



## Kicked Out

written by A.M. Dassu

### About the Book

**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

**Format:** Hardcover, 336 pages

**ISBN:** 9781643796871

**Reading Level:** Grade 3-7

**Interest Level:** Grades 3-7

**Guided Reading Level:** Z

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:**  
N/A

**Lexile™ Measure:** 660L

\*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

**Themes:** Childhood Experiences and Memories, Conflict Resolution, Courage, Cultural Diversity, Discrimination, Diversity, Dreams & Aspirations, Empathy/Compassion, Families, Fathers, Fiction, Friendship, Home, Immigration, Kindness/Caring, Middle Grade, Muslim/Muslim American Interest, Overcoming Obstacles, Realistic Fiction, Refugees, Religious Diversity, Responsibility, Sports, Teen Interest, Tolerance/Acceptance

**Resources on the web:**

[leeandlow.com/books/kicked-out](http://leeandlow.com/books/kicked-out)

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

### SYNOPSIS

In this stand-alone companion novel to the acclaimed *Boy, Everywhere*, A. M. Dassu returns to extend the story of Sami's best friend Ali, who organizes a charity soccer match for their friend Aadam while his whole life is privately unraveling.

After their friend Mark's mum wins the lottery and gets a giant house with an indoor pool, Ali and Sami have been having the time of their lives hanging at Mark's house. Even their friend Aadam gets a job there, which means he can make more money for his legal battle for UK residency. But when some money goes missing, Aadam is accused of stealing it – and all three boys are unceremoniously kicked out of Mark's house in suspicion.

On top of that, Ali's Dad, who abandoned the family when Ali was little, is suddenly turning up everywhere in town, and a half-brother Ali never knew has shown up at Ali's school. Ali feels miserable and resentful about it, making it hard to be a good friend.

The boys know Aadam is innocent, and if he doesn't raise thousands of pounds right away, he could get deported back to Syria amidst its civil war. At least Ali has a plan: they'll host a charity football penalty match to raise money for Aadam so he can stay in the UK.

But can Ali pull together the match – even if he feels his whole life at home is falling apart?

## BACKGROUND

### From Author's Note, "What Can We do?"

The refugee crisis around the world is not going anywhere, and with climate change destroying entire neighborhoods, it is only going to get worse. Now is the time to start a conversation about what we need to do to build a kinder and more supportive society for those who are forced to seek refuge elsewhere. If there's one thing we should remember, it's that it could happen to any one of us.

There were 89.3 million people who were forced to flee their homes by the end of 2021. Of these, 53.2 million people had to move within their own country, and 27.1 million moved to another country in search of safety. We are constantly told refugees are a threat and that they come here illegally, when, in reality, there are no safe and lawful routes into safe countries for them to use.

The UK and Europe are not affected by the refugee crisis in the same way other countries are, despite what we're told by the media and some politicians. Countries like Turkey, Uganda, and Pakistan take in more refugees than the whole of Europe put together. Approximately 72% of refugees live in countries that are neighbors with their country of origin, and most of these are developing countries. Almost half of displaced people around the world are children, and they deserve the same access to food, water, housing, and education that we would want for ourselves, were we to find ourselves in that position. I wrote my novel *Boy, Everywhere* in response to the divisive and hateful portrayal of refugees in the news. It is a story that shows we are all one cruel twist of fate away from becoming refugees ourselves.

One thing we should all be reminded of and challenge when we hear it said is that you cannot be an "illegal" asylum seeker. Under international law, you have the right to apply for asylum (shelter and protection) in any of the 149 countries that have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, including the UK. While the United States didn't sign it right away, they later signed the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. These agreements between 149 countries recognize the rights of refugees and that people fleeing their homes might have to use various ways to escape and get to safety.

There are many ways we can support refugees and unaccompanied minors. Here are some ideas:

- **Speak up.** It is hard, but we need to correct people if they say something that isn't accurate. Find out the facts so that if people don't agree with you because of something they've read, or seen on the news or on social media, you can challenge them on it with confidence. You can also speak out in many other ways: write to your local paper, organize an assembly at school, post on social media so everyone knows you support refugees!
- **Challenge racism and hateful language.** Look at the language you and the people in your life use. Are you describing people in a way that might be offensive? Could some of the words you use be untrue and not applicable to a whole group of people?
- **Email or call your member of Congress, both your Senator and Congressional Representative.** Write to tell them why you think refugees and asylum seekers deserve our protection, and ask them to make suggestions to change the law to help refugees

seek safety here more easily. If you don't have your own email address, you could ask a trusted adult to email them on your behalf. Find out who represents you at [congress.gov/members/find-your-member](https://congress.gov/members/find-your-member).

