

Summer Reading 2021



June 2021

Dear Families,

Reading for enjoyment during the summer is one of life's little pleasures for most of us. Our wish for your children is that they too look forward to reading those books that they didn't have time for during the school year. All students entering sixth, seventh, and eighth grade are expected to read **at least three books** over the summer. Although we recommend students use sticky notes or take notes to engage more deeply with their reading, there is no specific assignment to respond to the books.

While curating our lists, we try to choose books that are of high interest to students. The books also vary widely by reading level. If you feel that a book is not at an appropriate level, please help your child choose something else. You may want to read the books alongside your child so you can discuss them together. Some students may want to pair up with friends to read the same book together, too.

The following list is organized by genre. Each list includes a brief synopsis of the book, and some include links to book trailers or short video reviews.

You can check the [Dobbs Ferry Public Library](#) catalog to see if a book is available through the public library system. DFPL will be sponsoring a summer reading program this year, with both live and Zoom programs. Students can earn raffle tickets by writing book reviews of the books they read (which you can submit to be included in the DFMS catalog). Please click [here](#) for more information. Students can also see if books are available online through [Sora](#).

Another option for children to continue learning over the summer is through the [Middle School Choice Board](#). The choice board is essentially a grid with a range of activities that gives students the opportunity to choose the activity they would like to do and to learn in a variety of ways. The board represents content and strategies from the whole school year, and is designed to be self-paced.

Happy reading!

Best wishes,

Ellen Elsen
Library Media Specialist

Michelle Yang-Kaczmarek
K-8 Literacy Coordinator

The Language and Literature Department at DFMS (Claudia Ducic, Danielle Egan, Ed Feller, Melissa Gretczko, Rachael Lief, Mike Pagano, Jill Rosenblum, and Denise Rivera)

Dobbs Ferry Middle School
Suggested Summer Reading for Sixth Grade
Summer 2021

Students are expected to read any three books this summer, although we hope you will choose to read all summer. Books may be chosen from the suggestions below, but you are not limited to this list. You do not need to write a response to what you have read over the summer, but there will be an assignment when you return to school in September. We do recommend that you use sticky notes or jot down notes in a response notebook as a way to record your thinking as you read.

Short Story Collection



Flying Lessons & Other Stories, edited by Ellen Oh

From basketball dreams and family fiascos to first crushes and new neighborhoods, this anthology, written by award-winning children's authors, celebrates the uniqueness and universality in all of us. Features stories by Kwame Alexander, Soman Chainani, Mat de la Pena, Grace Lin, Walter Dean Myers, Jacqueline Woodson, and more.



Once Upon an Eid: Stories of Hope and Joy by 15 Muslim Voices, edited by S.K. Ali and Aisha Saeed

This collection showcases the most brilliant Muslim voices writing today, all about the most joyful holiday of the year: Eid! Eid: The short, single-syllable word conjures up a variety of feelings and memories for Muslims. For those who cherish this day of celebration, the emotional responses may be summed up in another short and sweet word: joy.

Adventure



The Blackthorn Key by Kevin Sands

In 1665 London, fourteen-year-old Christopher Rowe, apprentice to an apothecary, and his best friend Tom try to uncover the truth behind a mysterious cult, following a trail of puzzles, codes, pranks, and danger toward an unearthly secret with the power to tear the world apart. (Other books in series: *Mark of the Plague*, *The Assassin's Curse*, *Call of the Wraith*)

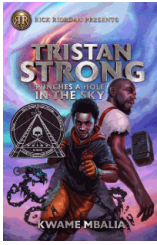


The Serpent's Secret by Sayantani DasGupta

Up until her twelfth birthday, Kiranmala considered herself an ordinary sixth-grader but then her parents disappear and a drooling rakkhosh demon shows up in her kitchen. Soon she is swept into another dimension. (Other books in series: *Game of Stars*, *The Chaos Curse*)

Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Louk6HSP5Uck9KoPgFFYb6-7y44w51mK/view?usp=sharing>



Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky by Kwame Mbalia

An epic adventure set in a richly imaged world populated with African American folk heroes and West African gods. Seventh-grader Tristan Strong tumbles into the MidPass and, with allies John Henry and Brer Rabbit, must entice the god Anansi to come out of hiding and seal the hole Tristan accidentally ripped in the sky. (Sequel: *Tristan Strong Destroys the World*)

Fantasy

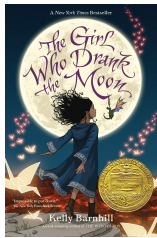


Ghosts by Raina Telgemeier

Catrina and her family have moved to the coast of Northern California for the sake of her little sister, Maya, who has cystic fibrosis--and Cat is even less happy about the move when she is told that her new town is inhabited by ghosts, and Maya sets her heart on meeting one.

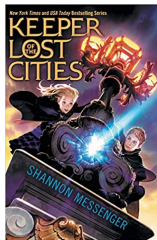
Book Trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gwOz33nIjXEEDjtzZQJXiL205PXA9GYw/view?usp=sharing>



The Girl Who Drank the Moon by Kelly Barnhouse

An epic fantasy about a young girl raised by a witch, a swamp monster, and a Perfectly Tiny Dragon, who must unlock the powerful magic buried deep inside her.



Keeper of the Lost Cities by Shannon Messenger

Twelve-year-old Sophie discovers the abilities that have always caused her to stand out are because she is actually an elf. After she is brought to Eternalia to hone her skills, Sophie learns she harbors certain secrets that others would kill to learn. (Other books in series: *Exile*, *Everblaze*, *Neverseen*, *Lodestar*, *Nightfall*, *Flashback*, *Legacy*)

Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hdKd64JbYJS8BxUWYNwW98EJzJof8089/view?usp=sharing>



Orphan Island by Laurel Snyder

A group of orphans wait each year for a boat to arrive on the island, replacing the eldest with the youngest, never to be seen again, as each remaining child learns what it means to say goodbye to childhood forever.



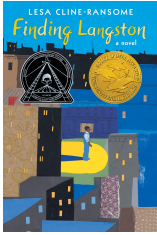
Wishtree by Katherine Applegate

An old red oak tree tells how he and his crow friend, Bongo, help their human neighbors get along after a threat against an immigrant family is carved into the tree's trunk.

Book trailer:

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Historical Fiction

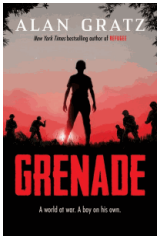


Finding Langston by Lesa Cline Ransom

Discovering a book of Langston Hughes' poetry in the library helps Langston cope with the loss of his mother, his relocation from Alabama to Chicago as part of the Great Migration, and being bullied.

Author speaking about the book:

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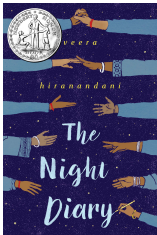


Grenade by Alan Gratz

On April 1, 1945 with the battle of Okinawa beginning, fourteen-year-old native Okinawan Hideki, drafted into the Blood and Iron Student Corps, is handed two grenades and told to go kill American soldiers. Hideki does not want to kill anyone, he just wants to find his family. Hideki's struggle across the island will finally bring him face-to-face with Ray, a marine in his very first battle--and the choice he makes will change Hideki's life forever.

Author speaking about the book:

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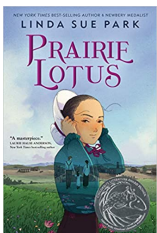
The Night Diary by Veera Hiranandani

Shy twelve-year-old Nisha, forced to flee her home with her Hindu family during the 1947 partition of India, tries to find her voice and make sense of the world falling apart around her by writing to her deceased Muslim mother in the pages of her diary.



