

### **Trowbridge Road by Marcella Pixley**

It's the summer of '83 on Trowbridge Road, and June Bug Jordan is hungry. Months after her father's death from complications from AIDS, her mother has stopped cooking and refuses to leave the house, instead locking herself away to scour at the germs she believes are everywhere. June Bug threatens this precarious existence by going out into the neighborhood, gradually befriendng Ziggy, an imaginative boy who is living with his Nana Jean after experiencing troubles of his own. But as June Bug's connection to the world grows stronger, her mother's grows more distant — even dangerous — pushing June Bug to choose between truth and healing and the only home she has ever known.

Trowbridge Road paints an unwavering portrait of a girl and her family touched by mental illness and grief. Set in the Boston suburbs during the first years of the AIDS epidemic, the novel explores how a seemingly perfect neighborhood can contain restless ghosts and unspoken secrets.

### **Hatchet by Gary Paulsen**

Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson, haunted by his secret knowledge of his mother's infidelity, is traveling by single-engine plane to visit his father for the first time since the divorce. When the plane crashes, killing the pilot, the sole survivor is Brian. He is alone in the Canadian wilderness with nothing but his clothing, a tattered windbreaker, and the hatchet his mother had given him as a present.

At first consumed by despair and self-pity, Brian slowly learns survival skills—how to make a shelter for himself, how to hunt and fish and forage for food, how to make a fire—and even finds the courage to start over from scratch when a tornado ravages his campsite. When Brian is finally rescued after fifty-four days in the wild, he emerges from his ordeal with new patience and maturity, and a greater understanding of himself and his parents.

### **When Stars are Scattered by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohammad**

Omar and his younger brother, Hassan, have spent most of their lives in Dadaab, a refugee camp in Kenya. Life is hard there: never enough food, achingly dull, and without access to the medical care Omar knows his nonverbal brother needs. So when Omar has the opportunity to go to school, he knows it might be a chance to change their future . . . but it would also mean leaving his brother, the only family member he has left, every day.

Heartbreak, hope, and gentle humor exist together in this graphic novel about a childhood spent waiting, and a young man who is able to create a sense of family and home in the most difficult of settings. It's an intimate, important, unforgettable look at the day-to-day life of a refugee.

### **The Perfect Horse by Elizabeth Letts**

When American Colonel Hank Reed and his soldiers captures a German spy, they uncover an unexpected secret: Hitler has kidnapped the world's finest purebred horses and hidden them in a secret Czechoslovakian breeding farm. But, starving Russian troops are drawing closer and the horses face the danger of becoming

food instead. With little time to spare, the small American troop cross enemy lines to heroically save some of the world's most treasured animals.

Elizabeth Letts details the terrifying truth of Hitler's eugenics program during World War II and shares the story of the courageous American troop dedicated to stopping it.

Highlighting bravery in the face of incredible odds, this tale will shed light on a little-known piece of our past and speak to history fans and animal lovers of every age.

### **Everything Sad is Untrue by Daniel Nayeri**

In an Oklahoman middle school, Khosrou (whom everyone calls Daniel) stands in front of a skeptical audience of classmates, telling the tales of his family's history, stretching back years, decades, and centuries. At the core is Daniel's story of how they became refugees—starting with his mother's vocal embrace of Christianity in a country that made such a thing a capital offense, and continuing through their midnight flight from the secret police, bribing their way onto a plane-to-anywhere. Anywhere becomes the sad, cement refugee camps of Italy, and then finally asylum in the U.S. Implementing a distinct literary style and challenging western narrative structures, Nayeri deftly weaves through stories of the long and beautiful history of his family in Iran, adding a richness of ancient tales and Persian folklore.

Like Scheherazade of One Thousand and One Nights in a hostile classroom, Daniel spins a tale to save his own life: to stake his claim to the truth.

### **Thornhill by Pam Smy**

1982: Mary is a lonely orphan at the Thornhill Institute For Children at the very moment that it's shutting its doors. When her few friends are all adopted or re-homed and she's left to face a volatile bully alone, her revenge will have a lasting effect on the bully, on Mary, and on Thornhill itself.

2017: Ella has just moved to a new town where she knows no one. From her room on the top floor of her new home, she has a perfect view of the dilapidated, abandoned Thornhill Institute across the way, where she glimpses a girl in the window. Determined to befriend the girl and solidify the link between them, Ella resolves to unravel Thornhill's shadowy past.

Told in alternating, interwoven plotlines—Mary's through intimate diary entries and Ella's in bold, striking art—Pam Smy's *Thornhill* is a haunting exploration of human connection, filled with suspense.

### **Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown**

For readers of *Unbroken*, out of the depths of the Great Depression comes the astonishing tale of nine working-class boys from the American West who at the 1936 Olympics showed the world what true grit really meant. With rowers who were the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington's eight-oar crew was never expected to defeat the elite East Coast teams, yet they did, going on to shock the world by challenging the German boat rowing for Adolf Hitler.

At the center of the tale is Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, whose personal quest captures the spirit of his generation—the generation that would prove in the coming years that the Nazis could not prevail over American determination and optimism.

### **Anya's Ghost by Vera Brosgol**

Anya could really use a friend. But her new BFF isn't kidding about the "Forever" part . . .

Of all the things Anya expected to find at the bottom of an old well, a new friend was not one of them. Especially not a new friend who's been dead for a century.

Falling down a well is bad enough, but Anya's normal life might actually be worse. She's embarrassed by her family, self-conscious about her body, and she's pretty much given up on fitting in at school. A new friend—even a ghost—is just what she needs.

Or so she thinks.