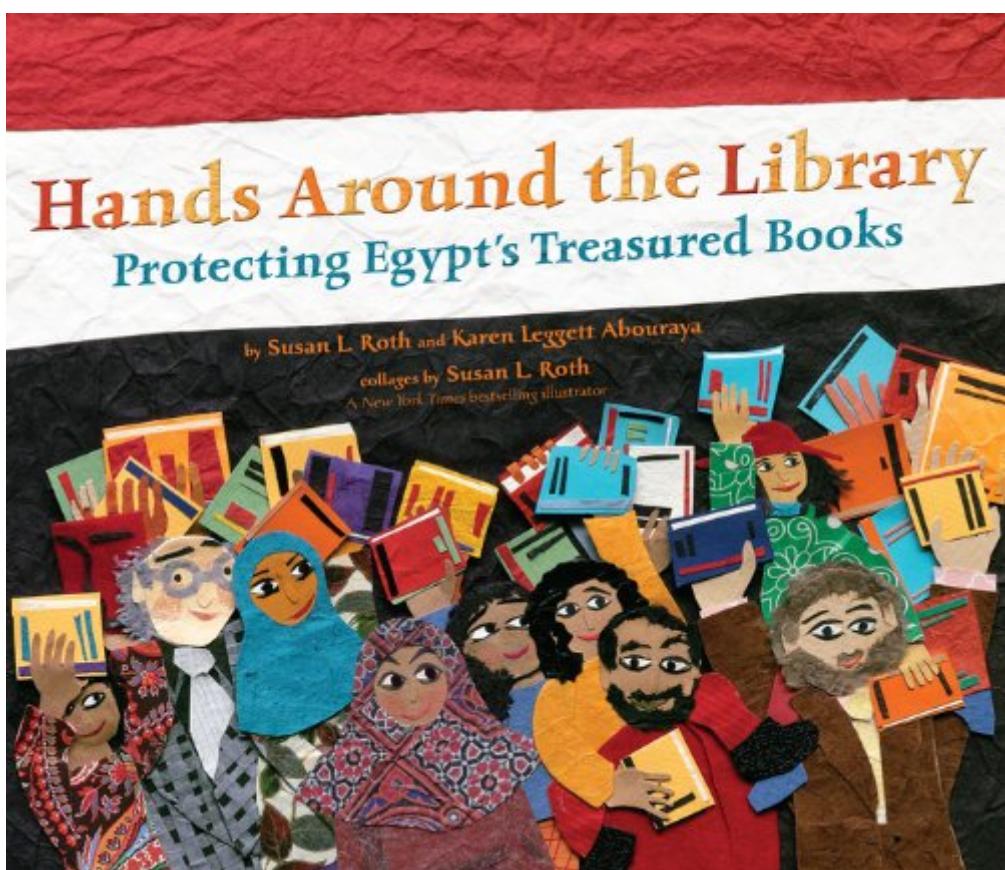


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Hands Around The Library: Protecting Egypt's Treasured Books



Synopsis

The inspiring true story of demonstrators standing up for the love of a library, from a New York Times bestselling illustrator In January 2011, in a moment that captured the hearts of people all over the world, thousands of Egypt's students, library workers, and demonstrators surrounded the great Library of Alexandria and joined hands, forming a human chain to protect the building. They chanted "We love you, Egypt!" as they stood together for the freedom the library represented. Illustrated with Susan L. Roth's stunning collages, this amazing true story demonstrates how the love of books and libraries can unite a country, even in the midst of turmoil.

Book Information

File Size: 26494 KB

Print Length: 32 pages

Publisher: Dial Books (August 30, 2012)

Publication Date: August 30, 2012

Sold by: Penguin Group (USA) LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00K0U876Y

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #671,099 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #7 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Children's eBooks > History > Middle East #49 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Children's eBooks > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Middle East #59 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Middle East

Customer Reviews

WOW! Hands Around the Library is remarkable. It records a moment in a revolution, an uprising, a political moment, whereby everyone, regardless of which side they stood on, came together to spare one of the beautiful and ancient libraries on Earth from harm. The artwork is wonderful, so much fun. The event -- a true story, beautifully retold -- reminds us how precious our libraries are and must remain and how we all, whether we are in Egypt or Timbuktu or Quito or New York or Duluth...anywhere, MUST protect them. Libraries represent our heritage as civilized human beings,

even as the world goes mad around us. This book is an inspiration!

Hands Around The Library is a wonderful addition to anyone's library. I particularly liked it because it has something for every member of the family: pictures for non-readers; easy text for beginning readers; history and civics lessons for older readers; references to additional information for the researcher in the family; and important life lessons for all humans!

The collages in this book are so gorgeous! The book tells the story of a particular heart-warming moment in the Egyptian revolution, and it will be a good opportunity to talk with children about Egypt but also about other social change movements. The book really emphasizes the power of people to do good in the world when we all work together. Since a lot of books about social change focus on one individual, I appreciate this perspective.

Shows the Egyptian revolution from a new perspective. Promotes love of books, and sheds light on the great library of Alexandria.

Dial Books for Young Readers, 2012
Narrative Nonfiction
32 pages
Recommended for grades 2+
Hands Around the Library takes readers back to the protests in Egypt in 2011 surrounding the citizens' desire for Hosni Mubarak to resign as president of Egypt. Not all the protesting was peaceful. Library director Ismail Serageldin could do no more than any other one person in protecting Biblioteca Alexandrina, but lucky for him and the library, he wasn't alone. Young people came to stand beside the library director, showing their desire to preserve their special building and the treasures inside. These actions helped "spread the democratic ideas that Egyptians were marching for."

In Egypt there is a library called the Alexandria library. The building is, according to the book, the most beautiful building in Egypt. It houses over 1 million books that include many children's books and many books that tell the history of Egypt. It's on the site of an ancient library that was intended to hold all the knowledge in the world. The ancient library burned down in ancient times. In January of 2011 the Egyptian people rose up against the regime of Hosni Mubarak. They protested in the streets. The protests sometimes became violent. The protests started in Cairo, but expanded to include Alexandria. The author was part of the protests in Alexandria. She heard about violence such as the burning of cars. The protesters were moving closer and closer to the library. The head

of the library came out and said there was no good way of protecting the library. One of the marchers moved up to take the hand of the librarian. Soon many marchers stood holding hands encircling the library. They put their bodies on the line to protect the library. This is the story of nonviolent political action. It's also a story of how precious books are to a culture. The book is illustrated with brightly colored collages. The collages of people are very similar to one another, but not the same, just as the protesters were not all the same. And some of the protesters decided to risk their lives to save the library. In the back of the book there are photographs of the event and of the library. These are instructive, but not nearly as beautiful as the collages. There's also a section on the ancient library at Alexandria, the current library at Alexandria and the 2011 revolution in Egypt. The sections are interesting and instructive. A list of other resources is included, as well as a note from Susan L. Roth. This book is physically beautiful and tells a beautiful story. It leaves me with one question, however. The uprising took place over a period of approximately two weeks. Was there a human chain around the library for the entire two weeks or was it just for the first day of protests in Alexandria?

This inspiring true story brings issues of social justice and activism right to a picture book audience's level. The first-person point of view adds drama, and the happy ending is heartfelt and satisfying. Excerpt: "And because together we all protected our Biblioteca Alexandrina, once upon a time not a long time ago, the library still stands today holding all of our stories."

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