**Benedictine High School**

**Sophomore Summer Reading 2023**

**Alan Gratz, *Refugee* (2017)**

**Reading Guide**

**Directions: As you read *Refugee*, answer the questions in this reading guide. You can answer the questions directly in this Word file. You will turn these questions in to your teacher during the first week of school!**

**This assignment is worth 60 points.**

**Name:**

*Overarching Questions (answer after you have read the entire book):*

1. Give three to four examples of the ways in which Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud’s stories connect.

2. One of the recurring ideas in the novel is invisibility. Give two to three examples of where Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are treated as if they are invisible in the novel.

3. Explain how the word “tomorrow” (*mañana* in Spanish) appears in the story. Provide examples for your answer.

4. What roles do Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud take on as their families are seeking refuge? Give examples to support your answer.

5. How do the conflicts and events of Josef’s, Isabel’s, and Mahmoud’s stories change them? What is similar about their changes? Use evidence from the novel to support your response.

*Questions for Chs. 1-3 (pgs. 1-17)*

1. What historical event happens in Chapter 1 that changes the lives of Josef Landau and his family forever?

2. What historical situation is happening in Chapter 2 that is affecting the lives of Isabel Fernandez, her family, and her neighbors?

3. What historical situation is happening in Chapter 3 that is affecting the lives of Mahmoud Bishara, his family, and his friends?

*Questions for Ch. 4-6 (pgs. 18-33)*

1. Where were they going to meet Josef’s father? What country did they hope to eventually go to, and why was it difficult for them to get there?

2. What happens to Isabel’s father during this chapter?

3. What happened to Mahmoud’s home in this chapter?

*Questions for Ch. 7-9 (pgs. 34-55)*

1. How has Josef’s father changed since Josef last saw him?

2. How does Isabel arrange for her family to leave Cuba in this chapter?

3. What does Mahmoud’s family have to do in this chapter?

*Questions for Ch. 10-12 (pgs. 56-73)*

1. What was Josef’s experience on the MS *St. Louis* like?

2. Why were there so many people on the beach when Isabel and her family reached it?

3. What happened to Mahmoud’s family’s car as they traveled?

*Questions for Ch. 13-15 (pgs. 74-92)*

1. What special event is held for Josef on board the ship? Why won’t his father attend?

2. What kinds of things do the passengers on Isabel’s boat hope to experience when they reach Florida?

3. What country does Mahmoud and his family end up in? Where does Mahmoud’s father ultimately want the family to go?

*Questions for Ch. 16-18 (pgs. 93-109)*

1. What troubling encounter does Josef have with members of the crew when he is touring the engine room? What is their political affiliation and how do they respond to the children on the tour?

2. Why is Isabel’s grandfather so upset in this chapter?

3. Where does Mahmoud’s family end up staying the night? Why are all of the hotels and the local park so crowded?

*Questions for Ch. 19-21 (pgs. 110-128)*

1. What difficult event takes place in this chapter? What confrontation does Captain Schroeder have with the Nazi Party Leader on the ship?

2. What would happen under maritime law if the tanker saw the boat that Isabel’s family was on?

3. Who does the family meet in this chapter? How is this person’s story similar to that of Mahmoud’s family?

*Questions for Ch. 22-24 (pgs. 129-146)*

1. What delay does Josef’s family encounter when their ship lands in Cuba?

2. Why did Isabel jump into the ocean?

3. Describe the boat ride to Greece. What did the Mahmoud and the passengers encounter? What ended the boat ride?

*Questions for Ch. 25-27 (pgs. 147-163)*

1. What happened on board Josef’s ship while they were waiting at the harbor? Who started to police the ship and why?

2. What kind of a song does Isabel compare their journey to and why?

3. What happened when Mahmoud’s family encountered another boat after theirs was destroyed? Who is left in the family by the end of the chapter?

*Questions for Ch. 28-30 (pgs. 164-182)*

1. What tragedy befalls the family by the end of the chapter?

2. Where did the family finally land? What do the police tell them about their immigration status?

3. What distasteful but necessary thing does Mahmoud have to do in this chapter to survive?

*Questions for Ch. 31-33 (pgs. 183-202)*

1. What happens to Josef’s father in this chapter?

2. What tensions are the passengers on Isabel’s boat experiencing in this chapter?

3. How is Mahmoud rescued from the sea?

*Questions for Ch. 34-36 (pgs. 203-222)*

1. What word does Isabel’s grandfather keep repeating in this chapter? What other character’s story does this remind you of?

2. What uncomfortable encounter with a group of tourists does Mahmoud have on board the ferry? What realization does he make (pg. 214)?

3. What is Captain Schroeder’s plan once he realizes the Cuban government won’t let his passengers leave the *St. Louis*?

*Questions for Ch. 37-39 (pgs. 223-242)*

1. What do the passengers on Isabel’s boat do with Iván’s body? What of Iván’s possessions does Isabel keep to remember him?

2. What difficulty does Mahmoud’s family encounter in the taxi at the end of the chapter?

3. What does Josef’s mother mean when she tells him, “You can live life as a ghost, waiting for death to come, or you can *dance*” (pg. 239)?

*Questions for Ch. 40-42 (pgs. 243-258)*

1. Who does Isabel’s family encounter by the end of the chapter?

2. What does Mahmoud’s family discover when they reach the Hungarian border?

3. What do Pozner, Josef, and the other men do in this chapter?

*Questions for Ch. 43-45 (pgs. 259-274)*

1. What kind of music does Isabel compare their situation to in this chapter and why?

2. What behavior does Mahmoud return to at the end of the chapter to “avoid the bullies” (pg. 269)?

3. What happened to Josef and his family after Germany invaded the country they were staying in?

*Questions for Ch. 46-48 (pgs. 275-291)*

1. What do we learn about Isabel’s grandfather in this chapter that connects him to one of the other stories?

2. What realization does Mahmoud come to about “being invisible” (pg. 281)?

3. What horrible decision does the German soldier force Josef’s mother to make?

*Questions for Ch. 49-52 (pgs. 292-317)*

1. Why is it so important that Isabel’s family reach the shore before the Coast Guard catches up with them?

2. What do Mahmoud and the other refugees do in this chapter? Where do they go?

3. How had Isabel and her family’s life changed since arriving in Miami?

4. Who does Mahmoud and his family live with when they arrive in Berlin? How does the host family’s story tie into one of the other stories? What do we find out about the fate of one of the other main characters?