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# Now Is The Time For Running



## Synopsis

Just down the road from their families, Deo and his friends play soccer in the dusty fields of Zimbabwe, cheered on by Deo's older brother, Innocent. It is a day like any other... until the soldiers arrive and Deo and Innocent are forced to run for their lives, fleeing the wreckage of their village for the distant promise of safe haven in South Africa. Along the way, they face the prejudice and poverty that greet refugees everywhere, but eventually Deo finds hope, joining dozens of other homeless, displaced teens on the World Cup Street Soccer team--a possible ticket out of extreme hardship to a new life. Captivating and timely, *Now Is the Time for Running* is a staggering story of survival that follows Deo and his brother on a transformative journey that will stay with readers long after the last page.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (21 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

*Now Is the Time for Running* by Michael Williams, follows Deo a young boy who is forced to leave his home in Zimbabwe after his family is killed in political violence. Deo is out playing soccer with his friends and his older mentally challenged brother Innocent when soldiers roll into town. They abuse his brother and then kill everyone in his town while Deo is trying to save his brother. Deo and Innocent escape and through the help of friends and strangers they escape and cross the border into South Africa. They face many dangers during their journey and when they get to South Africa

they are faced with Xenophobia violence and poverty. Now is the Time for Running is a very well written book that does a good job at making the African refugee experience relateable to a middle school audience. The author does not shy away from including the horrors that happen in those situations but also does not overly describe these things in a way that would traumatize a young reader, Deo's experience walk the fine line between being an adventure and being horrible. Deo's love of soccer is something that kids can relate to and the play by plays of the games are written in a way that makes the reader able to picture the game in progress. Appropriateness: This book contains many adult situations but does so in a way that is appropriate for young readers. There are a few instances of implied rape (a woman is taken away and hurt on the inside by soldiers for example) that include very little detail. The horrifying murders and beatings that take place in the book are described simply and without a lot of detail. The drug addiction faced by the main character is handled in a realistic manner that in no way makes the drug seem positive. This is a book that boys would really enjoy. I would recommend this book to ages 12+. Review copy received from the publisher.

Imagine witnessing the brutal beatings and murders of your family and village. All you have left is your brother, although older than you he has the mind of a child. With a homemade soccer ball, and his brother's special box, Deo and Innocent head to South Africa in search of peace and the possibility of finding the father they never knew. The trek from Zimbabwe to South Africa is tough including crossing a hazardous river and a dash through a dangerous animal preserve . These scenes are two of the best I have ever read before. Without spoiling, I do want to say Innocent's stash of goodies in his box is brilliant. This is a difficult yet must-read book encompassing topics such as political cruelty, refugee abuse, drug addiction and a young boy devoted to his mentally disabled brother. Deo is a character that we care deeply about. It is quite violent at times. When given the chance to play soccer and compete in a tournament to get his life on the right track you will be cheering Deo on as I did. A stunning piece of historical fiction. Recommended for those who enjoyed A LONG WALK TO WATER by Linda Sue Park and Shooting Kabul by N. H. Senzai which are written for younger readers but in a similar vein and fans of historical fiction and adventure. Read as an ebook arc courtesy of Hachette Book Group via Netgalley.

I read this book with a ninth grader whom I tutor. We both enjoyed it. As might be expected in a realistic novel about a civil war in Africa, the book contains some graphic violence. It is, however, a well-told and engaging tale.

This is an excellent book which opened my eyes to the hardships and despiration of life in southern Africa. It's a great read. While it is fictional, the book's characters and general storyline are based on real people known by the South African author.

Now Is The Time For Running is an excellent story about genocide, refugees and xenophobia. But mostly, it is the story of an overwhelmed, innocent young teen trying to save himself and his mentally disabled brother. Deo lived a poor, sheltered, happy life in rural Zimbabwe until the day government soldiers came into the village kidnapped the boys and young men and killed everyone else. Deo and his brother hid from the soldiers, but after the massacre they are homeless orphans. They walk to the capital city to seek help from a family friend and discover that the city is in the middle of a bloody military attack. Once again Deo and his brother are on their own. With the help of some kind strangers, and some carpetbaggers, they make their way to South Africa hoping to find the father they haven't seen in fifteen years, jobs, and a better life. What they find instead are violent gangs that prey on refugees, plantation owners who exploit refugees desperate for work, thousands of refugees from all over Africa living on the streets, and angry native South Africans who resent the refugees coming in and taking their jobs. The one thing Deo has that connects him to all of these people who don't speak his language, or understand his customs, is his amazing soccer talent. Eventually, it is soccer that saves his life. Now Is The Time For Running does not white-wash the genocide of Zimbabwe or violent rebellions in South Africa, but it is not graphically violent either. It does show how Deo's experiences almost destroy him. Author, Michael Williams, based the characters in the novel on young men he met while working at a soup kitchen in Cape Town. He brings their grief, depression and determination to create a better world, to life through Deo and the other characters. His description of the games of The Homeless World Cup are not only exciting but enlightening. Maybe soccer really does explain the world. ([homelessworldcup.org](http://homelessworldcup.org)) The short length and quick pace of Now Is The Time For Running makes it a great choice for reluctant readers.

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