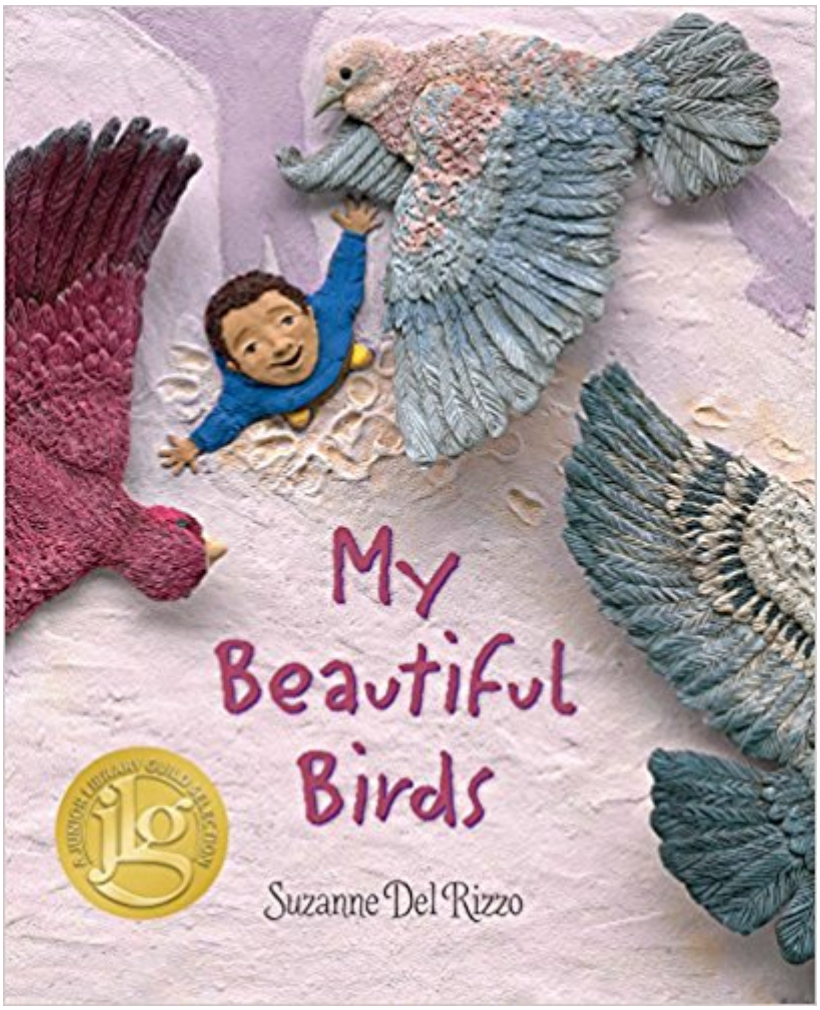
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My Beautiful Birds



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Synopsis

Behind Sami, the Syrian skyline is full of smoke. The boy follows his family and all his neighbours in a long line, as they trudge through the sands and hills to escape the bombs that have destroyed their homes. But all Sami can think of is his pet pigeonsÃ¢â ¬â ¢will they escape too? When they reach a refugee camp and are safe at last, everyone settles into the tent city. But though the children start to play and go to school again, Sami canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t join in. When he is given paper and paint, all he can do is smear his painting with black. He canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t forget his birds and what his family has left behind.One day a canary, a dove, and a rose finch fly into the camp. They flutter around Sami and settle on his outstretched arms. For Sami it is one step in a long healing process at last.A gentle yet moving story of refugees of the Syrian civil war, My Beautiful Birds illuminates the ongoing crisis as it affects its children. It shows the reality of the refugee camps, where people attempt to pick up their lives and carry on. And it reveals the hope of generations of people as they struggle to redefine home.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #109,893 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #36 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Middle East #58 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Homelessness & Poverty #120 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness

Age Range: 6 - 10 years

Grade Level: 1 - 3

Customer Reviews

This is such a beautifully illustrated book with such a heartwarming storyÃ¢â ¬Â¦.Stories like these remind me how blessed I am that my children have food, clothing and shelter and donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t have to worry about adult responsibilities at such young ages. (All Booked Up Now)In My Beautiful

