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WHY WE LOVE *The Ungrateful Refugee*

Dear Reader,

To describe why we love a book that has at times made us furious, made us cry, made us realize we have a lot more learning to do is a challenge. But, in my opinion, that's precisely what the very best books do, and, because of that, I love *The Ungrateful Refugee*.

A starred review from *Kirkus* calls this book “perfect for our moment,” and it's true—there are more than 25 million refugees in the world, enough to populate an entire—and sizeable—country, and immigration and asylum have become a big part of our national conversation. People in countries all over the world are being asked to welcome refugees in—to, in a very basic sense, provide the grace of hospitality. But that simple act writ large involves perplexing questions about how and when to grant asylum—about what makes someone worthy of entrance, about what dangers are considered justifiably worth fleeing—and in the fear and confusion of all that, we often forget the human experience.

With diligent care and insight, Dina Nayeri uses the true stories she's gathered to help us not only examine those various questions but also, importantly, to consider that human experience: what it means and how it feels to be a refugee. And that focus on the human perspective rather than divisive politics gives us the chance to recognize that the experience of being a refugee, as different as it may first seem, is not so incomprehensible. Even if our own experience isn't directly similar, we've likely faced the discomfort that comes with displacement. Just like the refugees in these stories, we may even have needed others to be patient with us as we've complained—without, ultimately, being ungrateful—and hoped that our new school or new partner or new job or new house will someday feel like home.

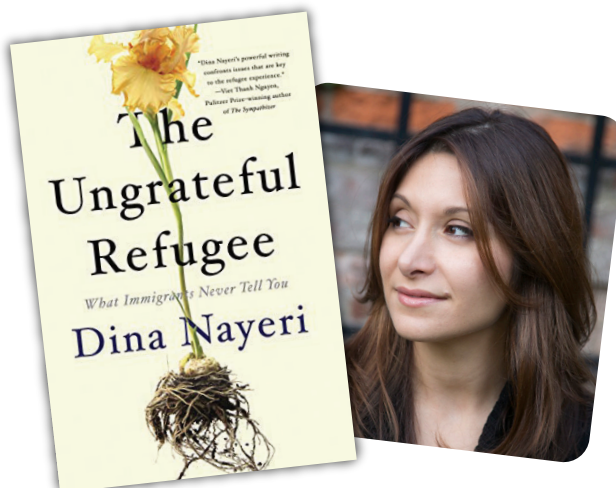
For me, the best book club meetings are ones in which we feel safe to ask ourselves hard questions, and *The Ungrateful Refugee* asks us to do just that. So head to your meeting resolved to give everyone grace while they ask and answer tough questions, knowing that no one will get everything right, knowing that we aren't always going to be easily understood, and knowing that compassion can begin at book club and then move outward.

Happy reading.

-Lindsay Williams, hoopla digital

About the Author

Dina Nayeri was born in Iran during the revolution and arrived in the United States when she was ten years old. She is the winner of the UNESCO City of Literature Paul Engle Prize and a National Endowment for the Arts literature grant, as well as a finalist for the Rome Prize and a *Granta* New Voices pick. Nayeri is the author of two novels—*Refuge* and *A Teaspoon of Earth and Sea*—and her work has been translated into fourteen languages and published in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Granta*, *The Best American Short Stories*, *The O. Henry Prize Stories*, and many other publications. *The Ungrateful Refugee* is her first book of nonfiction. A graduate of Princeton, Harvard, and the Iowa Writers' Workshop, she lives in London.



Selected Praise

Bustle, 1 of 15 Books About Asylum & Immigration That Every Person in the United States Needs to Read

An American Booksellers Association Indie Next Selection

“...one of the most urgently needed works of nonfiction of 2019.”
—**Elena Nicolaou, Refinery29, One of the Best Books of the Month**

“Long after closing the book, I’m haunted by the question she threads carefully underneath all the others: what keeps us from believing in each other?” —**Mira Jacob, author of *Good Talk***

“Dina Nayeri’s powerful writing confronts issues that are key to the refugee experience.”
—**Viet Thanh Nguyen, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Sympathizer* and *The Refugees***

“...a must-read for anyone who needs an insight into the common threads we all share, and a reminder of how important it is to keep them unbroken.” —**Kristin Iversen, NYLON, 1 of the 34 Books You’ll Want to Read This Fall**

“...helps us see beyond a person’s citizenship status to recognize their humanity, most affectingly questioning whether it’s necessary to remove a person’s dignity in order to help them. A much-needed exploration of the refugee experience; Nayeri’s writing will be welcomed by a wide audience.” —**Library Journal**

“An account of not only [Nayeri’s] own story, going from the privileged daughter of educated professionals to a refugee living in an Italian camp to a fiction writer in Iowa City, but of other desperate asylum-seekers who are expected to perform gratefulness for every act of basic human decency. Why must refugees be good? What does ‘good’ or ‘deserving’ mean, anyway?” —**Tomi Obaro, BuzzFeed, 1 of 33 Most Exciting Books Coming Out This Fall**

“...offers a searing, nuanced and complex account of her life as a refugee and of the experiences of other more recent refugees from Syria, Iran and Afghanistan...Nayeri is neither a journalist nor a polemicist. She’s a storyteller who invites our moral engagement.” —**Alden Mudge, BookPage**

“With inventive, powerful prose, Nayeri demonstrates what should be obvious: that refugees give up everything in their native lands only when absolutely necessary—if they remain, they may face poverty, physical torture, or even death... A unique, deeply thought-out refugee saga perfect for our moment.” —**Kirkus Reviews (starred review)**