- **Reach out and support.** We are so much stronger when we support each other. You can reach out in so many ways: a smile, a kind word, by volunteering, by learning some words in other languages, by learning about different cultures and the countries refugees have come from. You could also fundraise or donate money to charities, or even just raise awareness by supporting local and regional organizations or groups that provide young refugees who are unaccompanied with a safe place to heal and the support to make their futures better. In the US there are several organizations that support young refugees. For example, the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program works with the Catholic organization USCCB and the Lutheran organization LIRS to provide support and foster placements for young refugees. You can find out more about what they do at [acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/refugees/urm](https://acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/refugees/urm). There are seven other refugee resettlement agencies in the US that work to support refugee families as well. If you're old enough to have social media, you can share their articles/blogs/retweet their work. Your school can also become a "School of Sanctuary"—ask a teacher for help with finding out how.
- **Believe things will change.** Discuss issues about refugees with like-minded people, but also with people who don't agree with you so they might become aware why their opinions and behavior affect others. Most of all, never lose hope. If we believe things will get better for refugees, we're more likely to want to help to make it happen.

### Resources for Supporting Students Experiencing Bullying, Racism, and Acts of Hate

Ali, Sami, and Aadam experience hate and bullying both in school and out in the community. These situations can be triggering for students. It is important that educators are able to educate students on the harm that racist, xenophobic, antisemitic and Islamophobic ideologies can affect individuals and communities. See the following resources below for additional information on how to support students:

- Learning for Justice, "Let's Talk! Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics with Students" ([www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20Difficult%20Conversations%20web.pdf](https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20Difficult%20Conversations%20web.pdf))
- Center for Racial Justice in Education, Resources for Talking About Race, Racism, and Racialized Violence with Kids (<https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/resources-for-talking-about-race-racism-and-racialized-violence-with-kids/>)
- ¡Colorin Colorado!, Talking About Racism and Violence: Resources for Educators and Families (<https://www.colorincolorado.org/talking-about-racism-and-violence-students-resources-educators>)
- Edutopia, A Guide to Equity and Antiracism for Educators, (<https://www.edutopia.org/article/guide-equity-and-antiracism-educators>)
- Unicef, 5 Ways to Fight Racism and Xenophobia (<https://www.unicefusa.org/sto->)

[ries/5-ways-fight-racism-and-xenophobia/34567\)](https://leeandlow.com/books/kicked-out/5-ways-fight-racism-and-xenophobia/34567)

### Resources for Teaching about the Syrian Conflict

For more information about how to teach about the Syrian Conflict in your respective setting, consult the following resources and lesson plans below:

- PBS: Teach Syria Lesson Plan (<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons-plans/teach-syria/>)
- Visual Resources for Teaching about the Syrian Conflict (<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/classroom/lesson-plans/2013/09/visual-resources-teaching-syria>)
- New York Times "Examining How the Syrian Crisis Has Shaped the Lives of Young Refugees: A Guest Lesson Plan" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/26/learning/lesson-plans/examining-how-the-syrian-crisis-has-shaped-the-lives-of-young-refugees-a-guest-lesson-plan.html>)
- Duke University-UNC: Ideas for Teaching about the Syrian Refugee Crisis ([https://ncmid-east.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/1065/2011/07/TeachingIdeas\\_ArabRefugees1.pdf](https://ncmid-east.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/1065/2011/07/TeachingIdeas_ArabRefugees1.pdf))

### A Note to Educators:

Be aware of students who may be refugees or have experienced displacement in your classroom. Consult the resources below to further aid your teaching:

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network has an article, "Ways Teachers Can Help Refugee Students: Some Suggestions," for more information on how to support students (<https://depts.washington.edu/uwhatc/PDF/TF-%20CBT/pages/3%20Psychoeducation/Ways%20Teachers%20Can%20Help%20Refugee%20Students.pdf>).

You can also consult the National Association of School Psychologists' "Supporting Refugee Children & Youth: Tips for Educators" (<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/mental-health-resources/war-and-terrorism/supporting-refugee-students>) and Colorín Colorado's "How to Support Refugee Students in Your School Community" (<https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/how-support-refugee-students-ell-classroom>).

Learning for Justice also has a guide, "Immigrant and Refugee Children: A Guide for Educators and School Support Staff" for further information (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2017/immigrant-and-refugee-children-a-guide-for-educators-and-school-support-staff>).

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

**Note for Educators:** Please be cognizant of students who may be refugees in your classroom and be aware of speaking about refugee children and their circumstances at all times.