Birds, author-illustrator Suzanne Del Rizzo offers a poignant story of a Syrian child refugee traumatized by leaving his cherished pigeons behind. It is a tale of sorrow and suffering and promise, and beautifully rendered in Suzanne Del RizzoÃ¢â ¬â„¢s distinctive artÃ¢â ¬Â¦.My Beautiful Birds provides a promise that all the darkness from that Syrian skyline of smoke is behind Sami and remains open to a bright sky of birds and lightness, the landscape of his future. (CanLit for LittleCanadians)Del Rizzo uses polymer clay and acrylic paint to create vibrant pictures of Sami, his family, the refugee camp, and the swirling pink-and-purple sky. Most of all, she creates birds for which every feather and color looks real. Beauty and sorrow sit side by side in this compassionate and age-appropriate depiction of contemporary refugee life. (The Horn Book Magazine)With its elegant prose and beautiful clay illustrations, this book tells a timely story through the voice of a Syrian refugeeÃ¢â ¬Â¦.My Beautiful Birds is a very well-executed book that provides a window into the life of a refugee while also being a pleasure to read. (Resource Links)Del Rizzo uses her considerable talent with paint, Plasticine, and polymer clay to create the colorful, highly textured illustrations for this book, which she conceived while searching for a way to explain the Syrian civil war to her young children. Based on a real refugee child who keeps birds, this story isn't about war but its effect on those who experience it and survive. This story of one frightened little boy who finds strength in caring for animals and uses that strength to comfort other kids is an excellent means of explaining a difficult subject to young children. (Kirkus Reviews)STARRED REVIEW Del Rizzo...wisely focuses on what Sami sees and feels without trying to explain too much of the context, relying instead on her visuals to provide this information....These skillful and imaginative illustrations - created with Plasticine, polymer clay, and other media - give a sense of dimension, which is enhanced by striking and unusual perspectives. My Beautiful Birds is a lovely, timely book.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â ¢ (Quill & Quire)Ã¢â ¬Å“Suzanne Del Rizzo weaves the story together beautifully with the help of her own illustrations...They are extremely captivating and add even more depth to the already engaging story that accompanies them. In addition to all of its many amazing aspects, My Beautiful Birds is a stunning tool to teach children about what goes on in the world outside their own backyards. (Canadian Children's BookNews)My son and I both loved this story and the dimensional illustrations that the author created through Plasticine, polymer clay and other mixed media....Every page was a delight to explore. Truly a work of art....Although this is a story about war, it is hopeful and uplifting. It helps young ones to understand what is happening in our world and how we all have the same needs. (Laura Fabiani Library of Clean Reads)This talented Canadian author has produced a sensitive, moving account of what life is like in traumatic, emotionally-wrenching events experienced by so many people. I highly recommend My Beautiful

Birds. (Sandra Olshaski Library of Clean Reads)A personal story about a contemporary crisis that gives readers a child narrator they can relate to. The illustrations, created from polymer clay, are unique and eye-catching. This would make a great introduction to a discussion of Syria and refugees. (A Kids Book A Day)[A] beautifully written and gorgeously illustrated book...Del Rizzo's illustrations are the perfect compliments to the story. While they are detailed enough to convey emotion well, because they appear as theatrical vignettes, they provide some distance for the reader from a story which tackles a difficult subject. (Wander, Ponder, Write)Del Rizzo's exquisite polymer clay illustrations add depth and a life-like dimension to Sami's story....I appreciated that the author focused on the refugee crisis that is affecting the most innocent and vulnerable, children. She doesn't address political themes in the book, but focuses on the humanity of the situation for children displaced from their homes in Syria....My Beautiful Birds is an excellent addition to any school library. It is age-appropriate and an introductory story about children who are displaced because of war or natural disasters. (Children's Books Heal)[M]y favorite thing about this book though are the gorgeous illustrations. UsingÃ¢â ¬Â¦polymer clay, and other mixed media Del Rizzo has created illustrations that really pop out at you. The story itself really touched my heartÃ¢â ¬Â¦here we have a young boy who has lost his home, his pets, pretty much his whole world, and he grieves the loss, butÃ¢â ¬Â¦he finds a reason to rejoice despite his humble circumstances. (Geo Librarian)If youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve been wondering how to present the refugee crisis to children without losing faith in humanity, take a look at this graceful, even uplifting book. (The New York Times)Books like this are needed to help our students and children begin to understand the plight of refugees around the world. Heartfelt and timely, this book deserves to be shared. (Sal's Fiction Addiction)Suzanne Del RizzoÃ¢â ¬â„¢s incredible attention to each detail in the story line, dialogue and exceptionally detailed polymer clay and acrylic art work of the landscape and living conditions, beautifully combines to allow the reader to absorb the profound emotional loss that Sami has experienced and continues dailyÃ¢â ¬Â¦.I appreciated that the book did not explain, blame or discuss any political themes, leaving these questions outside SamiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s innocent mind, allowing him to focus on reality, humanity and survival. I hope this book inspires others to realize the daily plight of refugees. (Youth Services Book Review)Rich, textured illustrations fashioned from Plasticene, polymer clay, and other mixed media complement this moving story of one young refugeeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s experience in the Syrian civil war. (Omnilibros)[T]his story draws attention to an important world issue without subjecting young readers to its harshest realities. (Booklist)Based on the experiences of a young boy in the ZaÃ¢â ¬â„¢atari refugee camp in Jordan, this glimpse of the overarching as well as deeply personal, individual losses for refugee children is poignant but not too

