

# The Birchbark House Summary Of Chapters

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## CERVANTES JONAH

**The Star That Always Stays** Harper Collins  
 When bright and spirited Norvia moves from the country to the city, she has to live by one new rule: Never let anyone know you're Ojibwe. Growing up on Beaver Island, Grand-père told Norvia stories—stories about her ancestor Migizi, about Biboone-o-nini the Wintermaker, about the Crane Clan and the Reindeer Clan. He sang her songs in the old language, and her grandmothers taught her to make story quilts and maple candy. On the island, Norvia was proud of her Ojibwe heritage. Things are different in the city. Here, Norvia's mother forces her to pretend she's not Native at all—even to Mr. Ward, Ma's new husband, and to Vernon, Norvia's irritating new stepbrother. In fact, there are a lot of changes in the city: ten-cent movies, gleaming soda shops, speedy automobiles, ninth grade. It's dizzying for a girl who grew up on the forested shores of Lake Michigan. Despite the move, the upheaval, and the looming threat of world war, Norvia and her siblings—all five of them—are determined to make 1914 their best year ever. Norvia is certain that her future depends upon it... and upon her discretion. But how can she have the best year ever if she has to hide who she truly is? Sensitive, enthralling, and classic in sensibility (perfect for Anne of Green Gables fans), this tender coming-of-age story about an introspective and brilliant Native American heroine thoughtfully addresses assimilation, racism, and divorce, as well as everygirl problems like first crushes, making friends, and the joys and pains of a blended family. Often funny, often heartbreaking, *The Star That Always Stays* is a fresh and vivid story directly inspired by Anna Rose Johnson's family history. AN NPR BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR! A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection! A Parnassus Books Spark Club Pick! "INSPIRING."—Kirkus Reviews "A NEW CLASSIC."—Southern Bookseller Review "INTIMATE."—Publishers Weekly "BEAUTIFUL."—Booklist "UNPUTDOWNABLE."—Anne Bustard, author of *Parents' Choice Book Award Winner Blue Skies* "LOVINGLY WOVEN... PAIRS WELL WITH 'THE BIRCHBARK HOUSE.'"—Cynthia Leitich Smith, NYT-bestselling author of *Ancestor Approved*  
**Amber Was Brave, Essie Was Smart** Penguin  
 A New York Times Notable Book Louise Erdrich, the New York Times bestselling, National Book Award-winning author of *LaRose* and *The Round House*, paints a startling portrait of a young woman fighting for her life and her unborn child against oppressive forces that manifest in the wake of a cataclysmic event. The world as we know it is ending. Evolution has reversed

itself, affecting every living creature on earth. Science cannot stop the world from running backwards, as woman after woman gives birth to infants that appear to be primitive species of humans. Twenty-six-year-old Cedar Hawk Songmaker, adopted daughter of a pair of big-hearted, open-minded Minneapolis liberals, is as disturbed and uncertain as the rest of America around her. But for Cedar, this change is profound and deeply personal. She is four months pregnant. Though she wants to tell the adoptive parents who raised her from infancy, Cedar first feels compelled to find her birth mother, Mary Potts, an Ojibwe living on the reservation, to understand both her and her baby's origins. As Cedar goes back to her own biological beginnings, society around her begins to disintegrate, fueled by a swelling panic about the end of humanity. There are rumors of martial law, of Congress confining pregnant women. Of a registry, and rewards for those who turn these wanted women in. Flickering through the chaos are signs of increasing repression: a shaken Cedar witnesses a family wrenched apart when police violently drag a mother from her husband and child in a parking lot. The streets of her neighborhood have been renamed with Bible verses. A stranger answers the phone when she calls her adoptive parents, who have vanished without a trace. It will take all Cedar has to avoid the prying eyes of potential informants and keep her baby safe. A chilling dystopian novel both provocative and prescient, *Future Home of the Living God* is a startlingly original work from one of our most acclaimed writers: a moving meditation on female agency, self-determination, biology, and natural rights that speaks to the troubling changes of our time.  
**Bayou Magic** Candlewick Press  
 "If it wasn't for the fused-with-Zyx thing, I suppose I would just be normal—whatever that means." When Felix Yz was three years old, a hyperintelligent fourth-dimensional being became fused inside him after one of his father's science experiments went terribly wrong. The creature is friendly, but Felix—now thirteen—won't be able to grow to adulthood while they're still melded together. So a risky Procedure is planned to separate them . . . but it may end up killing them both instead. This book is Felix's secret blog, a chronicle of the days leading up to the Procedure. Some days it's business as usual—time with his close-knit family, run-ins with a bully at school, anxiety about his crush. But life becomes more out of the ordinary with the arrival of an Estonian chess Grandmaster, the revelation of family secrets, and a train-hopping journey. When it all might be over in a few days, what matters most? Told in an unforgettable voice full of heart and humor, *Felix Yz* is a groundbreaking story about how we are all separate, but all connected too.  
*Born Behind Bars* Groundwood Books Ltd  
 Winner of the Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children's Non-