A Night Divided by Jennifer Nielsen

When the Berlin Wall went up, Gerta, her mother, and her brother Fritz were trapped on the eastern side where they were living, while her father and her other brother Dominic were in the West. Four years later, Gerta, now twelve, sees her father on a viewing platform on the western side and realizes he wants her to risk her life trying to tunnel to freedom.



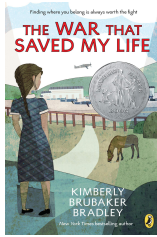
Prairie Lotus by Linda Sue Park

In Dakota Territory in the 1880s, half-Chinese Hanna and her white father face racism and resistance to change as they try to make a home for themselves.

Includes author's note.

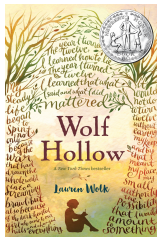
One Minute Book Review:

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The War that Saved My Life by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

A young disabled girl and her brother are evacuated from London to the English countryside during World War II, where they find life to be much sweeter away from their abusive mother. (Sequel: *The War I Finally Won*)



Wolf Hollow by Lauren Wolk

Twelve-year-old Annabelle must learn to stand up for what's right in the face of a manipulative and violent new bully who targets people Annabelle cares about, including a homeless World War I veteran.

Horror

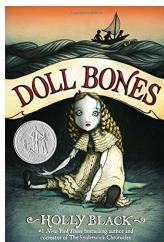


The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle by Janet Fox

In 1940, during the Blitz, Katherine, Robbie, and Amelie Bateson are sent north to a private school in Rookskill Castle in Scotland, a brooding place, haunted by dark magic from the past—but when some of their classmates disappear Katherine has to find out if the cause is hidden in the past or very much in the present.

Book trailer:

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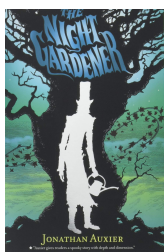


Doll Bones by Holly Black

Zach, Alice, and Poppy, friends from a Pennsylvania middle school who have long enjoyed acting out imaginary adventures with dolls and action figures, embark on a real-life quest to Ohio to bury a doll made from the ashes of a dead girl.

Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aD7fKKsYOTXuEOaVQBCMRMgijy8z5Pkqw/view?usp=sharing>



The Night Gardener by Jonathan Auxier

Irish orphans Molly, fourteen, and Kip, ten, travel to England to work as servants in a crumbling manor house where nothing is quite what it seems to be. Soon the siblings are confronted by a mysterious stranger and secrets of the cursed house.



Small Spaces by Katherine Arden

After eleven-year-old Ollie's school bus mysteriously breaks down on a field trip, she has to take a trip through scary woods, and must use all of her wits to survive. She must stick to small spaces. (Sequel: *Dead Voices*)

Humor



Stand Up, Yumi Chung! by Jessica Kim

When eleven-year-old Yumi Chung stumbles into a kids' comedy camp, she is mistaken for another student. She decides to play the part.

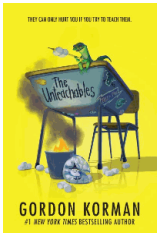


To Night Owl from Dogfish by Holly Goldberg Sloan and Meg Wolitzer

Unhappy about being sent to the same summer camp after their fathers start dating, Bett and Avery, eleven, eventually begin scheming to get the couple back together after a break-up. Told entirely through emails.

Book trailer:

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The Unteachables by Gordon Korman

The Unteachables are a wayward medley of characters: Parker the dyslexic farm boy; Aldo, who is perpetually angry; Elaine (rhymes with pain); Barnstorm the jock; Rahim the sleep-deprived artist; and Mateo, lost in fantasy worlds. Plus Kiana, who isn't even registered with the school. Not to mention their teacher, who remains in disgrace after a 25-year-old cheating scandal and is just killing time, waiting to take early retirement. Are they really incorrigible, or is it possible they are just misunderstood?

