

# BOOKNOTES

READERS GUIDE

## World at War

Grades 7 up

Loss • Fear

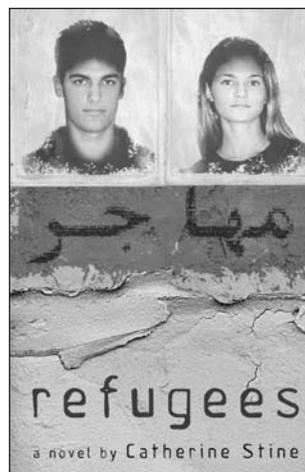
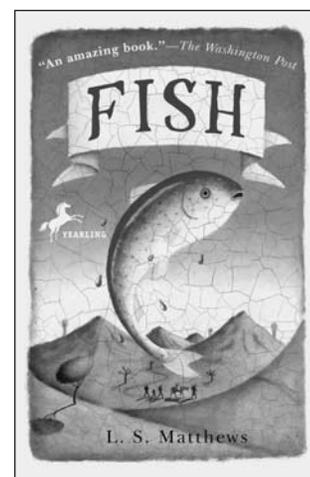
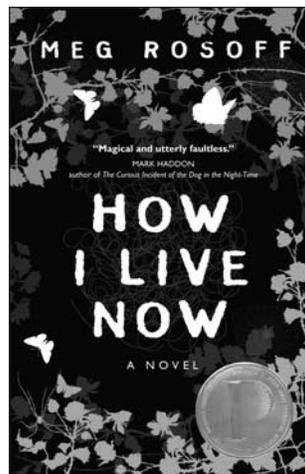
Survival • Courage • Hope

## introduction

**“Every war has turning points and every person too.”**—from *How I Live Now* by Meg Rosoff

War and terrorism are real. They're no longer subjects limited to history books. Children and young adults need only to listen to the nightly news to realize the horrors of war. Whether the news takes them to the Middle East, to New York, to the subway systems of London and Madrid, or to the stories of wounded or fallen soldiers, the young are forced to deal with the threats and effects of war in a different way than children of the past. Mass media and the Web have changed their lives forever. It is now impossible to protect them from the fears connected with terrorism and global conflict. Children were watching when the Twin Towers went down. They are witnessing the suicide bombers in and around Baghdad. They are seeing the frightened citizens of war-torn regions attempt to flee their burning villages. They are noticing that war is dirty. It ruins lives, and it leaves emotional scars that last a lifetime.

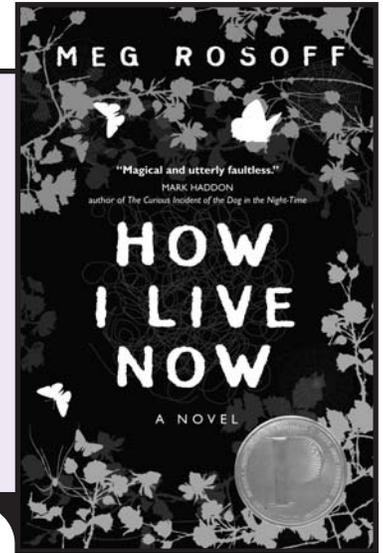
The books in this readers guide deal with war and the threat of war, and the toll it takes on the young adult main characters. Some are set in the present and others in the near future. They all deal with loss, fear, survival, courage, and hope. We hope that these titles and this guide help you lead important discussions in your classrooms.



# World at War

## about the book

Fifteen-year-old Daisy leaves New York City to stay with her Aunt Penn's family on a farm in England. Soon after Daisy arrives, Aunt Penn goes on a business trip and is stranded abroad when England is invaded by terrorists. The cousins must fend for themselves. Daisy and her cousin Edmond fall in love, but they're separated when the military takes over the farm. Daisy and nine-year-old Piper are sent to another town, and the boys elsewhere. The girls find themselves in a terrifying world, but their desire to be reunited with their family gives them the courage they need to survive the devastation of the war.



