

A Long Walk to Water

Linda Sue Park. Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 128pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-547-25127-1.

Recommended Grade: 6-8

A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park tells the story of what it was like to live in Sudan in 1985 and 2008. In 1985, Salva Dut is forced to flee from school due to the civil war in Sudan. Without his family, Salva and many other Sudanese citizens begin their journey across Sudan to Ethiopia. In 2008, Nya also travels many miles across Sudan, but her journey is for water. Park tells the interweaving journeys of Salva and Nya through back and forth narratives, following Salva's journey back across Sudan to Kenya after the fall of the Ethiopian government, his experiences in a Kenyan refugee camp, his experiences in America, and his return to Sudan, as well as Nya and her family's struggle for clean water.

Park tells Salva and Nya's stories in a way that is understandable for students, yet does not take away from the truth of the atrocities that both of these characters face. The reader is drawn into their stories and drawn into geographic concepts in the book such as migration, reasons for conflict, and patterns of cultures. The dual narrative that Park creates in this story asks students consider these geographic concepts in both the past and present, making the story a powerful teaching tool.

Resources:

1. Salva's Story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuLbHz7k9xg>

2. Itang Refugee Camp 1985

http://www.worldpressphoto.org/sites/default/files/styles/gallery_main_image/public/1984105AL.jpg?itok=IIPqB0Bb

3. A Poem About the Lost Boys

<http://www.lostboyschicago.com/Writings/AbrahamDPoem.htm>

4. Water Scarcity In Africa:

<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/df/0b/de/df0bde018d81f558450dc19acaa7cc81.jpg>

Consider this map as a whole, and then look at the map below to place Sudan and South Sudan in context.

5. Map of Africa:

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/85/Map-Africa-Regions.svg>

6. Girls Carrying Water

http://programs.louisberger.com/~media/Images/LBG/Projects/NB-Construction-Infrastructure/SISP-T04/SISP_WASH_8.jpg