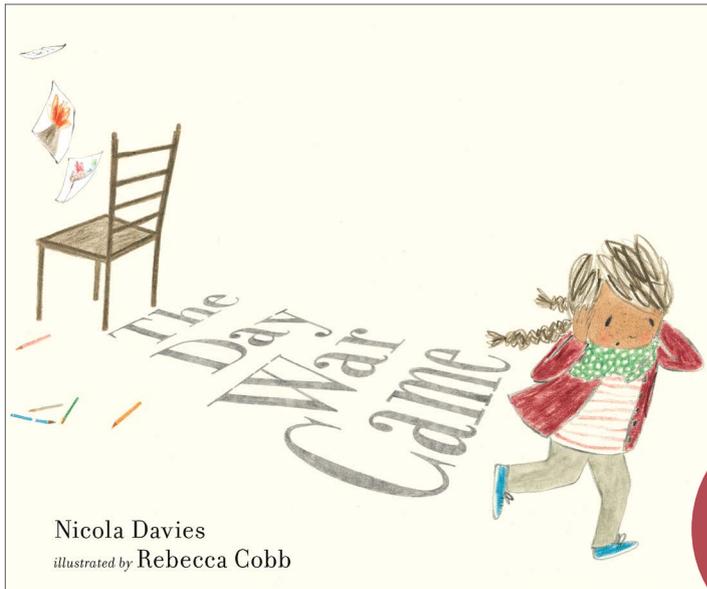


WALKER BOOKS  
**TEACHERS' NOTES**



Nicola Davies  
illustrated by Rebecca Cobb

# The Day War Came

Nicola Davies

*illustrated by*

Rebecca Cobb

Walker Books  
will donate £1 to  
Help Refugees for  
every copy sold

For readers aged 5 +  
9781406376326  
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*"The Day War Came* reminds us of the intimate human impact of the refugee crisis on children. This story of loss, solidarity, and hope suggests how we can each make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable among us."

**Dawn O'Porter**, co-founder, Help Refugees

There are wonderful opportunities to develop empathy and understanding and to explore difficult issues in this book. Discussion in pairs, small groups and whole class are an important element of developing these qualities and it is important to gently encourage the children to go beyond superficial answers and really explore human response, motivation and capacity to adapt and change.

## TITLE

Keeping the book hidden in a bag, box or wrapping paper, discuss the title *The Day War Came*.

### Think/pair/share

What might this picture book be about? When do you think the story takes place? Give reasons for your opinion.

### Vocabulary

What does the word "war" mean?

## COVER

### Think/pair/share

Why do you think it was decided to design the title words in that way?

Describe the little girl on the cover. How do you think she is feeling?

Why do you think she has her hands over her ears?

Open the book right out to look at the whole cover. How does this illustration make you feel?

## BLURB

### Think/pair/share

What is the author asking you to do?

Do you think this book is going to be optimistic (look towards a brighter future) or pessimistic (anticipate the worst)? Support your opinion with reasons.

Read everything on the back cover.

### Rapid research

Amnesty International UK endorse this book because it shines a light on children's rights to be safe and have an education. Find out about Amnesty International. What symbol does it have? Why do you think this symbol was chosen? Discuss the statement next to the logo.

[www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/education](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/education)

Walker Books will donate £1 to Help Refugees for every copy sold. Find out about Help Refugees. What symbol does it have? Why do you think this symbol was chosen?

[www.helprefugees.org.uk](http://www.helprefugees.org.uk)

### Vocabulary

What does the word "endorses" mean?

What metaphor does the statement use and why do you think this was chosen?

## END PAPER – FRONT OF BOOK

### Discuss

What has the illustrator decided to depict on the end paper? Why do you think she chose to do this?

## DEDICATION

### Discuss

What do you think and feel, when you read this dedication?

