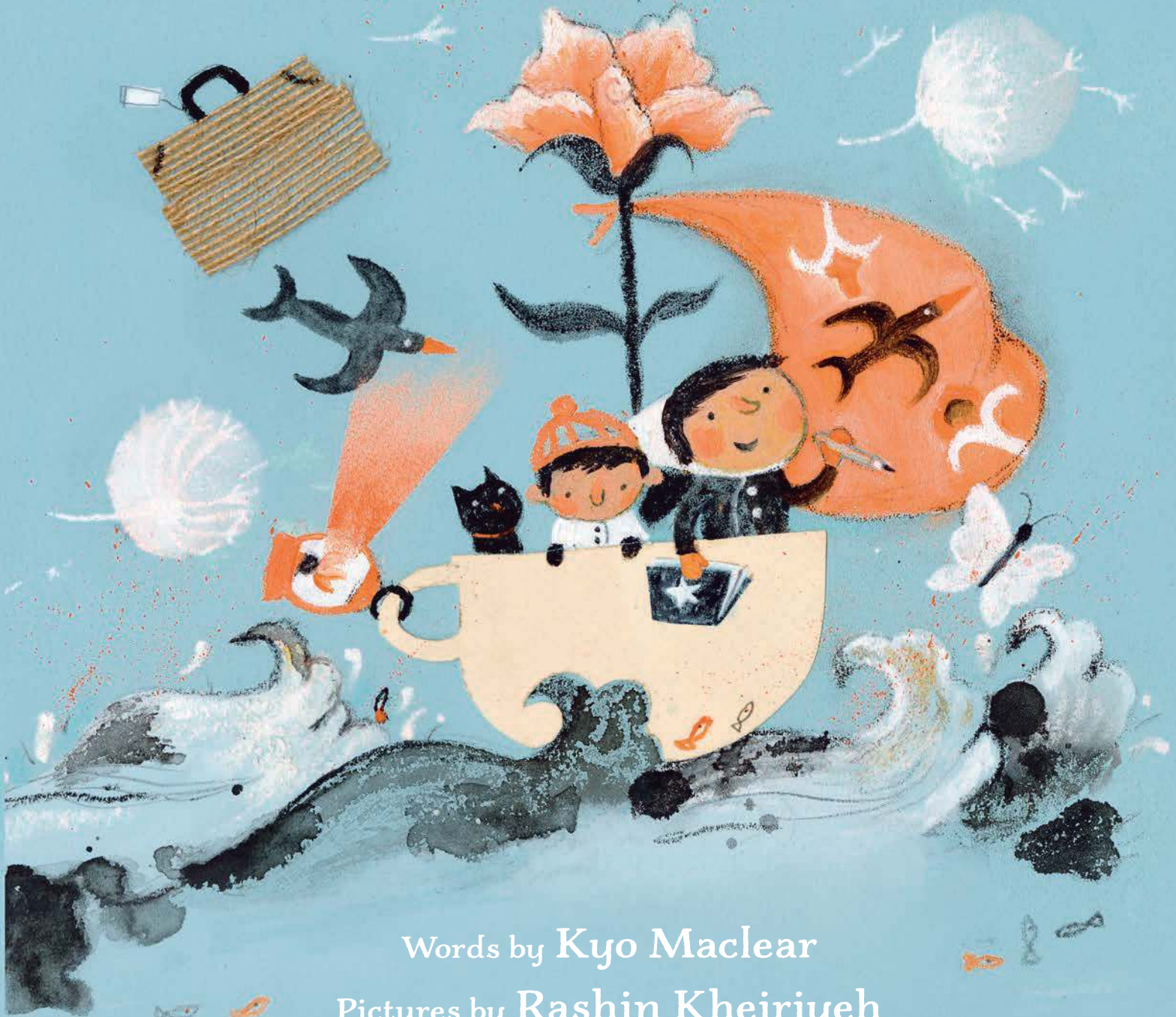
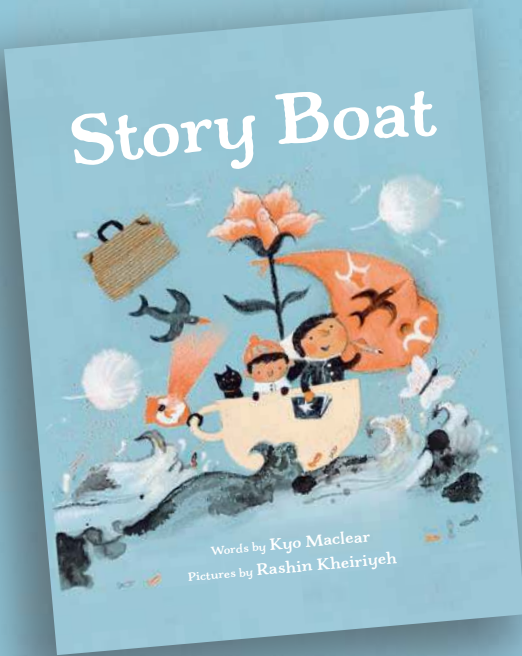


