

### ***How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* by Julia Alvarez**

The García sisters—Carla, Sandra, Yolanda, and Sofía—and their family must flee their home in the Dominican Republic after their father's role in an attempt to overthrow a tyrannical dictator is discovered. They arrive in New York City in 1960 to a life far removed from their existence in the Caribbean. In the wild and wondrous and not always welcoming U.S.A., their parents try to hold on to their old ways, but the girls try find new lives: by forgetting their Spanish, by straightening their hair and wearing fringed bell bottoms. For them, it is at once liberating and excruciating to be caught between the old world and the new. *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* sets the sisters free to tell their most intimate stories about how they came to be at home—and not at home—in America.

### ***The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros**

Acclaimed by critics, beloved by readers of all ages, taught everywhere from inner-city grade schools to universities across the country, and translated all over the world, **The House on Mango Street** is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero. Told in a series of vignettes – sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous – it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.

### ***High Heat* by Carl Deuker**

As the star closer for his high school baseball team, Shane Hunter is untouchable. Firing fastballs at ninety miles per hour, he loves being a winner. But when his father is accused of a crime, Shane's charmed world is turned upside down. Nothing is the way it once was, and Shane's not sure he wants to -- or even can -- pitch ever again. But like baseball, life sometimes throws you curves, and Shane discovers it's how you play the game that counts most of all. (less) This is another book that my son and I both read. There are a lot of realistic elements in the novel and you don't have to be a huge baseball fan to feel involved in the action. The ending will leave you questioning if Shane meant to hit the batter with the ball, or if it was an unfortunate accident

### ***Boy 21* by Matthew Quick**

Basketball has always been an escape for Finley. He hopes basketball will be his escape from a town ruled by the Irish mob, drugs, violence, and racially charged rivalries. Finley's dreams are threatened when his coach asks him to mentor Russ, a basketball phenom who's trying to cope with tragic loss

### ***Butter* by Erin Jade Lange**

A lonely obese boy everyone calls "Butter" is about to make history. He is going to eat himself to death-live on the Internet-and everyone is invited to watch. When he first makes the announcement online to his classmates, Butter expects pity, insults, and possibly sheer indifference. What he gets are morbid cheerleaders rallying around his deadly plan. Yet as their dark encouragement grows, it begins to feel a lot like popularity. And that feels good. But what happens when Butter reaches his suicide deadline?

### ***Quiet Strength* by Tony Dungy**

Tony Dungy's words and example have intrigued millions of people, particularly following his victory in Super Bowl XLI, the first for an African American coach. How is it possible for a coach—especially a football coach—to win the respect of his players and lead them to the Super Bowl without the screaming histrionics, the profanities, and the demand that the sport come before anything else? How is it possible for anyone to be successful without compromising faith and family? In this inspiring and reflective memoir, now updated with a new chapter, Coach Dungy tells the story of a life lived for God and family—and challenges us all to redefine our ideas of what it means to succeed.

### ***My Losing Season* by Pat Conroy**

Pat Conroy, one of America's premier novelists, has penned a deeply affecting coming-of-age memoir about family, love, loss, basketball—and life itself. During one unforgettable season as a Citadel cadet, Conroy becomes part of a basketball team that is ultimately destined to fail. And yet for a military kid who grew up on the move, the Bulldogs provide a sanctuary from the cold, abrasive father who dominates his life—and a crucible for becoming his own man. With all the drama and incandescence of his bestselling fiction, Conroy re-creates his pivotal senior year as captain of the Citadel Bulldogs. He chronicles the highs and lows of that fateful 1966–67 season, his tough disciplinarian coach, the joys of winning, and the hard-won lessons of losing. Most of all, he recounts how a group of boys came together as a team, playing a sport that would become a metaphor for a man whose spirit could never be defeated.