### How I Live Now

Meg Rosoff

Wendy Lamb Books trade paperback  
0-553-37605-5

Wendy Lamb Books hardcover  
0-385-74667-6

Reinforced library binding  
0-385-90908-X

eBook  
0-375-89054-8

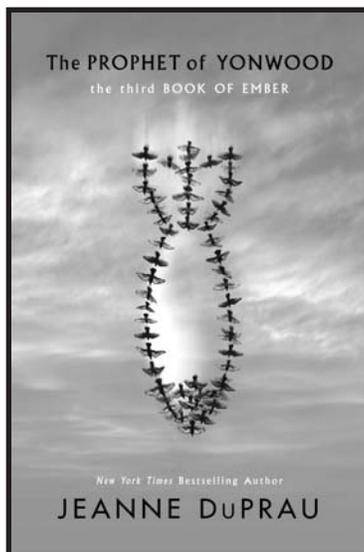
## classroom connection

Most of the novel focuses on Daisy's life in England, how she is affected by war, and her eventual return to a life she chooses for herself. But, Daisy does tell her readers that she was quite unhappy living with her father and stepmother. She even alludes to suffering from an eating disorder. Write a brief paper titled "How I Lived Then." Make the point that how Daisy lived then shapes how she lives now.

A Michael L. Printz Award Winner  
An ALA Best Book for Young Adults

A Publishers Weekly Best Book  
A Publishers Weekly Flying Start Author

A Booklist Editors' Choice  
A Kirkus Reviews Editor's Choice



## about the book

Eleven-year-old Nickie Randolph goes to Yonwood, North Carolina, with her aunt Crystal to settle the estate of her grandfather. The President of the United States has just announced that talks to settle a dispute with the Phalanx Nations has failed and war could be imminent. The people of Yonwood are in an uproar, because Althea Tower, known as the Prophet, has just predicted the future, and the news appears terrible. The truth is that the Prophet only mumbles. Her friend Mrs. Beeson interprets the meaning, and convinces everyone that the Prophet's words are orders from God.

## classroom connection

When Nickie and Crystal arrive in Yonwood, the police tell them, "You be careful while you're here, now. We've had reports indicating there may be agents of the Phalanx Nations traveling alone or in small groups in parts of the area." (p. 11) Write a series of newspaper articles about the looming terrorists in Yonwood. Include Althea Tower's vision, Hoyt McCoy's activities, and any other unusual events that cause suspicion among the citizens of Yonwood.

