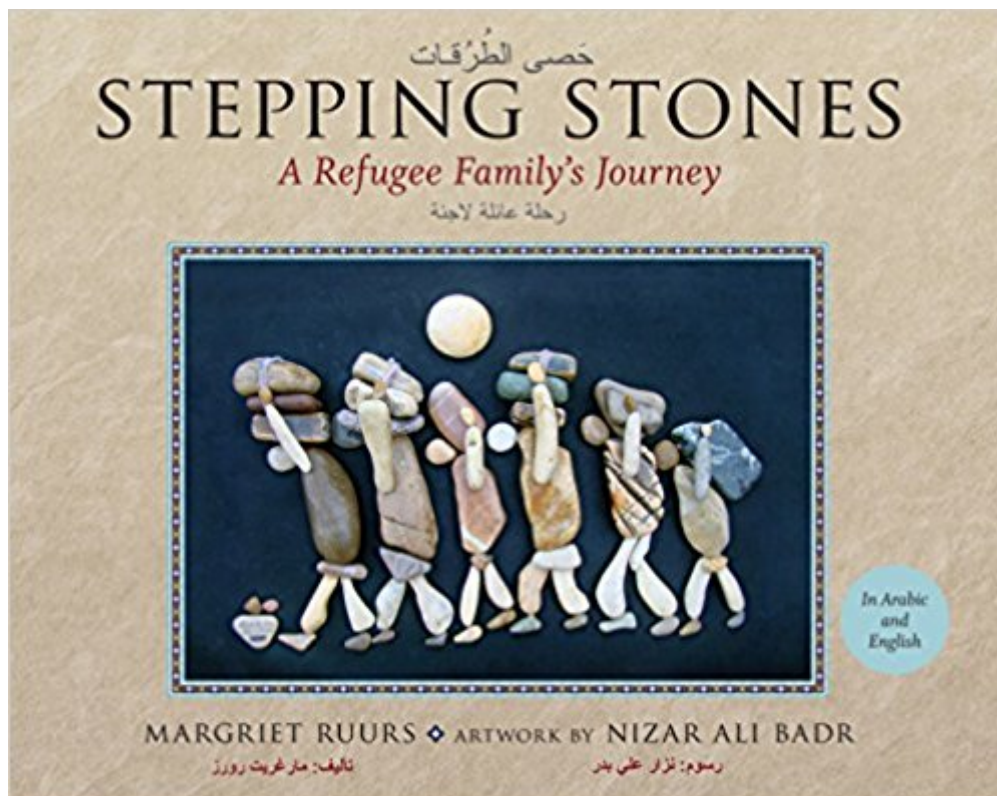


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# Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey (Arabic And English Edition)



## Synopsis

This unique picture book was inspired by the stone artwork of Syrian artist Nizar Ali Badr, discovered by chance by Canadian children's writer Margriet Ruurs. The author was immediately impressed by the strong narrative quality of Mr. Badr's work, and, using many of Mr. Badr's already-created pieces, she set out to create a story about the Syrian refugee crisis. *Stepping Stones* tells the story of Rama and her family, who are forced to flee their once-peaceful village to escape the ravages of the civil war raging ever closer to their home. With only what they can carry on their backs, Rama and her mother, father, grandfather and brother, Sami, set out to walk to freedom in Europe. Nizar Ali Badr's stunning stone images illustrate the story. Orca Book Publishers is pleased to offer this book as a dual-language (English and Arabic) edition.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 660 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 28 pages

Publisher: Orca Book Publishers; Bilingual edition (October 18, 2016)

Language: Arabic, English

ISBN-10: 1459814908

ISBN-13: 978-1459814905

Product Dimensions: 9.5 x 0.3 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 16 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #18,112 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Middle East #38 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction #49 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Multigenerational

Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

"Brilliant and beautiful and inspiring. A book that should be read with every child in the world! An instant classic as solid as the stones on which it is based!" (Eric Walters, award-winning author and member of the Order of Canada 2016-05-16)"Ruurs writes purely and warmly, with the text set in both English and Raheem's Arabic translation...She deftly conveys the happiness of peaceful

childhood, then the confusion and the fears born of war and migration, and the relief and curiosity of arriving at a new home...Each illustration is masterful, with Badr's placement of stones as careful as brush strokes, creating figures positioned to tell the whole story without the benefit of facial expressions...An astonishing book that allows the humanity of refugees to speak louder than politics and introduces readers to one of Syria's incredible artists." (Kirkus Reviews, starred review 2016-08-01)"It's exquisite! One can only pray that its message will spread and make the difference we need." (Mem Fox, award-winning and internationally bestselling children's book author 2016-09-08)"Stunning, original artwork both childlike and sophisticated; a text that will both break and mend your heart." (Jane Yolen, award-winning author of *Devil's Arithmetic* and *The Stone Angel*. 2016-09-12)"Readers will be fascinated by the stone-collage illustrations created by Syrian artist Badr, who arranges expressive tableaux of people formed entirely of rocks and pebbles...A unique offering that will open eyes and soften hearts." (Booklist 2016-10-01)"Readers of all ages will find things of value within the pages of the book...The photographed stone arrangements seem oftentimes to pulse with more life than one might think possible. Whether consciously or otherwise, given his media Badr has create figures that suggest the unbreakable spirit of people seeking freedom and opportunity...This rare treasure of a book is likely to remain highly sought-after for some considerable time...Highly recommended." (CM Magazine 2016-09-16)"This is an amazing book!! Every teacher should own one." (Jennifer Maruno, former school principal, Peel District School Board 2016-12-12)"The lyrical phrasing of Margriet's free verse narrative captures the eloquence and simplicity of young Rama's reactions to her experiences...Badr instills life into his stone-art with seemingly simple shifts in background, angles, and minute adjustments of one stone in relation to another." (Nerdy Book Club blog 2017-01-05)"Ruurs' beautiful words are twinned with the most stunning artwork by Nizar Ali Badr...I could not but be moved by Badr's work, as it is unlike anything else I have ever seen and conveys so much emotion. I hope this beautiful book will reach the shelves of classrooms, libraries and homes throughout the world and be read and shared many times over." (Canadian Children's Book News 2016-10-20)"Ordinary beach stones were used to make the three-dimensional collages in this arresting picture book...Stone by stone, step by step, it all adds up to a memorable look at what it means to leave one's home in search of 'a bright new future.'" (Horn Book Magazine 2017-02-06)"[An] excellent book that will help young readers understand what is happening to the children they see on TV. I can't recommend [Stepping Stones] highly enough." (The Children's War blog 2017-01-31)"Ruurs' sensitive text focuses on the beauty of everyday aspects of Rama's life before the war and gently recounts the mounting problems that cause the family to leave...A book that reflects not just the experiences of Syrian refugees, but one

that is a beautiful and timeless reminder of resilience in the face of war as love and caring prevail." (Wander, Ponder, Write blog 2017-04-21)"The book is beautifully written in two languages: English and Arabic. Its English prose is straightforward, piercing, and lyrical. The Arabic is no less deft and poetic. It stands on its own and not simply as a translation of English. For example, the translator's Arabic choices for 'juicy' and 'sunbaked' are inspired...'It tells me what people's lives were like in Syria.' For this reason and many others, it is a book worth reading. Its story, in two languages, is beautiful. Its artwork is original and touching. And most importantly, it teaches us empathy and compassion for humans often dehumanized, who live and love the way we too would like to live and love." (Friends Journal 2017-05-01)A gateway to discussing refugees and immigration with America's youngest citizens...Teaching kids empathy&#8212this is where it starts. (New York Magazine 2017-02-08)"This picture book is special, in many ways. Firstly, the verbal text is well worked and beautifully written. It is compassionate and warm. The English is accompanied by Arabic, making this a dual language text, sought after in public libraries. The illustrations are amazingly authentic...The pictures emanate expression and feeling, astounding from such inanimate objects as stones...the world is a lot better for it. This book, although initially intended for children, is for a global, all ages audience. It is a must for public library and more suitable for school libraries. " (The Children's Book Council of Australia, Reading Time 2017-05-24)

A refugee family's flight to freedom, uniquely illustrated.