One Minute Book Review:

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Mystery



Book Scavenger by Jennifer Chambliss Bertram

Just after twelve-year-old Emily and her family move to San Francisco, she teams up with new friend James to follow clues in an odd book they find, hoping to figure out its secrets before the men who attacked Emily's hero, publisher Garrison Griswold. (Sequels: *The Unbreakable Code*, *The Alcatraz Escape*)

Link to information on the Book Scavenger game: <https://bookscavenger.com/>

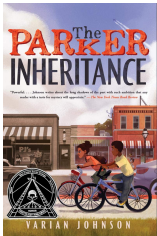


Greenglass House by Kate Milford

At Greenglass House, a smuggler's inn, twelve-year-old Milo, the innkeepers' adopted son, plans to spend his winter holidays relaxing, but soon guests arrive with strange stories about the house that send Milo and Meddy, the cook's daughter, on an adventure. (Other books in series: *Ghosts of Greenglass House*, *Bluecrowne*, *The Thief Knot*, *The Raconteur's Commonplace Book*)

One Minute Book Review:

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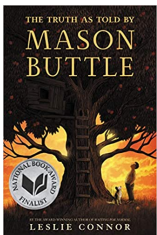


The Parker Inheritance by Varian Johnson

Twelve-year-old Candice Miller is spending the summer in Lambert, South Carolina, in the old house that belonged to her grandmother, who died after being dismissed as city manager for having the city tennis courts dug up looking for buried treasure. When she finds the letter that sent her grandmother on the treasure hunt, Candice finds herself caught up in the mystery and, with the help of her new friend and fellow book-worm, Brandon, she sets out to find the inheritance, exonerate her grandmother, and expose an injustice.

Author speaking about the book:

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The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle by Leslie Connor

Mason Buttle is the biggest, sweatiest kid in his grade, and everyone knows he can barely read or write. Mason's learning disabilities are compounded by grief. Fifteen months ago, Mason's best friend, Benny, turned up dead in the Buttle family's orchard. An investigation drags on, and Mason can't understand why Lieutenant Baird won't believe what Mason has told him about that day. Both Mason and his new friend, tiny Calvin Chumsky, are relentlessly bullied by the other boys in their neighborhood. When Calvin goes missing, Mason finds himself in trouble again.

One Minute Book review:

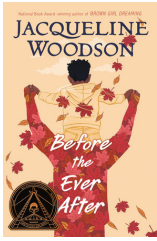
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Realistic Fiction



Amal Unbound by Aisha Saeed

In Pakistan, Amal holds onto her dream of being a teacher even after becoming an indentured servant to pay off her family's debt to the wealthy and corrupt Khan family.



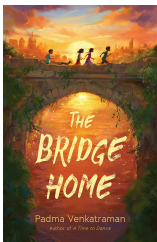
Before the Ever After by Jacqueline Woodson

ZJ's friends Ollie, Darry and Daniel help him cope when his father, a beloved professional football player, suffers severe headaches and memory loss that spell the end of his career.



The Best Man by Richard Peck

Archer Magill has spent grade school with one eye out in search of role models. Three of the best are his grandpa, the great architect; his dad, the great vintage car customizer; and his uncle Paul, who is just plain great. Along the way he finds a fourth—Mr. McLeod, the first male teacher in the history of Archer's school.



The Bridge Home by Padma Venkatraman

Four determined homeless children make a life for themselves in Chennai, India.

One Minute Book Review:

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From the Desk of Zoe Washington by Janae Marks

Avid baker Zoe Washington receives a letter on her twelfth birthday from her biological father, who is in prison for a terrible crime.



King and the Dragonflies by Kacen Callender

In a small but turbulent Louisiana town, one boy's grief takes him beyond the bayous of his backyard, to learn that there is no right way to be yourself.

