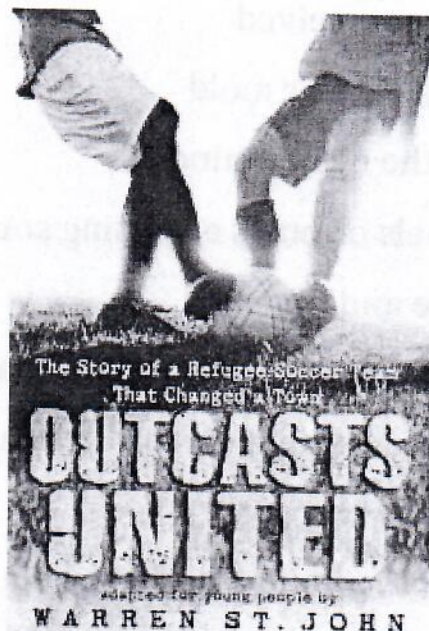


OUTCASTS UNITED NOVEL STUDY GUIDE



NAME: _____ Class Period: _____

DO NOT LOSE THIS STUDY GUIDE!

BULLETED NOTES FROM VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR:

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Vocabulary- You will have a quiz over these words and definitions on **Friday, March 3rd**.

1. adamant-very hard native crystalline carbon valued as a gem
2. goad-stab or urge on as if with a pointed stick
3. palpable-capable of being perceived
4. intractable-difficult to manage or mold
5. conspicuous-obvious to the eye or mind
6. cordon-a series of sentinels or posts enclosing some place or thing
7. idyllic-charmingly simple and serene
8. innocuous-not injurious to physical or mental health
9. foible-a minor weakness or peculiarity in someone's character
10. aggrieve-cause to feel sorrow
11. consolidate-form into a solid mass or whole
12. squalid-foul and run-down and repulsive
13. gaudy-tastelessly showy
14. incongruous-lacking in harmony or compatibility or appropriateness
15. vertiginous-having or causing a whirling sensation; liable to falling
16. proclivity-a natural inclination
17. contrite-feeling or expressing pain or sorrow for sins or offenses
18. incensed-angered at something unjust or wrong
19. paltry-contemptibly small in amount
20. disparate-fundamentally different or distinct in quality or kind
21. taciturn-habitually reserved and uncommunicative
22. irascible-quickly aroused to anger
23. contrived-showing effects of planning or manipulation
24. corollary-an inference following from the proof of another proposition
25. precipitous-extremely steep

The Washington Post

Lost in America, Found on a Field

By Steven V. Roberts

OUTCASTS UNITED

A Refugee Soccer Team, an American Town

My grandfather, Avram Rogowsky, was not a man of small dreams. Born in Bialystok, a town that's now in eastern Poland, he moved to Palestine as a teenager and worked on the first roads ever built in Tel Aviv. After returning home, falling in love and getting drafted, he decided that life in the czar's army was not a good career move. He jumped off the troop train and bribed his way onto a ship headed to the Holy Land. After realizing that the Ottoman-ruled region was no place for a young bride, he sent a message to my grandmother back in Bialystok: Change of plan, meet me in Brooklyn.

Grandpa Abe reached America on April 7, 1914, because he was confident and conniving, ambitious and ornery -- just the sort of immigrant Barack Obama had in mind when he said in his inaugural address that this country was built by "the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things." I thought of Abe when I picked up "Outcasts United" by New York Times writer Warren St. John. It centers on the Fugees, a team of soccer-playing misfits from a dozen war-ravaged countries transplanted to Clarkston, Georgia, and their dynamic coach, Luma Mufleh, an immigrant from Jordan. Almost 100 years after my grandfather's arrival, America is still renewed by fresh transfusions of foreign blood.

The book started as a newspaper article, published in January 2007, that prompted a huge response -- tons of donated cash and equipment, plus a book contract for St. John and a movie deal that financed a team bus and a new school, the Fugees Academy. You can read the book or wait for the movie, but the book is worth the effort. This story is too textured for Hollywood. The film will undoubtedly portray Coach Mufleh as a tough-but-tender soul who forges an adorable group of multicolored young athletes into a cohesive unit and teaches them the Meaning of Life and the Joys of Diversity.

Clarkston became a dumping ground for relief agencies looking to relocate refugees from Burundi and Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. There was good public transportation and plenty of affordable housing, but throwing kids from 50 different countries into an all-white high school was crazy, "and the result was a raw and exceptionally charged experiment in getting along." Some locals reacted badly, especially Mayor Lee Swaney, who decreed that only American sports such as baseball could be played on city fields, not soccer. Others emulated Bill Mehlinger, who turned a local grocery store into a booming bazaar selling fish sauce to the Vietnamese, cassava powder to the Africans and whole lambs to the Middle Easterners.

