

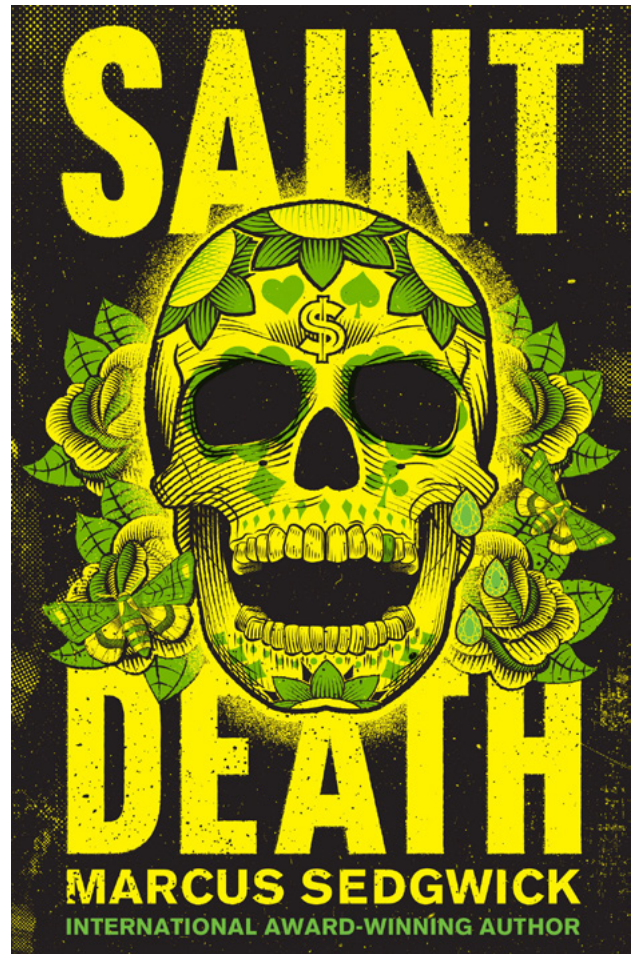
SAINT DEATH

By Marcus Sedgwick

Orion Children's Books

2018 Carnegie Medal shortlist,
eligible for Amnesty CILIP Honour

'A gripping, fast-paced narrative... Sedgwick's beautifully-crafted novel reflects upon the nature of friendship, faith and those "breaches of brotherhood" which makes us flawed and very human.' *Judging panel*



UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 3: We all have the right to live, and to live in freedom and safety

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This compelling novel is set near the US-Mexican border where violent gangs rule, police officers do nothing and corporations make money. Loyalty is rare. Arturo does his best to keep his head down until now... he only has 36 hours to save his friend's life and risk his own in the process.

This book highlights the relentless economic and social inequalities people face in their struggle for better lives. It shows the conditions that allow the drug trade and human trafficking to flourish – and that rather than demonise migrants and refugees, and build walls, we should act to protect them.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THIS STORY

The right to life; to safety; to freedom from cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment; to equality before the law; to freedom of movement; to freedom of belief;

to a good life; to healthcare; to housing; to a job and a fair wage; to education; to peace and order.

YOU CAN TALK ABOUT...

The beginning

- The author prefaces the novel with a quote from Charles Bowden: 'The way to understand these stories is to say they are about us.' What point is he making?
- What was your first thought when you saw the question 'What have we lost?'
- Talk about the cover. Who is saint Santa Muerte and how does she dominate Arturo's world?

Gangs

- Why won't the police investigate gang murders?
- Why does Faustino join a gang?
- Why does Arturo choose death over working for El Carnero?
- The author describes Eva's body and Arturo's death in detail – for what purpose?

Women's rights

- What has happened to the disappeared girls and women?
- 'Girls, young women, just being fed into the horror machine of the drugs wars and the murders.' What impact does the violence against women have on the community?
- How do you feel about Margarita's decisions?
- Why are girls and women more vulnerable to having their rights violated?

Relationships

- Why did Faustino stop contacting Arturo?
- Arturo wins enough money to help him – why doesn't he stop?
- What would you do if you were Arturo, Faustino and Eva?
- Why didn't Eva return to talk to Arturo?
- Does Arturo die for nothing?
- Is it better to die a good man than live as a bad man?

Migration and refugee rights

- What do you think countries are for?
- What are the arguments for and against border control between countries?
- The book explores different causes for the refugee crisis. Which causes do we see illustrated in Faustino and Eva's cases?
- Why don't they have legal and safe options?
- Why does Faustino risk everything despite the dangers?
- How can you find solutions to change things?

Corporate responsibility

- Both Eva and Arturo's mother are sacked unfairly. What rights should workers have? Who should be responsible for ensuring these rights are protected?

- The ASARCO plant caused pollution across the border and resulted in stillbirths. Who should be responsible for preventing this happening, and holding companies to account?

Society

- Carlos believes in 'community' and 'togetherness'. Siggy believes people 'serve themselves'. What do you think?
- The author uses the phrase 'polite embarrassment' to describe how people react when human rights violations are discussed. Why isn't everyone outraged and calling for change?

ACTIVITY

Pick the last item of clothing or electronic device that you bought. Where was it made? Find out about working conditions, human rights and levels of poverty in that country.

RESEARCH

Find out about the issues impacting Mexico today, and research what Amnesty is doing in that country.

Pick another issue that the book covers and research it, eg free trade, globalisation, climate change.

'Remember this: every man has to find out for himself in what particular fashion he can be saved. I believe that. You just have to find out what it is you're looking for.' Siggy

WE ARE ALL BORN FREE AND EQUAL

The atrocities of World War II sparked a determination to protect the rights of all human beings everywhere. On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The preamble says it must be shared, learned by children and be a part of all our lives.

When using these notes, you can download for reference:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights simplified version, especially useful for younger children [amnesty.org.uk/udhr](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [unicef.org/crc](https://www.unicef.org/crc)

For more free educational resources from Amnesty International go to [amnesty.org.uk/education](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/education)



The CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Children's Book Awards

