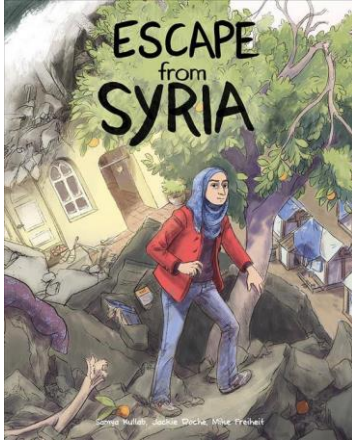


Spotlight on Books



Samya Kullab's graphic novel *Escape from Syria* tells of the recent and ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria, following one specific family as they escape first to Lebanon and try to gain some semblance of normalcy. Unfortunately, their efforts begin to look in vain as they discover Lebanon to be over-burdened. They are a resistant sort however and eventually they get sponsored to come to Canada. They are worried that the culture shock will be too much and that they will not be accepted.

Escape from Syria is probably best aimed at mature juveniles, teens, and adults as Kullab doesn't shy away from the violent images when they are necessary. There's an explosion on the very second page. There are heads on spikes later.

Despite the images, which will no doubt be shocking to some, Kullab offers a very balanced picture, perhaps owing to her journalism background. Any sentimentality comes across as genuine, unforced.

The art of *Escape from Syria* is deceptively simple. I was first reminded of old Sunday school comics. However, artistic touches help elevate the tale. I especially like the use of repetition to hit home points. In one scene for example, Amina the teenage daughter is studying. Her position on the floor with a book in front doesn't change while her family enters and exits in the background across several panels. In one, they have placed a blanket over her as the night has grown cold.

For many Yellowknifers, this book would likely help personalize events of which they are only familiar through the news, and for a few others, the fears, hopes, and familial themes will likely resonant profoundly.

John Mutford, Library Manager

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