

# EWB Book Club Meet-up Notes

Date: September 25, 2024

## Land Acknowledgement

We would like to start this session by acknowledging that the land on which we gather here today in Ottawa, is the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Nation. We are making this acknowledgement with the intention of speaking truth and reconciling our history and are grateful to have the opportunity to be present in this territory.

## Opener: Speed Meeting

Amount of time: 5 min (4:05 - 4:10 pm)

## Discussion

Amount of time: 45 minutes (4:10 - 4:55 pm)

### Discussion Questions:

Source: <https://bookriot.com/book-club-discussion-questions>

- Share a favourite quote from the book, why did this quote stand out?
- What new things did you learn?
- What questions do you still have?

### Notes:

Book: [Homes](#)

Favourite quotes:

Braeden:

- Pg 19 - numb to war
- Pg 44 - don't let fear rule your life
- Pg 81 - "When most people hear massarce ..."
- Pg 107 - From soccer to sniper's nest "My heart sank ..."
- Pg 121 - First thought of death "Since coming to Syria"
- Pg 156 - Loyalty to family "No my son..."
- Pg 195 - Homs and Canada comparison "The next morning ..."
- END DISCUSSION HERE Pg 210 - What is a secret wish you have "One day... "

- START DISCUSSION HERE pg 213 - The escape from death is something wonderful “I wondered how to begin”

Sahand - Iraqi

New things we learned:

- Refuge process
  - pg 33 - Insurance
  - Pg 90 - follow-up calls
  - Pg 186 - Reception house

Questions:

- What was Syrian war about?

Ben:

Favorite quote:

- Not a quote but I liked the passage when Bakr needs to get surgery and can't eat any food. In the days leading up to the surgery while he is in the hospital, his dad comes to tease him by eating a shawarma sandwich in his face. I thought it was interesting how even though this family is living through hell being caught in the middle of this war, they are still able to laugh and tease each other. I feel like passages like this really shows the humanity of the people in the story, and it helps me relate to them more. I often feel that when I am reading memoirs like these, it is often easy to distance yourself from the book. It almost feels like at some point, subconsciously I feel like I am reading a story, and not something that someone actually experienced. I feel like passages like these that show the humanity of the people in the story helps me ground myself.

What new things did you learn?

- Overall, learning about events like these through the medium of a book helps you understand the gravity of situations like these. I feel emotionally connected to these characters, something that I cannot get by watching the news for example.
- Although this is only one account of a refugee, I am sure there are many more with similar stories. It gives you perspective.
- Even in the most dire situations, there is always hope. I thought it was inspiring to see the hope of the family throughout the story. Although what they were going through was unspeakably awful, they kept living their lives and hoping for a better future.

Questions:

- At some point in the story, Bakr's father mentions that they had come close to moving to the USA. Had that happened, how different do you think their experience would have been to moving to Canada?

- Is there anything we can do (as in us as individuals) to help people in countries plagued by war?

## Closer: Start, Stop, Continue

Amount of time: 5 minutes (4:55 - 5:00 pm)

### Notes:

Braeden - distribute next book / collect copies of Homes

- Talk about How to Abolish Prisons

| START | STOP | CONTINUE |
|-------|------|----------|
|       |      |          |