



The Kites Are Flying

Michael Morpurgo , Jeremy Bowen (Contributor) , Laura Carlin (Illustrator)

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TV reporter Morpurgo visited the West Bank and befriended a Palestinian boy named Said. Said does not speak. He makes kites. Morpurgo's poignant account of the experience about how Palestinian and Jewish children live with the Wall is a message of dreams for peace and hope for all children.

The Kites Are Flying Details

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From Reader Review The Kites Are Flying for online ebook

Pally Chohan says

The kites are flying is an intriguing yet sad story, the story follows a western reporter on the West Bank, who befriends a young boy called Said, Said is a Palestinian child who has faced great loss in his life due to the occupation. The story centres on him talking to his brother who has died. They are both so different and initially Said does not speak due to the trauma he has faced of losing his brother. They quickly develop into friends. The ending is surprising as Said does begin to speak, with his speech also we get the message of hope, the hope that all children on the West Bank have of wanting this conflict to be over and to live peacefully.

The imagery in the book is simple yet effective, the sombre imagery reflects the tone of the story, yet the kites which represent innocence, childhood and hope are more vibrant. The imagery is not too busy, this means that it does not distract from the serious issue of the story. Which is introducing children to firstly a darker world of difference and war, a childhood for some children which is not as idyllic as their own. But leaves them with the beautiful ending of hope.

The cross curricular links with this story are endless. It can be used in a design and technology lesson to create kites, in geography children could explore the regions which have been affected by the conflict. Superb artwork can be created through using thoughts and emotions, dark colours representing war and bright colours representing hope. Religious education can explore the religions that are involved in the conflict, and how they have been impacted. Finally the story could be used in an English setting for children to create a diary entry.

I definitely recommend this book for children in upper phase key stage 2, and lower phase of key stage 2. I feel the issues may be overwhelming and distressing for younger children. I particularly recommend this book for adults who are not Michael Morpurgo fans as it is completely different to his usual style of writing.

Thomas says

A very quick read but not up to Michael Morpurgo normal standard but none the less a four. (three and a half) an interesting book about the life of a little boy growing up in the conflicts in Palestine.

Adele Broadbent says

This story is told in two view points – one a journalist called Max and one an 8 yr old shepherd boy.

The journalist is filling in a diary about his travels and what he is doing each day. He writes of seeing a shepherd boy alone on a hill with his sheep and how he doesn't speak. He is making a kite. He is fascinated with the journalist's new video camera so he shows the boy how to use it and the boy videos his sheep and surroundings.

When the boy is leaving with his sheep, the journalist follows. He tries to keep up but sprains his ankle. The boy silently returns to help him down the rocky hillside and takes him to his home in the West Bank. Even in his home the boy does not speak – but the head of the family explains that Said saw his older brother Mahmoud shot by soldiers and hasn't spoken since.

Said makes a kite and writes the word Peace on it and lets it go when the wind is blowing in the right direction to blow the kite across the wall. Then he begins a new kite. These kites are in the name of Mahmoud and Said's dream of Peace.

Wonderful!

Amrit says

Morpurgo presents a very political issue in the most subtle manner, but unravels the reality of the conflict as the book progresses, broken up by abstract illustrations. The story is based within the Israel and Palestine conflict on West bank in a village outside a settlement. This is the first book I have ever read from Morpurgo and am pleasantly surprised. From the front cover I instantly thought of an adventure story, but this was not the case and I could not put it down.

The conflict is shown from two perspectives. The first from a boy named Said, an elective mute who shares his experiences and thoughts to his brother. The second protagonist is Max a journalist who reflects in a daily journal. Said writes to his brother every night, his tone is one where he seeks comfort, answers and is desperately trying to live a normal life. Said's character epitomises the traits of a resilient child; hope, perseverance and forgiveness. Despite his silence, he displays his feelings through flying kites into the neighbouring settlement in the hope to develop friendship with a girl on the other side. The kite can be seen as a metaphor for freedom and hope of both sides living at peace. He makes a connection to in his camera, despite not being able to speak he aides Max in his mission to document the lives of people living in the conflict. Without spoiling the ending, the story ends on the idea of hope being present even at the darkest of times.

There are many messages and themes to be discovered throughout the story. For children nine onwards this is a great book to gather awareness of issues they may begin to understand as part of becoming a citizen in particular human rights. The descriptions and writing styles adopted cause a sense of empathy for the characters, and imagine the setting. This story can be used as an example to recognise different genres and styles of writing which is part of the literacy National Curriculum.

Alison Wickham says

Such a beautiful short read. Beginning with many unknown stories from when a film reporter visits a small village with lots of controversy. It has two narratives, the boy and the reporter that help us to get an emotional understanding of what has happened. Themes of conflict, family, love and dreams. A very emotional ending. The illustrations are beautiful, using colour, tone and line to add quality and emotion to the story. Loved it.

