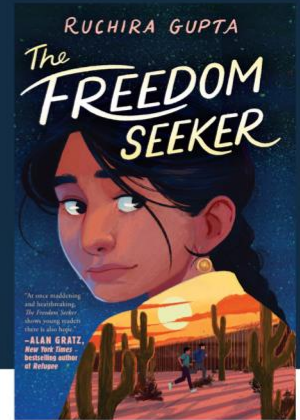


Ruchira Gupta

AUTHOR ARTIST ACTIVIST

Discussion Questions from The Freedom Seeker



CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTERS 1–3: LIFE IN CHANDIGARH

- What kind of student and daughter is Simi? How is her identity shaped by her community?
- Why do you think the author chose to start with a scene about field hockey?
- What pressures are felt by families with mixed religious backgrounds?

CHAPTERS 4–6: THE ESCAPE BEGINS

- How does Simi's family prepare for their departure?
- What does the word 'asylum' mean, and why is it important in this story?
- How does fear begin to shape Simi's worldview?

THEMES AND CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

THEME: MIGRATION & BORDER CROSSINGS

Quote: "I have to remember the path. I have to remember my mother's voice."

- Discussion: What makes crossing the border so dangerous? What is the role of coyotes?
- Activity: Map Simi's journey across India, Spain, Mexico, and the U.S.
- Writing Prompt: Write a journal entry from Simi's perspective as she crosses the desert.

THEME: RESILIENCE & COURAGE

Quote: "Even the desert cannot take away my hope."

- Discussion: What small actions give Simi strength?
- Activity: Create an art piece about personal resilience.
- Research Prompt: What does resilience look like in other migrant stories?

SAMOSAS & STORYTELLING DAY

Host a classroom celebration inspired by *The Freedom Seeker*:

- Serve samosas and invite students to share family stories.
- Create a 'Story Tree' where students hang memories, poems, or drawings.
- Invite a local speaker or read aloud a passage about migration or courage.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

This guide supports the following Common Core ELA Standards for Grades 5–8:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2: Determine theme and summarize text
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3: Describe how a story's plot unfolds
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1: Write arguments with clear reasoning
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1: Engage in collaborative discussions

GLOSSARY

- Asylum: Protection given by a country to someone fleeing persecution.
- Coyotes: Smugglers who help people cross borders illegally.
- COMBAM: A vigilante group featured in the story.
- Hielera: Spanish word for 'icebox', slang for detention centers.
- Detention Center: A facility used to hold migrants and asylum seekers.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- NPR: Indian migrants crossing U.S. border – <https://www.npr.org/2023/02/03/indian-migrants-border>
- NYT: Family who froze to death at U.S. border – <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/14/us/india-migrants-canada-border.html>
- NBC: A mother separated from her children – <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/mother-separated-children-border-returns-home-rcna45992>