

# A Book Review

Title: *The Lion Above the Door*

Author: Onjali Q. Raúf

## Plot

*The Lion Above the Door* by Onjali Q. Raúf is about Leo, a Singaporean boy who often feels out of place in his mostly white English village and school. On a class trip to a war museum, Leo feels left out when his classmates talk about relatives who fought in World War II. But then he spots his own name on a war memorial, and everything changes—he's desperate to find out who this war hero was.

Leo gets so caught up in solving the mystery that he breaks a few rules along the way, making the journey even more exciting. Things get even bigger when a TV crew shows up to cover Remembrance Day at their school. With help from his best friend, Sangeeta, Leo uncovers stories about people of color who fought in the war, shining a light on the parts of history that often get overlooked.

## Characters

The story is based around two friends called Leo and Sangeeta. They live in Whot, a small village in the UK and they are in the minority of Asian children in their school. They are two lovely children who feel they are misunderstood in their community and school because of their family's cultures and traditions. Some of the other children do seem to target Leo and he can feel helpless at times and that his teachers can sometimes not see this.

We meet Olivia, a character who has hidden her culture from everyone at school. She has done this by being ensuring everyone is scared of her and she is in control.

Mr Scott is Leo and Sangeeta's teacher, he is strict but fair, direct and respected by the children in his class.

## Your opinion

I really enjoyed *The Lion Above the Door* by Onjali Q. Raúf. It's such a powerful and eye-opening story that mixes history with a fun and relatable adventure. I loved how Leo and Sangeeta's friendship brought warmth and humour to the story, even when they were dealing with some big, important topics.

The way the book highlights the contributions of people of colour during World War II really stood out to me. It made me think about how much history gets left out of what we learn in school. I also liked that Leo wasn't a perfect hero—he broke some rules and got himself into trouble, which made him feel like a real kid.

## Recommend

I would definitely recommend *The Lion Above the Door* by Onjali Q. Raúf for children in years 5 and 6. Leo's journey to uncover the truth about his namesake is so engaging, and it's full of moments that make you think and laugh at the same time. It also does an amazing job of shining a light on forgotten stories from history, especially the contributions of people of color during World War II. It's a great read for children who love adventure stories and for those who want to learn more about history in a fun and exciting way. I think it would be a hit with both kids and their teachers!