Author speaking about the book:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vpoAoakuFoTVwOFzfG1ts3rB1DzN8wxQ/view?usp=sharing>



New Kid by Jerry Craft

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds--and not really fitting into either one. Graphic novel. (Sequel: *Class Act*)

Author speaking about the book:

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Other Words for Home by Jasmine Varga

When things in her hometown in Syria become volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives. The American movies Jude has always loved haven't prepared her for starting school in the US. But this life also brings unexpected surprises--new friends, a whole new family, and a school musical that Jude just might try out for. Maybe America, too, is a place where Jude can be seen as she really is. Novel in verse.

One Minute Book Review:

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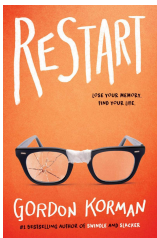


The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise by Dan Gemeinhart

Twelve-year-old Coyote and her father rush to Poplin Springs, Washington, in their old school bus to save a memory box buried in a park that will soon be demolished.

Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19cSWMMkne2-qw7HDZtBk3AKi1RfbWAtA/view?usp=sharing>



Restart by Gordon Korman

Chase does not remember falling off the roof, in fact he does not remember anything about himself, and when he gets back to middle school he begins to learn who he was through the reactions of the other kids--trouble is, he really is not sure he likes the Chase that is being revealed, but can he take the opportunity amnesia has provided and restart his life?

Author speaking about the book:

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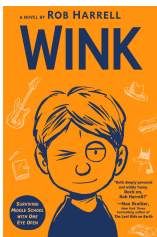


Stargazing by Jen Wang

Growing up in the same Chinese-American suburb, perfectionist Christine and artistic, confident, impulsive Moon become unlikely best friends, whose friendship is tested by jealousy, social expectations, and illness.

Book trailer:

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Wink by Rob Harrell

After being diagnosed with a rare eye cancer, twelve-year-old Ross discovers how music, art, and true friends can help him survive both treatment and middle school.

Author speaking about the book:

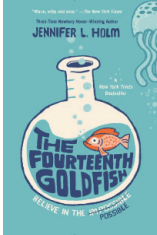
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Science Fiction



Dragon Pearl by Yoon Ha Lee

Min, a thirteen-year-old girl with fox-magic, stows away on a battle cruiser and impersonates a cadet in order to solve the mystery of what happened to her older brother in the Thousand World Space Forces.

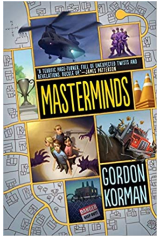


The Fourteenth Goldfish by Jennifer L. Holm

Ellie's scientist grandfather has discovered a way to reverse aging, and consequently has turned into a teenager--which makes for complicated relationships when he moves in with Ellie and her mother, his daughter.

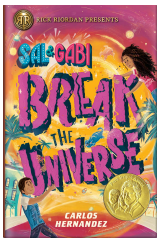
Author speaking about the book:

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Masterminds by Gordon Korman

Eli Frieden has never left Serenity, New Mexico...why would he ever want to? Then one day, he bikes to the edge of the city limits and something so unexpected happens, it changes everything. Eli convinces his friends to help him investigate, and soon it becomes clear that nothing is as it seems in Serenity. (Other books in series: *Criminal Destiny*; *Payback*)

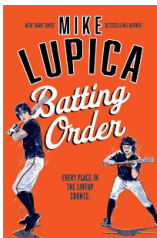


Sal and Gabi Break the Universe by Carlos Hernandez

In order to heal after his mother's death, thirteen-year-old Sal learns to reach into time and space to retrieve things--and people--from other universes.

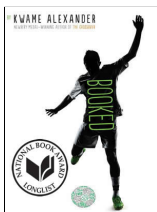
(Sequel: *Sal and Gabi Fix the Universe*)

Sports Fiction



Batting Order by Mike Lupica

Twelve-year-old Matt Baker is the best all-rounder on his baseball team, but can he help Big Ben Roberson improve his hitting and stand up to his father?

