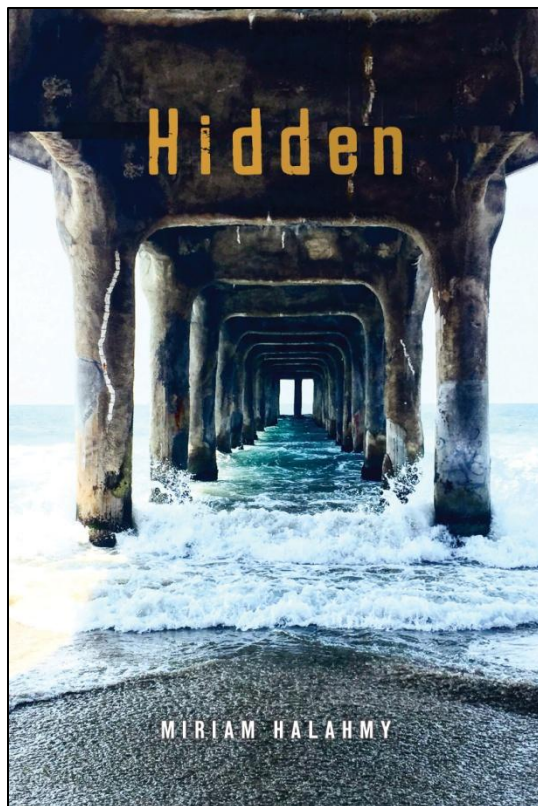


# Hidden

MIRIAM HALAHMY



Ages 12 up • 978-0-8234-3694-1 • E-book available

While every refugee's story is different and their anguish personal, they all share a common thread of uncommon courage—the courage not only to survive, but to persevere and rebuild their shattered lives.

—ANTÓNIO GUTERRES  
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES  
"SPEECH FOR WORLD REFUGEE DAY," 2005

Instructional  
Standards

**Guided Reading Level:** Z+  
**Grade Level Equivalent:** High School  
**Interest Level:** Grades 8 up

**Instructional Standards**  
RL.9-12.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10  
SL.9-12.1, 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6  
L.9-12.3, 4, 4a, 5, 5b6



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## AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

1. What is Miriam Halahmy's purpose for writing *Hidden*? What does she want to answer, describe or explain?
2. How does the author's background influence her writing?

## CHARACTERIZATION

1. Who are the key characters in the story? Who are the supporting characters?
2. How does Miriam Halahmy build characterization in *Hidden* to enhance your understanding of the characters' personalities? (Choose 2 characters from the story.)
3. Describe the characters in the story (Alix, Mom, Dad, Samir, Naazim, Mohammed, Mrs. Saddler, Kim, Steven, Lindy, Terrance, Mr. Spicer). What are their beliefs, hopes, dreams, fears, strengths and weaknesses?
4. How do they conduct themselves throughout the book? What do the characters do and say to reveal themselves?
5. Discuss the exact moment in the story that your opinion of the characters changed in some way.
6. Explain how they change as the plot develops and how their unique experiences cause them to grow.
7. What are your feelings about them?
8. What does Alix learn about the characters throughout the story? What does she learn about herself?
9. What purpose does Miriam Halahmy have for including each character in the story?
10. Which characters do you empathize with? Explain.
11. What do you think will happen to the characters next?

## SETTING

1. Where does the story take place? Explain how the location and environment of the book color the telling of the story.
2. Compare and contrast words and phrases used by teenagers in London and the United States.
3. Create an "English" dictionary with words and phrases used by the characters in *Hidden*.
4. Describe in detail the following settings: the cottage, the hut, the beach, High Street, school.
5. How does Halahmy use imagery to create a feeling as the setting changes? How does this vivid language appeal to the senses?

## THEME

1. What are the main themes and ideas of *Hidden*? How do the themes of racism, friendship, family, loss, bullying, trust and refugees blend naturally with the story line?
2. Is one theme more dominant than others?
3. How are the themes reflected through the characters' behaviors?
4. Discuss the characters' repeated thoughts, words and actions throughout the book.
5. What can the theme teach you about your own life?
6. Did the story change you or your ideas about the world? Explain.



## STYLE

1. Discuss how the author structures the story. How does she arrange her sentences as well as words to affect meaning? Was this effective?
2. How are the chapters arranged and named? Explain the central idea of each.
3. In what voice or point of view is the story written?
4. How does this perspective color the story?
5. How would the story change if it were told from the point of view of Mohammed?

## TONE

How does the author create humor and suspense in *Hidden*? Cite specific examples from the book.

## CONFLICT

1. Discuss the conflicts faced by the characters in the story, including
  - human kind vs human kind
  - human kind vs nature
  - human kind vs self
  - human kind vs society
  - human kind vs fate
2. What decisions must the characters make? Between what concepts are they deciding and what do these ideas represent?

## SYMBOLISM

1. What settings, names, colors, recurring objects are referred to and what do they represent?  
*elephants, gremlin, ice man, hidden, High Street/Town Center, the beach, the water, Lindy's razor nail, marathon training, Laura Croft (web quest if needed), bread and cheese, Mom's broken leg, Grandpa, two percent*
2. Did *Hidden* expand your range of experience or challenge your assumptions?
3. Did the book take you to a place you haven't been before or help you see a place you know in a different light?
4. Did reading *Hidden* help you to understand a person better, or even yourself?
5. Have you read other historical fiction books on refugees? Or books that take place outside the United States? Compare and contrast the language, dialect, characters, settings and conflicts.

Write about an individual's personal struggles and triumphs, people who helped the individual throughout the book and how the person changes from the beginning to the end of the story.

## MAKE TEXT-TO-WORLD CONNECTIONS

1. Who are refugees and asylum seekers, and how can we protect their human rights?
2. What facts about refugees and asylum seekers surprised you the most?
3. What events might be causing people to leave their countries of origin as refugees and asylum seekers?
4. Why might a country protect refugees and asylum seekers?



5. Why might governments provide benefits to refugees and asylum seekers above what other immigrants receive?

## FUTHER RESEARCH

- What is a refugee?
- Who were some of history's first refugees? What were the reasons they needed to leave their countries?
- How many refugees are there in the world?
- How many refugees does the United States let in each year?
- Per capita, which country in the world allows the most refugees in every year?
- How many refugees die of sickness or disease?
- What is the average number of refugees in a refugee camp?
- What percentage of the world's population are refugees?
- What are the requirements for refugees to enter a country?
- Why do some countries not want refugees?
- Are all refugees poor? Why or why not?
- What causes refugees to run away from a country?
- How can refugees travel to another country?
- Which countries reject refugees from entering their country?
- Do you think we should allow refugees in the United States? Why or why not?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Miriam Halahmy** is a poet, special needs educator and novelist. She has worked with refugees in schools as well as in workshops she led for PEN and the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture. Her book *Hidden* was inspired by stories she heard from members of the Iraqi family into which she married. She lives in London, England.

Educator's Guide prepared by Marla Conn, reading/literacy specialist and educational consultant

