

Parents' Guide to *When Stars Are Scattered* by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed

Grade Levels: 7-10

Lexile Level: HL 530L

Genre: Graphic Novel Memoir

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About the Book

When Stars Are Scattered is an award-winning memoir in a graphic novel format based on the real-life childhood of Omar Mohamed, who grew up in a refugee camp in Kenya after fleeing war in Somalia at just four years old. The story follows Omar and his younger brother Hassan as they grow up in the Dadaab refugee camp, facing uncertainty while holding on to hope for education, stability, reunification with their lost mother, and a better future.

Educational Value

This novel supports key literacy and social-emotional learning goals:

- Visual Literacy: The integration of text and illustrations strengthens comprehension and adds new layers of interpretation to explore in the classroom (color analysis, composition elements, etc.).
- Global Awareness: The story provides insight into the realities of refugee life and international conflicts.
- Social & Emotional Learning: *When Stars Are Scattered* encourages empathy, resilience, and compassion.
- Cross-Curricular Engagement: The book connects to world history and geography (historic conflicts in the Horn of Africa), civics (humanitarian aid), religion (hope, charity, fortitude, human dignity), and fine arts (visual media).

Discussion Topics for Home

- How does Omar balance his responsibilities as a brother with his own hopes and dreams? How do you balance what you must do and what you want to do?
- How does access to education impact Omar's life and future? Does his story affect your view of school?
- What does "home" mean to Omar? How does that definition change over the course of the story?
- How does [Matthew 25:31-40](#) connect to the way Omar and Hassan are treated?
- Read [1 Corinthians 12:12-26](#). How does this passage relate to the human dignity of Omar, Hassan, Maryam, Nimo, and the other refugees in the book? How can we respect and support one another in our own communities beyond our immediate families?

Why We're Reading *When Stars Are Scattered*

This memoir helps students build empathy and awareness of global issues through a personal and accessible story. The graphic novel format engages a wide range of readers while addressing serious and important topics. It encourages students to reflect on perseverance, gratitude, and the power of education. It serves as a powerful starting point for the English II/English II Honors curriculum, which surveys literature from different countries and cultures around the world.