

THE STAR OUTSIDE MY WINDOW

ONJALI RAÚF

EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

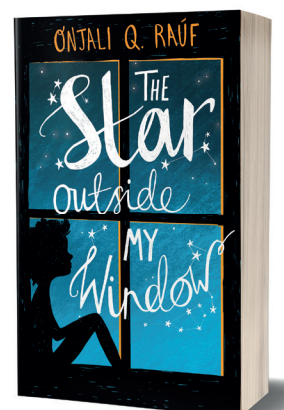
Suitable for: Ages 9–11

Includes: Extracts from the text + corresponding discussion questions and activities

Themes: Healthy Relationships; Fostering and Adoption; Coping with Loss; Hope

CONTENTS

- EXTRACT 1: Healthy Relationships (taken from Chapter Two)
Objectives: Identify how unhealthy relationships impact upon characters in the text; use the senses to explore what makes a healthy relationship.
Subjects: RSE, Literacy: Reading Comprehension and Inference, Art, Design and Technology
- EXTRACT 2: Fostering and Adoption (taken from Chapter Three)
Objectives: Understand the key differences between fostering and adoption; write a reflection summarising what you have learnt on this topic.
Subjects: RSE, Citizenship, Literacy: Reading Comprehension and Inference, Writing
- EXTRACT 3: Coping with Loss (taken from Chapter Six)
Objectives: Consider how loss affects us and the feelings and emotions that we associate with it; sketch and decorate an object that celebrates someone special in your life.
Subjects: RSE, Literacy: Reading Comprehension and Inference, Art, Design and Technology
- EXTRACT 4: Hope (taken from Chapter Twenty-Four)
Objectives: Explore the symbol of the star throughout the story; name your own star and paint the night sky including accurate star constellations.
Subjects: RSE, Literacy: Reading Comprehension and Inference, Art, Design and Technology, Science: The Solar System



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ABOUT THE BOOK

'I've always wanted to be a Star Hunter. But not the kind that looks for old stars. I want to find the ones that have only just been born and are searching for the people they've left behind.'

Told through the innocent voice of a child, this story celebrates the power of hope and resilience, from the author of The Boy at the Back of the Class.

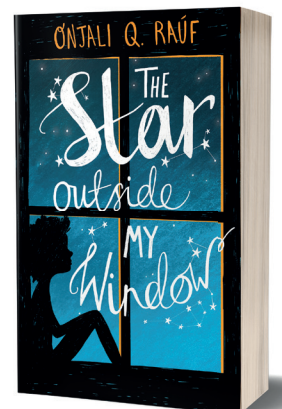
Aniyah has always loved watching the night sky and imagining who the stars were before they were stars. So when a physics-defying new star shows up in the sky the same week Aniyah's mum has to leave, Aniyah just knows it's her mum trying to find her and her brother Noah.

But when a world-wide competition with millions of entrants is started to decide on a name for the star, Aniyah will have to find a way to tell the world the truth. And in doing so, will end up on an adventure she never could have foreseen... one that involves a midnight bike ride ever, a scurry of squirrels, the Royal Observatory at Greenwich and the biggest star in Hollywood...

EXTRACT 1: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS (Taken from Chapter Two)

I wasn't expecting to learn any more rules on our third day, because after everyone else had gone to school, Mrs Iwuchukwu had us do the same thing we did the first two days we were there. First she let us sit and draw and colour in the living room until lunch-time, when we were allowed to watch television for half an hour. Then she read us a story and let us go and play in the garden until everyone came home. Playing in the garden made me realise that Mrs Iwuchukwu's messes-are-OK rule was true outside too – because when Noah fell down and got mud all over his trousers, she didn't tell him off. Instead she said, 'What a lovely colour that dirt is, don't you think Noah? Look at all those different shades of brown!' That made Noah immediately stop crying and bend over to look at the stains properly, as if he'd never really thought about it before.

After we were told to come inside again and Noah had changed into some pyjama bottoms, Mrs Iwuchukwu clapped her hands and said, 'Right, Aniyah! Noah! The third day is a charm, so what shall we have for tea today? Veggie lasagne? Or fish fingers and chips? Or spaghetti?' She waited for us to answer as she waved at us to sit down at the kitchen table. She was wearing golden glitter around her eyes today, and it made her eyelids look like sand on a beach when the sun's shining on it.