heavy. Colorful, clay-sculpted illustrations create friendly, engaging visuals as well. (Orange Marmalade)Rendered in bright and textured polymer clay and acrylic, [My Beautiful Birds] is the story of a boy named Sami, leaving his Syrian home (with a sky full of smoke) to escape warÃ¢â ¬Â¦.Del Rizzo writes in an arresting first-person, present-tense voice, the story coming straight from the boyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s point of view and giving us a glimpse into his inner turmoil. (Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast)A gentle yet moving story of refugees of the Syrian civil war, My Beautiful Birds illuminates the ongoing crisis as it affects its children. (49th Shelf)My Beautiful BirdsÃ¢â ¬Â¦sheds a light on the ongoing Syrian Refugee crisis and its effects on its childrenÃ¢â ¬Â¦.[It] shows the reality of refugee camps and ultimately provides hope for people in search of a new place in lifeÃ¢â ¬Â¦.As beautiful as the story is, the illustrations are even more so. Del Rizzo creates her illustrations from acrylic paint and polymer clay, so the texture is out of this world. With each page flip it feels like we can reach out and touch the illustrationsÃ¢â ¬Â¦.I would love to talk about each and every spread but this is a book worth seeing for yourself. (Let's Talk Picture Books)Intricately detailed and lifelike, the polymer clay and mixed-media illustrations combine with the understated first-person narrative to communicate SamiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s circumstances, heartbreak, and healing process. Through this emotionally accessible story, inspired by an article about a real boy who fled to JordanÃ¢â ¬â„¢s ZaÃ¢â ¬â„¢atari camp, readers begin to understand SamiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s plight, and to gain awareness and insight into the lives of the many children facing calamity across the globe. (School Library Journal Collection Development: "Reading Around The World | Picture Books")Exquisite dimensional illustrations usingÃ¢â ¬Â¦polymer clay, and other media bring a unique, lifelike quality to the page, enriching SamiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s story to its fullest potential when paired with the often lyrical prose. VERDICT A stunning offering for libraries wishing to add to their collection of hopeful yet realistic refugee tales. (School Library Journal)[My Beautiful Birds] is enlivened by Del RizzoÃ¢â ¬â„¢s plasticine illustrations with their rich purple and golden hues. Of all the things that Sami has left behind, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s his pigeons he misses the most, the birds he fed and kept and as petsÃ¢â ¬Â¦.Where he finds solace, though, is in the sky, one thing that is familiar to him, Ã¢â ¬Ëœwait[ing] like a loyal friend for me to remember.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ In the clouds, he sees the shapes of his birds: Ã¢â ¬ËœSpiralling. Soaring. Sharing the sky.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ (Pickle Me This)This is a gorgeous book that had me in tears...VERDICT: This is a must for all public and school libraries. The refugee situation will only get worse with time, and we need to educate ourselves and our kids about it. (Oregon Coast Youth Book Preview Center)While there is a contrast in the book's beauty and the grim situation of these families, the story realistically portrays the boy's struggle with his loss and offers many points of connection and discussion for young

readers...Art is a key element in the telling of this story...This rich illustrative setting contextualizes the role of art in the story as a means of disclosing the inward struggles of the child... (Worlds of Words)The outstanding artwork, along with the multi-faceted themes, would give older elementary readers much to discuss and explore. Because of its timely content and poignant illustrations, My Beautiful Birds is a worthwhile purchase for home, school, and public libraries. (CM Magazine)Illustrations in polymer clay and acrylic paint show SamiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s slow transition into in his new life. The authorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s note provides context about the Syrian war and information about the refugee camps. (ILA Literacy Daily, Ã¢â ¬Å“Stories of Young Immigrants and RefugeesÃ¢â ¬Â•)The way language is used in the book is beautifully poetic, and even soothingÃ¢â ¬Â¦[It] will get your child hooked on reading, as they realize that a vivid image can be painted in their head from just a simple line or paragraph. The child wonÃ¢â ¬â„¢t be able to wait until the next plot advancement or change in scenery. (Getting Kids Reading)

Suzanne Del Rizzo began her career in picture books as the illustrator of the award-winning Skink on the Brink. With My Beautiful Birds, she launches herself as both author and illustrator for the first time. SuzanneÃ¢â ¬â„¢s dimensional illustrations use Plasticine, polymer clay, and other mixed media to bring rich texture and imagination to her books, the most recent of which was Sky Pig. She lives in Oakville, Ontario.Suzanne Del Rizzo began her career in picture books as the illustrator of the award-winning Skink on the Brink. With My Beautiful Birds, she launches herself as both author and illustrator for the first time. SuzanneÃ¢â ¬â„¢s dimensional illustrations use Plasticine, polymer clay, and other mixed media to bring rich texture and imagination to her books, the most recent of which was Sky Pig. She lives in Oakville, Ontario.

Sami, a young Syrian boy, is forced to flee his town when war arrives. As he and his family settle in to the refugee camp, Sami can’t help longing for the pigeons he left behind, his ’beautiful birds’. He can’t bring himself to get involved in school or even playing games with the other children, until he discovers that beauty can be found in even the most discouraging circumstances.I think my favorite thing about this book though are the gorgeous illustrations. Using Plasticine, polymer clay, and other mixed media Del Rizzo has created illustrations that really pop out at you. The story itself really touched my heart, especially with everything going on right now. I mean, here we have a young boy who has lost his home, his pets, pretty much his whole world, and he grieves the loss, but when new birds fly into his life, he finds a reason to rejoice despite his humble circumstances.

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