines are spare, offering only pertinent details. In the case of Salva, six years in a camp pass by with the barest of mentions. This minimalism streamlines the plot, providing a clarity that could have easily become mired in depressing particulars. The two narratives intersect in a quiet conclusion that is filled with hope.

—Naphtali L. Faris, Saint Louis Public Library, MO

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Starred Review After 11-year-old Salva's school in Sudan is attacked by brutal rebel soldiers in 1985, he describes several terrifying years on the run in visceral detail: "The rain, the mad current, the bullets, the crocodiles, the welter of arms and legs, the screams, the blood." Finally, he makes it to refugee camps in Ethiopia and then Kenya, where he is one of 3,000 young men chosen to go to America. After he is adopted by a family in Rochester, New York, he is reunited with the Sudanese family that he left behind. There have been several books about the lost boys of Sudan for adults, teens, and even for elementary-school readers. But this Newbery Award-winning picture book's spare, immediate account, based on a true story, adds a stirring contemporary dimension. In chapters that alternate with Salva's story, Nya, a young Sudanese girl in 2008, talks about daily life, in which she walks eight hours to fetch water for her family. Then, a miracle happens: Salva returns home to help his people and builds a well, making fresh water available for the community and freeing Nya to go to school. The switching viewpoints may initially disorient some, but young readers will be stunned by the triumphant climax of the former refugee who makes a difference with the necessities that we all take for granted. Teachers may want to point out the allusion to Nelson Mandela's *A Long Walk to Freedom* (1995) echoed in this moving book's title. Grades 6-9.

--Hazel Rochman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Reading it together with my 9 year old. Some of the themes are a little mature, but he is engaged and enjoying the story. I thought it was an important historical event and thought he could identify with the young men who concurred so many atrocities in their young lives.

My grandson, age 11, read this book in school and recommended it to me. I was amazed and awed by Salva's strength and perseverance through incredible hardships as a young boy about the age of my grandson. I appreciate that his teacher recommended this book; all of us who live relatively easy lives need to know that not all people enjoy the opportunities we have and that we can do our part to help improve the lives of others. My grandson and I will be making a donation to the water project for Christmas this year.

Although written for mature children, "Long Walk to Water" engaged me as an adult too. I'm always drawn to stories of Africa as an author and this one did not disappoint me. Coughlin captured the excitement and emotion of actual events without sounding sad or depressing. The graphic detail of the refugee status was revealing. I felt engaged by the writing style. I highly recommend "Long Walk to Water" as an inspiring anecdote to children between the ages of 10-15 and adults.

A Long Walk to Water is an enjoyable read that makes you appreciate the comforts we enjoy in the first world. Park does an excellent job of putting the reader into the shoes of both main characters and keeps the plot simple, yet compelling at the same time. The tale is especially gratifying in its conclusion and makes the reader believe in the power of peace and forgiveness.

This was for my 7th grade son was assigned to read in school. This was the first book my son had ever finished, talked about and even read more than he was assigned to do. My son is dyslexic which makes reading a book laborious or even impossible. I bought the feature that reads it to him which he loved and made it more interesting since they had music and the reader used different voices for each character. It also highlighted the words as it read and for words that are hard it gave the definition. Amazing it opens up a whole new world for struggling readers.

I love this book and just had my son read it for a 6th grade book report project. For him it was a little confusing at first because the writer alternates between two story lines throughout the book. I felt that it is such an important story, that I ended up reading it to him and he loved it. The story made for a great book report, also. I don't know why my son had trouble with the two story lines. For me, it was very easy to understand the delineation between the two stories. Also, he had trouble grasping the reality that this was based on a true story. He initially did not believe me that people, even today, have to live with such hardships and violence. The story is a great eye-opener and a reminder to us all not to take what we have for granted.

My grandson does not really like to read, but this was a required reading for the summer. He loved the book and still talks about the characters (a year later). Finding more books like this would change his perception of reading.

Superb. I'm always on the lookout for films, literature, art, etc which depicts life outside of Middle-Class-America -- it's extremely important to me that my children grow into adults who are aware that most of the world isn't as privileged as we are. I read this out loud to my young children (ages 6-10). Not only did it prove to be a really intense adventure story, it was hugely meaningful that we were able to discuss that the events in the story are REAL, and that they happened to real people, and that it happened just a very few years ago (and a lot of it still continues today).

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