Chapter 1

Luma
Luma Mufleh
Luma Mufleh

She was like her father, who kept “his emotions hidden for fear of revealing weakness” (16).

“Luma’s very sensitive but she never shows it” (16).

“Quiet confidence” (16)

Muslim

“A sensitive, even sentimental young woman with a deep concern for those she perceived to be weak or defenseless” (17)
Rhonda Brown

Volleyball coach at her high school

“Brown’s coaching philosophy was built on the belief that young people craved leadership and structure and at the same time were capable of taking on a tremendous amount of responsibility. She didn’t believe in coddling” (19).
“She began to feel at odds with the Jordanian society in which she had grown up. . . . Her family’s social status created additional pressure for her to follow a more traditional path” (20).

“Jordan, while a modern Middle Eastern state, was not an easy place for a woman used to Western freedoms” (22).
Smith College
Highlands, North Carolina
Chapter 2
Beatrice and her Boys
Charles Taylor and child soldiers
Refugee camp
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Resettlement process

- $3000 loan to pay for plane tickets
- Caseworker assigned to each family
- Two-bedroom apartment
- Three months of government assistance
- Job search -- hotel maid -- one-hour commute by bus -- 12+ hour days

Beatrice’s fears for her family

- Mugging
- No friends or close neighbors
- Gang activity and gunshots
Chapter 3

“Small Town . . . Big Heart”
Clarkston, GA

Population: 7200

Goatsville → Clarkston H.S. Angoras

“Typical small Southern town, conservative and white” (34)
Clarkston in the 1970s

Atlanta airport expanded -- became major international hub -- more jobs, more people

Apartment complexes

MARTA (Atlanta’s public transit system) added a rail station in Clarkston

Two Clarkstons -- 1) old houses, and 2) working-class newcomers in new apartments
Clarkston in the 1980s

White people left the apartment complexes ("white flight")

Crime was rising

“Familiar cycle of urban decay” (35)

Refugee resettlement agencies took notice of Clarkston

- Close to downtown Atlanta
- Growing need for low-skilled workers
- Good public transportation
- Cheap housing
- Pedestrian-friendly
Refugees in Clarkston

Late 1980s - early 1990s: Vietnam and Cambodia (southeast Asia)

Survivors of conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo

Former Soviet Union

War-ravaged African countries

“In a relatively short amount of time, Clarkston had completely changed” (36).
Demographic changes in Clarkston

Clothing styles

Restaurants and grocery stores

Mosques and other religious centers

High school -- students from 50+ countries

Examples of crime in refugee populations

“A sense of community was missing” (39).

Fear and resentment
Law enforcement and local government

Police department -- traffic tickets

Refugees felt singled out and harassed

Mayor Lee Swaney

Dispute over resettlement of Somali Bantu refugees
Luma as coach and business owner

YMCA 14-and-under girls’ team

“She was more demanding than any of the girls or their parents expected…” (46).

2003 -- opened a cafe named Ashton’s

“Running Ashton’s was tough” (49).
Discovering soccer in Clarkston

Made a U-turn in a parking lot

Discovered group of boys playing soccer

Asked if she could join in

Got to know the boys and their lives

“The loneliness that resulted from being uprooted was something that Luma intuitively understood” (51).

Decided that the boys needed a free soccer program of their own -- got support from YMCA
Chapter 5

The Fugees Are Born
Jeremiah Ziaty

8 years old

From Liberia

Nickname: “One Shoe”

Resistance from his mother, Beatrice

Hungry
Community center

Enjoyed by refugee community

- They lived in small apartments and were eager to get out and meet other people
- Signed up for English and computer classes

Battle over the town’s identity

Clarkston residents: “They very clearly said they didn’t like all these newcomers here” (55).
Tryouts

Some Muslim students were wary (based on experience with a Christian basketball program)

“She’s a girl...She doesn’t know what she’s talking about” (56).
Problems faced by the Fugees

Profound psychological trauma

Lack of formal education

“The clock was ticking on these young students; if they didn’t get help and find a way to succeed in school, they would fail out or simply get too old for high school, at which point they would be on their own” (59).

Equipment problems

Prejudices and divisions
Chapter 6

Paula
History of the Congo

Exploited by European countries for its natural resources

1960 -- emergence of African nationalism

Patrice Lumumba -- prime minister

“The new nation was really an arbitrary assemblage of ethnic groups and tribes with little in common save their location within an imposed and haphazardly drawn border, so ethnic and tribal tensions immediately set in” (65).
Joseph Desire Mobutu

1965

Tortured and killed Lumumba (“with the blessing, if not the outright aid, of the CIA”)

Renamed the country Zaire

Appointed himself president

Violent dictator
Laurent-Desire Kabila

1997

Led an uprising against Mobutu

Declared himself president

Renamed the country the Democratic Republic of Congo

Targeted his political opponents and anyone who disagreed with him
Paula and Joseph Balegamire

Joseph joined a group that opposed Kabila’s government

Family left the nation’s capital, Kinshasa, and fled to Brazzaville

2001 -- Kabila was assassinated and his son Joseph took over the country -- “…immediately began a crackdown against his father’s political enemies” (68).
Paula and Joseph Balegamire

2001 -- Joseph was arrested and sent to Makala prison

Prison was notorious for extraordinary brutality and human rights abuses

UN promised to expedite resettlement proceedings for wives and children of arrested men

Terrible choice: 1) Stay in Congo; try to get husband out of prison; live in constant fear, or 2) Move to U.S. with children