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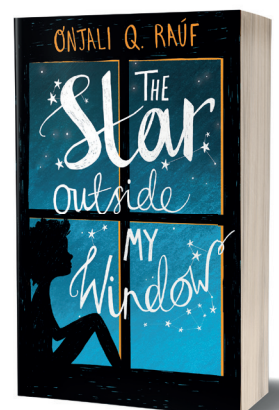
EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What does the phrase 'healthy relationship' mean? Why is it so important to have these relationships in our lives?
- How does Mrs Iwuchukwu behave towards Aniyah and Noah in the extract? How do they react?
- How does homelife with Mrs Iwuchukwu compare with Aniyah's and Noah's previous homelife with their mum and dad?
- Which characters have experienced unhealthy relationships in the story? Give examples.
- How have these unhealthy relationships affected them?

ACTIVITY: RECOGNISING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS *Subjects: RSE, Literacy: Reading Comprehension and Inference, Art, Design and Technology*






- Take a moment to close your eyes and picture a family member you have a healthy relationship with. Think about how this person makes you feel and what makes it a healthy relationship.
- Now, think about all the other family members and friends you have healthy relationships with. Using them for inspiration, fill in the table below that helps us explore what a healthy relationship **looks** like, **feels** like, and **sounds** like. The text should give you some ideas to get started!
- CHALLENGE: When you have completed these first 3 rows of boxes in as much detail as possible, see if you can fill in the final 2 rows coming up with **smells** and **tastes** that you associate with a healthy relationship too! For example, it might be the taste of a stew or curry that a family member cooks for you, or the taste of cookies that you have when you sleepover at a friend's house.
- As a class, feedback one of the senses you have written down that you associate with being loved and cared for.

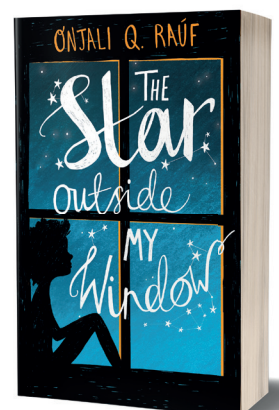


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EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS

<p>What a healthy relationship looks like ... Eg. Behaviour, activities</p> 	<p>Examples:</p>
<p>What a healthy relationship feels like ... Eg. Emotions, bodily contact</p> 	<p>Examples:</p>
<p>What a healthy relationship sounds like ... Eg. Things you say, tone of voice</p> 	<p>Examples:</p>
<p>What a healthy relationship smells like ... Eg. Food, Clean clothes</p> 	<p>Examples:</p>
<p>What a healthy relationship tastes like ... Eg. Drink, Food</p> 	<p>Examples:</p>



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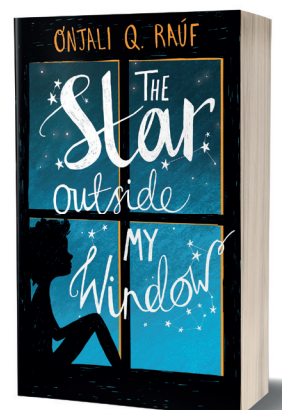
EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS

EXTRACT 2: FOSTERING AND ADOPTION *(Taken from Chapter Three)*

I wanted to ask what happened to Mr Iwuchukwu and how anyone could have more than one mum, but then Travis said, 'Yeah, sh-she gave us n-nice rooms. And the house is n-nicer than all the other foster onesh t-too!' His braces made his voice come out mushy, but it was better than not having one at all.

I looked around the living room and suddenly noticed all the different photos hanging on the walls. I hadn't really looked at them properly before. but in every single one of them, Mrs Iwuchukwu was standing next to a different child. There she was standing next to a boy with bright red hair, a big nose and even bigger glasses. And then a girl with bright yellow curly springs for hair. Another boy in bright red shorts who looked like he was Chinese who had straight black hair that was so shiny that you could see the sunlight bouncing off it. Two twins with long brown hair were frozen blowing bubbles at the camera.

'Niyah ... look!' cried out Noah suddenly, turning around to me and pointing to the TV screen. But I was too busy thinking about what Ben and Travis had said about being adopted to listen to him properly. I hadn't thought that there might be lots of other kids living in lots of other foster houses too ... and that someone could have more than one foster mum.