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- Have you ever stood up for something or someone? Was there ever a time when you stood up for something that you believed in, even if others disagreed with you? How did it feel? What did you do?
- What strategies do you use when you're sad or scared? What techniques do you use to make yourself feel better? How did you come up with ways that help you in times of need?
- How does food, sport, or a favorite pastime help people heal? What helps you feel better after a difficult moment or situation?
- Have you ever been in a difficult situation where you didn't know what to do? Who did you go to for help? What plan did you come up with to tackle the situation? How did this situation make you feel?
- What does it mean to be a friend? What are the qualities of friendship? How do you support your friends? Why is it important to be loyal to your friends and defend them?
- Ask students to think about their family and what family means to them. How is family important to you? How do you interact with your family members? How do you help them?
- Have you ever solved a problem? What did you do? Why did you have to solve that particular problem? How did you think quickly? How were you acknowledged afterward?
- Why might someone need to leave their home and country? What are different factors that play into families having to leave their homes unexpectedly?
- What do you know about the experiences of refugee children and families? What does it mean to be a refugee? What have you heard about refugees from books that you've read or what you've heard before? How are refugees different than immigrants?
- What does it mean to be resilient? How do you demonstrate resilience even though something may be challenging? Why is it important to be resilient? Do you think it can be learned? How so?

You may want to have students journal their responses to these questions or pose the final question as a KWL discussion and chart so that you can refer back to it throughout and after the reading of the book to further their thinking on the topic(s).

## Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

**Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *Kicked Out*. Ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

**Book Walk:** Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, table of contents, author's dedication, and Author's Note at the end. Display the book and analyze the cover. What do students notice in the illustration?

**Read A. M. Dassu's biography:** Read about A. M. Dassu on the jacket back flap as well as on her website, [amdassu.com](https://amdassu.com). Encourage students to think about what could have been her inspiration for writing *Kicked Out*.

Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or see new words.

Have students write feeling(s) in their notebook during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them write a journal entry about it. Have students complete one journal entry per each reading session.

## Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- what is Aadam's situation and how do his friends rally around him in a time of need
- how to confront harmful representations and racism
- how Ali, Sami, Aadam, Mark and their family change over the course of the book, and what events cause those changes
- how young people show resilience through difficult times
- how the support from family and friends during difficult times is important
- why it's important to advocate for yourself and stand up for your beliefs, identity, culture, and traditions
- how and why trauma can affect people differently
- how Ali manages and copes with complex emotions while his life is unraveling

Encourage students to consider why the author, A.M Dassu would want to share this story with young people around the world.

## VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

### Content Specific

innit, WhatsApp, kameez, barfi, pistachio, cardamon, rucksack, form, thrash, asylum, eczema, refugee, archnemesis, CCTV, neanderthals, halal, somersault, allah, ya rabb, keepie-uppie, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, spindles, banister, tabbouleh, parsley, in shaa Allah, Ribena, note, Salaam, Eid, mosque, paratha, samosas, nikah, co-op, Qadar of Allah, baklava, tartan, as-salaamu alaikum, booza, manservant, culprit, git, duvet, detention center, mincemeat, spectator, antiseptic, catastrophe, gazillionth, FIFA, Minecraft, Kinder Eggs, Akhi, Asar, Auntyji, Ayatul Kursi, Beta, Booza, Dada, Dua, Jum'ah, Kameez, Laddu, Leave to remain, maamoul, Nani, Topi, Walaikum As-salaam

### Academic

supreme, puny, optician, revising, credible, deport, traumatic, ecstatic, manky, rubbish, whizzed, cocky, jabbered, queue, tapered, havoc, conjured, insincere, mourning, tenner, reckon, skidded, scowled, involuntarily, whirring, intimidated, unaccompanied, sputtered, pristine, panting, gawping, tutted, smirked, interlocked, livid, swanned, cringey, harassed, keeled

**Refer to the Glossary from *Kicked Out* for more information.**

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

#### Chapters 1 - 10

1. What does Ali remember as he is looking through his camera roll? How did Sami feel in the picture that Ali is looking at?
2. What role has Ali been tasked with since his father left?
3. Who is Aadam? How did Sami and Aadam meet?

4. What difficult situation is Aadam dealing with? How does Aadam feel?
5. What does Sami share with the boys about Aadam's experience back home in Syria?
6. Who is captain of the school's football team? Who is Nathan?
7. Who is Callum? How would you describe Callum? What kind of attitude does Callum display to Ali and Sami?
8. Why is Aadam working while the boys are enjoying time at the pool? What does Sami explain to the boys?
9. How has Mark's life changed since his mum won the lottery?
10. What situation unfolds at Mark's house? What does Callum accuse Aadam of?
11. What does Sami ask Aadam? How does that question hurt Aadam's feelings?
12. What do Ali and Sami think about when they stop and think about what might have actually happened at Mark's house?
13. Why is Sami considering not playing football for year 9?
14. Where do Ali and Sami finally find Aadam? What does Aadam explain to Sami? How does Aadam feel?
15. What idea does Ali come up with to help Aadam raise legal fees? Who does Ali see as he is pumping up the boys about the fundraiser?
16. What does Mark's mum say to him as she drops him off for school the next day after the incident? What does Mark say to the boys?
17. What false narrative do Callum and Mark's mum believe about refugees? What type of news does Callum share with the "family" group chat?
18. What news does Samira break to Ali? What are Ali's feelings toward this news?
19. Who does Ali see at school during the fire alarm? What are his thoughts during this event?
20. What update do the boys receive about Aadam's application?
21. How does Ali feel towards Mustafa? What physical response does Ali feel in his body when he sees Mustafa?
22. What happens at the Co-op store? How does this make Aadam feel? Sami? Ali? Mark? Describe the impact of this event for each character.
23. What are Sami and Ali brainstorming for the event to raise money for Aadam? Who will they present this idea to?
24. How does presenting the charity football match to Mrs. Hack go? What does Sami say?
25. What do the boys do when they see a group of kids trying to key a red Porsche? What happens after?

