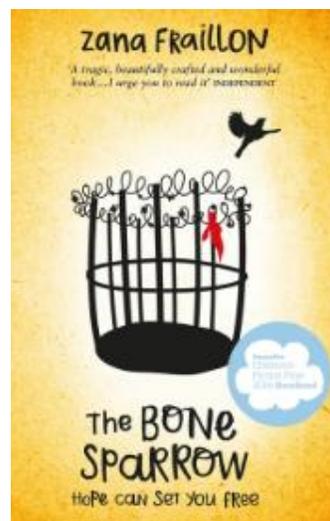


2017 Carnegie Medal shortlist Talking Points

Title: **The Bone Sparrow**

Author: **Zana Frallion**

Publisher: **Orion**



THE SET-UP: HARSH REALITIES?

Subhi is a member of Burma's Rohingya people – how much did you know about them before reading this book?

How was camp life described in the book – did anything about it surprise or shock you?

How fairly are Subhi and the other asylum seekers treated?

REASONS FOR HOPE?

Which characters actually show Subhi some kindness?

Where does Subhi himself get hope from? He still expects a happy ending, a better life – is his optimism helped by the fact that he's a child, do you think?

What is the role played by imagination in Subhi's hopes?

SUBHI

One might expect Subhi to be depressed and resentful – but what's he like, actually? Is his character surprising?

What's his relationship to his mother and sister like? And what's the point of his rubber duck in the book?

How do you feel about what happens to his friend Eli? Why do you think the author has Subhi witness such a thing?

Are there some things about the world that Subhi understands better than all the adults around him?



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STORIES AND DREAMS

It's only in Subhi's dreams that he can escape from the camp – where does he go?

Subhi's mother used to tell stories of life back in Burma; how important a role do these stories play in Subhi's life now?

Do you think the author has a message for us about the power that imagination and stories can have?

JIMMIE

The only time we really leave the camp is to see Jimmie's story; how effective are these parts of the book?

The book is primarily a story about a sad situation, with serious political implications – so why is this story about a positive friendship included?

What's the significance of Jimmie's bone sparrow, which gives the book its title?

POLITICS AND ACTIVISM

Why do you think the author felt the need to write this book?

Do you think the book is intended just to reflect the real world, or actually to change it? Do you believe stories can change how people think about the world?

What does the author's note at the end of the book add to your understanding of the issues it confronts?

Do you think young readers are particularly well suited to understanding and empathising with these kinds of story?

Is there a tension between wanting a story like this to end happily and wanting it to end realistically, or is it possible to achieve both?

AND FINALLY...

Does this Carnegie-shortlisted book deserve to win? Why, or why not?



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