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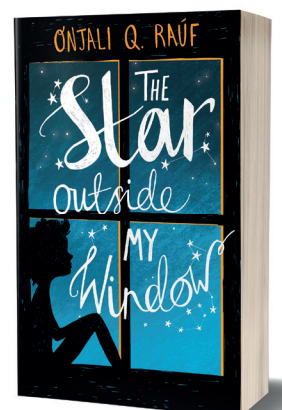
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is a foster house? Why are Aniyah and Noah being looked after by Mrs Iwuchukwu?
- What are Aniyah's and Noah's relationships like with Travis, Ben, and Sophie? Explain your ideas.
- What does Aniyah realise as she looks at the photos hanging in the living room?
- Earlier in the text, Ben states, 'It's much better to be an adopted kid than to be a foster one'. Why does he think this?
- What challenges might fostered or adopted children face? Why might they need extra help and support growing up?

ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING FOSTERING AND ADOPTION *Subjects: RSE, Citizenship, Literacy: Reading Comprehension and Inference, Writing*

- See how much you know about fostering and adoption by filling in the 'True or False Questionnaire' independently.
- As a class, go through the answer to each statement, discussing anything you're unsure of and linking back to characters in the text when applicable. Adjust any answers that you didn't get right in a different coloured pen.
- Thinking back over the subject of fostering and adoption in the text, your questionnaire, and your class discussions, write a reflection about what you have learnt on the topic. You may wish to consider things such as; why children are fostered or adopted and what it involves; the challenges faced by the parents and children in their care; why we need more foster and adoptive parents like Mrs Iwuchukwu.



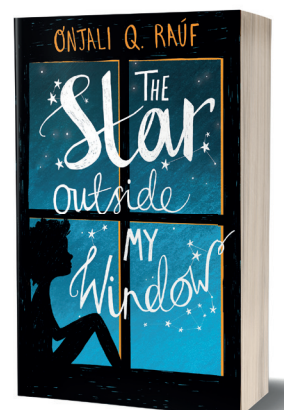
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EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS

FOSTERING AND ADOPTION: TRUE OR FALSE?

1. A foster parent will always look after a child until they become an adult:
.....
2. Foster parents go through lots of checks before they are allowed to look after a child:
.....
3. Foster parents have no legal rights over a child:
.....
4. Adopting a child is quick and easy:
.....
5. Adoptive parents have to pay for a child's upbringing themselves:
.....
6. Both foster and adoptive parents should make their child feel safe and cared for:
.....
7. Adoptive parents are legally responsible for their child long-term:
.....
8. When possible, children will be kept with their birth parents but only if it's in the child's interests:
.....
9. We don't need anymore foster or adoptive parents, we have plenty to go round:
.....
10. Being a foster or adoptive parent can be tough at times but it is an amazing thing to do:
.....



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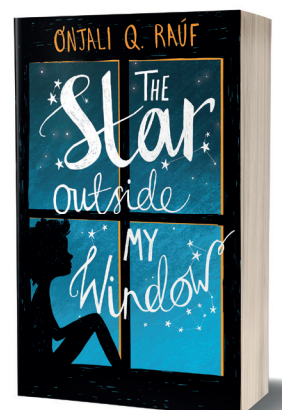
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EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS

EXTRACT 3: COPING WITH LOSS *(Taken from Chapter Six)*

The very last thing I remember is watching the hands of the clock on the wall, and the small hand standing still above the number eight as if it didn't want to move. In this part, my memory plays even more tricks on me, because it made sound fade away and words become jumbled – as if everything was being squashed and sucked up by a giant silent Hoover. The only words that my ears can remember hearing are, 'Family ... Officer ... Your mum wanted ... Gone ... Do you ... So sorry ... Understand ... Got to leave...'

I can't remember who said those words, or what the missing words were, or whose hands put themselves on my shoulders and made me turn cold. All I know is that that was when I heard a loud crack from somewhere deep inside my chest, and a large explosion taking place high up in the skies, and a creaking as if the world had stopped turning and didn't know how to move again. I looked around to see if Felicity or Katie or the police officers had heard the noises too, but their mouths were still going up and down so I knew they hadn't, because no one who had heard those noises could go on talking. Then I looked down at Noah who was staring up at me, his face red and wet and his mouth open, and I knew right away that he had heard the same sounds. They were the sounds of Mum's heart leaving her body and becoming a star.



