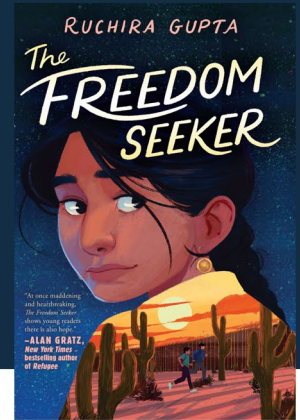


# Ruchira Gupta

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## Education Toolkit The Freedom Seeker



■ A Companion Resource for Teachers, Parents, and Community Leaders

### Common Core Standards (Grades 5–8):

- RL.5.2: Determine themes and summarize the text.
- RL.6.3: Describe plot development.
- W.7.1: Write arguments with evidence.
- SL.8.1: Engage in discussions using evidence.

### 1. Understanding Religious Intolerance and Celebrating Diversity

#### Overview:

Simi's parents come from different religious backgrounds, a fact that brings societal judgment and risk. This mirrors real-world challenges of religious intolerance. On the other hand, she meets children of different religions and ethnicities in a shelter in the US. They offer love and friendship against loneliness.

#### Learning Objectives:

- Define religious intolerance.
- Explore respect for different beliefs.
- Promote inclusive classroom culture.

#### Discussion Questions:

- How does Simi's family handle the prejudice they face?
- Why is respect for different religions and cultures important?
- What emotions did you feel reading about Simi's experience?

#### Classroom Activities:

- **Culture & Faith Day:** Students bring in items, foods, or stories from their own or another culture.
- **Holiday Exchange Posters:** Research and present different religious or cultural holidays.
- **Ally Role Play:** Practice scenarios where students speak up against discrimination.

### Recommended Books & Films:

- *Does My Head Look Big in This?* – Randa Abdel-Fattah
- *The Breadwinner* – Deborah Ellis
- *The Faithful Spy* – John Hendrix
- *Inside Out & Back Again* – Thanhha Lai

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## 2. Learning About Immigration and Refugees

### Overview:

Simi's migration journey—from India to the U.S.—highlights the hardships, hope, and resilience of many refugee families today.

### Learning Objectives:

- Understand the push-and-pull factors of migration.
- Define terms like refugee, asylum seeker, and coyote.
- Empathize with migrant experiences.

### Discussion Questions:

- Why did Simi's family leave India?
- How did crossing borders impact their emotional and physical wellbeing?
- What did Simi learn about trust and survival?

### Classroom Activities:

- **Map Simi's Journey:** Trace her path and annotate challenges she faced at each stage.
- **Write a Letter to a Refugee:** Create empathetic messages of welcome and support.
- **Migration Timeline:** Research another refugee story and compare it to Simi's.

### Organizations to Explore (can be tailored to local context e.g., Arizona/Mexico):

- International Rescue Committee (IRC)

- Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
  - Women's Refugee Commission
  - Borderlinks (Arizona)
  - Kino Border Initiative (Arizona/Mexico border)
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### 3. How You Can Make a Difference

#### Overview:

Inspired by Simi's courage, students can become agents of change in their own communities.

#### Acts of Kindness:

- Greet new classmates.
- Learn about your neighbor's cultural traditions.
- Stand up against bullying.

#### Student Projects:

- **"Welcome Kit" for Newcomers:** Include local maps, cultural do's & don'ts, and letters from students.
- **Donation Drive:** Collect essential supplies for migrant support centers.
- **Samosa & Storytelling Day:** Host a storytelling event celebrating diversity.

#### Real-Life Inspiration:

- PBS Kids videos on youth migration stories.
  - *Esperanza Rising* – Pam Muñoz Ryan
  - *Front Desk* – Kelly Yang
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### 4. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Religious Intolerance:** Lack of acceptance of others' beliefs.
- **Refugee:** Someone fleeing their country due to danger or persecution.
- **Asylum Seeker:** A person seeking legal protection in another country.
- **Coyotes:** Human smugglers.

- **Detention Center:** A facility for holding migrants.
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## 5. Discussion Questions for Parents & Teachers

- What events forced Simi's family to flee?
  - How does the migration journey change their relationship?
  - What does the story teach us about the power of kindness and courage?
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## 6. Thematic Connections & Common Core Alignment

### Themes:

- **Migration & Border Crossings:** Explore the emotional and physical risks involved.
  - **Resilience & Courage:** Investigate how Simi finds hope and strength despite adversity.
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## 7. Further Resources

- NPR: [Indian migrants at U.S. border](#)
  - NYT: [Family death at U.S. border](#)
  - NBC: [Mother separated from children](#)
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### Final Note:

*The Freedom Seeker* is more than a story—it's a bridge to empathy, education, and empowerment. Use this toolkit to foster inclusive conversations and encourage action that reaches far beyond the classroom.

Let me know if you'd like a downloadable PDF version, a presentation-ready format, or if you'd like to localize the resources for your specific region or school.

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