## Chapters 11-20

26. Who is David Mora?
27. Who does Ali see in the street after saving David Mora's car? Who does that person confuse Ali with?
28. What great news does Sami share with the boys?
29. Why is Ali questioning his self-worth? What is his current situation with Mustafa?
30. What does Ali notice about Sami's confidence? What obstacles did Sami have to overcome to gain confidence?
31. How does Ali's mum show that she cares about him? What does his mum explain to him about his Dad?
32. How does Ali deal with his emotions?
33. How are the boys feeling about the charity event? What is the status on Aadam's application?
34. How does Nathan respond to the charity event? Why does his response get the boys thinking about the event? What change do the boys make to the charity event?
35. Who is Mark's neighbor?
36. What leap of faith does Ali take?
37. How does Aadam respond to the big news?
38. How is the charity event coming along? Who all is willing to help out?
39. How does Mustafa and Ali's interaction in the library go? What does Ali share with Mark and Sami?
40. Why is Mustafa a painful reminder for Ali?
41. What lies is Nathan spreading in school? What do the boys wish David Mora would do?
42. What does Mark wish he could ask his mum?
43. How is Mrs. Webster helping the boys? How is Mrs. Greenwood helping them? What are the boys realizing about what this event means for teachers?
44. Why does Ali need to show proof of his age? What do you learn about Aadam and his journey to Manchester? What do you learn about the legal system?
45. What does Sami miss from home?
46. Who is also at the supermarket when Ali, Ahmed, and his mum go? What conversation does Ali's mum have with them?
47. Why does Ali refuse to go into the supermarket?

**Chapters 21-30**

48. Why does Ali get upset as they drive by a mosque on their way home from the grocery store?
49. Why does Ali call Samira a traitor? What does he realize after their conversation?

50. How do Ali and Samira comfort one another?
51. What happens during the announcement in the assembly hall? What does Mrs. Greenwood explain to the students?
52. Why does Ali get upset when a kid asks him if he is Mustafa's brother? What is his response?
53. Who does Ali have a conversation with after his outburst? What does he learn from that conversation?
54. How does Ali's conversation go with Mustafa?
55. What does Ali dream the next day after his encounter with Mustafa?
56. How is the stress of the relationship with his dad interfering with Ali's mental, physical, and emotional state?
57. What happens to Ali during their football match? What is Ali having a hard time doing?
58. Who does Ali visit? How does that visit go?
59. Who do the boys come across on their ride back to Mark's house? How does that conversation go?
60. How does Sami relate to Ali? What does Sami notice about Ali?
61. What message does Ali's dad send him? What is he thinking about? How does Ahmed respond to this message?
62. How does Ali's dad stand up for him after school? How does this make Ali feel?
63. How did the date with Dad go? How does Ahmed feel about the date?

### **Chapters 31-Epilogue**

64. What happens as the boys are riding home with Mark?
65. How is Mark planning on proving who Callum really is? What does Mark find on the CCTV?
66. What is Ali reminded of when his dad sends him a text? What does his dad's message say?
67. How does Ali's dad contribute to the charity shoot-out event?
68. How does Mustafa show his generosity?
69. How much money do the boys have so far? What do they realize?
70. Why does Ali's dad call him? What does he say? How does Ali respond?
71. What plan have the boys put together to reveal who Callum is? How does the plan go?
72. What does Mark's mum realize? Who does she confront?
73. What happens when the police show up to Mark's house? How do the boys feel?
74. What does Mark's mum say to the boys? What does she do for Aadam?
75. How is David Mora greeted at the school?