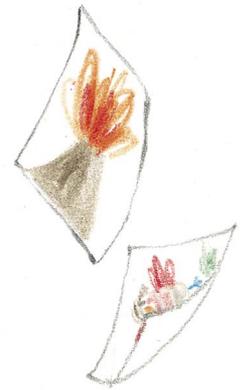
## TITLE PAGE

### Discuss

What do you notice about the title page?

What do you think the grey represents?

How do you think the illustrator created this effect?



## "THE DAY WAR CAME ..."

### Discuss

What does the first page tell you about the little girl's family life?

What sort of country do you think she lives in?

Why do details matter when you tell a story?

What sort of routine do you have on a school day?

### Creative challenge

Create a picture of your family at home and write a description with small, but telling details.

## "THAT MORNING I LEARNED ABOUT VOLCANOES ..."

### Discussion

What do the volcanoes suggest?

What sort of little girl do you think this child is?

What sign is there in the illustration that war is coming?

How is this class similar to or different from yours?

## "AT FIRST, JUST LIKE A SPATTERING OF HAIL ..."

### Author technique

Spot the similes. Why are they so effective?

### Discussion

How do you think the little girl feels in this picture? Use a thesaurus to help you collect a wide range of words.

### Creative challenge

Draw a quick sketch of the girl and surround her with the words you have chosen to describe her feelings.

Think about what colours you will use so that they are in keeping with the mood.

## "IT CAME ACROSS THE PLAYGROUND ..."

### Author technique

What do you think the author means, when she says: "It came into my teacher's face"?

How does the focus of each line shift?



### Discussion

What does the illustration show?

### Think/pair/share

Think of all the things that war can do and list them.

Create a poem about war by choosing your best lines. Think about rhythm and alliteration. You might want to use rhyme, but it's not essential (bad rhymes can have a clunky effect and sound unnatural). Read your lines aloud to your partner to see how they sound and play around with line and word order to create the best effect.

You could use the following suggestion to structure your poem.

*War came...*  
*It .....*  
*It .....*  
*It.....*  
*War came.*

Share your poems and maybe rework them into a longer class poem which you can perform. Carefully choosing a musical accompaniment can enhance the effect of your performance.

## "I CAN'T SAY THE WORDS THAT TELL YOU ..."

### Discussion

Why can't the little girl "say the words that tell you about the blackened hole that has been my home"?

What has happened?

What details do you notice in the illustration?

Why are the little girl's words so poignant and moving?

## "I RAN ..."

### Author technique

There is a strong rhythm to these words. Why do you think the author chose to do this?

### Discussion

Why did the little girl run?

In what different ways did the little girl travel?

### Creative challenge

Act out this scene, with one person reading, whilst the others take the part of the refugees.

Why do you think the little girl had to travel in a leaky boat?

Why do you think there were empty shoes on the sand?

## "I RAN UNTIL I COULDN'T RUN ..."

What sort of place do you think the little girl has arrived at?

Which details make us more aware of her plight?

What does she mean by the words:

*"But war had followed me.*  
*It was underneath my skin,*  
*Behind my eyes,*  
*And in my dreams.*  
*It had taken possession of my heart."*

### Creative challenge

Using a thesaurus to help you, make a collection of words and phrases to describe how the little girl feels.

Choosing from a range of prepositions, create your own short poem about how war has made the little girl feel:

beneath	on	inside	outside	upon	behind
above	below	beyond	under	through	between
within					

Play around with word and line order. Think about careful use of repetition, rhythm, alliteration and what will make a strong concluding line.

Practise and perform!

## "I WALKED AND WALKED ..."

How do you think walking might "drive war out of" the little girl?

In what ways do you think war has accompanied the little girl?



### Discussion

Look at the four pictures. How do they emphasise the little girl's feelings of rejection?  
Where is the little boy going in the fourth picture?  
Why are smiles important?  
What can we infer about the nature of the people that the little girl meets?  
What words would you use to describe them?

### "I CAME TO A SCHOOL..."

#### Discussion

How do the children look in this illustration?  
How do you think the little girl feels now?