### The Prophet of Yonwood

Jeanne DuPrau

Random House hardcover  
0-375-87526-3

Reinforced library binding  
0-375-97526-8

# World at War

## Questions for Goup Discussion

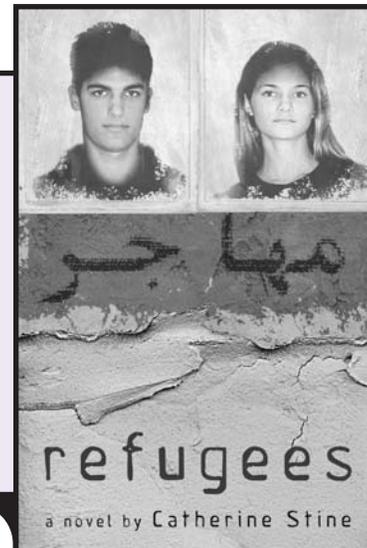
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- The fish in Matthews's novel is a symbol of hope. How is the element of hope revealed in the other novels? Discuss the role of the secondary characters in helping the main character realize hope in *Light Years*, *Refugees*, and *How I Live Now*.
- Nickie Randolph in *The Prophet of Yonwood* sets a goal "to do something helpful for the world." (p. 16) How does she achieve her goal? What is Dr. Louise in *Refugees*, the family in *Fish*, and Aunt Penn in *How I Live Now* doing to serve others in the world? Discuss how the work of nonprofit organizations like the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, the Peace Corp, and religious-sponsored groups are important to war-torn nations.
- Discuss how war is secondary to the internal conflict that Dawn in *Refugees* and Daisy in *How I Live Now* are experiencing. How do they resolve the war inside themselves?
- Define the term *refugee*. Johar in *Refugees* lives in a refugee camp, but Dawn might also be considered a refugee. Why? Debate whether there is a time when Daisy in *How I Live Now*, Maya in *Light Years*, and the family in *Fish* feel like refugees.
- Discuss how the guide in *Fish* helps the family stay in control of their fears. Describe the moment when the guide almost collapses with fear. How is Mrs. Beeson in *The Prophet of Yonwood* more responsible for creating fear among the citizens of Yonwood than the Prophet? What does Daisy in *How I Live Now* do to control her fear? How does she help Piper conquer her fears in the face of war?
- Ask students to discuss the difference between mental and physical survival. Compare and contrast how Daisy in *How I Live Now*, Dawn in *Refugees*, Maya in *Light Years*, and the family in *Fish* manage to survive physically. Which of these characters have the most difficult battle with mental survival? Discuss the conflict that develops between Edmond and Isaac in *How I Live Now*. What does the conflict have to do with their survival?
- Discuss the relationship between courage and fear. How is the entire family in *Fish* a role model for courage? Engage the class in a debate about whether it takes more courage for the family to leave than to stay. How does it take courage for Maya to leave Israel in *Light Years*? Discuss how Dawn and Johar demonstrate courage in *Refugees*. Trace Daisy's acts of courage in *How I Live Now* from the time she arrives in London to her return at the end of the novel. Debate the most courageous character in *The Prophet of Yonwood*. How is the courage of each character related to the fears they experience in the face of war?
- Compare the relationship between Daisy and Edmond in *How I Live Now* to the relationship that develops between Maya and Justin in *Light Years*. How do you see the relationship between Dawn and Johar in *Refugees* developing?
- Why is Mrs. Beeson in *The Prophet of Yonwood* so upset to discover that the Prophet's mumbled words aren't orders from God? She feels compelled to warn people that they should continue to fight against evil. How might Mrs. Beeson describe evil? Define evil through the eyes of Maya in *Light Years*, Dawn in *Refugees*, and Daisy in *How I Live Now*.

# World at War

## about the book

Soon after the terrorists' attack on the World Trade Center, Dawn, a teenage runaway living in New York City, and Johar, an Afghani refugee in Peshawar, Pakistan, begin to communicate by e-mail. The two teenagers develop a special bond as they share their secrets, fears, and dreams. Dawn relates her unhappiness in her foster home in San Francisco, and Johar shares the tragic loss of his family. Their frequent exchanges lead them on a journey of hope, and the two young adults eventually find a way home. In the center of their journey is Louise, Dawn's foster mother and a Red Cross doctor in the refugee camp in Peshawar.



### Refugees

Catherine Stine

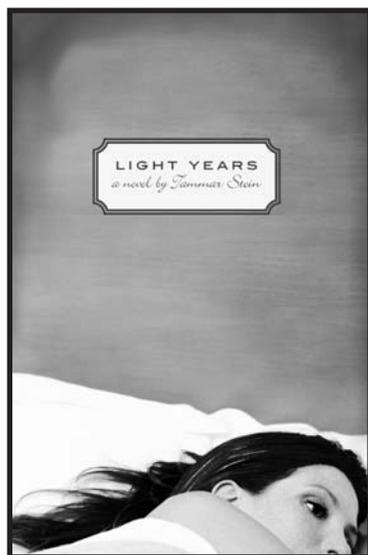
Laurel Leaf paperback  
0-385-73179-5

Delacorte Press hardcover  
0-385-73179-5

Reinforced library binding  
0-385-90216-6

## classroom connection

Dawn goes to the site of the World Trade Center and plays her flute for the people who are there to mourn the loss of their loved ones. She carefully selects music that she thinks will bring comfort to individuals. She plays "Bamboo Pond" for a Chinese woman searching for the spirit of her son. Select music that Dawn might perform to bring comfort to Maya in *Light Years* and Daisy in *How I Live Now*.



## about the book

Maya Laor leaves Israel to study astronomy at the University of Virginia after serving time in the Israeli army. Her courageous decision to leave the violence of her beloved homeland is clouded by guilt, especially after her boyfriend, Dov, is tragically killed by a suicide bomber. As Maya strives to resolve the issues of her past, her roommate, Payton Lee, and a doctoral student, Justin Case, help her adjust to life as an American student and point her in the direction of a future that is filled with hope, love, and friendship.