76. How does the event go? How do the boys feel during and after the event?
77. How did Mark's mum change?
78. Who was featured in the newspaper?
79. What does Ali realize at the end?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the title *Kicked Out* mean to you after reading? Why do you think the author chose this particular title?
2. How does Ali's character evolve over the course of the book?
3. How do pictures allow Ali to relive happy memories? How has Sami changed from the moment that the picture was taken, to present day at Mark's pool? How has Ali had an impact on Sami?
4. How does Ali demonstrate self control throughout *Kicked Out*? What inner dialogue does Ali have?
5. What do Ali's friends teach him throughout the book? How do Ali, Sami, and Mark all come together to help their friend Aadam?
6. Why is it important to listen to other people's stories? David Mora shares his own story with Ali. Aadam shares his story with his friends and community. What did they all learn from each other?
7. What role does ethnicity and immigration status play throughout *Kicked Out*? Why do you think Callum, Mark's mum, and Nathan think the way they do about refugees? How does misinformation play a role on their perspective?
8. What does it mean to "belong"? What gives us our sense of belonging? Why do you think some people have different beliefs about what the concept of "belonging" means? How does the Stockport community show Aadam that he belongs?
9. What lessons does Ali learn about forgiveness? What stories and experiences make him reflect on the situation with his dad?
10. What does Ali reflect on at the end of the book? What do you think he realizes? What lesson(s) does Ali learn at the end of the story?
11. Why does Ali admire and respect his mum? What does he realize about his mum? What does he reflect on about his actions towards his mum, Ahmed, and Samira?
12. How does A. M. Dassu use figurative language in *Kicked Out*? Why do you think this helped further your understanding of the character's emotions?
13. What does family mean to you after reading this story? Have any of your perceptions or feelings toward family members changed after reading this book? How does Ali's relationships

with his family members inspire you to act toward your own family and friends?

14. Explore the structure of this text. Does the story describe events chronologically, as comparison, cause and effect, or problems and solutions? Why do you think the author structured the text the way she did? How does this story compare to other texts you have read?
15. As a reader, how did you feel throughout the book? What thoughts and emotions did you experience as you read *Kicked Out*? What did you learn about what it means to be a friend? How did this story connect to your life? What moments did you identify with? Why?
16. Read about author's A. M. Dassu's life ([amdassu.com](http://amdassu.com)). What inspired her to write this story? How can our own lives and experiences be mined for inspiration? How can real life be used in fiction writing?

### Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. What is one big thought you have after reading this book? Think about how Ali navigates and experiences trauma throughout *Kicked Out*. How does he process trauma and change during the story?
2. What do you think is A. M. Dassu's message to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind A. M. Dassu's intentions for writing the book. What do you think she wanted to tell her readers?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Ali's, Sami's, Aadam's or Mark's experiences, thoughts and feelings mean to you?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Kicked Out*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world or on the news? Why did *Kicked Out* make you think of that?
6. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about different character changes, the setting, and the relationships. What did you learn from reading *Kicked Out*?
7. What different types of conflicts are presented in *Kicked Out*? Discuss Ali's conflicts within himself, with his family, with his friends, and conflicts in the world. Compare and contrast the conflicts within the text.
8. Have students write a book review after reading *Kicked Out*. Consult ReadWriteThink's lesson plan on how to teach students how to write book reviews (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/what-think-writing-review-876.html>). Students can also refer to other book reviews for references. What did they enjoy about *Kicked Out*? What

would they tell a friend or another person who wants to read the book? Students can share their book reviews with small groups or the whole class.

### Multilingual Learners Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are multilingual learners (ML).

1. Assign ML students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Review each chapter and chapter title. Have students summarize what is happening in the chapter, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about one of the characters in the book. Have them discuss what characteristics they admire about the person they chose. Perhaps consider creating sentence stems for students to reference to during their short talk.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose ML students to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
6. The book contains different Arabic words. Have students highlight them in the text, and then record them separately. Have students look up their definitions and share their knowledge about these words, if applicable.
7. Consider consulting [www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/](https://www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/) for more ideas on how to support Multilingual Learners.

### Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)  
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. How does Ali demonstrate persistence and resilience throughout *Kicked Out*? Identify a scene from the story that exemplifies how Ali is persistent. What made you choose this particular passage? How did it affect you and what did you learn from Ali after reading *Kicked Out*?
2. Throughout the story, Ali feels the pressure of being a middle sibling. Have you ever felt pressure from siblings and/or friends? What does this pressure feel like, and what strategies do you use to overcome those feelings?
3. What kinds of emotions does Ali struggle with after his dad moves back to town? How do these emotions affect his thoughts and actions throughout the story?
4. What are the coping strategies and techniques that Ali uses during difficult moments? How does he evolve in his coping strategies throughout the story?
5. How has a family member impacted your life? How do you think Ali's family has inspired him? You can also provide examples from other characters in *Kicked Out* to support your ideas.
6. Ali, Sami, and Aadam face discrimination throughout *Kicked Out*. How do you respond to prejudice or discrimination?
7. How does Ali use the incident with Callum at the beginning of *Kicked Out* to help Aadam? How did people in Aadam's life support him when he needed help? What did you learn about Ali, Sami, Mark, and Aadam?
8. Choose an emotion that interests you: happiness, sadness, fear, anxiety, frustration, hope, perseverance, and so on. Illustrate or act out what that emotion looks like in *Kicked Out*.
9. Have students go on a Social and Emotional Learning scavenger hunt in the text, looking for evidence in the details from the book. Assign students to relevant Social and Emotional Learning themes, such as: empathy, problem-solving, perspective taking, perseverance, and recognizing and managing emotions.
10. Encourage students to identify passages where characters manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways. In a chart with four columns, write: What was the cause of the conflict? What was the consequence of the conflict? How does the character(s) resolve the problem? What are additional ways the character(s) could have solved the problem? What advice would you give?

