



Come and share your thoughts with us:



**Wednesday, February 1**

Parent-Child Book Discussion: *Home Is Beyond the Mountains*  
7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Skokie Public Library

**Tuesday, February 28**

Celia Barker Lottridge discusses *Home Is Beyond the Mountains*  
5 p.m. NTS ELL Parent Center  
6:30 p.m. Highland School

**Wednesday, February 29**

Book Discussion: *Children of War*  
12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.  
Oakton Community College  
Skokie Campus, Room P103

**Wednesday, March 7**

Deborah Ellis will discuss her book *Children of War*  
10:30 a.m. Niles North High School  
7 p.m. Skokie Public Library

**Friday, March 9**

Deborah Ellis will discuss her book *Children of War*  
10:30 a.m. Niles West High School  
1:30 p.m. NTS ELL Parent Center

**Thursday, March 15**

Book Discussion: *Children of War*  
7:30 a.m. Niles West High School  
3:30 p.m. Niles North High School

**Tuesday, February 21**

Book Discussion: *Gilgamesh*  
7:30 p.m. Skokie Public Library

**Thursday, February 23**

Book Discussion: *Gilgamesh*  
10 a.m. Skokie Public Library

**Wednesday, March 21**

Book Discussion: *Gilgamesh*  
10 a.m. Skokie Public Library

**Thursday, March 22**

Book Discussion: *Gilgamesh*  
7:30 p.m. Skokie Public Library



### *Home Is Beyond the Mountains*

1. Samira suffers many great losses, from family deaths to the loss of her home. Does Samira grieve? What enables her to continue on? How would you recover from this kind of devastating loss?
2. How will taking on so many adult roles so early in life change Samira's development into an adult?
3. How does Miss Shedd make sure that the children bond with their "families" before the trip back home across the mountains? What makes a family?
4. Why does Miss Shedd ask the children to write rules for the Hamadan Orphanage? Do you think the rules they write are good? What rule would you put on the list?
5. At the end of the book, Samira decides to go back to her village while her brother chooses not to go. How is Samira's refugee experience as a girl different from her brother's? What would you have chosen? Why?
6. Is the ending of the book what you expected? Why or why not?
7. What are your hopes for Samira and the other orphans in the book?
8. Clearly, "home" is a major theme in the book. What does "home" mean to a displaced population and their cultural identity? What does this book teach you about the Assyrian diaspora and the effects of being far from home?





### *Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees*

1. If you only had three words to describe your impression of this work, what would these three words be?
2. What was going through your mind when you were reading about these children suddenly losing their homes and parents and having to relocate to other places?
3. Were there events or scenes in the book that were hard for you to read? Why?
4. What did you learn about the effects of war after reading this book?
5. Have you or someone you know experienced anything similar to what these children are going through?
6. Are there lessons to be learned from these children's stories? What are they?
7. Some of the children in the book speak about the American people in a negative way. What are the reasons for that? What would you say to these children in order to change their view of Americans?
8. Having finished this book, do you feel hope for the children? Why or why not?
9. What is one thing you'll remember about this book?
10. What do you think was the author's motivation for writing this book?
11. Did this book change your views in some way? Explain.
12. Are the issues in the book controversial? In what way?



## *Gilgamesh*

1. Gilgamesh was composed more than 4,000 years ago. Is it still relevant to us today? In what ways?
2. This epic tells the stories of two heroes: Gilgamesh and Enkidu. How do their individual stories compare or contrast with each other?
3. Gilgamesh doesn't achieve immortality, he can't save his friend's life, and he loses the plant that restores youth. Do you think that Gilgamesh is a failure? Why do you think this story has survived through time?
4. Does Gilgamesh change over the course of the story? If so, how? Why is that important?
5. The tablets containing the standard version of Gilgamesh were found in the ruins of an Assyrian king's library. Do you think the poem contains useful lessons for leaders?
6. Gilgamesh includes several responses people have to their own mortality. What are these responses and what are their limitations?
7. There are three worlds in Gilgamesh: the City, the Wild, and the Divine. How are these worlds distinguished and where do they intersect? What are the good and bad points of each? Where do Gilgamesh and Enkidu fit?
8. What do you make of the ending of the poem? Is it at all satisfying?
9. In what ways does Gilgamesh prefigure later literary works such as Homer's epics and stories in the Bible?