But no statistic can convey the human dimension of immigration, and no movie can fully evoke the emotional damage inflicted on families driven from their homelands by boundless brutality. Beatrice Ziaty and her children (three sons played for the Fugees) fled out the back door of their house in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, as her husband was being killed in the front room. Most immigrants to America come eagerly, after years of saving and scheming; they stay in touch with kinfolk back home via cellphones and e-mail and retain a sense of connection and community. The refugees of Clarkston were uprooted against their will. "There's no point in thinking about where to go back to," said Paula Balegamire, whose husband languished in a Congolese prison, "because there's nowhere to go back to."

Coach Mufleh didn't have anywhere to go back to, either. When she decided to stay in America after graduating from Smith College, her father cut her off, so she moved to Atlanta because she liked the weather and found work washing dishes. She started shopping in Clarkston for familiar foods -- yogurt, hummus, pita bread -- and one day saw a group of refugee boys playing soccer in a parking lot. She watched for an hour and discovered a calling. She realized that soccer was the answer to "the boys' isolation from the new world around them and their desire to connect." Goal and grit are the same in Albanian and Swahili. And English.

Mufleh became much more than a coach. She tutored the kids in their lessons, found jobs and food for their families and filled the gap left by overworked and undermanned social service agencies. "You start off on your own," she says, "and you suddenly have a family of 120." In truth, she can overdo the "tough" part of "tough love." I cringed when she banished Mandela Ziaty for insubordination, called her players "a pathetic excuse for a soccer team" and told them that they "deserved to lose." "Control freak" is the same in any language, too.

Those are quibbles, though. This is an uplifting tale celebrating the most old-fashioned of virtues: diligence, self-discipline, regard for others. Phil Kitchin, pastor of a church that caters to the refugee community, put it this way: "Jesus said heaven is a place for people of all nations. So if you don't like Clarkston, you won't like heaven." As the Christian players said after their pre-game prayer, "Amen." And as the Muslims added, "Amin."



NONFICTION READING ASSIGNMENT:

Based on the WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE IN THIS PACKET:

DUE DATE: MON – March 6th

DIRECTIONS: First you will read the article found on page 3 of this packet. Then follow the steps below as you have done previously.

After reading your article you will complete the following information in a word document. MAKE SURE YOUR NAME IS ON THE DOC and email it to me (ckearns@apsk12.org) .

1. **MLA HEADING (Google it ☺)**
2. **Factual Summary: Write a short summary of the piece you read.**
3. **Vocab: With which vocabulary words if any did you encounter some difficulty understanding?**
4. **How did you make sense of these words...what do they mean?**
5. **Interpretation: Why was this newsworthy?**
6. **Criticism: Do you agree/disagree with this writer's review of the novel?**
7. **Why – make sure to explain your answers to number 6.**

WRITTEN REFELCTIONS TO BE COMPLETED AS WE READ THE NOVEL –

1. Do you prefer to read stories about local or global characters and events? What are some of the benefits of reading and learning about global issues?

2. What were some of the hardships that refugees faced before coming to America? What about after they got here?

3. Why was Clarkston, Georgia chosen for the refugee settlement and how did this place change because of the refugees?

4. What does diversity mean to you? Is it something you actively encourage in your reading, watching, listening, and living patterns? How?

“I AM” POEM – Follow the guidelines given below to create your own “I AM” poem. Type this and print it...due Monday, March 13th

I Am

I am *(two characteristics about yourself)*
I wonder *(something you are actually curious about)*
 I hear *(an imaginary sound)*
 I see *(an imaginary sight)*
 I want *(an actual desire)*
 I am *(the first line repeated)*
I pretend *(something that you actually pretend to do)*
 I feel *(a feeling about something)*
 I touch *(an imaginary touch)*
I worry *(something you actually worry about)*
 I cry *(something that makes you sad)*
 I am *(the first line repeated)*
I understand *(something you know is true)*
 I say *(something you believe in)*
I dream *(something you actually dream about)*
 I try *(something you make an effort toward)*
 I hope *(something you actually hope for)*
 I am *(the first line repeated)*

Make it personal: add a photo, draw a picture of something you love, write your name creatively on your work...you decide but make it your own 😊 Please make sure it looks “bulletin-board ready” before handing it in.