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Examine the different figurative language that author A. M. Dassu uses throughout *Kicked Out*.** Have students come up with a list and select portions of the text that showcase a specific type of figurative language (i.e. simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, etc). Afterward, students can select one type of figurative language and write about how that was impactful when reading *Kicked Out*. How do literary devices make the story engaging, and how do they contribute to the story overall? See PBS's "Literary Elements and Techniques" video for more information about how to teach about literary devices (<https://ny.pbslearning-media.org/resource/litel18-fig/literary-elements-and-techniques-figurative-language/>).
- **Prepare a persuasive essay that explains your views on which character changed the most throughout the course of the novel.** Defend your views by citing specific examples. Track their change through evidence from the book over the course of the story. What did you notice about how they changed? Readwritethink.org's "Inferring How and Why Characters Change" lesson plan provides additional details and ideas on how to teach about character change (<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/infer-ring-characters-change>).
- **Have students identify a place where Ali's character changes in the book.** Why do students think it was a point where Ali's character changed? How does Ali feel before the change, what causes the change, and then how does he feel after? Create a graphic organizer with a column on the left that says "Before," a column in the middle that says "Event—what happened that caused the change," and then a column that says "After." Afterward, students can write an essay detailing their findings from the graphic organizer, and what they learned from analyzing Ali's character change.
- **Analyze Ali's relationships with other characters in the book and divide students into their respective groups: Ali and his family; Ali and his friends; Ali and his Dad.** Have students examine these relationships closely and think about how they help Ali develop as a character throughout the story. Then, have students share their findings and write an essay comparing their character's relationship with Ali and another group's character.

- **Have students define the following words in their own words: refugee, asylum seeker, and unaccompanied minor.** Have students share their definitions in groups. How were their definitions similar? How were they different? Once students have had time to discuss amongst their group, come together as a class to create a class definition for each of the words. After, have students reflect on the power of words and how readers can reclaim the use of a word that may or may not carry a negative stereotype. Consult the Migrants' Right Network to learn more about why words matter (<https://migrantsrights.org.uk/projects/words-matter/>).
- **Select a scene in which you disagreed with how a character handled a situation, person, or event.** In the voice of that character, rewrite the scene as you think it should have happened. Here are a few resources on how to teach voice in writing (<https://www.teachwriting.org/612th/2020/1/29/teaching-voice-in-writing-a-guide-for-creative-teachers>) and (<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/teaching-voice-anthony>). Have students share their writing pieces afterward, and reflect on what it was like to think about the characters differently.
- **Assign students different characters from the book and have them brainstorm about a guiding question: What and how can this character teach us?** Students can think about different characters to examine as a whole class and then break into smaller, specific character groups. Encourage students to think about how characters have made mistakes and have also done good things in the book, and ultimately what they learned from that character. Have students share their findings: How is this character important to the book, and what lessons did they teach us over the course of the story? How did their actions develop the narrative, and why are they crucial to understanding the meaning of the book?
- **Conduct an Author Study on A.M Dassu with her other titles, including *Fight Back and Boy, Everywhere*** ([leeandlow.com/books/boy-everywhere](https://leeandlow.com/books/boy-everywhere)). How are the main characters similar? How are they different? What themes do the books have in common? How are the topics similar? How are they different? Provide students with a graphic organizer to differentiate the titles and then ask students to write an essay answering the previous questions.
- **Have students come up with a list of questions to ask author A. M. Dassu.** What do students want to know about the process behind writing a children's book? How did the author come up with the idea to write *Kicked Out*? Consider contacting A. M. Dassu and inviting her to your school, library, or other relevant setting for a virtual author visit (<https://amdassu.com/>).
- **Have students read *Boy, Everywhere*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/boy-everywhere>), which is the standalone companion title to *Kicked Out* by author A. M. Dassu. Ask students to compare each book with the following guiding questions: What is the central idea of each title? How are the titles connected? What themes or ideas do they

share? How are the main characters similar? How are they different? What kinds of problems do they experience in the books? How are their families important in their lives? What are the ways that they solve critical problems and think about their actions? Have students plan their thoughts in a graphic organizer and write an essay afterwards.

- **Have students read the Author's Note from A. M. Dassu.** What did they learn from the Author's Note after reading the story? How did it make them think differently about *Kicked Out*? What is A. M. Dassu's perspective and why did she decide to write this story? Have students write a reaction essay to the Author's Note, and present 3 follow-up questions for A. M. Dassu.

### Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Conduct a research study on the history of the Syrian conflict.** Refer to the Background section of this guide for additional resources on teaching about refugees and the Syrian conflict. Guiding questions to ask include: When did this conflict begin? Where does this conflict take place? Why did it start? Who is involved? How does it impact individuals, communities, and the country as a whole, as well as the world? TeachMideast has more resources on the Syrian conflict, its history, as well as resources for teaching about it to students in your relevant setting (<https://teachmideast.org/syria-civil-war-and-refugee-crisis/>).
- **Ali, Sami, and Aadam face racist and xenophobic attacks from a classmate and community members.** It is important to be cognizant of the students in your classroom when teaching about these topics. Assign a word to groups of students and have them conduct a research study on their word and how to combat each term within their school, community, and the world. Have students present their findings to the class.
  - **Racism**
    - (<https://www.apa.org/topics/racism-bias-discrimination>)
    - (<https://www.facinghistory.org/en-gb/resource-library/discussing-race-racism-classroom>)
    - (<https://www.kqed.org/education/535060/how-can-students-fight-racism-in-schools>)
  - **Xenophobia**
    - (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/family/article/talking-to-kids-about-xenophobia-coronavirus>)
    - (<https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/5-ways-fight-racism-and-xenophobia/34567>)

- **Encourage students to learn about refugees and forced displacement.** It's critical to be aware of the students in your classroom when teaching about these topics. See the Background Section of this guide for how to teach students who are refugees. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has teaching materials on refugees, asylum, migration, and statelessness for further information on how to extend your teaching about refugees in your respective setting (<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/teaching-about-refugees.html>). Why do people become refugees? What are the different factors that come into play in the refugee experience?
- **Have students research the food that is mentioned in *Kicked Out*.** Various foods were mentioned in *Kicked Out*. Have students identify the different foods that were discussed in the book, find photographs, and compile recipes to create a *Kicked Out* cookbook for the class. Some of the foods mentioned might be fast food or processed, think about what recipe you can create to make a similar food to include in the cookbook. Students can refer to the glossary to identify what those foods are. How does food provide comfort for the characters in *Kicked Out*? Have students reflect on how food is a powerful method of connection.
- **Have students read A. M. Dassu's author's note, "What Can We Do?"** Have students jot down the different data and new information they learn after reading. What does the 1951 Refugee Convention represent? Consider consulting this resource from the United Nations Refugee Agency, <https://www.unhcr.org/us/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention> to learn more. Have students reflect and record their response on what new information they have learned regarding seeking asylum.
- **As a follow up to the previous activity, have students summarize the different calls to action that A. M. Dassu provides in "What Can We Do?"** What are the different ideas that the author presents to the reader? Have students reflect on how they can individually support refugees and unaccompanied minors. If time allows, have students create a poster using these ideas from A. M. Dassu on how to support refugees and unaccompanied minors.
- **Aadam has to submit a new asylum application. Have students research what it means to apply for asylum in the United States. Please be mindful that this could be a sensitive topic to students who are in the process of seeking asylum or if they know of someone who is.** Have students refer to the definition of asylum. Once the definition is established, have students conduct a research project on what the application to seek asylum looks like in the US. Consider consulting presenting these resources from USA.gov (<https://www.usa.gov/asylum>) and the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/refugees>) as a starting point for students to conduct their own research. After students have done their research, have them respond to the following questions: What did you learn about the process? How long does it take? How much money does it cost? What criteria does the application have to meet in order to be eligible? What does the refugee process entail? Is this process fair? How do you think Aadam felt

having to go through a similar process at the age of 16? Once students are done responding the reflection questions, discuss their responses as a class.

- **As a follow up to the previous activity, the refugee process in the UK is different as the process in the US.** If time allows, have students compare and contrast the the process in the US vs. the process in the UK.
- **Encourage students to learn more about refugees' journeys and how they are different around the world.** To provide students more context and information about how refugees' experiences vary, have them read the article, "Refugees around the world: Stories of survival" (<https://www.msf.org/refugees-around-world-stories-survival-world-refugee-day>). As students read the stories, have them refer to the map and point out where these people had to leave and then where they traveled to. Once students are done reading the stories, have them create a T-chart and compare the differences between Sami's and Aadam's experiences. Afterward, students can reflect on what it was like to hear about other accounts and how refugees differ all over the world.
- **Have students conduct a research study on the impact of football (soccer) across the world and what the Premier League means to England.** As a resource for this research study, have students consult this resource from the Library of Congress (<https://guides.loc.gov/sports-industry/soccer>). Allow students to use the following questions to guide their research: How many registered players are there worldwide? When was FIFA founded? What is its purpose? How many confederations are there in FIFA? What are they? When was the MLS founded in the US? What is the Premier League? Have students use this resource from Premier League (<https://www.premierleague.com/premier-league-explained>) to guide their research. How many teams are there in the Premier League? What team has the league record for most titles? Allow students to explore and learn more about the different teams in the Premier League. Have students write an essay on the impact that football (soccer) has in the life of the characters in *Kicked Out* and in their own life.