Fiction From the mid-1800s to the late 1990s, the education of Indigenous children was taken on by various churches in government-sponsored residential schools. More than 150,000 children were forcibly taken from their families in order to erase their traditional languages and cultures. *As Long as the Rivers Flow* is the story of Larry Loyie's last traditional summer before entering residential school. It is a time of adventure and learning from his Elders. He cares for an abandoned baby owl, watches his kokom (grandmother) make winter moccasins, and helps his family prepare for summer camp, where he will pick berries, fish and swim. While searching for medicine plants in the bush with Kokom, he encounters a giant grizzly bear. Gently but truthfully written, the book captivates its readers and reveals a hidden history. Correlates to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7 Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting) CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions). CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.5 Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

*A Conspiracy of Stars* Knopf Books for Young Readers  
 "Venkatraman has never met a heavy theme she did not like....Borrowing elements of fable, it's told with a recurring sense of awe by a boy whom the world, for most of his life, has existed only in stories."—New York Times Book Review The author of the award-winning *The Bridge Home* brings readers another gripping novel set in Chennai, India, featuring a boy who's unexpectedly released into the world after spending his whole life in jail with his mom. Kabir has been in jail since the day he was born, because his mom is serving time for a crime she didn't commit. He's never met his dad, so the only family he's got are their cellmates, and the only place he feels the least bit free is in the classroom, where his kind teacher regales him with stories of the wonders of the outside world. Then one day a new warden arrives and announces Kabir is too old to stay. He gets handed over to a long-lost "uncle" who unfortunately turns out to be a fraud, and intends to sell Kabir. So Kabir does the only thing he can—run away as fast as his legs will take him. How does a boy with nowhere to go and no connections make his way? Fortunately, he befriends Rani, another street kid, and she takes him under her wing. But plotting their next move is hard—and fraught with danger—in a world that cares little for homeless, low caste children. This is not the world Kabir dreamed of—but he's discovered he's not the type to give up. Kabir is ready to show the

world that he--and his mother--deserve a place in it.

**The Plague of Doves** Candlewick Press

From acclaimed Nigerian storyteller Atinuke, the first in a series of chapter books set in contemporary West Africa introduces a little girl who has enchanted young readers. Anna Hibiscus lives in Africa, amazing Africa, with her mother and father, her twin baby brothers (Double and Trouble), and lots of extended family in a big white house with a beautiful garden in a compound in a city. Anna is never lonely—there are always cousins to play and fight with, aunts and uncles laughing and shouting, and parents and grandparents close by. Readers will happily follow as she goes on a seaside vacation, helps plan a party for Auntie Comfort from Canada (will she remember her Nigerian ways?), learns firsthand what it's really like to be a child selling oranges outside the gate, and longs to see sweet snow. Nigerian storyteller Atinuke's debut book for children and its sequels, with their charming (and abundant) gray-scale drawings by Lauren Tobia, are newly published in the US by Candlewick Press, joining other celebrated Atinuke stories in captivating young readers.