Chapter Questions

Directions: Answer the chapter questions (as you read) using the blank pages at the end of this packet.

Chapter 1 Questions:

How is the example of Luma making her cousins and sister run while she trailed behind in a car an example of, as St. John calls it, "tough love in action" (17)? What did it teach and how?

How does what we learn about Luma's developing coaching philosophy foreshadow one of the main themes of the book? (1st full paragraph on p. 20.)

What competing pressures does Luma start to grapple with as she starts to grow older and begins coaching the junior varsity girls' soccer team at the American Community School?

What American qualities and or characteristics of life is Luma attracted to even though staying in America means making a serious break with her family?

Chapter 2 Questions:

Why do you suppose St. John quotes from the book, *The Fate of Africa*, to give details about cannibalism and the 'Butt Naked Brigade' rather than just retelling details as he did with the historical facts about Liberia?

Were you surprised to learn that refugees have to repay the costs of their plane fare to the Office of Refugee Resettlement? Given the refugee's circumstances, does this rule seem fair? To what extent might this idea have positive consequences, to what extent might it place an undue burden on refugees?

How does the fact that Beatrice's children had no access to education during their five years in the refugee camp, foreshadow difficulties they might encounter when placed into the public school system in Clarkston?

Chapter 3 Questions:

Chapter Three describes a study led by Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam that states that inhabitants of hyperdiverse communities tend to withdraw from collective life and distrust their neighbors. Are you surprised by Putnam's findings? Why or why not? How can communities best overcome this unfortunate tendency?

Chapter 4 Questions:

The mother of one of the players on Luma's girls 14 and under team said about Luma, "She helped cultivate them and truly gave them more skills than soccer" (48). Discuss what skills the mother is referring to and what she means by "cultivate."

What characteristics and values did Luma notice in the refugee boys' pick-up soccer matches that attracted her to these players?

What does the chapter title, "Alone Down South," lead readers to believe the chapter will be about? Is that expectation fulfilled? What other, perhaps more informative, titles could be given to this chapter?

Chapter 5 Questions:

Given what St. John has revealed about the refugees in Clarkston so far, are you surprised to read Emanuel Ransom's comment that from among the refugees, "Nobody wants to help—it's just give me, give me, give me" (55)? What might be the reasons the long-time residents of Clarkston get that impression?

What do you suppose Emanuel Ransom means when he refers to "real Americans" (55) as deserving of programs at the Clarkston Community Center?

Chapter 6 Questions:

St. John begins the chapter by providing three pages of background information about the political history of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Why does he do this? What does he want readers to know and realize?

In recounting Paula's story, St. John creates a certain mood that predominates in the chapter. Describe this mood. What words, phrases, or passages are particularly effective in creating this mood?

Chapter 7 Questions:

What is the meaning of the chapter title? What tendencies and values are communicated by the incident that it refers to?

When St. John says, in referring to the Fugees, "It was as if they were some sort of Rorschach test for the people they encountered on the field" (78), what does he mean? Does he assume readers know what a Rorschach test is? Why or why not?

Chapter 8 Questions:

What predictions can you make about the content of the chapter from its title? What cultural knowledge allows you to make this prediction?

Does the chapter title point to negative, positive, or more complicated attitudes and values?

Chapter 9 Questions:

What details in the chapter does the title refer to? What point is the author seeking to make with the title?

To what extent is Nyok's statement "When I came to America I heard it was the land of opportunity, and indeed it was" (90), put into question by the city of Clarkston's refusal to let the Lost Boys' team play soccer on Armistead Field?

Chapter 10 Questions:

What qualities is Luma most interested in when selecting players? Why are these qualities important to her?

Chapter 11 Questions:

This chapter presents examples of colliding cultural values and childrearing practices. For example, in Africa, corporal punishment is practiced as a means of instilling respect and obedience. In America, this constitutes child abuse and has serious legal consequences for parents and children. Discuss Beatrice's dilemma (124). What solutions are available to her, if any?

Chapter 12 Questions:

During halftime, Fortunatee tells the Fugees "Coach is just a coach. She cannot show us how to play soccer. Is she playing? No – we are. The skills we got, we don't need her." (131) But after describing the second half and the game's outcome, Warren St. John concludes that "The Fugees were exhausted, and without their coach they were lost" (132). Discuss the reasons for these two seemingly contradictory points of view.

Chapter 13 Questions:

Given the need and desire of refugees to integrate themselves into American culture, why do you think Luma's "psychological manipulation" of telling her team that they were "playing like them," meaning the mostly white American opponents, was successful in motivating the team to win?

