



Shining: The Story of a Lucky Man

Abdi Aden and Robert Hillman

Book Summary:

A remarkably warm-hearted, uplifting and inspiring story of one boy's survival against the odds.

Abdi's world fell apart when he was only fifteen and Somalia's vicious civil war hit Mogadishu. Unable to find his family and effectively an orphan, he fled with some sixty others, heading to Kenya. On the way, death squads hunted them and they daily faced violence, danger and starvation. After almost four months, they arrived in at refugee camps in Kenya - of the group he'd set out with, only five had survived.

Curriculum Areas and Key Learning Outcomes:

Encountering Conflict

Exploring Issues of Identity and Belonging

Reflects Australian engagement with Asia

Cultural diversity

Appropriate Ages: 13+

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Encountering Conflict

Exploring Issues of Identity and Belonging

Cultural diversity

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

Shining The Story of a Lucky Man will sustain intensive study, raising interesting issues and provided challenging ideas.

THEMES

Difference in beliefs; morals, values; difference in culture and religion; unmatched expectations; Fear, Exposure to the unknown/unfamiliar.

BIOGRAPHY

PREPARED BY

HarperCollins Publishers

Book Summary Continued:

All alone in the world and desperate to find his family, Abdi couldn't stay in Kenya, so he turned around and undertook the dangerous journey *back* to Mogadishu. But the search was fruitless, and eventually Abdi made his way - alone, with no money in his pockets - to Romania, then to Germany, completely dependent on the kindness of strangers. He was just seventeen years old when he arrived in Melbourne. He had no English, no family or friends, no money, no home. Yet, against the odds, he not only survived, he thrived. Abdi went on to complete secondary education and later university. He became a youth worker, was acknowledged with the 2007 Victorian Refugee Recognition Award and was featured in the SBS second series of *Go Back to Where You Came From*.

Despite what he has gone through, Abdi is a most inspiring man, who is constantly thankful for his life and what he has. Everything he has endured and achieved is testament to his quiet strength and courage, his resilience and most of all, his warm-hearted, shining and enduring optimism.

'Powerful and uplifting' Bookseller + Publisher

'Aden's odyssey belongs to our time ... Here is a man who counts his blessings and has an inspiring story to tell.' Sydney Morning Herald

Abdi Aden

Abdi Aden grew up in Mogadishu, Somalia, until, at the age of fifteen, civil war broke out. Separated from his family, Abdi abandoned his home in search of a safe haven. Following a harrowing journey across Somalia to Kenya then back to Mogadishu, he escaped to Europe and, finally, Australia. Abdi attended university, completed postgraduate studies in adolescent mental health and was a youth worker for many years. In 2007 he was awarded a Victorian Refugee Recognition Record for outstanding work in the community. Abdi was eventually reunited with

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his mother and his sister living in the UK. He is married to the daughter of British immigrants and lives with his wife and three sons in Melbourne

You can view a video interview with Abdi on ABC TV:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-16/australia-celebrates-the-contribution-of-refugees/6548280>

Robert Hillman- Author

Robert Hillman is the author of more than eighty published works, ranging from biography and autobiography to textbooks and literary fiction. His most recent publications include biographies, *The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif, with Najaf Mazari*; *My Life as a Triton with Zarah Ghahramani* (shortlisted for the 2008 Prime Ministers Literary Award); *The Boy in the Green In The Green Suit* (winner of the 2005 Australian National Biography Award) and *Gurrumul: His Life and Music*. His journalism has appeared in newspapers all over the world. His fifth novel, *Joyful*, was published by Text Publishing in 2014. Another new novel, this one for a teenage audience, *Malini* (Allen & Unwin), was also published in 2014.

Pre- Reading Discussion topics

Who is a Refugee?

Who is an asylum seeker?

What is the Refugee Convention?

Refugees around the world today

Refugees in Australia.

Discussions

Encountering Conflict

1. Everyone encounters a range of conflicts during their life. However, every person's experiences with conflict are different. Whether it's the type of conflict, their involvement in a conflict, their response to conflict – it is unique to every individual.

In *Shining- The Story of a Lucky Man* Abdi talks about his personal experience as he flees Somalia and is on his "Grand Tour" as he calls it, he is able to empathise with others as he has experienced conflict himself.

Think about your own experiences– have you been involved or observed a conflict within the past week?

2. There are endless forms of conflicts, from mass-scale wars and political debates to personal one-on-one conflicts. It is difficult to categorise conflict as a particular type because often conflicts are multiplex. Below are some examples :-

- The Inner (intrapersonal) conflict: When an individual struggles with his or her personal conflict. In most cases, only that particular person can resolve the conflict. Example: Victorian bushfire survivors dealing with their loss and pain.

Discuss how Abdi faced intrapersonal conflict.

Interpersonal conflict: A confrontation that occurs between two or more people. Example: Mark McInnes, the ex-CEO of David Jones and Kristy Fraser-Kirk sued McInnes for sexual harassment.

During War how does Interpersonal Conflict occur?

Social Conflict: Different social classes in society. Example: The class divide between rich and poor in Bolivia.

Discuss the Social Conflict affecting the wars of current time?

Cultural: Different traditions from different cultures.
Example: Burqa ban in France/Australia.

Discuss this further.

Religion: Religious groups against other religious groups.

Example: Sunni and Shia of Islam.

Discuss the sectarian violence of 2009 in Somalia.

Racism: Conflict between two difference races.

Example: Violence against Indians in Australia.

Discuss this further.

Identity and Belonging

Your identity defines who you are. Our sense of identity and belonging is impacted by various factors, including our experiences, relationships, and our environment.

Discussion

How did Abdi's journey impact on his identity and a young 13 year old?

How has Abdi's identity being impacted after his experiences?

Belonging

Belonging is a sense of welcome and acceptance to someone or something. As suggested by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a psychological theory centered on humans' innate desire for fulfillment, belonging is a need that we naturally seek in order to feel loved.

Discussion

How does Abdi seek belonging both in his family, his journey and his arrival to Australia?

Biography

<http://www.vcestudyguides.com/encountering-conflict>

<http://www.sbs.com.au/programs/sites/sbs.com.au.programs/files/schools-pack-2012.pdf>

http://www.libraries.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/Digital_Library/Digital_Library/Podcasts

<https://www.onwar.com/aced/chrono/c2000s/yr09/warofsomalia2009.htm>

These notes were create to support Shining The Story of a Lucky Man during class discussions