



The New Kids: Big Dreams and Brave Journeys at a High School for Immigrant Teens

Brooke Hauser

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Some walked across deserts and mountains to get here. One arrived after escaping in a suitcase. And others won't say how they got here.

These are “the new kids”: new to America and all the routines and rituals of an American high school, from lonely first days to prom. They attend Brooklyn's International High School at Prospect Heights, where all the students are recent immigrants learning English. Together, they come from more than forty-five countries and speak more than twenty-eight languages.

An inspiring work of narrative journalism, *The New Kids* chronicles a year in the lives of teenage newcomers who are at once ordinary and extraordinary in their paths to the American Dream. Hauser's unforgettable portraits include Jessica, kicked out of her father's home just days after arriving from China; Ngawang, who spent twenty-four hours folded up in a suitcase to escape Tibet; Mohamed, a diamond miner's son from Sierra Leone whose past is shrouded in mystery; and Chit Su, a Burmese refugee who is the only person to speak her language in the entire school.

The students deal with enormous obstacles: traumas and wars in their native countries that haunt them, and pressures from their cultures to marry or to drop out and go to work. They aren't just jostling for their places in the high school pecking order—they are carving out new lives for themselves in America.

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