**The Scarlet Letter** HarperCollins

At the end of a winter-long journey into manhood, Little Hawk returns to find his village decimated by a white man's plague and soon, despite a fresh start, Little Hawk dies violently but his spirit remains trapped, seeing how his world changes.

**The Painted Drum** Penguin

"Haunted and haunting. . . . With fearlessness and humility, in a narrative that flows more artfully than ever between destruction and rebirth, Erdrich has opened herself to possibilities beyond what we merely see—to the dead alive and busy, to the breath of trees and the souls of wolves—and inspires readers to open their hearts to these mysteries as well."— Washington Post Book World  
From the author of the National Book Award Winner *The Round House*, Louise Erdrich's breathtaking, lyrical novel of a priceless Ojibwe artifact and the effect it has had on those who have come into contact with it over the years. While appraising the estate of a New Hampshire family descended from a North Dakota Indian agent, Faye Travers is startled to discover a rare moose skin and cedar drum fashioned long ago by an Ojibwe artisan. And so begins an illuminating journey both backward and forward in time, following the strange passage of a powerful yet delicate instrument, and revealing the extraordinary lives it has touched and defined. Compelling and unforgettable, Louise Erdrich's *Painted Drum* explores the often-fraught relationship between mothers and daughters, the strength of family, and the intricate rhythms of grief with all the grace, wit, and startling beauty that characterizes this acclaimed author's finest work.

**Pioneer Girl Perspectives** Astra Publishing House

For young Samuel Russell, the summer of 1777 is a time of fear. The British Army is approaching, and the Indians in the area seem ready to attack. To Stands Straight, a young Abenaki Indian scouting for King George, Americans are dangerous enemies who threaten his family and home. When Stands Straight's party enters the Quaker Meetinghouse where Samuel worships, the two boys share an encounter that neither will ever forget. Told in alternating viewpoints, *The Arrow over the Door* is based on a true story. Illustrated by James Watling. "Thoughtful and eminently readable." (School Library Journal)

**Anna Hibiscus** Puffin

Winner of the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, *Chickadee*

is the first novel of a new arc in the critically acclaimed Birchbark House series by New York Times bestselling author Louise Erdrich. Twin brothers Chickadee and Makoons have done everything together since they were born—until the unthinkable happens and the brothers are separated. Desperate to reunite, both Chickadee and his family must travel across new territories, forge unlikely friendships, and experience both unexpected moments of unbearable heartache as well as pure happiness. And through it all, Chickadee has the strength of his namesake, the chickadee, to carry him on. Chickadee continues the story of one Ojibwe family's journey through one hundred years in America. School Library Journal, in a starred review, proclaimed, "Readers will be more than happy to welcome little Chickadee into their hearts." *Chickadee* Holiday House

After an October blizzard, Laura's family moves into town for the winter.

**Felix Yz** HarperCollins

American Indian Youth Literature Award Winner: Best Middle Grade Book! Brian Young's powerful debut novel tells of a seemingly ordinary Navajo boy who must save the life of a Water Monster—and comes to realize he's a hero at heart. When Nathan goes to visit his grandma, Nali, at her mobile summer home on the Navajo reservation, he knows he's in for a pretty uneventful summer, with no electricity or cell service. Still, he loves spending time with Nali and with his uncle Jet, though it's clear when Jet arrives that he brings his problems with him. One night, while lost in the nearby desert, Nathan finds someone extraordinary: a Holy Being from the Navajo Creation Story—a Water Monster—in need of help. Now Nathan must summon all his courage to save his new friend. With the help of other Navajo Holy Beings, Nathan is determined to save the Water Monster, and to support Uncle Jet in healing from his own pain. The Heartdrum imprint centers a wide range of intertribal voices, visions, and stories while welcoming all young readers, with an emphasis on the present and future of Indian Country and on the strength of young Native heroes. In partnership with We Need Diverse Books.

