

11 Words for Love

AUTHOR

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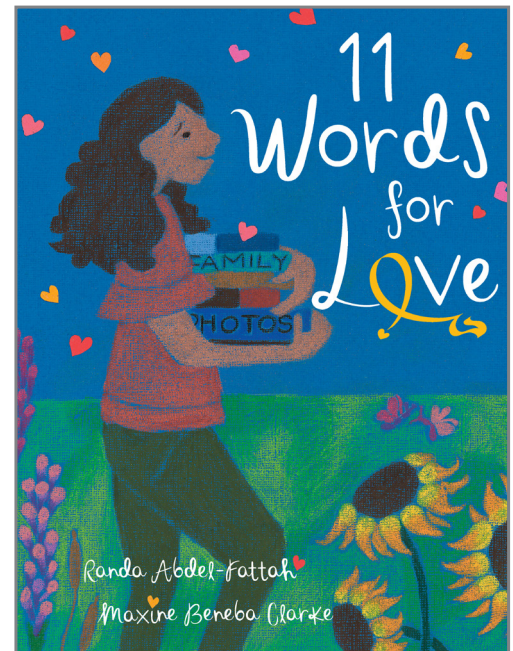
ILLUSTRATOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

There are eleven words for love, and my family knows them all. A family flees their homeland to find safety in another country, carrying little more than a suitcase full of love.

As their journey unfolds, the oldest child narrates 11 meanings for love in Arabic as her family show, and are shown, all different kinds of love in their new home, and they also remember the love they have for their homeland and for those left behind or lost along the way.

In the Arabic language, there are over 50 words describing the degrees of love. That's 50 stories, 50 life-worlds. This lyrical and heartwarming book takes you on a journey through 11 of these Arabic expressions for love.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Randa Abdel-Fattah is a Palestinian Egyptian Muslim writer, academic, former lawyer and the multi-award-winning author of 11 books published in over 20 countries, including multiple translations, stage productions in the US and Australia, and a graphic novel series. Randa has been nominated for Sweden's 2019 and 2018 Astrid Lindgren Award, the world's biggest children's and young adult literature award. Randa is also a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Sociology at Macquarie University.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Maxine Beneba Clarke is a widely published Australian writer of Afro-Caribbean descent. Maxine's short fiction, non-fiction and poetry have been published in numerous publications including *Overland*, *The Age*, *Meanjin*, *The Saturday Paper* and *The Big Issue*.

Her critically acclaimed short fiction collection *Foreign Soil* won the ABIA for Literary Fiction Book of the Year 2015 and the 2015 Indie Book Award for Debut Fiction, and was shortlisted for the Matt Richell Award for New Writing at the 2015 ABIA's and the 2015 Stella Prize. She was also named as one of the Sydney Morning Herald's Best Young Novelists for 2015.

Maxine has published three poetry collections including *Carrying the World*, which won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry 2017 and was shortlisted for the Colin Roderick Award. *The Hate Race*, a memoir about growing up black in Australia won the NSW Premier's Literary Award Multicultural NSW Award 2017 and was shortlisted for an ABIA, an Indie Award, the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards and Stella Prize. *The Patchwork Bike*, Maxine's first picture book, with Van T. Rudd, was a CBCA Honour Book for 2017.

STUDY NOTES**HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)**

- Discuss the different forms of love, such as the love of parents for their children, and children for their parents; the love of grandparents for their grandchildren; the love of kindness shown to us; the love of beauty in nature; the love of learning and reading; the love of pets. What other forms of love are there? Which of these forms of love did you observe in this picture book?
 - How do you express love – in words, in actions, in images or in what other ways?
- There are said to be 50 words describing the degrees of love in Arabic. How many English language words for love do your students know? Make a class list. How many words for love in other languages do you know?
- This story is about a Palestinian family which has left their home to establish themselves in a new country with only a suitcase of memories. Discuss the issue of how immigrants and refugees are treated when they arrive in any new country.
- The suitcase in this story is obviously precious as it contains everything this family has brought with them from home, including photos. How important are memories in maintaining contact with our past?
- Later in the book the child is seen taking Polaroid photos. From then, the photos look new and there is no tape on the edges used to stick them in photo albums. These newer photos denote the making of new memories. How do you preserve your own family's memories? Apart from photos, stories are a powerful way to preserve memories. Encourage members of the class to write down memories which are significant to them.
- This novel shows the refugee family gradually becoming part of a new community, having left the one they knew behind. What makes a community?
- The scenes in this book reveal the kindness of neighbours in the community depicted. For example, the second frame has a girl presenting the narrator with flowers and an attached note which reads 'Welcome to our school.' A school is one form of community. Another frame depicts neighbours speaking over their fences as they go about their daily household chores. A neighbourhood is another form of community. Identify the various 'communities' depicted in this book.
- The words for love are translated in Arabic in this book. In one frame, elderly members of their family at home are emerging from the Dome of the Rock, one of Islam's most revered landmarks located in Islam's third holiest site, the Al-Aqsa compound in the old city of Jerusalem. What other details about Islamic beliefs and Muslim culture did you observe in this book? What do you know about these complex beliefs and cultures? Research and discuss further.
- In some frames women are depicted wearing the hijab, one of the forms of headwear adopted by Muslim women. Read more about the various forms of headwear and what they mean.
- In another frame the family is dancing the traditional Palestinian dance, the dabka. What part does dance play in Palestinian culture?
- The school children depicted in this book are culturally diverse. Discuss with students the diversity of their community. What are the advantages of living in a diverse community?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- The text contains rhyme, for example, meet/feet; kind/entwined. Choose further pairs of rhymed words in this text. Then choose a third rhyming word and create another rhymed sentence which relates to this text.
- The text also contains a repeated refrain: 'There are 11 words for love, and my family knows them all.' What does such repetition cement in the reader's mind?
- What other examples of literary devices did you observe in this novel? For example, alliteration and assonance: 'grows and glows'.
- Write a story about another child arriving in a new place and how they might confront the process of fitting in to a new society and community.

VISUAL LITERACY

- The (front and back) cover of a book is an important part of its message. The suitcase on the back is a symbol

representing not only the journey to a new country, but also a repository of precious things and by implication, of memories. On the front the mother is carrying some of the contents from suitcase—photo albums. Flowers and hearts decorate the image. Do you think this cover works with the story? Why or why not? Design your own cover for this book.

- The endpapers contain an image of the father carrying the suitcase, and the suitcase floating aloft with hearts on strings supporting it. Design a different set of endpapers which might relate to this picture book text.
- The title page depicts a little girl with her back to the viewer holding a suitcase and waving through a window as a plane flies away. What feelings does this image evoke?
- The format of the book is portrait. How does the layout of the storyboard and the format and design of the book influence your reading of it?
- Creating characters entails studying facial expressions and body language. What do the drawings in this book tell the reader about each character?
- Prediction is an important part of reading a picture book. The reader's perspective in observing strong left to right movement across a double-page spread is also important in a picture book, encouraging the reader to follow the action sequentially in a filmic way. Invite students to read and predict what might come next on a subsequent page in this text.
- Symbolism and sub-text is used in the inclusion of hearts (representative of love), sunflowers (which are representative of the sun and of happiness) and the suitcase (representative of memories, as mentioned above), and rainbow colours (representative of diversity) in the visual text. Encourage students to examine these symbolic references and to describe what they mean to them.