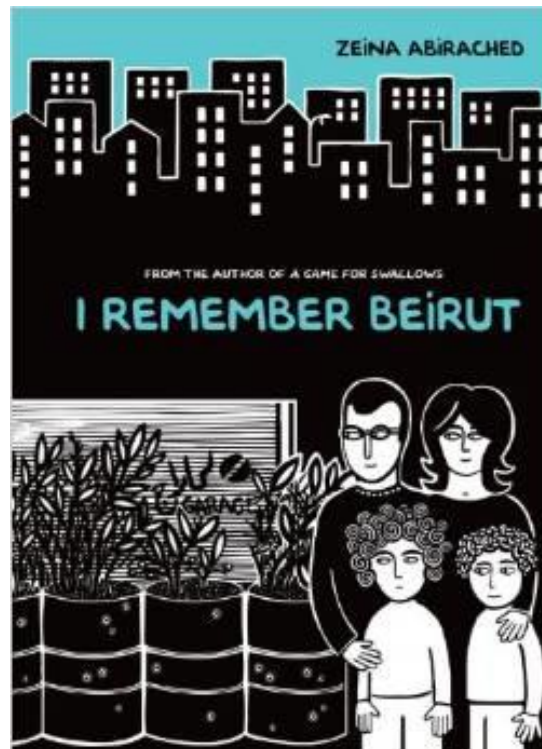


**Children and Young Adult Book Review**  
*Middle School*  
**I Remember Beirut**

Educator Reviewer: Yunying Xu  
Student Reviewer: Anna Frances Julian



Abirached, Z. (2014). *I remember Beirut*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Group.

### Educator Review:

This graphic novel was written by Zeina Abirached (2014) who lived through the 1975 to 1990 Lebanese Civil War. The novel was written from Abirached's ten year-old self and provides readers with vivid stories of how the war affected the lives of the Lebanese people. The book touches on three primary themes: school, family and life after war.

Zeina shares her experiences through text and black and white graphics. Her stories of going to school will make readers hesitate before they think about taking school for granted. Zeina had to travel to a different neighborhood to ride the school bus because her neighborhood was too dangerous for the school bus to travel. Sometimes the school was destroyed by the war, or soldiers blocked the road to the school. She relates stories of her father turning up the volume of the music to mask the chaotic sounds of war outside. Spending a day with family to celebrate a birthday was precious; the family never knew if they would have the chance to celebrate the next birthday together.

The author also discusses how her life changed after the war. Freedom and peace were valuable and cherished by the family. Zeina describes and the first time she went was still fighting downtown, the violence simply because She remembers, for her after the war and how she had was hard-won.

*Her stories of going to school will make readers hesitate before they think about taking school for granted.*

the luxury of a comfortable shower downtown after the war. While there after the war, towns-people braved the downtown area was finally open. audience, the first dollar she had dare not spend it. Everything she

This book targets the late student. Students who come experienced war on their soil children who live through for freedom and peace. Students will gain perspective about living in a society where many goods and services are accessible as compared to living in a country where products simply are not available. Reading this book can provide them with a new way to think about their lives.

elementary to middle school from countries who have not will learn about the experiences of wars in which countries are fighting

This book can also be used in cross-curricular settings, especially social studies. There is bountiful information on the geography and history of Lebanon. For example, teachers and students can explore the route of how the author and her family escaped Beirut or discuss the history of the Lebanese Civil War.

While this book is interesting and accessible for most readers, there may be concerns for educators who plan to use this book in the classroom or recommend this text to students. First, the graphics in the book are in black and white, so may be overlooked for more colorful graphic novels. Second, the order of the dialogue bubbles are not always clear; occasionally I had to re-read dialogue to understand what was going on. With support, however, students will enjoy this autobiographical graphic novel.

Yunging Xu  
The University of Georgia, Athens, GA

**Student Review:**

The book *I Remember Beirut* is about a girl whose family is affected by a war in the Middle East. I think this book is important because it shows how war affects everyday people. It affects how they live and it affects everything. Why would I recommend this book? It has beautiful illustrations; the art is great! It's a really quick read. It's thought-provoking and makes you think and that's a good thing in a book. The type of people who would enjoy this book? Anyone really. I think younger children might not want to read it because it talks about war. But middle grade, young adult, even adults would like it. It's for almost everyone. What did I like best about this book? I really liked the illustrations and I loved the setting of Lebanon. It was a very, very beautiful book and it made me think about war in a different way.

Anna Frances Julian  
Clarke Middle School, Athens, GA  
Grade 7