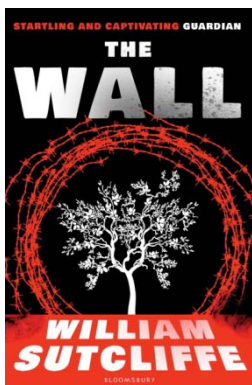


TALKING POINTS

CILIP Carnegie Medal Shortlist 2014



The CILIP Carnegie
& Kate Greenaway
Children's Book
Awards



The Wall

By William Sutcliffe

Before reading

Why do you think the author chose "The Wall" as the title for this book?

The book also has a subtitle, "A modern fable" – why a "fable", do you think?

How much did you know about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict before reading *The Wall*? Did it make you want to find out more?

The setting

The author chose to invent a place – Amarias – rather than using a real place as the setting for his story. Why do you think this is? How would the book have been different if he had used somewhere real?

How is life different for the people on the two sides of The Wall?

Amarias, says Joshua, is "a strange place" – what does he mean? What's strange about it?

The story

What makes Joshua want to go through the tunnel the first time?

What does he notice when he first sees the place he finds at the other end?

And what makes him want to go back a second time?

Why do you think Leila helps him? And why does it take longer for him to win her father's trust?

A lot happens in the last twenty pages of the book – did the ending surprise you?

What is Joshua's final resolution?

The characters

How are Joshua and David different?



Why does Joshua himself come to feel a responsibility for what is happening on the other side of the wall?

Describe the journey Joshua goes on over the course of the book. What has he learned? How has he changed?

On both sides of The Wall there are people who are portrayed sympathetically, and people who are portrayed unsympathetically. Can you think of examples?

Liev is absolutely insistent about his rights, and shows no trace of any doubts at all. Leila's father is also absolutely clear what he is entitled to. But their attitudes are quite different. What motivates these two men to behave the way they do?

How the story is told

Why do you think the author chose to tell this story in the first person?

Why do you think he chose to tell the story from the point of view of a young person – rather than, say, Joshua's mother, or Leila's father?

Whose side is Joshua on in the conflict? Does this change? Whose side are we supposed to be on?

Some themes

Joshua's father has died before the book begins, but he is still a strong presence – in what way?

The book is about the rights to ownership of land. So what do you think is the symbolic significance of

- the fantasy Lego village Joshua keeps under his bed?
- the olive grove?

Some things on this land change quickly (places are built that weren't there before, others are knocked down even quicker); some things endure a long, long time (olive trees being passed down through families) – why do you think the author emphasises these two different timeframes in his story of this place?

Liev thinks Joshua's curiosity about the other side is a symptom of being crazy and that he needs to see a psychologist. Joshua thinks Liev's views are cruel and paranoid. Did you feel at any point in the book that there was a chance that one might be able to persuade the other, or are their views completely irreconcilable?

Does the book conclude with a feeling of hope or hopelessness?