Margriet Ruurs is an author devoted to directly engaging with people around the world, listening to the stories of their lives and often incorporating those experiences into books. Among those are *My Librarian Is A Camel* and *School Days Around the World*. Her most recent book has an origin story all its own, which she describes well in the author's note at the front of the book, *STEPPING STONES: A Refugee Family's Journey*. Its artwork is created by Nizar Ali Badr, a stonework artist/sculptor whose creations can be seen on his Facebook page, [here](#). He's a resident of Latakia, Syria, and his visions find expression through the stones he collects along the river's edges. The story of Ruurs' discovery of Badr, their connection, and their joint mission is best read in the author's own words. Within a few weeks I'll post an interview with Margriet and explore their process more fully. For now, I simply want to spotlight a book that should be read by everyone. When I say "everyone", I'm not speaking figuratively. It's published in English and Arabic, but the text and art are so well-integrated in the book design that it could be understood as a wordless book, and that's no offense to the author. Ruurs has constructed a narrative path for a universally recognizable

family from their simple but safe home in Syria, through life-threatening crisis, on a journey with devastating risks and horrors, to eventual resettlement in a safe and welcoming new home. In one scene tiny pebbles might constitute a path; in another, harvested food, rooster feathers, birds' wings, or flower petals. Shifts in angles and joinings change the stone scenes from secure workday routines to desperate escapes and mournful memorials. Throughout it all, the continuity of family, flowers, sun and moon, despair, hope, and love call out to the reader of words and scenes. This is a book that does not allow us to turn away, as we so often do when faced with the humans represented here through stone art and story. Composed of the stones and scraps found around the artist's feet, characters rise to life from horizontal background surfaces where they are photographed before disappearing. It's a frighteningly painful parallel to the real lives being disrupted and lost as a result of never-ending, undeclared war. Scene after scene expresses emotions, invites questions, and tells stories. Ruurs' text, mirrored in Arabic, unfolds the tragedy before our eyes through potent poetic phrasing and figurative fluency. Pebbles become people, people we are willing to see, and hear, and care about with more genuine empathy than society musters for the actual millions of people living (and dying) in the journeys represented here. I plan to gift this copy to my library and another copy to my school, with more going to family and friends during the holidays. Proceeds from the book will support Badr's work and his village, where he continues to live and create. The author and publisher are also contributing portions of the profits from sales to refugee organizations. I hope everyone who becomes aware of this book will make it a personal mission to distribute it as globally as possible. Literally. The "refugee problem" is too easily viewed as a matter of millions of lives, as "too big" to fix. Until we can allow ourselves, force ourselves, to focus on the PEOPLE, on their LIVES, instead of on numbers, nothing will improve--for us and our sense of security, or for theirs. This book could help us shift that focus.

This is an inspiring book and should be in every school. The pictures are amazing and I hope this book will help the artist to a better life and that the book will help people everywhere to be more compassionate than they currently are.

Beautifully written and stunningly illustrated. So glad they included the story of the book's journey too. Well done and certainly deserving of the acclaims it's receiving.

My second grade students loved this book. It was a great way to share the story of a refugee family and the children really were able to grasp the concept. The photographs of the stones that portray the

families are perfect and show the journey they took with a simple eloquence. There are many different activities that can spring from the reading of this book.

The art is amazing. These stones tell a story of a family how their life changed by the conflict in their country and how they had to leave the country where generations of their families lived and where they only knew. Faceless figures expressed their story so settle yet powerful way. I highly recommend this book to read for all ages.

Beautifully done. Simple, yet so powerful a story. A must read for everyone. Told with beautiful stones, It is creative and even more powerful with its connection of nature and a people's struggle to find a peaceful way of life.

Highly recommended. Beautiful art work, relatable, and simple. Helps children empathize.

A thought-provoking story that has spurred lots of conversations with my five year old about refugees. I'm grateful for this beautiful, real portrayal to help educate my children on the reality that is some children's lives.

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