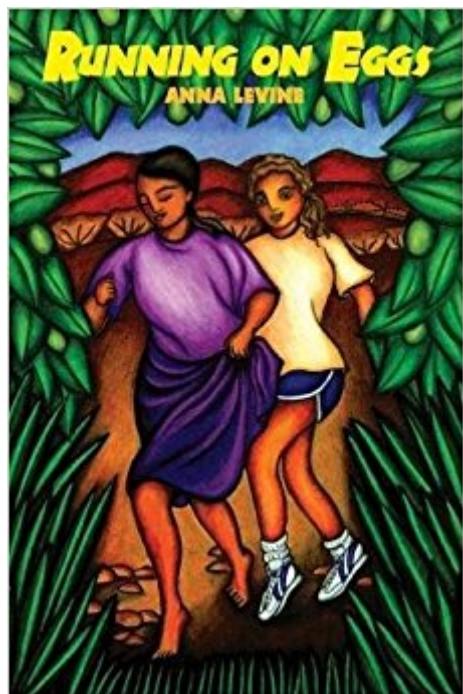


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# Running On Eggs



## **Synopsis**

It all starts when Karen and Yasmine trade lunch boxes. Such an act would hardly raise eyebrows anywhere else, but Karen lives on an Israeli kibbutz and Yasmine in a nearby Palestinian village, and distrust between the two cultures runs deep. Karen's father was killed several years ago in the war in Lebanon, and her family still hasn't fully accepted the loss. Karen focuses on running as a way to heal, and her place on the Arab-Israeli track team is something she holds dear. Yasmine's family disapproves of her love for track, and when the coach won't allow her to run in a long skirt, Yasmine's father forces her to drop out. But soon Yasmine and Karen begin meeting secretly to run together in "no man's land," a strip of woods that separates their communities. Karen is preparing for an important meet, and as Yasmine helps her train, she begins to view the sport as more than just an opportunity to win races. When their friendship is exposed, however, the consequences threaten to pull their communities even farther apart. *Running on Eggs* offers a frank portrayal of modern-day Israel and recounts the story of two girls whose loyalty to each other helps them overcome the obstacles in their path.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Set in contemporary Israel, this thought-provoking first novel defines the problems a Jewish girl

encounters when she befriends an Arab schoolmate. Although she has been raised to view Arabs as the enemy, 13-year-old Karen is drawn to her track teammate Yasmine, who shares her love of running. Both dream of winning an upcoming meet to qualify for a competition in Spain. But when Yasmine's father will not allow her to wear the "immodest" uniform of shorts, Yasmine must leave the team. However, she offers to help Karen train for the race. Knowing their friends and family would disapprove, the two meet secretly in "no man's land," an overgrown lot dividing Karen's kibbutz from Yasmine's village. Tension mounts when Yasmine's older brother spies the girls together, and Karen, sensing impending danger, is forced to choose where her loyalties lie. This realistic story offers a peaceful resolution of its potentially volatile conflicts; a timely and sympathetic treatment. Ages 10-up. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 4-7-A sympathetic story of an Israeli-Arab friendship. In an atmosphere of suspicion and fear, young Arabs and Jews have lived apart, forced to share space on the school bus but having no further contact. Between the kibbutz and the Arab village lies an uncultivated tract where Karen's deceased father once ran and where Karen now hopes to train for the Galilee Run in hopes of qualifying for a 10K race in Spain. A tentative friendship between Yasmine and Karen, brought about by the track coach's insistence on having Arab runners as well as Jews on his track team, is threatened when he refuses to allow the Arab girls to run in skirts, and Yasmine's older brother angrily bars her from the team. But the girls continue to meet, and run, in no-man's-land until Yasmine's brother and friends find them there and chase Karen. In her haste to escape, she falls and hits her head, but tells her mother that she was caught in the cross fire of a game. In the meantime, the adult world is moving toward conciliation. Coach Enrico has led the two communities to agree to develop the wild area as a running track, to be opened with the Galilee Run. Spurred on by the pacing of Yasmine, who cannot run officially but joins her mid-race, Karen comes in third, winning a place on the traveling team. While the message sometimes threatens to overwhelm the story, the author sustains the mood and the suspense well enough to bring the book to a satisfying conclusion. Readers can enjoy this as a simple sports story as well as a picture of life in a world immersed in hostilities. Kathleen Isaacs, Edmund Burke School, Washington, DC Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Written by Anna Levine, her inspiration for *Running on Eggs* was developed from her experience living on a kibbutz, an agricultural settlement, in Israel. It is a book about a hidden friendship between two 13-year-old girls. Their families do not approve of their friendship and they try to hide

it. Karen and Yasmine are track teammates from very different backgrounds. Karen lives on an Israeli kibbutz as a Jewish girl. Her father was killed years ago in the war in Lebanon. Her family is still struggling with the loss. She secretly meets Yasmine in "no man's land," a lot dividing Karen's kibbutz from Yasmine's village. Yasmine lives in an Arab village. Her parents are very strict. Her dad does not allow her to run in shorts and wants her to run in a long skirt. Yasmine's family does not support her love for track, and eventually her father forces her to drop out. Although they ride the bus together, the young Arabs and Jews have lived apart. On the bus, they purposely switch lunchboxes, giving them a reason to meet. The two are brought together by their passion for running. They both were hoping to do well in the Galilee Run so they could qualify for another race in Spain. After Yasmine is forced to quit, Karen continues to train with Yasmine's help. When Yasmine's brother discovers the girls' friendship, the punishment could divide the two communities even. This book is about loyalty and friendship during conflicts and distrust. The story ends peacefully. This book teaches readers about the Arab-Israeli dispute. It also teaches about the way people judge others and form opinions based on preconceived ideas instead of the real person.

This thoughtful representation of a difficult situation is a great way to introduce young people to the tragic affect of long-standing mistrust. Children following their passion can see each other without the prejudices held by their parents, the basis of which are hidden in a long history not always fully understood. The value of teaching these youngsters to look for what they have in common rather than what is different is enormous. This book tells a story that can be appreciated by all young people, who can only benefit by taking a life lesson from it. Thank you, Anna Levine, for not painting one or the other victims or aggressors, but showing how good life can be if we have the desire or courage to grow.

This was a great book. It's hard to believe it is a kids book because you don't get many books for kids on this subject. I think it's great that kids can learn about the Arab-Israeli dispute in a mellow way. I really liked this because you start to understand what it must feel like to be 9 in Israel right now. I think the reason the Israelis and Arabs got over their fight (in the book) is because they realized they could share, and they could use it for something they had in common. And, in the end it all worked out, for everyone.

The main character is a young girl from Israel and her friend is from Palestine, the place that has been in war with Israel for years. She needs to race for a reason her friend can't understand, but her

father was killed and he was a runner so she has to run. I liked this book because it was well written and had just enough detail. It's about a really interesting topic- you know, the wars in Israel, really, things that happened only a couple years ago. This is a book full of meaning and truth.

This is a great book on a subject that is not often written about for kids. It is written in language that draws them into the story, and lets them understand and experience another part of the world through the eyes of normal kids facing problems that are much bigger than they are. This book tackles the subject of distrust between Jews and Arabs in Israel. It is ultimately about friendship. American kids will be easily able to identify with the kids in this story even though the subject may be new to them.

I read this book to my 1st and 5th graders. They loved it. The book gives a great impression of what it's like to live in the middle east and how the people are caught in it.

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