### ***Minnow* by James E. McTeer II**

*Minnow* is an otherworldly story of a small boy who leaves his dying father's bedside hunting a medicine for a mysterious illness. Sent by his mother to a local druggist in their coastal town, Minnow unexpectedly takes a dark and wondrous journey deep into the ancient Sea Islands, seeking the grave dust of a long-dead hoodoo man to buy him a cure. With only a half-feral dog at his side, Minnow's odyssey is haunted at every turn by the agents of Sorry George, a witch doctor who once stirred up a fever that killed 52 men. Meanwhile, a tempest brews out at sea, threatening to bring untold devastation to the coastal way of life. *Minnow* is a remarkable debut novel that evokes the fiction of Karen Russell and Lauren Groff's *Low Country* and *Heart of Darkness* about the mysteries of childhood, the sacrifices we make to preserve our families, and the ghosts that linger in the Spanish moss of the South Carolina barrier islands.

### ***Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand**

In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will.

### ***The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd**

(Huck Finn for girls)

A coming of age tale set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted black "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the town's most vicious racists, Lily decides they should both escape to Tiburon, South Carolina—a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. There they are taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters who introduce Lily to a mesmerizing world of bees, honey, and the Black Madonna who presides over their household. This is a remarkable story about divine female power and the transforming power of love—a story that women will continue to share and pass on to their daughters for years to come.

### ***The Maze Runner* by James Dashner**

The first book in the #1 *New York Times* bestselling *Maze Runner* series is perfect for fans of *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*. When Thomas wakes up in the lift, the only thing he can remember is his name. He's surrounded by strangers—boys whose memories are also gone. Outside the towering stone walls that surround the Glade is a limitless, ever-changing maze. It's the only way out—and no one's ever made it through alive. *Everything is going to change*. Then a girl arrives. The first girl ever. And the message she delivers is terrifying: Remember. Survive. Run.

### **Crossover by Kwame Alexander**

*"With a bolt of lightning on my kicks . . . The court is SIZZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. Cuz tonight I'm delivering,"* announces dread-locked, 12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood from Kwame Alexander. Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

### **The Girl from Felony Bay by J.E. Thompson**

*The Girl from Felony Bay* is a fresh, vibrant, funny, and heartwarming debut in the vein of Sheila Turnage's *Three Times Lucky* and Clare Vanderpool's *Moon over Manifest*. Set on a southern plantation, it's about a young girl named Abbey, her best friend, Bee, and a hundred-year-old mystery. The last year has been a rough one for Abbey Force. Her father has been in a coma since his accident, in which he was framed for a terrible crime he didn't commit. And their home, Reward Plantation, had to be sold to pay off his debt to society. So Abbey is stuck living with her Uncle Charlie, who isn't exactly an ideal role model. But things just got more interesting. The new family who moved in to Reward Plantation has a daughter named Bee, and she's just as curious as Abbey is about the No Trespassing signs and holes being dug out of Felony Bay. It seems like someone has been poking around a mystery that dates all the way back to the Civil War—and it just might be the same someone who framed Abbey's father.

### **The Other Normals by Ned Vizzini**

Given the chance, fifteen-year-old Peregrine "Perry" Eckert would dedicate every waking moment to *Creatures & Caverns*, a role-playing game with magical creatures, spell casting, and deadly weapons. The world of C&C is where he feels most comfortable in his own skin. But that isn't happening—not if his parents have anything to do with it. Concerned their son lacks social skills, they ship him off to summer camp. Perry is bracing himself for the worst summer of his life. Everything changes, however, when Perry gets to camp and stumbles into the World of the Other Normals. There he meets Mortin Enaw, one of the creators of C&C, and mythical creatures from the game. Perry's new otherworldly friends need his help to save their princess and prevent mass violence. As they embark on their quest together, Perry realizes that his nerdy childhood has uniquely prepared him to be a great warrior in this world, and maybe even a hero. But to save the princess, Perry will have to learn how to make real connections in the human world as well.