# Story Boat



Words by Kyo Maclear

Pictures by Rashin Kheiriyeh



## About the Book

When you have to leave behind almost everything you know, where can you call home? Sometimes home is simply where we are: here. A imaginative, lyrical, unforgettable picture book about the migrant experience through a child's eyes.

When a little girl and her younger brother are forced along with their family to flee the home they've always known, they must learn to make a new home for themselves, wherever they are. And sometimes the smallest things — a cup, a blanket, a lamp, a flower, a story — can become a port of hope in a terrible storm. As the refugees travel onward toward an uncertain future, they are buoyed up by their hopes, dreams and the stories they tell — a story that will carry them perpetually forward.

This timely, sensitively told story, written by multiple award-winner Kyo Maclear and illustrated by Sendak Fellowship recipient Rashin Kheiriyeh, introduces very young readers in a gentle, non-frightening and ultimately hopeful way to the current refugee crisis.

Fountas/Pinnell Reading Level: N



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*Story Boat* by Kyo Maclear, illustrated by Rashin Kheiriyeh · ISBN 9780735263598

## About the Author

**KYO MACLEAR** is an essayist, novelist, and children's author. Her books have been translated into fifteen languages and published in over twenty countries. She has earned multiple awards, including a Governor General's Award, the Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Picture Book Award, a USBBY Outstanding International Book (*Virginia Wolf*), the IODE Ontario Jean Throop Award (*Yak and Dove*), the Trillium Book Award (*Birds Art Life*) and the White Raven Award (*Virginia Wolf* and *The Liszts*). She has received nominations for the Kate Greenaway Medal (*The Liszts*), the Forest of Reading, the Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Award (*The Good Little Book*) and the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Non-Fiction Prize (*Birds Art Life*). Kyo holds a doctorate in environmental humanities and is on faculty at the University of Guelph Creative Writing MFA and the Humber School for Writers.

## About the Illustrator

**RASHIN KHEIRIYEH** is an internationally recognized award-winning illustrator/author, animation director and painter who has published over eighty children's books in countries including the United States, France, Italy, Japan, Germany, Spain, South Korea, China, Brazil, India and Iran. She has received fifty national and international awards for her work, including the 2017 Sendak Fellow Award. She was also the winner of the Bologna Book Fair six times and the winner of Golden Apple Award at the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB), Slovakia. She has an honorary doctorate degree in Illustration, an MFA in Graphic Design from Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran and a Doctorate Degree in Illustration from Ministry of Art and Culture, Tehran, Iran. She also studied at School of Visual Arts (SVA) in New York. She is a lecturer at Department of Art, University of Maryland, and has contributed illustrations to The New York Times, Google and many other publications around the world.

