

A LONG WALK TO WATER



3 September 2025
Chapters 1 & 2

60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

IRA

The story is about children from the Southern Sudan. The events described take place 23 years apart. Nya an 11-year-old girl is tall for her age, going, playing with the big plastic container held only air.

Salva, an 11-year-old boy, is at his Arabic language class and is well aware of how lucky he is to be able to go to school. But his mind is far from Arabic: he is absorbed in memories of herding cattle with his brothers. How, depending on brothers' age, they are responsible for a certain number of heads of cattle. How Salva and the other boys make cows out of clay in the time that remains because cows don't require much care. Or how they practice with their bows and arrows, shooting at small animals or birds and if one of them manages to kill some animal there is a lot of work to do: wood, fire, roasting and eating, only enough for each boy to have a few but how delicious bites.

He returns in his mind to the class and looks forward to going home and having a bowl of fresh milk. But the noise has come outside. Gunfire!

The teacher shouts: "Everyone down!" When the shooting dies down, the teacher tells all the students to quickly go not home, but into the bushes.

Salva remembers that war has started 2 years earlier because the people from the Southern Sudan didn't want to be forced to practice Islam are fighting against the government.

When Salva approaches the door, he sees everyone running through the dust hanging in the air. Salva runs away from home.

60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

IRA

We see Nya is sitting on the ground and trying using a thorn to poke and prod at a big thorn that has broken off right in the middle of her heel.

Salva runs until he is exhausted, and then walks until sunset. Many other people are walking too. As darkness falls, people stop and talk in whispers. The men decide that the villages should group by villages to find someone they know. Salva hears the name of his village and recognizes several people, but none from his family. They sleep right there by the road.

In the afternoon, he sees a group of soldiers and word "rebels" passed the crowd. The rebels escort the villagers to their camp and then divide the village into two groups: one group includes the men, the other includes the women, children and the elderly.

Salva hesitates for a moment, he is only 11 years old, but his father always told him to act like a man. He takes a few steps towards the men, but the soldier approaches Salva and uses his gun to lift Salva's chin for getting a better look at his face.

He points to Salva towards the group of women and children. The next morning the rebels with the village men that carry supplies: guns and mortars, shells, radio equipment move on from the camp. The group of women and children, which includes Salva, moves in the opposite direction from the rebels, where there are rebels, there is sure to be fighting.

Salva's group finds a barn in which to spend the night. But when Salva wakes up he realizes that he is alone. They have left him.

60-SECOND SUMMARIZER

MONICA

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VOCABULARY BUILDER

FLAVIA

CRADLE(D)

(noun) an infant's bed or crib ; a framework

Ex: "The baby is sleeping in his cradle."

(verb) hold gently and protectively

Ex: "She cradled the baby in her arms until he fell asleep."

HALT (ED)

(verb) to (cause to) abrupt stop moving or doing something or happening

Ex: "Halt!" called the guard. "You can't go any further without a permit."

SIZZLE (D)

(verb) (of food) make a hissing sound when frying or cooking.

Ex: "The bacon began to sizzle in the pan."

THUMPING

(adjective) pounding or throbbing in a heavy, continuous way.

Ex: "The thumping beat of her heart."

Informal : of an impressive size, extent, or amount.

Ex: "A thumping 64 percent majority."

TO POKE(D)

(verb) jab or prod (someone or something), especially with one's finger.

Ex: "She poked her friend to see the handsome boy."

Ex: "She gave the fire a poke"

Ex: "I poked my head around the door to see what was going on."

THRUST (something) in a particular direction.

(noun) an act of poking someone or something.

VOCABULARY BUILDER / SOUND SPOTTER

CRISTY

Droned / Make a continuous low sound (page 2)
“The teacher droned on with the lesson, about the Arabic language”

Cattle / Large ruminant animal with horns domesticated for milk (page 2) “He owned many head of cattle and worked as their village’s judge”

Aimless / without purpose or direction (page 4) “ The boys’ aimless play halted and there was suddenly a lot of work to do”

Littered / make a place messy (page 8) “ but the torns littered the ground everywhere”

Prod / Someone pointed object (page 8) “ Then she picked up another thorn and used it to poke and prod at the first one”

Flooded / Cover with water (page 9) “Relief flooded trough him”

Hesitated / Pause before saying or doing something (doubt) (page 10) “Salva hesitated for a moment”

Strengthened / make or become stronger (page 11) “ Somehow, this thought strengthened him enough to keep him from collapsing in terror”

Aiming it / Point or direct (a weapon) at a target (page 11) “ He was not aiming it; he was using it to lift Salva’s chin so he could get a better look at his face “

Shouldered / Put something heavy over one shoulder or two (page 12)” The men shouldered the heavy equipment and left the camp”

Restlessly / Inability to stay still (page 12) “ Salva restlessly in the itchy hay”

SOUND SPOTTER

MARIA

Droned on: To speak for a long time in a dull voice without saying any interesting.

It can also describe a person who speaks in a monotonous, boring way that puts listeners to sleep.

Clay: Is a natural, sticky, earthy material made of tiny rock particles that becomes hard when baked or dried.

Aimless play: Refers to activities that are without a clear goal, purpose, or direction.

Ducking: Lower the head or the body quickly to avoid a blow or so as not be seen.

Hunching: Raise (one's shoulders) and bend the top of one's body forward.

"He thrust his hand in his pockets, hunching his shoulders"

CONNECTION MAKER

LISA

The book begins by telling the stories of two children from the Sudan region: one in 1985, an 11-year-old boy was at school when a civil war suddenly started, and the other history, more than 20 years later, about an 11-year-old girl who walks a long distance in search of water.

These are sad stories that make us reflect on how war can destroy a country, our lives, our families, and our resources.

It relates to current events because many people today still face war, refugee crises, and lack of clean water.

For example, in 2022 Russia started an invasion in Ukraine territory. So many people died in this conflict and the others are struggling with basic resources. So many losses to the economic and the fight continue to happen nowadays.

CONNECTION MAKER

ESMERALDA

Not yet submitted

EMOTIONS EXPLORER

YULIANNA

As I read these two first chapters, my emotions kept shifting from one to another. In the beginning of chapter one, I felt peace, love, and a sense of a steady life. But in the blink of an eye, everything changed—fear, shock, deep pain, and, in the end, loneliness.

WORD ARTIST

LILY S.

Pick a scene. Help your group “see” it by using sensory, descriptive language.

Who is there?

What’s happening?

Where is it happening?

What does it look like? Feel like? Sound like? Smell like? Taste like?

Skills: descriptive language, visualization, adjectives

WORD ARTIST

FATEMEH

Pick a scene. Help your group “see” it by using sensory, descriptive language.

Who is there?

What’s happening?

Where is it happening?

What does it look like? Feel like? Sound like? Smell like? Taste like?

Skills: descriptive language, visualization, adjectives

PREDICTION MAKER

YARIELA

With only 11 years old, Nya is going through a painful situation because she got a thorn in the middle of her heel and she is trying to recover it. After this episode, I think she will continue her way.

Salva woke up in the barn confused, and I think he is going to look for his group and ask them why they left him alone.

PREDICTION MAKER

ANA

Pick a scene. Help your group “see” it by using sensory, descriptive language.

Who is there?

What’s happening?

Where is it happening?

What does it look like? Feel like? Sound like? Smell like? Taste like?

Skills: descriptive language, visualization, adjectives