## classroom connection

In a telephone conversation with her parents, Maya explains that Payton is afraid to walk alone on campus at night. Her father replies, "Just try to be patient with her. Try to view it from her perspective, not yours." (p. 50) Write a brief paper that describes Maya's perspective. Consider her experiences in the Israeli army and the violence in her homeland.

### Light Years

Tammar Stine

Alfred A. Knopf hardcover  
0-375-83023-5

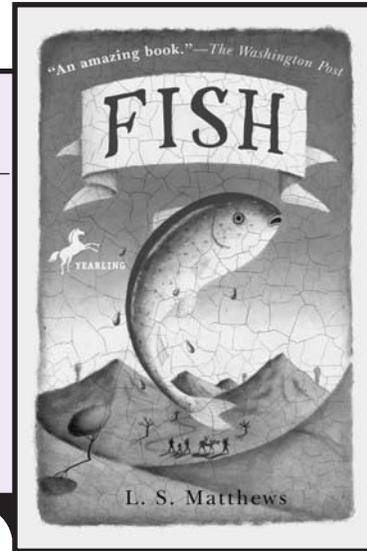
Reinforced library binding  
0-375-93023-X

An ALA Best Book for Young Adults

# World at War

## about the book

Tiger's parents, aid workers in a foreign country wrecked by war, decide to leave when the political situation becomes so volatile that they fear for their child's safety. On the day of the family's departure, Tiger rescues a fish from the muddy waters and insists that they take it along. The fish becomes a symbol of hope for the family as they make their long trek to the border. Food and water are scarce, and an encounter with "fighting men" threatens the family's survival, but their faith in their ability to endure gets them to the border where an airplane is waiting to return them to their own country.



### Fish

L. S. Matthews

Yearling paperback  
0-440-42021-0

Delacorte Press hardcover  
0-385-73180-9

Reinforced library binding  
0-385-90217-4

An ALA Notable Children's Book  
A Publishers Weekly Best Book  
A Publishers Weekly Flying Start Author

## classroom connection

Some of Tiger's village friends are lucky enough to go to a neighboring country to live in a refugee camp. Ask students to take a virtual field trip to a refugee camp ([www.refugeecamp.org](http://www.refugeecamp.org)). What are the greatest needs of these camps? What organizations are giving aid to them? Ask students to find out ways they can help.

## writing activity

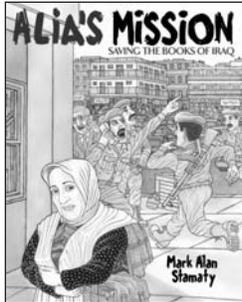
Dawn, the main character in *Refugees*, is an accomplished musician. Maya, the main character in *Light Years*, is very interested in astronomy. Have students write a paper that discusses how each of these characters uses their talent on their journey toward a hopeful and happier future.

## culminating activity

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Ask students to read these human rights ([www.un.org/overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/overview/rights.html)). Engage the class in a discussion about the importance of these rights, and why the United Nations felt it necessary to adopt them. Then have each student design and illustrate a poster that represents one of the human rights. Display the posters in class.

# World at War

## related titles



**Alia's Mission:  
Saving the Books of Iraq**

Mark Alan Stamaty

Alfred A. Knopf hardcover: 0-375-83217-3

Reinforced library binding: 0-375-93217-8



**Girl of Kosovo**

Alice Mead

Yearling paperback: 0-440-41853-4



**Shattered: Stories  
of Children and War**

Edited by Jennifer Armstrong

Laurel-Leaf paperback: 0-440-23765-3

Alfred A. Knopf hardcover: 0-375-81112-5

## internet resources

**Educators for Social Responsibility**

[www.esnational.org](http://www.esnational.org)

This site offers lesson plans on defining and understanding war.

**World at War**

[www.cdi.org/issues/World\\_at\\_War/vwar00.html](http://www.cdi.org/issues/World_at_War/vwar00.html)

This official site for the Center of Defense Information discusses global conflicts.

**Warchild**

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

This site discusses international programs that aid children affected by war.

**Visit a Refugee Camp**

[www.refugeecamp.org](http://www.refugeecamp.org)

This site offers a virtual visit to a refugee camp.

## on the web

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