This guide was created by **KATHLEEN ODEAN**, a school librarian for more than fifteen years who now gives professional development workshops for educators on new children's and young adult books. She chaired the 2002 Newbery Award Committee and served on earlier Caldecott, Newbery and Notable Children's Books Committees.



# Discussion Questions

Please take care of which activities and discussion questions are most appropriate for your class.

1. Who is the narrator of this story? How can you tell? What's going on in the narrator's life? Who does "we" refer to?
2. What kind of journey are the children on? Who are they traveling with? Where do you think they are going and why?
3. Talk about what the children and other people have brought with them on the journey. What does it tell you about the trip and their situation in life?
4. How does the sister treat her brother? How does he treat her? Give examples of their relationship from the words and pictures.
5. Talk about the role of imagination in the story. Which scenes are real and which are make-believe? Why do you think the narrator imagines so often?
6. Why is the book titled *Story Boat*? Find pages where the girl imagines the cup as a boat. Discuss why she says, "And this cup is a home." Who else is in the cup? Why do you think she's holding a pencil?
7. What creates the sail that the girl adds to the cup in her imagination? What else do she and her brother have with them on their imaginary sailing journey?
8. What is a lighthouse? What are the sister and brother doing before the lamp turns into a lighthouse? Why is it something they might be thinking about on their journey?
9. Why do you think the girl starts so many sentences with the word *here*? What does she mean by the words on the first several pages: "Here we are. What's that? Well, here is . . . *Here* is just here. Or here." How does the meaning of the word *here* change when you are traveling?
10. Look at the expressions of the people on the page that opens, "Here is a song that everyone can sing." How do they look and why? How do their expressions compare to those on some of the other pages?
11. Why do the people get into a boat? Judging from the expressions on their faces, what do you think they are feeling? Where do they end up?
12. Look carefully at the page that has the text, "And this story is a boat." What do you see that has been on earlier pages? How has the boat itself changed? How has the pencil changed? Discuss the meaning of the sentence, "And this story is a boat."
13. Take a close look at different pages and discuss what you learn from the words and what you learn from the pictures. What information and emotions do the words convey on that page? What information and emotions do the pictures convey?

CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.K-2.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.K-2.2,  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.K-2.3, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.K-2.1,  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.K-2.2



# Activities

Please take care of which activities and discussion questions are most appropriate for your class.

1. Discuss what the children in the story have brought with them on the journey. Then have students think about what they would bring if they were leaving home, maybe forever, knowing that the items have to fit in a backpack. Ask them to make a list of the items they would pack, with very brief explanations about each choice.  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.K-2.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.K-2.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.K-2.2
2. As a class, talk about the children's journey in the story and the uncertainty of their future even once they are in a new place. Relate their story to that of many refugees today around the world. Have students talk about what kind of future they wish for children like this, such as a safe, permanent place to live. Create a class list of the hopes for the children in the story and others like them.  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.K-2.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.K-2.1
3. Ask each student to write down some of the hopes that they listed for question two on a sheet of 8 x 11" paper. Teach them how to fold the paper into a boat that resembles a hat, as seen in the illustrations. (Videos are available on the internet.) Have students fold their sheet of paper into a boat. Display the boats or, if possible, sail them on a stream, pond, fountain or other body of water.  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.K-2.2
4. Our country is full of people who made a journey, sometimes long and difficult, to live here. Students may have made such journeys themselves. Have students collect stories from each other, friends, relatives and neighbors about such journeys. These could be recent or in the past, or they could be long-ago stories from family history. Share the stories in class. Invite speakers who came from other countries to share their stories with the class, too.  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.K-2.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.K-2.4
5. The book's narrator appreciates small things that make her life better, such as the group singing together. Ask students to consider what small things or activities that cost little or nothing help make their lives better. Ask them to make a poster using words, pictures or both that shows five to ten things or activities that matter to them.  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.K-2.5, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.K-2.2  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.K-2.5, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.K-2.2

