

# Concept of survival and struggle in the happiest refugee by ahn do

Literature



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## The Happiest Refugee

“ Success, whether academic or professional, involves an ability to survive in a new environment and, eventually, to change it”

In relation to Ahn Do's book, this statement means that happy life that an individual attains, comes from survival through many struggles. Do survived in an environment of war in Vietnam and they changes it when they fled for their lives. He was around age thirteen then and his readers can imagine how a boy at such a young age suffered having to seek refuge in another place. The encounter with the pirates while on the congested boat and their brutal treatment is another new environment that Do survived. They changed this environment by complying with what the pirates commanded them to do. After making it to Australia, as if having to put up with trying to build a new life in a foreign country was not enough, Do's father left them. Do survived and changed this environment by stepping up and supporting his family through the job he did, studying up to university and doing comedy (Do, 2010).

I enjoyed reading The Happiest Refugee and largely, I agree with Do's views. According to the history texts I have read, I realize that he presents quite a good account of the life in Vietnam especially at the time of the war. Like in any other war-torn country, I agreed with Do that life in Vietnam was unbearable and his family's decision to leave Vietnam was the best. Probably, Do could not have made it to be a successful comedian were it not for their leaving Vietnam. As risky as it was, I felt I could not blame Do's family for their decision to use the ocean in search of a safe refuge. When war breaks out, victims of war are extremely fearful and they lack the time

to decide on the best route out of their current problems. They were lucky to live through two pirate attacks. I have read in the newspapers that in the current times, the issue of the people who come into Australia via the ocean has brought contention especially in the political arena (Do, 2010).

The experiences that my refugees friends have shared with me help me identify with Do's account of the difficulty they experienced starting life in Australia. Most of them have told me that most of the people in the host country were unwelcoming and extremely suspicious at first. Similar to the stories I have read and heard, Do got inspiration from his mother, brother, and sister. Do lived through arduous work in the hands of unfriendly employers and property owners. While as a refugee, both nuclear and extended family become one's source of encouragement before they make friends with the local people. It was, however, surprising to discover that Do trained in law before he went into comedy. I have never heard of such a twist in life that connects law with comedy but I could not doubt the possibility because Do's life turned out to be full of surprises (Do, 2010).

#### Reference

Do, A. (2010). *The happiest refugee: The extraordinary true story of a boy's journey from starvation at sea to becoming one of Australia's best-loved comedians*. Sydney: N. S. W.