**Chula the Fox** South Dakota State Historical Society

When Ohkwa'ri overhears a group of older boys planning a raid on a neighboring village, he immediately tells his Mohawk elders. He has done the right thing—but he has also made enemies. Grabber and his friends will do anything they can to hurt him, especially during the village-wide game of Tekwaarathon (lacrosse). Ohkwa'ri believes in the path of peace, but can peaceful ways work against Grabber's wrath? "An exciting story that also offers an in-depth look at Native American life centuries ago." —Kirkus Reviews

**Birchbark Brigade** Yearling

A vibrant, edgy, fresh new YA voice for fans of *More Happy Than Not* and *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*, packed with interior graffiti. Winner of the Schneider Family Book Award! When Julia finds a slur about her best friend scrawled across the back of the Kingston School for the Deaf, she covers it up with a beautiful (albeit illegal) graffiti mural. Her supposed best friend snitches, the principal expels her, and her two mothers set Julia up with a one-way ticket to a "mainstream" school in the suburbs, where she's treated like an outcast as the only deaf student. The last thing she has left is her art, and not even Banksy himself could convince her to give that up. Out in the 'burbs, Julia paints

anywhere she can, eager to claim some turf of her own. But Julia soon learns that she might not be the only vandal in town.

Someone is adding to her tags, making them better, showing off—and showing Julia up in the process. She expected her art might get painted over by cops. But she never imagined getting dragged into a full-blown graffiti war. Told with wit and grit by debut author Whitney Gardner, who also provides gorgeous interior illustrations of Julia's graffiti tags, *You're Welcome, Universe* introduces audiences to a one-of-a-kind protagonist who is unabashedly herself no matter what life throws in her way. "[A] spectacular debut...a moving, beautifully written contemporary novel full of quirky art and complicated friendships...this book is a gift to be thankful for."—BookRiot

**The Game of Silence** White Dog Press

After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the Canadian wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce.

**Ghost Hawk** Penguin

Ungdomsbog om en ung indianerpige, Omakayas, som bor med sin familie i det, der senere bliver Minnesota

**Future Home of the Living God** Simon and Schuster

This National Book Award finalist by Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Louise Erdrich is the first installment in an essential nine-book series chronicling 100 years in the life of one Ojibwe family, and includes beautiful interior black-and-white artwork done by the author. She was named Omakayas, or Little Frog, because her first step was a hop. Omakayas and her family live on an island in Lake Superior. Though there are growing numbers of white people encroaching on their land, life continues much as it always has. But the satisfying rhythms of their life are shattered when a visitor comes to their lodge one winter night, bringing with him an invisible enemy that will change things forever—but that will eventually lead Omakayas to discover her calling. By turns moving and humorous, this novel is a breathtaking tour de force by a gifted writer. The beloved and essential Birchbark House series by Louise Erdrich includes *The Birchbark House*, *The Game of Silence*, *The Porcupine Year*, *Chickadee*, and *Makoons*.

**Hatchet** Harper Collins

Too often, Native American history is treated as a finished chapter instead of an ongoing story. This book offers readers everything they never learned in school about Native American people's past, present, and future.

**Written in Stone** Harper Collins

Rosanne Parry, acclaimed author of *A Wolf Called Wander* and *Heart of a Shepherd*, shines a light on Native American tribes of the Pacific Northwest in the 1920s, a time of critical cultural upheaval. Pearl has always dreamed of hunting whales, just like her father. Of taking to the sea in their eight-man canoe, standing at the prow with a harpoon, and waiting for a whale to lift its barnacle-speckled head as it offers its life for the life of the tribe. But now that can never be. Pearl's father was lost on the last hunt, and the whales hide from the great steam-powered ships carrying harpoon cannons, which harvest not one but dozens of whales from the ocean. With the whales gone, Pearl's people, the Makah, struggle to survive as Pearl searches for ways to preserve their stories and skills.

**Children of the Longhouse** HarperCollins

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