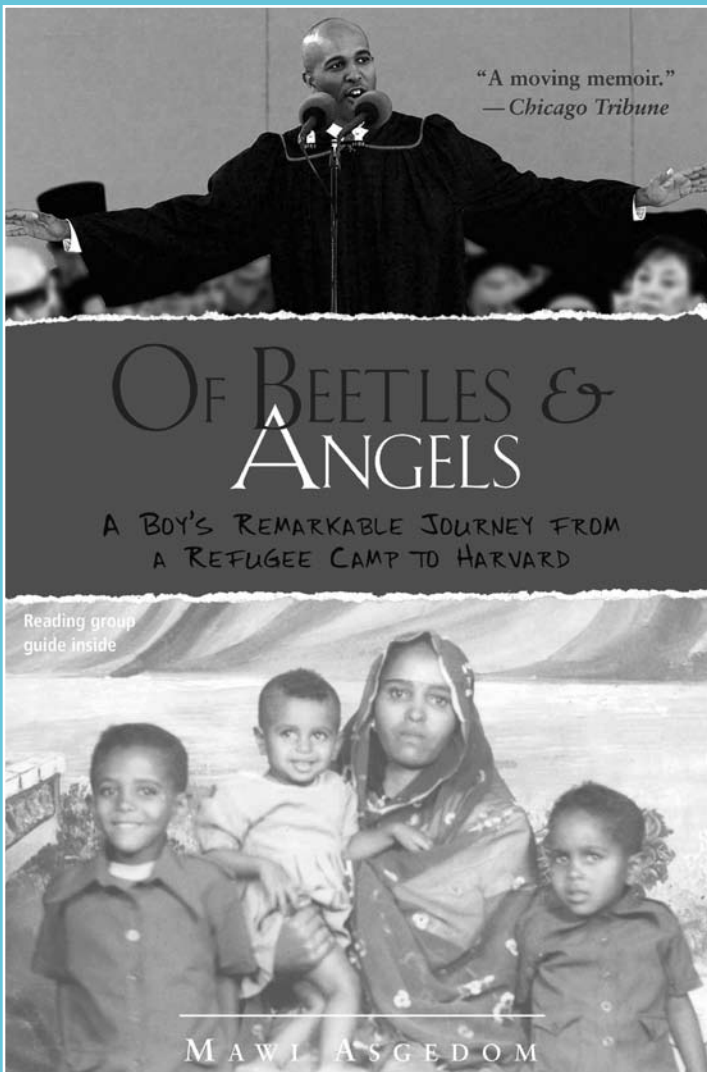


# OF BEETLES & ANGELS

A BOY'S REMARKABLE JOURNEY FROM  
A REFUGEE CAMP TO HARVARD



## curriculum connections

- ❖ Themes
- ❖ Family
- ❖ Heroism
- ❖ War

By  
Mawi Asgedom

## Discussion Questions

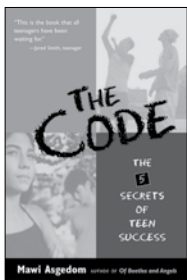
- If you had to flee America today with your immediate family, several suitcases, and \$100, where would you go? How would you get there? What would be your biggest challenges once you got there?
- One of the last things the villagers told Mawi's family was, "Remember us." When Mawi gave his commencement address at Harvard, he started out by sharing a piece of advice that his mother always gave him: "Always remember where you came from." What does it mean to remember where you came from? Is it important? Where do YOU come from?
- Were Mawi's parents good parents? What are the attributes of good parents?
- If you wrote a memoir of your life, what experiences would you share with the readers? What wouldn't you share? Do you think that you would learn anything new about yourself?
- Mawi dedicates his book to the "true hero of this story, [his] mother, Tsege." But he hardly mentions her in his book. If Tsege is so heroic, why doesn't Mawi write more about her?
- What does the book's title, *Of Beetles and Angels*, mean to you? Are there angels in your life? Who are they? How would you title your memoir?
- What different forms can terrorism take in a classroom, community, or country? How might playground warfare lead to civil or international warfare?
- Stealing a parking meter is a serious crime. What if Mawi had been caught by the policeman and sent to a behavior-disorder school? Would his life have turned out the same? Can we use Mawi's story to argue that young people should be given multiple opportunities to "develop a heart"?
- Rudyard Kipling once asked, "And who should know England, who only England has known?" What does it mean to know America? Do you know America? If you are not in America, substitute your own country.

## praise for *Of Beetles and Angels*:

"What stays with you is the **quiet, honest drama** of a family's **heartrending journey**."—*Booklist*

"This earnest account of **Asgedom's life**...is peppered with **powerful moments**."—*Publishers Weekly*

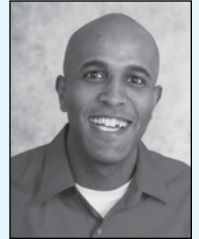
## also available:



*The Code: The Five Secrets of Teen Success*  
0-316-73689-9/978-0-316-73689-3

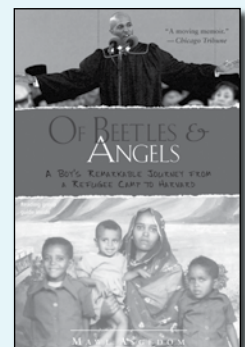
## about the author

This is an unforgettable true story of a young boy's remarkable journey from a refugee camp in Sudan to an affluent Chicago suburb where his family survives on welfare. Following his father's advice to "treat all people—even the most unsightly beetles—as though they were angels sent from heaven," Mawi Asgedom overcomes racial prejudice, language barriers, and financial disadvantage, eventually realizing his dream of a full-tuition scholarship to Harvard University. *Of Beetles and Angels* is a compelling survival story sure to inspire readers of all ages and backgrounds.



## about the book

Mawi Asgedom graduated from Harvard University and delivered his class's commencement address in 1999. Now 25 years old, he is a successful inspirational speaker at schools, community groups, churches, and businesses. He lives in Chicago.



0-316-82620-0 • 978-0-316-82620-4  
\$9.99/\$13.99 CAN