

## **Wisp - A Story of Hope**

By Zana Fraillon & Illustrated by Grahame Baker Smith

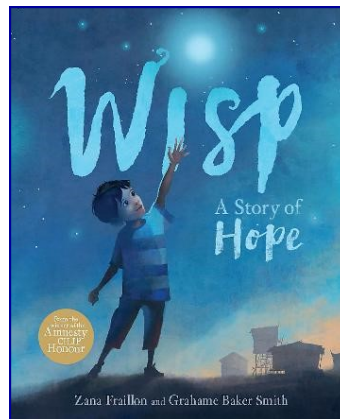
Publisher: Lothian Children's Books

ISBN 9780734418043 SCIS:1874854

\$24.99

**Picture Book of  
the Month**

A refugee story of extraordinary power and beauty from the Amnesty CILIP Honour-winning author of *The Bone Sparrow*, Zana Fraillon, and Kate Greenaway Medal-winning illustrator Grahame Baker Smith. Idris is a child refugee, born into a world of tents and fences. He has known no other life than this. He has no memories of the world outside. Then the Wisp arrives, floating in on the evening breeze. Everyone who holds it finds their memories reawakened, their hopes of freedom reborn. But what about Idris, who has no memories? What will happen when he holds the magical Wisp? Storytelling and imagination have the power to offer hope in this extraordinary picture book.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

### **Themes:**

- Refugees and Detention
- Memories
- Hope

### **Discussion Questions & Activities:**

- Idris and his family have lived in a refugee camp all his life. This sort of upbringing is difficult for those living in safe and secure communities to even imagine. And yet millions of people live like this and governments struggle to deal with this global crisis. Discuss with students the facts of this crisis. For example, explain to students that there are legal requirements for immigration but that many have no option but to flee persecution in ways which are unsafe or may be deemed illegal. How should governments tackle this issue?
- Brainstorm with students how refugees might be assisted and housed, rather than being kept in detention.
- This picture book is about the nourishing power of memory to infuse even the direst of circumstances with a sense of hope. It is also about how flashes of memory can be provoked by a random sensory object. What memories do the people Idris encounters share with him?
- Invite students to share their own happy memory and to write a story about it.
- Hope is a major theme in this book. Idris, despite his terrible circumstances, is offered a dream of a promising future by the Wisp. What is the Wisp? Is it the power of whispering secrets and stories and protests around the world until they grow into a powerful message of hope?
- Idris has no memories of the world outside. What is your earliest memory? How is memory important to who we are?
- Examine the use of language in this text with words such as 'softlied', and 'gentlied'. Sentences are also constructed inventively, for example, 'He watched it wing higher and higher, flying over the fences to where people had forgotten how to welcome wide feel.'
- Write an acrostic poem using the letters in refugee.
- The cover of a book is an important part of its message. What does the image on the cover suggest to the reader? Take into account the way Idris is standing, and the mood evoked by the image. The title page is a double page image of a refugee camp. Draw your own image of this place.
- The images of the Wisp have some similarities to images of a crystal ball. Such balls often predict the future. What might Idris's future hold? [See Worksheet 1]

# WORKSHEETS

## WORKSHEET 1: DRAW THIS IMAGE

Idris's Wisp has visual similarities to a crystal ball. At the end of the book we see him riding a bicycle on a bright summer's day. Draw another image of what you see in Idris's future inside the crystal ball below.