Mike Joseph says

A film director, Max, has a flight going to Jerusalem. Starting his day with regret, having a bad day, traffic, delayed flight, and a seatmate that's terrified at a turbulence. While in Jerusalem, Said, a traumatized kid after his brother died in front of his eyes, is talking to his dead brother everynight while lying in bed. Said is sitting under his favorite tree when Max saw him after he got out of the bus that he came with. And that's where a friendship starts between two different people with different beliefs in life. Learning each others story while Max's filming some of the scenes that he think is great to what he is creating.

This book talks about the historical conflict between the Arabs and Jews about a part of a land that lies between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, that often sends shockwaves around the world. And on how a single bullet change a life of a person, and on how a single action change a persons perspective about the other party.

Nadine Larter says

A sweet and rather poignant book about the wall dividing Israel and Palestine. Very sad, but also hopeful. A good book for children I think, despite the seriousness of the content.

Jessica Sacks says

I found this piously patronising. The narrative cuts off without the point of view character fulfilling his admirable intention of following up his visit to a Palestinian village with a visit to an Israeli settlement, and we get the impression this reflects the author's research process. The Palestinian characters are stereotypes which seem to be the fruit of spending a few days conversing with Palestinians in their second or third language; the Israeli characters are non-characters based on nothing at all. Even the identifying feature of the Israeli heroine, her blue headscarf, shouts ignorance, as headscarves are generally only worn by orthodox Jewish women after marriage. Even among the better researched characters, we are given no insight into internal Palestinian tensions.

The author's intention is clearly benevolent - he paints all characters as good (except, perhaps, for the Israeli soldiers, but they're off-stage and in uniform so never mind them) - but the result is insulting; he misses the dignity of both sides by projecting his own fantasy onto both.

I'd give him 2/10 for outcome, 4/10 for effort, 8/10 for intentions. Intentions are something I suppose, so I'll raise my star-rating from 1 to 2.

Indi says

'I judge a book by its cover',

adalah sebuah aklamasi yang tertera di bagian bio laman Goodreads milik saya. Kalimat tersebut sudah menjadi semacam *belief* bagi saya dalam memilih buku, karena di dalam buku bersampul indah, *most likely*, alur ceritanya akan indah juga.

Ya memang tidak bisa digeneralisasikan ke semua buku sih, tapi *belief* itulah yang saya yakini dan amalkan saat melihat sampul buku *The Kites are Flying!* ini.

Pertama lihat buku ini di pameran buku Big Bad Wolf Books di BSD pada Mei 2016. Tanpa pikir panjang, saya langsung comot tanpa meninjau lebih lanjut ceritanya tentang apa. Padahal sinopsis ceritanya ada di balik sampul dan bukunya nggak disegel plastik, *so it was supposed to be easy for me to check it, if I want to*. Tapi ya itu tadi, sampulnya sudah menarik. Saya buka-buka sedikit halamannya, ilustrasinya pun menarik. *Messy messy* tapi *artsy* gitu, *me likeeeyyy* hahaha.

Singkat cerita, sampai awal bulan September 2017, buku itu (+ beberapa buku hasil borongan di BBW 2016 lainnya + hasil borongan BBW 2017) tidak tersentuh. Ngendon aja di kardus. Saya memang lagi malas baca akhir-akhir ini. *Ready Player One* dan *Station Eleven* yang sudah jelas dinilai bagus aja cuma sanggup saya baca 20-an halaman lalu saya tinggal.

Tapi awal September 2017 itu, saya lagi pengen baca buku.

Saya lagi bosan sama layar.

Tapi, saya lagi malas baca. Hahaha kontradiktif.

Saya putuskan untuk bongkar kardus berisi buku-buku borongan BBW dan berniat mencari buku yang jelas menarik tapi ringan.

Daaaaan keputusan jatuh pada dua buku:

The Kites are Flying!

serta

Dr. Seuss' Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Ketika itu saya lagi berencana pergi ke suatu tempat di dalam kota, tapi karena akhir minggu sudah jelas jalanan akan macet. Maka saya putuskan ambil *The Kites are Flying!* untuk dibaca di jalan tanpa ribet, karena ukurannya jelas lebih praktis dan tipis dibanding Dr. Seuss'.

Singkat cerita, baca deh tuh di jalan.

KESAN PERTAMA

Ampun..... bosan.

Saya nggak menyangka bahwa ceritanya adalah seputar kehidupan anak-anak di West Bank, Jerusalem, yang menjadi 'korban' konflik Palestina-Israel. *I am surely not into this issue*, bukan karena nggak peduli tapi karena nggak ngerti. Dan kesannya ribet aja lah, *lha wong* di awal saya niatnya mau cari buku yang ringan dan menarik.....