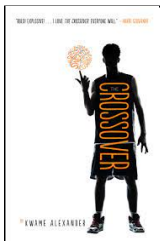


Booked by Kwame Alexander

Twelve-year-old Nick loves soccer and hates books, but soon learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams.

Author speaking about the book:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/12e7b9vH7MaDW3h75kvjNH-3RyD2b-GzC/view?usp=sharing>



The Crossover by Kwame Alexander

Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health. In verse.



Get a Grip, Vivy Cohen! by Sarah Kapit

Eleven-year-old knuckleball pitcher Vivy Cohen, who has autism, becomes pen pals with her favorite Major League baseball player after writing a letter to him as an assignment for her social skills class.



Ghost by Jason Reynolds

Aspiring to be the fastest sprinter on his elite middle school's track team, gifted runner Ghost finds his goal challenged by a tragic past with a violent father.

(Other books in series: *Patina*, *Sunny*, *Lu*)

Author (and others) speaking about the book:

<https://www.pbs.org/video/jason-reynolds-discusses-ghost-dbm4ux/>

Informational Texts/Biographies/Memoirs

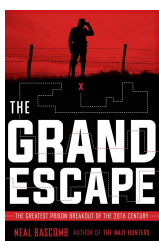


Becoming RBG: Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Journey to Justice by Debbie Levy

Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a modern feminist icon--a leader in the fight for equal treatment of girls and women in the workplace and in society. She blazed trails to the peaks of the male-centric worlds of education and law, where women had rarely risen before. Graphic format.

Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Cdnz1p-DL2Es82wUP2BBXy6tygsaTbjk/view?usp=sharing>



The Grand Escape: The Greatest Prison Breakout of the 20th Century by Neal Bascomb

The story of a group of Allied POWs in WWI who dared to escape from

Germany's most notorious prison camp.



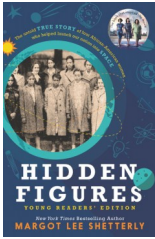
Guts by Raina Telgemeier

Raina Telgemeier relates her struggles with stress and anxiety as a child.

Graphic format.

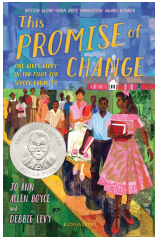
Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Mq6XCplxpHMMIQdXtXNvBTY3V8rbR0cn/view?usp=sharing>



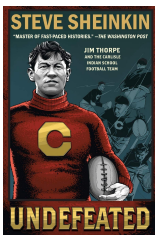
Hidden Figures by Margot Lee Shetterly (Young Readers' Edition)

Before John Glenn orbited the earth, or Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, a group of dedicated female mathematicians known as “human computers” used pencils, slide rules, and adding machines to calculate the numbers that would launch rockets, and astronauts, into space.



This Promise of Change: One Girl's Story in the Fight for School Equality by Jo Ann Allen Boyce

In 1956, one year before federal troops escorted the Little Rock Nine into Central High School, fourteen-year-old Jo Ann Allen was one of twelve African-American students who broke the color barrier and integrated Clinton High School in Tennessee. This is the heartbreaking and relatable story of her four months thrust into the national spotlight and as a trailblazer in history.



Undeclared: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian High School Football Team by Steve Sheinkin

Before they became legends, Jim Thorpe and Pop Warner met at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, where they forged one of the winningest teams in American football history.

Author speaking about the book:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/169REgoB79jsxWKj9lfA7leryh0bUbKM5/view?usp=sharing>



When Stars Are Scattered by Omar Mohamed and Victoria Jamieson

Omar and his younger brother Hassan live in a refugee camp. When an opportunity for Omar to get an education comes along, he must decide between going to school every day or caring for his nonverbal brother in this intimate and touching portrayal of family and daily life in a refugee camp. Graphic format.

Book trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=111ztD-2QaU>