#### Creative challenges

"On the outside, looking in"

Using this title, write about the little girl's feelings and thoughts.

Look at the way the illustrator has drawn the children so that they are all different.

Draw some of the people in your class, using the same technique with crayons, particularly with regard to the hair!

#### Prediction

What do you think might happen next?

### "I WENT INSIDE ..."

#### Author technique

How does the author convey a sense of the bravery of the little girl?  
What senses are evoked by the text?

#### Discussion

What is your impression of the teacher?  
Look at the body language in this illustration. What does this indicate?

#### Drama challenge

Freeze frame this scene, with people taking on the part of the girl, the pupils and the teacher.

Thought tapping: one person is chosen to tap the different characters in the freeze frame to discover what their innermost thoughts are.

#### Discussion

What does the little girl mean by "I understood that war had got here too"?



### "I TURNED AROUND ..."

#### Discussion

How does this illustration make you feel?

What effect does the author create, together with the illustrator, by the words "I went back to the hut, the corner and the blanket"?

#### Creative challenge

Look at the different textures the artist has used. Experiment to create your own different textures, using pencil, crayon or charcoal.

### "THE DOOR BANGED ..."

#### Author technique

Find the repetition and suggest why the author chose to do this.

#### Discussion

What do you think motivated the boy to think in this way?  
Why will the chair drive the war out of the little girl's heart?  
Why do you think the other children have brought their chairs too?

### "OUT OF EVERY HUT ..."

#### Discussion

What do you think the chairs represent?

How are the refugee children different from the local children in the illustration?



What do you notice about the design of the images and text on the last page, compared with the title page?  
Why do you think the little girl, the school children and the teacher are not given names by the author?  
What messages have you found in this book?

## NOTE FROM NICOLA DAVIES

### Vocabulary

Find out what the following words mean:

sanctuary  
unaccompanied  
solidarity  
NGOs  
displaced populations  
flexible  
empowering

### Discussion

Why do you think the UK government refused sanctuary to 3,000 unaccompanied refugees?  
Take time to look at the wonderful range of chairs, designed in response to Nicola's poem on:  
[www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2016/may/11/your-3000-chairs-for-child-refugees-in-pictures](http://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2016/may/11/your-3000-chairs-for-child-refugees-in-pictures)  
Choose your favourite and explain why you like it.

### Creative challenge

Design your own chair and make a class display. Decide whether it will be 2D or 3D and what medium you will use to make it: electronic, paint, pencil, clay, construction kits, card, etc.

### Numeracy challenge

How many chairs each would the children in your school have to give in order to accommodate 3,000 refugees?

### Discussion

What sort of things do you think refugees will find difficult in a new country?

In what ways can you help refugees:

if you know a refugee personally?  
if you don't know any refugees?

### Creative thinking

Look at the website: [www.helprefugees.org](http://www.helprefugees.org)

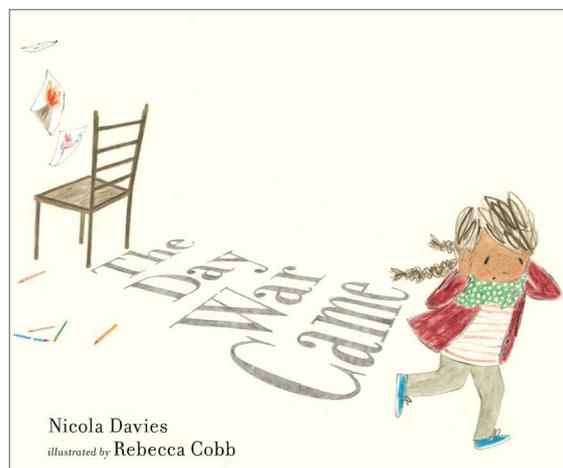
Think of, and organize, some fund-raising activities, to help refugee children.



## FINAL PAGE AND END PAPERS

How do these illustrations make you feel?

Was this book optimistic or pessimistic?



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