### Art/Media

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Have students research Fairouz, the famous Arab singer that reminds Aadam of home in chapter 19.** Students can use the following questions to guide their research: What is Fairouz known for? Why is this singer so famous? What does their music sound like? How is this music similar to music you might have on your own playlist? Is there a singer you like to listen to in the mornings? After doing their research, students can present their findings to the class in a format of their choosing.
- **Encourage students to plan their own event for a good cause, inspired by events from the text.** Have students brainstorm through different causes they would like to raise

money for. Students may need help narrowing down what cause they would like to donate to. If necessary, provide students with a couple of causes to pick from. Students would need to answer the following questions: What would their event be? How much money would they like to raise? Who would they ask for help? What would they name their event? When and where would the event take place? Have students create a poster for their event and present it to the class. Create a gallery walk to display each student event.

- **Look at the article, “We never chose this’: Refugees use art to imagine a better world”** (<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/gallery/2019/dec/25/we-never-chose-this-refugees-use-art-to-imagine-a-better-world-in-pictures>). Have students reflect on this artwork and what they learned from looking at the photographs. How can artwork help you process difficult things in your life? Afterward, students can create a drawing, illustration, or photo collage about what they learned about the refugee experience in *Kicked Out* and share with a partner, small group, or whole class.
- **Citing textual evidence, select a theme portrayed in the novel, *Kicked Out*.** Create a visual presentation with illustrations, drawings, and any other creative materials to reflect how this theme is developed over the course of the text.
- **Have students illustrate a feeling one of the characters experienced in the story.** What do they want to convey? Students can think about a particular scene that stood out to them from *Kicked Out* featuring the character of their choosing. What kinds of materials do they want to use? Have students share their pieces with a partner, small group, or whole class.

### School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Interview a family member about the history of their family.** Why is it important to understand your family history? Why is it important to know the different parts of the world where your family is from? If students do not know their family history, have them interview someone about the history of your town or city.
- **If applicable, encourage students to share the different refugee experiences with family members.** Have students talk with their families about what they learned from Adam's refugee experience, and share the resources from the Background section of this guide with families for additional research. How can students and families support refugees in their immediate communities? The International Rescue Committee has more information about how to welcome refugees in the United States (<https://www.rescue.org/article/how-help-refugees-united-states-12-ways-stand-welcome>).
- **Have students interview a parent, guardian, or adult mentor about their experiences with fighting for something they believe in or going through a hardship.** How did this person react to and handle the situation when they were faced with obstacles? What advice do they have for someone trying to take up a cause and stand up for justice? What advice do they have for someone who has been silenced?



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**A. M. Dassu** is the internationally acclaimed author of *Boy, Everywhere*, *Fight Back* and *Kicked Out*, which have collectively been listed for over 50 awards, including the Waterstones Children's Book Prize, the Week Junior Book Award, the Carnegie Medal, The Little Rebels Award for Radical Fiction, the American Library Association Notable Book List and Jane Addams Peace Book Award.

She is a director at Inclusive Minds, which is an organisation for people who are passionate about inclusion, diversity, equality and accessibility in children's literature; a patron of *The Other Side of Hope*, a literary magazine edited by immigrants and refugees, which celebrates the refugee and immigrant communities worldwide, an ambassador for new charity Inclusive Books for Children, which reviews hundreds of high-quality inclusive children's books, and one of The National Literacy Trust's Connecting Stories campaign authors, aiming to help inspire a love of reading and writing in children and young people.

A. M. Dassu grew up in the Midlands dreaming of becoming a writer but studied economics instead and worked in marketing and project management before realising her dream. She writes books that challenge stereotypes, humanise the "other" and are full of empathy, hope and heart. Her most recent book, *Boot It!* was a bestselling World Book Day novella, published in March 2023. Her latest novel, *Kicked Out* was published in October 2023. You can also find her on Twitter/X @a\_reflective or Instagram @a.m.dassu.

## REVIEWS

A **Junior Library Guild Gold Standard** Book

"Dassu expertly handles difficult topics relating to the adversity and othering that asylum-seekers and refugees face in ways that are relatable for young readers. She broaches the storyline that explores Ali's personal life with sensitivity, showing the internal upheaval following his father's reappearance, including themes of rejection and anger. This novel is an engaging modern tale that serves to build empathy.

An important and triumphant read." – *Kirkus Reviews*



"The tidy plot threads tying everything up and lots of reflection on how we let our past impact—or not impact—our future make this tale of boyhood friendship and caring for your community perfect for reluctant readers who want satisfying resolutions, a lot of playing with friends, and relatable characters who provide *new insights into the lived experiences of immigrants and refugees.*" —*Booklist*

"Boasting down-to-earth, believable characters and pacy action, Dassu's intensely readable sequel to *Boy, Everywhere*, best suited for 9+, deals squarely with the racism and intimidating bureaucracy facing young refugees." — *The Guardian, a Book of the Month*

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