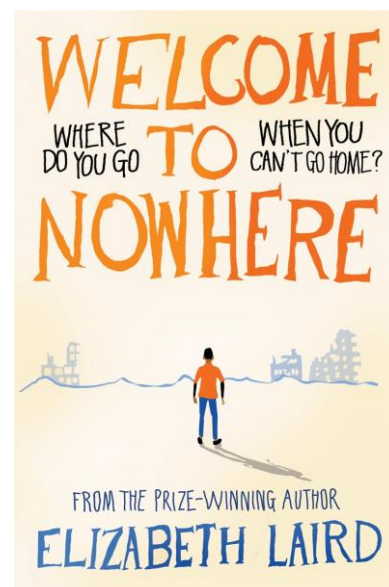
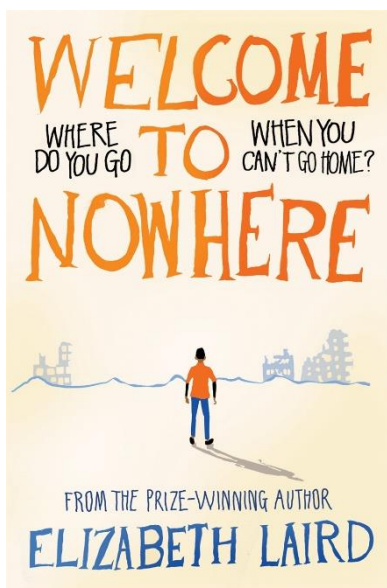


Welcome to Nowhere by Elizabeth Laird – Discussion Notes

1. Did you know anything about Syria before reading this book? What have you learned about the war and the effect it's had on Syria's citizens?
2. **'How could I know what was going to happen? Nobody saw the disaster coming, especially not me. I wasn't quite thirteen, after all.'** How does Omar's understanding of what is going on around him change throughout the story? Do you think he grows up more quickly than if there hadn't been a war on?
3. **'Musa, my skinny brother, shaky on his legs, his tongue stuck in his mouth – Musa was the most unlikely revolutionary I could possibly have imagined.'** What does Omar mean when he says this? Do you think Musa is right to stand up for his beliefs, even if this puts his family at risk?
4. Because of the war, Omar's family is forced to flee several places – first their home in Bosra, then Daraa, then the village in the country. Discuss how they adapt each time, and what effects this constant moving has on the family relationships. How do you think your family would cope in a similar situation?
5. **'Education's a waste of time for girls. Eman's sixteen already. It's high time she was married.'** (Baba) What do you think of this point of view? Discuss the different ways in which girls and women are viewed by the characters in *Welcome to Nowhere*, and how Eman's prospects change throughout the book.
6. **'Do you think we'll be all right in Britain?' I whispered. 'Do you think they'll like us?'** What kind of future can you imagine for Omar and his family at the end of the book? Discuss the challenges and opportunities they might face in Britain.
7. Has Omar's story made you think differently about the refugees entering Europe?
8. **'How will history view us, and our treatment of today's refugees?'** (Foreword) Discuss the author's reasons for writing a book about the Syrian refugee crisis.





About the Book

Twelve-year-old Omar and his brothers and sisters were born and raised in the beautiful and bustling city of Bosra, Syria. Omar doesn't care about politics – all he wants is to grow up to become a successful businessman who will take the world by storm. But when his clever older brother, Musa, gets mixed up with some young political activists, everything changes . . .

Before long, bombs are falling, people are dying, and Omar and his family have no choice but to flee their home with only what they can carry. Yet no matter how far they run, the shadow of war follows them – until they have no other choice than to attempt the dangerous journey to escape their homeland altogether. But where do you go when you can't go home?

About the Author

Elizabeth Laird is the multi-award-winning author of several much-loved children's books, including *The Garbage King*, *The Prince Who Walked with Lions* and *The Fastest Boy in the World*. She has been shortlisted for the prestigious CILIP Carnegie Medal six times. She lives in Britain now, but still likes to travel as much as she can.



Find out more about *Welcome to Nowhere* by Elizabeth Laird at <https://www.panmacmillan.com/authors/elizabeth-laird/welcome-to-nowhere>