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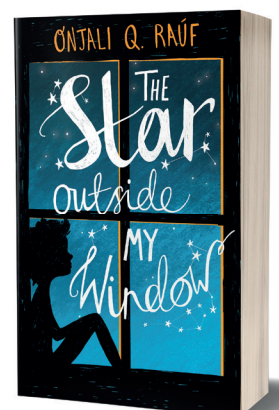
EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why is this such a significant scene in the book? Who and what have Aniyah and Noah lost?
- Can you spot any **similies** and **metaphors** that Aniyah uses to describe her feelings? How are they effective?
- What other feelings and emotions might we associate with losing someone?
- What advice or support could you give Aniyah to help her to deal with the loss she has suffered?
- Why is it so difficult to cope with loss no matter how old you are?

ACTIVITY: SPECIAL OBJECTS *Subjects: RSE, Literacy: Reading Comprehension and Inference, Art, Design and Technology*

- On page 152, Aniyah reveals the importance of her silver locket stating: 'It was the only thing I still had that Mum and Dad had bought for me together'. With a partner, discuss special objects that you associate with the people that you love most. See you if you can pick one that is particularly significant to you. It might have belonged to or remind you of someone you have lost, or it could be a family member or friend you are really close to.
- On a piece of card, draw your object with the name and picture of your important person on it. Make sure you leave space on your object to note down the following:
 - This object is special to me because ...
 - It reminds me of a time when ...
 - I smile when I think about ...
- When you have done all of this, decorate it and add any additional detail or information that you wish. Take this home to show your family member or friend, or put it somewhere safe so that you can look at it and smile whenever you want to remember someone special that you have lost.



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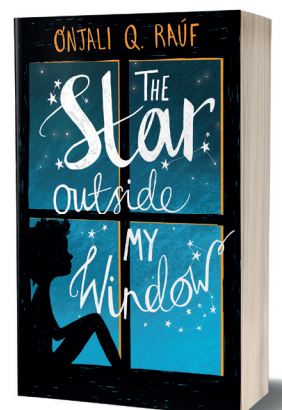
EXTRACT 4: HOPE (Taken from Chapter Twenty-Four)

The screen looked like it was whooshing backwards, and Mum's star became smaller and smaller and smaller, until she was surrounded by lots of other white dots.

Starting where Mum's dot had been, Mr Withers made a straight line with his fingers and, walking across the stage, pointed to what looked like seven dots all squeezed together right in the top corner.

'It seems Isabella is on a straight trajectory towards the Pleiades constellation,' explained Mr Withers. 'The constellation of the Seven Sisters and their parents Atlas and Pleione. Where we hope, she'll be finding herself in the best of families!'

Everyone in the room began clapping again and Professor Bridges gave my knees a squeeze. I stared at the screen and at the small dots of light that Mum was travelling to, feeling so happy that my head hurt. Mum wasn't ever going to be alone! She was going to live with a family that were waiting for her – just like Mrs Iwuchuwku's family had been waiting for me and Noah. She was heading to a foster family and, just like me, was going to be a foster sister too.



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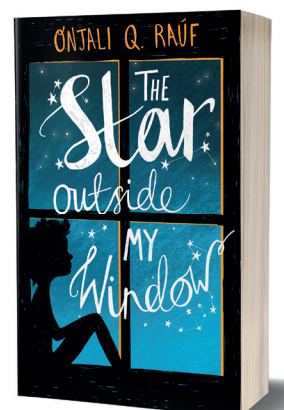
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How does this extract connect to Aniyah's dream of being a 'star hunter'?
- Why is Aniyah so desperate to make it to the Royal Observatory in time?
- Who and what does the star symbolise throughout the story? Give examples from the text.
- Why does the 'constellation of the Seven Sisters' give Aniyah comfort? What does it represent?
- What predictions about Aniyah's and Noah's futures can you make based on this extract? Explain your ideas.

ACTIVITY: YOUR STAR *Subjects: RSE, Literacy: Reading Comprehension and Inference, Art, Design and Technology, Science: The Solar System*

- In pairs, see how many star constellations you already know of and note them down. Then, once the 'Star Constellation worksheet' has been handed out to you, work together to see if you can accurately sketch a few. Note: 3 boxes have been left blank for you to choose the constellations yourselves.
- Next, at the top of a large sheet of black paper, write or paint the name of the special person you used for inspiration in Extract and Activity 3. Congratulations, you have now named a star!
- Finally, paint a picture of the night sky making sure that your named star shines brightly! Try to include some star constellations that you discussed and sketched earlier on but be sure to label them and make sure they're as accurate as possible.



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STAR CONSTELLATIONS

PLEIADES (SEVEN SISTERS)	ORION	URSA MAJOR (PLOUGH)
.....