Why do you think Luma says after the Fugee's 5-1 win that, "It wasn't your best game, but a good game" and then tells them what they need to work on? Why didn't she just praise them for their win?

Chapter 14 Questions:

What effect do the details about the effects of the telemarketing scams on refugees have on readers? How might refugee resettlement agencies anticipate and prevent these problems?

How do refugees come to think of America as "the land of plenty" and "paradise"? What are the consequences of this belief for refugees? What steps might be taken by resettlement agencies to create a more accurate vision and expectation?

Chapter 15 Questions:

What does the title of this chapter refer to? Who is trying again?

What do you think motivates Luma to take on this new Under 15 team even though she is exhausted?

Chapter 16 Questions:

Discuss Mandela's behavior before and during the scrimmages and his seeming lack of interest in "getting to know the new players" (157). To what extent does his behavior surprise you and to what extent is it understandable?

Chapter 17 Questions:

Describe Kanue's influence on the team. What specific actions suggest the type of influence he has?

Chapter 18 Questions:

Do you anticipate that the events discussed in this chapter will help Luma make her case to the City Council for shifting practices and games to Armistead Field? Why or why not?

Chapter 19 Questions:

Discuss Brenda White's comment "I don't think it's fair that we had to cater to the foreign people rather than them trying to change to our way of doing things" (177). What thoughts and attitudes does it reveal? To what extent can you see her point and to what extent is her view problematic?

Chapter 20 Questions:

What is the significance of the chapter title "The Soccer People?" What undercurrent of sentiments does it reveal?

Chapter 21 Questions:

What is the purpose of the repetition of "If you keep getting beat up on the same road, take a different road" (197)? Within the context of the chapter, could the sentence have more than one meaning?

Tic-Tac-Toe for Student Choice Activities:

<p>1. Type a <u>letter</u> to a character in the story telling him/her how your life is similar OR how your life is very different from theirs. Make sure to include:</p> <p>Heading, Greeting</p> <p>Body (4-6 sentences)</p> <p>Closing</p> <p>Signature</p>	<p>2. Produce a 2 minute <u>news report</u> about an incident that happened in the story.</p> <p>Make sure your filming is clear.</p> <p>The events and reporting flows in logical order.</p> <p>Voice, music, or other sounds are clear and understandable.</p>	<p>3. Type a two paragraph <u>epilogue</u> to this book telling what happened to one character after <i>Outcasts United</i> ends.</p> <p>At least 2 paragraphs,</p> <p>Correct grammar, spelling, and mechanics,</p> <p>Well organized and easy to follow.....has consistent character traits when compared to novel.</p>
<p>4. Team up with a classmate and <u>role play</u> a scene from the novel. Make sure that you dress accurately for the parts.</p> <p>Dialog for all characters must be clear and rehearsed.</p> <p>Must turn in a neatly typed script.</p> <p>Must portray the scene accurately.</p>	<p>5. Make a <u>TIME LINE</u> sequencing at least 8 of the major events from the novel.</p> <p>It must have –</p> <p>TITLE</p> <p>Events in chronological order.</p> <p>Well plotted time spans</p> <p>At least two illustrations</p> <p>Correct spelling throughout.</p>	<p>6. Draw at least 3 <u>COMIC STRIPS</u> and make sure the dialogue is realistic for the book characters.</p> <p>Frames must be in correct sequence.</p> <p>Tells story through pics.</p> <p>Characters and objects are clearly drawn.</p> <p>Creative and original.</p> <p>Has title and at least a one line caption for each panel.</p>
<p>7. Type a <u>letter</u> to the author telling her why you liked the book OR why you didn't like it. Give valid reasons.</p> <p>Make sure.....</p> <p>Your likes or dislikes are clearly stated.</p> <p>3 or more reasons are given to support your view.</p> <p>Reasons are supported by book evidence.</p> <p>Correct spelling, grammar, and mechanics throughout.</p>	<p>8. Create a <u>movie poster</u> for the film version of this story.</p> <p>Make sure that you have realistic photo,</p> <p>rating, reviews listed on the poster,</p> <p>and a cast of actors/actresses that is realistic to play the parts.</p>	<p>9. Make an <u>information cube</u> about the novel with the following on the 6 different sides:</p> <p>Title</p> <p>List of main characters</p> <p>Setting – description</p> <p>General plot summary</p> <p>Your favorite part</p> <p>Illustration of one scene.</p> <p>Cube must be sturdy and have 6 sides.</p>

