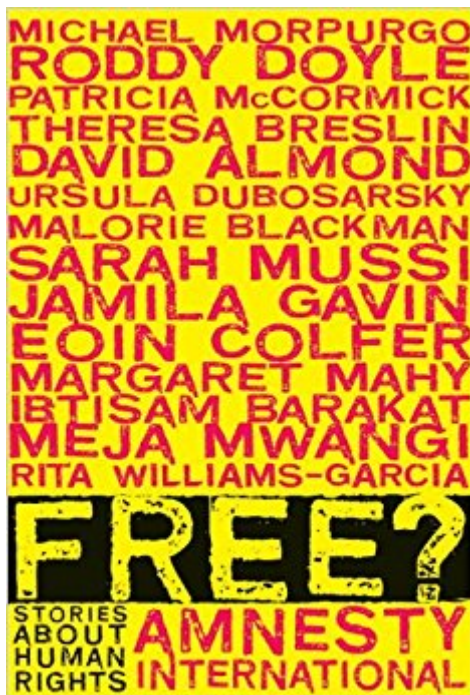


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Free?: Stories About Human Rights



Synopsis

What does it mean to be free? Top authors donate their talents to explore the question in a compelling collection to benefit Amnesty International. A boy who thinks that school is "slavery" learns the true meaning of the word when he stumbles on a secret child-labor factory. A Palestinian boy, mute from trauma, releases kites over a wall to a hilltop settlement, each bearing a message of peace. This inspiring, engaging anthology gathers an international roster of authors to explore such themes as asylum, law, education, and faith — from a riveting tale of an attempt to find drinking water after Hurricane Katrina; to a chilling look at a future where microchips track every citizen's every move; to a hilarious police interrogation involving the London Tower, the Crown Jewels, and a Ghanaian boy with a passion for playing marbles. Features an introduction by British writer Jacqueline Wilson. With stories by: David Almond, Itisam Barakat, Malorie Blackman, Theresa Breslin, Eoin Colfer, Roddy Doyle, Ursula Dubosarsky, Jamila Gavin, Margaret Mahy, Patricia McCormick, Michael Morpurgo, Sarah Mussi, Meja Mwangi, Rita Williams-Garcia

Book Information

Paperback: 202 pages

Publisher: Candlewick; 1 edition (April 27, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763649260

ISBN-13: 978-0763649265

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.6 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.3 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #240,691 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #134 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories](#) #165 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Values & Virtues](#) #466 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Human Rights](#)

Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up — This anthology advocates for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has the bonus of literary merit, and — another plus — it's highly readable. Don't let the cause or political weight of the title scare readers away. Popular YA authors use their exemplary storytelling skills to present stories set in a variety of countries, including Africa, Palestine, Jerusalem, Ireland, the United States, and England. Rita Williams-Garcia's jaunty

short-story-in-verse style belies the contrasting events of the Hurricane Katrina debacle. Three high school teens, bolstered by their marching-band spirit, set off to find water for their families in New Orleans. What transpires is a devastating dose of reality as they witness rescue and governance gone wrong. In David Almond's "Klaus Vogel and the Bad Lads," a pack of boys takes on the persona of tough blokes shoving about an English neighborhood during the late 1940s. Active and impulsive, they fall in with the oldest, coolest, meanest guy on the block. But when a new boy arrives from Germany, allegiances and dynamics shift. Independent Klaus is small but confident, and he risks standing up for himself. Strength of character is exposed, the group's status quo is broken, and the ability to say "no" is celebrated. Each selection cites the article(s) from the Declaration to which it relates. •Alison Follos, North Country School, Lake Placid, NY
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 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Short fiction by 14 prominent children's writers from around the world dramatize the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights with contemporary personal stories about young people who are victims, perpetrators, or activists. Some entries have a heavy message, but even those will draw in readers with the facts about what is happening now. Margaret Mahy writes about class with wit and intensity, as does Jamila Gavin, who sets the class war in India, where a young girl's family throws her out for resisting an arranged marriage and choosing a hill boy. David Almond explores school power plays in a story about a boy who says no to a popular bully. Hurricane Katrina is Rita Williams-Garcia's setting. Two contemporary Palestinian stories compare the current occupation with Native American experiences of oppression. Occasional, stark design elements illustrate, and with each story, there is a note that highlights its connection with the Declaration of Human Rights, which is appended in its full text. Sure to spark discussion and perhaps participation in Amnesty International. Grades 7-10. --Hazel Rochman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Some of the stories in this book are really abstract, such as the story of the different kinds of birds vying for an elected position (the chickens want a chicken elected, the crows want a crow, etc.). Or this really weird story of a hamster whose name is taken away and then ends in quite bizarrely. If you are a parent or a teacher who wants to teach about human rights, then you might find a story or two (such as the one about Hurricane Katrina, and there are certainly other resources that tell about that) that could serve as an introduction that would be followed by your own explanation of what

happens/has happened in the real world. Unfortunately, this book pretty much gives a story and then afterwards names (not describes) the particular human right. There's no explanation for the more fable-like stories of what has happened in real life, like who has violated that particular human right. No facts, no short history, no specific names except for one (out of 15) story's author's note about Zimbabwe. (Two other author notes are also included, but one is solely about how the author likes to write and the other just gives the most basic overview of Katrina, which is too basic to be informative). I remember reading about the Holocaust in 7th grade. Young adults can handle the truth, if presented properly (by which I mean, for example, avoiding describing in detail the worst violence or rapes). Perhaps Amnesty International felt internal pressure to accept the stories that were presented by the authors, but I'm not sure really how the stories really contributed to anything. I felt that the fable-like stories were too childish. You often knew the ending or the moral by the second page. I can't see this book holding much interest, and I think I finished it solely because it was what I happened to have. None of the stories made me feel "wow," or were particularly memorable in a good way. This book would have been so much improved if they had done even an introduction or a conclusion with real information. It could also have referred to some real resources at least, since they did not bother to provide much real information. In my opinion, I also would have preferred having the human right Convention named before the story rather than afterwards, as I felt that would have put more emphasis on thinking about the human right than thinking about the particular story (particularly so for the more fable-like stories instead of the ones that were based on some actual real-world truth). So, despite wanting to like this book, and believing that human rights are important to teach, I just feel like I wasted my time. I picked the book up really cheap and still feel ripped off. Not something I would have paid for had I looked at it in a store, so I would definitely say that it isn't worth the list price.

In 1948 following the destruction and human rights abuses of World War II and the Holocaust, the General Assembly of the United Nations convened to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In this fundamentally important document that all member countries were called upon to disseminate and practice, 30 succinct statements, classified as articles, described the conditions under which all human beings deserve to live in a life characterized by fairness and dignity, free of abuse, fear, and want. In this new volume, edited by one of the world's leading non-governmental organizations to protect people's human rights around the world, fourteen writers each contribute a short piece that illustrates his or her interpretations of a particular article in the UDHR. These short stories, verses, and scripts depict in the clearest and most touching ways how

rights to such entities as an education, equal treatment, free speech, rest from work, and a home can make all the difference between a life of decency and one of despair. This book makes a fine introduction, in a dignified and age-appropriate way, for young readers to gain an early appreciation of economic rights as human rights, and of the ever-present need to advocate for social justice no matter how small or large the scope of the injustice.

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