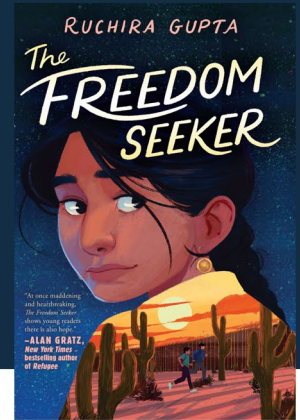


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AUTHOR ARTIST ACTIVIST

Book Club Guide The Freedom Seeker



Book Club Discussion Guide

Overview

The Freedom Seeker tells the powerful story of Simi, a young girl who must flee her home with her mother in India due to religious intolerance. Along the way, they meet José and his mother, who are escaping violence in Honduras. Together, the two families journey across Mexico into the Sonoran Desert in the U.S., enduring hardship, fear, and uncertainty. Despite cultural and language differences, Simi and José become close friends. They support one another through blistering heat, hunger, fear of capture, and the deep worry of family separation.

Their bond becomes a source of strength—showing how kindness and courage can cross any border.

This novel offers readers a window into global issues—immigration, identity, and resilience—through the eyes of a courageous protagonist.

Part 1: Getting Started

Suggested Reading Schedule:

- **Week 1:** Chapters 1–3 – *Life in Chandigarh*
- **Week 2:** Chapters 4–6 – *The Escape Begins*
- **Week 3:** Chapters 7–9 – *Crossing Borders*
- **Week 4:** Chapters 10–End – *Arrival & Resilience*

Icebreaker Questions:

- What drew you to *The Freedom Seeker*?
 - Have you or someone you know experienced a major life transition or migration?
 - What does the word “freedom” mean to you?
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Part 2: Discussion Questions by Theme

Religious Intolerance & Identity

- How does Simi's family dynamic reflect societal challenges around interfaith relationships?
- Why do you think people fear or reject religious differences?
- How does Simi develop her own beliefs in the face of pressure?

Immigration & Asylum

- What are the different motivations for people to migrate or seek asylum?
- How are immigrants like Simi and her mother vulnerable to exploitation?
- What scenes best illustrate the dangers and hopes of migration?

Resilience, Hope, and Courage

- What are some of the “small acts” that give Simi strength throughout the story?
- What does resilience look like in your life or your community?
- How does Simi inspire those around her, even when she is afraid?

Part 3: Interactive Activities

Journaling Prompt

"Write a letter to Simi as a friend, encouraging her during a hard moment in her journey. What advice or support would you offer?"

Cultural Mapping

Create a visual timeline of Simi's journey—mark each country she crosses and reflect on what she learns at each stage.

Postcard Project

Write a postcard from the perspective of Simi or another character at a key moment in the story.

Part 4: Reflection & Real-World Connections

- What parallels do you see between Simi's journey and today's news stories about immigration or refugees?
- How can we apply the lessons of this book in our communities or schools?

- What does this story teach us about empathy, advocacy, and action?
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Further Reading & Viewing

If You Liked This Book, Try:

- *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang
- *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai
- *Does My Head Look Big in This?* by Randa Abdel-Fattah
- *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis (also a film)

Documentaries & Videos:

- PBS Kids: Stories of young immigrants
 - NPR: Indian migrants at the U.S. border
 - NBC: Reunification stories of families separated at borders
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Final Discussion Questions

- How did Simi change from the beginning of the novel to the end?
 - What moment in the story will stay with you the longest?
 - What is one thing you're inspired to do after reading this book?
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Closing Activity: “Samosa & Storytelling”

Host a celebratory event where everyone brings a snack inspired by the book or their own heritage. Share personal or family migration stories, poems, or creative responses inspired by *The Freedom Seeker*.

Would you like this in printable PDF format or customized for a specific age group (e.g., middle schoolers, adult book clubs, intergenerational groups)? Let me know and I can adapt it accordingly.

Follow me on Insta, Tic Toc and YouTube at #RuchiraAGupta for updates and more resources