Akhirnya buku tersebut saya tutup di halaman 25.

Pupus sudah harapan untuk nggak pegang *gadget* selama di perjalanan. Saya pun kembali ketak-ketuk layar, kembali *scroll, scroll, scroll.....*

See further: https://www.goodreads.com/user_status...

KESAN KEDUA

Besoknya, saya bener-bener nganggur nggak ngapa-ngapain di rumah. Dan kembali saya tekankan, saya lagi bosan sama layar. Pengen rasanya melakukan sesuatu yang bisa menyegarkan pikiran tanpa kontribusi layar. Kemudian mata saya tertambat kembali ke buku di atas meja belajar, buku yang kemarin saya campakkan di perjalanan....ahaha. Kesannya dramatis banget ya, kemarin dicampakkan terus ternyata saya dekati lagi bukunya di hari itu. Tapi beneran, kronologis emosinya memang begitu.

Jujur, di titik ini saya agak memaksakan diri untuk lanjutin baca.

Perlahan tapi pasti, saya mulai mengerti inti dari buku ini. Plot cerita disampaikan dari POV dua tokoh sentral yang, di dunia nyata, dinilai sangat berseberangan baik dari segi usia maupun kepentingan. Sangat kecil kemungkinannya untuk (orang-orang seperti) mereka bersinggungan dan bahkan terikat secara emosional. Ada pula beberapa tokoh sampingan yang keberadaannya sangat berperan dalam membangun cerita. Saya mulai merasa tokoh-tokoh ini merasuki pikiran saya.

Dan.... di halaman 43, saya resmi tertarik dengan alur cerita buku ini.

(*Intinya, kayaknya, jiwa saya emang agak dramatis jadi nunggu nyampe ke titik konflik dulu baru bener-bener tertarik sama cerita suatu buku :p*)

Kemudian di halaman 53, saya mulai nggak mau berhenti baca.

Tapi saat itu saya ada kerjaan lain, jadi bukunya kembali diletakkan di atas meja belajar. Kali ini diletakkan dengan lembut karena sudah terasa akrab, nggak dicampakkan lagi kayak sebelumnya.

See further: https://www.goodreads.com/user_status...

KESAN KETIGA

Selanjutnya, tiga hari berikutnya saya melanjutkan baca tapi terpenggal-penggal.

Saya sampai pada titik di mana saya merasa bahwa buku ini sangat indah. Plot cerita, penggambaran tokoh melalui penuturan dua tokoh sentral, serta nilai moral atau *insight* yang terbersit saling membantu membentuk keindahan buku.

Akhirnya, saya bisa kembali meyakini dan lantang mendeklarasikan, *I do judge a book by its cover* . Untuk sekali lagi, terbukti bahwa sampul yang indah adalah indikasi dari cerita yang indah pula.

Di beberapa halaman saya hampir menitikkan air mata, dan di halaman 75, sudah tidak hampir lagi.... air mata saya jatuh. Saya jatuh kasih.

Rasa kasih ini jatuh kepada ikatan emosional antara Said dan Mister Max, kepada ketekunan Uncle Yasser, kepada keyakinan yang ditularkan oleh Mahmoud kepada Said..... kepada seluruh anak-anak yang harus merasakan pedihnya konflik Palestina-Israel. Saya bahkan dapat merasakan diri saya berterima kasih kepada *The Girl in the Blue Headscarf* atas pendiriannya yang teguh akan mimpi-mimpi Said dan Mahmoud, serta tindakannya yang saya nilai sangat berani.

Sejak pertengahan hingga akhir buku, saya merasa bahwa tokoh-tokoh di dalam buku ini seperti nyata.

Seperti benar-benar ada dalam realita.

See further: https://www.goodreads.com/user_status...

Overall, saya merekomendasikan buku *The Kites are Flying!* ini kepada teman-teman yang sedang mencari bahan bacaan yang ringan, menarik, menyentuh, dan (mungkin) sedang ingin tercerahkan.

Walaupun ini bukan buku terbaik yang saya baca, dan tidak membekas sampai berlarut-larut, tetapi kisah selama saya menemukan dan membaca buku ini *is indeed memorable* :)

Virginia says

Another engaging book by Morpurgo.

A television reporter sets out to create a story about life on both sides of the dividing wall in the West Bank.

He encounters a shepherd boy, Said, who is making a kite. He comes to realise that Said does not speak at all, but suspects that there must be a story in this encounter, so he persists in trying to engage Said. Said writes a message on his kite and appears to surrender it to the wind. A wheelchair-bound girl on the other side of the wall picks it up when it lands at her feet. Said and the girl seem to have some sort of unspoken relationship. As a result of having suffered an injury while trying to win Said's trust, the reporter gets to find out why the boy does not speak. Then, on the morning of the journalist's departure to observe life on the other side of the wall, the sky is adorned with kites - each carrying a message. They were not from Said.

