

Walker Books Classroom Ideas

The Day War Came



Nicola Davies Rebecca Cobb ISBN: 9781406376326 June 2018 *Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Walker Books Australia Locked Bag 22 Newtown, N.S.W., 2042 Ph +61 2 9517 9577 Fax +61 2 9517 9997

These notes were created by Steve Spargo. For enquiries please contact: educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

Notes © 2018 Walker Books Australia Pty. Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Outline:

Imagine if, on an ordinary day, war came. Imagine it turned your town to rubble. Imagine going on a long and difficult journey – all alone. Imagine finding no welcome at the end of it. Then imagine a child who gives you something small but very, very precious...

When the government refused to allow 3000 child refugees to enter this country in 2016, Nicola Davies was so angry she wrote a poem. It started a campaign for which artists contributed drawings of chairs, symbolising a seat in a classroom, education, kindness, the hope of a future. The poem has become this book, movingly illustrated by Rebecca Cobb, which should prove a powerful aid for explaining the ongoing refugee crisis to younger readers.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Nicola Davies is an award-winning author, whose many books for children include *The Promise*, *King of the Sky*, *A First Book of Nature*, *A First Book of Animals*, *Tiny: The Invisible World of Microbes*, *Lots: The Diversity of Life on Earth*, *Ice Bear*, *Big Blue Whale*, *Dolphin Baby*, *Bat Loves the Night*, *Just Ducks!*, *Animals Behaving Badly* and the *Heroes of the Wild* series. Nicola graduated in zoology, studied whales and bats and then worked for the BBC Natural History Unit. She makes regular visits to schools and festivals, and is very active on social media – she lives in Crickhowell, Wales.

Rebecca Cobb graduated from the Falmouth School of Art in 2004. She has collaborated with the Gruffalo author Julia Donaldson on picture books including *The Paper Dolls*, Orange Prize-winner Helen Dunmore on books including *The Lonely Sea Dragon* and popular film-maker Richard Curtis on Christmas titles including *The Empty Stocking*. Rebecca was the winner of the 2013 Waterstones Prize and has twice been shortlisted for the prestigious Kate Greenaway Award.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

1

These notes	Key Learning	Example of:	Themes/Ideas:
are for:	Areas:	 Picture 	• War
 Primary 	 English 	Book	Safety
(all years)	 History 	 Poetry 	Refugees
• Ages 5-12			• Fear
			Change
			Kindness

WALKER 🗣 BOOKS



Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before reading

Before reading *The Day War Came* view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?

Before reading this story, have a class discussion about the word "refugee". What do you think it means? What words do you associate with it? Where do refugees come from? Create a mind-map using words from this discussion. Revisit this mind-map after reading the book. How have your ideas changed? What have you learned about refugees?

Exploring the text

The author describes the text as a poem, rather than prose (language in its ordinary form, without metrical structure). Rewrite some of the text as prose (i.e. use more descriptive language, arrange the text in paragraphs, give much more detail, etc.) Compare your prose with the author's poetry and discuss how each format can be used to achieve different goals.

Exploring the illustrations

Choose several spreads from the book to examine closely. Discuss the following:

- What emotions are the characters feeling? What clues are there in text and illustrations to help you answer this question? How do you think you would feel in this situation?
- Some of the illustrations give the reader more information than offered by the text. Can you identify any of these illustrated elements? Why do you think they have been included in the book?
- What colours have been used? What mood do these colours create for the reader?

Look at how the characters are drawn in the first few spreads. What do the illustrations tell you about these characters? How are these characters feeling? Compare this to the illustrations later in the book. What has changed?

Themes

As a class, identify some of the main themes of the text (e.g. fear, safety, war, change). What messages about these themes do you think the text is communicating?

A major theme in this story, especially regarding the end, is kindness. How is kindness demonstrated in this story? Why is kindness important in everyday life? The boy bringing the girl a chair is a small act of kindness that will have a huge impact on the girl's life. Give some examples of other small acts of kindness that could affect others. As a class, make a pledge to be kind to each other and to do at least one act of kindness or good deed every day.

Further Activities

What is the purpose of this text (tell a story, give information, persuade, etc.)? Does it have more than one purpose? How can you tell? Who is the intended audience this book?

When and where do you think the story is set? What gives you this impression? The author/illustrator has not specified the country in which this story is set, or their destination country. Why do you think this has been left open to interpretation?

Write a journal entry/reflection after reading the book. Some questions to consider could be:

- What did you feel while reading the book? Which parts of the story made you feel most emotional?
- Have you had any experiences like those in the story?
- Do you know anyone who is like a character in the story?
- Does anything in the story remind you of a television program, film or other book? For example, a character, the setting or something that happened in the plot.
- If you were telling this story, what would you change?
- Why do you think the author wanted the story to end as it does? Were you satisfied with the ending?
- What do you think is the main message of the story?
 Are there any questions you have for the author/
- Are there any questions you have for the author/ illustrator?
- If you could speak to the author/illustrator, what comments would you make?

Imagine your school and home were destroyed. How would you feel? What would you do? Where would you go? Make a list of the five things you would miss the most.

2