This story is presented in the form of diary entries by the journalist and Said respectively. It is full of reflection, and a host of emotions - pain, sadness, grief, anger and mistrust. The overriding theme is, however, one of dreams and hope - children's hope for peace. A very touching account that had me feeling I was there observing/experiencing every event. A must read.

Rachel says

"Every time I fly a kite little brother, I'm thinking it's me up there, and that I'm far away from all this down here, far away from the soldiers and the checkpoints and the tanks. Up there I'm out of it. I go wherever the wind takes me, and no one can stop me. No soldiers, no checkpoints, no tanks"

Rahmadiyanti says

"Every time I fly a kite... I'm thinking it's me up there, and that I'm far away from all this down here, far away from the soldiers and the checkpoints and the tanks. Up there I'm out of it. I go wherever the wind takes me and no one can stop me. No soldiers, no checkpoints, no tanks." (Mahmoud)

Flying kite —maybe— is an ordinary activity for children in a country with normal condition, but not in Palestine. Read this paragraph, written by Ramzy Baroud about his childhood, that I quoted from:[https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/...](https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/)

“... During the Uprising’s summers, there would be dozens of kites, all red, black, green and white wavering atop the Israeli military camp and temporary detention center. The soldiers would often fly into a rage, storm the camp, seeking their target: children with kites. We could determine the location of the raid when all the kites from a particular location would fall from the sky in unison.

“One afternoon, I sat upon the staircase of our home in the camp, a white cinderblock home, adorned with patriotic graffiti. It was safe to fly my kite as my father was in Israel, joining tens of thousands of Palestinians who negotiated a living wage under the harshest of circumstances. Out of nowhere, Israeli jeeps leapt into the open area, separating my house from the Martyrs Graveyard. Children ran in panic. Teargas grenades were lobbed in frenzy. Kites fell all around like wounded eagles. I too ran, in circles, without letting go of my kite.

“It was not bravery. Far from it. I was frightened beyond comprehension. But it took me months to finally have a kite, and when I finally had one, and an amazingly beautiful one at that, I was not ready to let go. A jeep sped towards me, as my hand trembled. “You, jackass,” a soldier yell in a loudspeaker. “Let go of the kite.” And so I did...”

It's not easy flying a kite for Palestinian children, isn't?

Okay, about this book. It's a quite interesting story. Set in West Banks, Palestine, told from two viewpoints, Max, a British reporter and Said, a Palestinian boy. Said is a shepherd boy who likes making a kite. But he doesn't speak, leaving a curiosity to Max. One day, Max follows Said to his home and meets his family. Then Max realizes the reason Said doesn't speak.

It's a touching story, with good illustration. Trying to give a message that there's a hope and peace for Palestine-Israel conflict. But... I think, it's a bit ignores Israel's occupation in Palestine. How Israel has oppressed Palestine for many years. How Israel did many crimes in Palestine. How Israel has murdered many Palestinian (men, women, children). It's okay to say both sides, but it's also important to be fair about Israel's crimes.

I always pray that Palestine will be free and Palestinian children will also be free to flying kites.

Inas says

This is the first book by Michael Morpurgo that I've read. I bought it in a Book Sale for a really cheap price, but the content inside is far from cheap.

This is a story of an English Reporter named Max who goes to Palestine to film what the life is like on both sides of the wall that divided the Palestinians and the Israeli. He meets an 8-year-old boy named Said who loves to make kites and fly them. Max soon realizes that there are simply some things that cannot be expressed by words and must be captured in films instead.

Miina Saarna says

A moving story about the children of West Bank, their dreams and hopes for peace. Beautifully written and illustrated.

Beccy says

Whilst most children who read Morpurgo's stories will know him for his animal tales, this is the story of a child's life in Palestine.

Told in turn by an adult film maker and Palestinian 8 year old, Said, The Kites are Flying is a simple, beautiful depiction of the physical loss war creates and the hope and humanity it can foster in those ensnared in it.

Mr Max, the filmmaker, and Said are brought together under the kite tree in Said's village, which looks out onto the dividing wall between Palestine and Israel in the occupied territories. Said's kites prove to hold more significance than one might initially imagine, and his quest to send them over the wall to the girl with the blue headscarf becomes a mission, which on successful completion, shows the power of unspoken friendship transcending barriers of race and religion, from which we all might learn.

The illustrations in the book are beautiful and understated, in sympathy with Morpugo's prose.

This is a wonderful story. Perfect for key stage two children to read alone or a chapter at a time as a group exercise. As a text to underpin project work, perhaps children making their own kites, cooking honey cake, exploring landscapes through art, or writing their own diaries, it's brilliant.
