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At Maquoit High School, Tom Bouchard has it made: captain and star of the soccer team, boyfriend to one of the prettiest, most popular girls, and third in his class, likely to have his pick of any college, if he ever bothers filling out his applications. But life in his idyllic small Maine town quickly gets turned upside down after the events of 9/11.

Enniston has become a “secondary migration” location for Somali refugees, who are seeking a better life after their country was destroyed by war—they can no longer go home. Tom hasn’t thought much about his Somali classmates until four of them join the soccer team, including Saeed. He comes out of nowhere on the field to make impossible shots, and suddenly the team is winning, dominating even; but when Saeed’s eligibility is questioned and Tom screws up in a big way, he’s left to grapple with a culture he doesn’t understand and take responsibility for his actions. Saeed and his family came out of nowhere and vanish just as quickly. And Tom may find himself going nowhere, too, if he doesn’t start trying to get somewhere.

Out of Nowhere Details

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From Reader Review Out of Nowhere for online ebook

Nira says

18 year old Tom Bouchard's life is changed by Somali immigrants who come from their own war infested country to life in Tom's town. A few of them attend Tom's high school, Chamberlain, and help him and his soccer team get to the next level. Tom then gets in trouble with the law and finds himself working at the community center. he then finds himself falling for a fellow volunteer, a down to earth college girl. Tom juggles a new girl, new friends, old enemies, and the loyalty of his friends all at once.

The demanding social and academic stress for Tome is a big part of the book, but the real test is when Tom tries to stand up for a Somali student on his soccer team which looks to only guarantee to get him farther in trouble with the law. The real theme of the book is Tom's loyalty and understanding to what is right even when the going get's tough. Maria Padian does a good job of making this theme clear.

The author also does an excellent job of showing Tom's good natured heart even in the worst of times. She showed that Tom had a plan, even if there were a few bumps in his way. His plan was simple, to stick to himself and enjoy the ride.

The author did a good job capturing the voice of an 18 year old high school student. Maria Padian captured all of his emotions and displayed them in the pages so it made Tom complex, but not too crazy. She also did a good job with Tom's story, and connections to people and places and his background. it made for a very authentic and interesting story line.

This book is recommended to anyone who enjoys challenging books, not necessarily in terms of how big the words are, but how big the concepts are. This book deals with some hardships and religious beliefs that are complicated and involve some thought. Even though under the surface is a big hard, the outside of the story is softer and more fun, with compelling characters worth rooting for. All of characters in this book are different. There's the heroic protagonist who supposedly has "the life", the jealous "x" and her posy, the "screw up" who you always seem to root for in the end, the sweet down to earth, wise girlfriend...Out of Nowhere covers it all.

Tepolak Seth says

I love this book, more than I expected to. This book has made me change my perspective on life. It made me see life a different way. I realized how lucky I am while reading this book. It made me feel really grateful and I'm touched. The book is way far from boring! It was incredibly moving.

Richie Partington says

Richie's Picks: OUT OF NOWHERE by Maria Padian, Knopf, February 2013, 352p., ISBN: 978-0-375-86580-0

"I like the shores of America!

Comfort is yours in America!
Knobs on the doors in America,
Wall-to-wall floors in America!
-- L. Bernstein, S. Sondheim, (1956)

"You've got to wonder who the genius was that came up with the plan to put a bunch of Africans in Maine, the coldest, whitest state in America.

"Okay, maybe Alaska is colder. But not whiter. And it's true that the Somalis who began showing up in Enniston by the hundreds started out someplace else. Warm places, like Georgia and southern California. Our town wasn't ever anybody's first bright idea. We'd gotten what's called a 'secondary migration' (my aunt Maddie taught me that term), which is when refugees who have just barely made it out alive from some war zone are dumped in a city where there are plenty of cheap apartments, but as soon as they learn a few words of English they realize their situation sucks. Like the guy next door deals drugs and the schools are bad, So they move to a better place. Like Enniston. Which has pretty low crime, okay schools, and loads of cheap, empty apartments."

Meet Chamberlain High School senior Tom Bouchard. Tom is far from being a goody-goody, but he's definitely a solid citizen: third academically in his class; a guy who instinctively stands up for losers and lost sheep; and captain of the soccer team. Which is where Tom meets and gets to know Saeed, a member of that "secondary migration" of Somali Muslims to Enniston (and Chamberlain High). Saeed, who has suddenly shown up at Chamberlain, plays soccer at a whole 'nother level, but can hardly speak a word of English.

"Every day in school you saw a new bunch of them in the guidance office, these black kids who barely spoke English. They would wander, lost, through the halls, trying to figure out the whole concept of changing classes. The girls would wash their feet in the restroom sinks before lunch, which made them real popular with Cherisse's crowd (not). One day I saw this Somali girl on all fours on the staircase landing. Everybody had to step around her, and I heard one guy say, 'Dude, what is she doing?'

"'Facing Mecca,' someone replied.

"'Where's Mecca?' somebody else asked.

"'It's out by the mall,' a third answered, which got a few laughs.

"But not everyone was laughing. People were mad. Worried. Especially teachers. Who didn't know what to do with hundreds of kids who just showed up and didn't know English. Hell, a lot of them couldn't even read and write in their own language."

I always wondered how all of those Cambodian refugees in Gary Schmidt's TROUBLE -- an all-time favorite of mine -- had found their way to the down-on-the-heels Massachusetts mill town of Merton which, in that story, comes to be known as "Little Cambodia." Now, thanks to Tom Bouchard and his Aunt Maddie, I understand it.

Anyway, Tom gets conned into pulling a prank on a rival high school by a childhood friend who is now a stoner-type, gets caught, and finds himself doing community service -- providing tutoring to a young Somali kid -- at a drop-in center. This leads to Tom meeting a college girl working at the drop-in center who has killer eyes and is a million times more enlightened than his stuck-up, clueless, hottie girlfriend Cherisse.

What turns these elements into a pressure cooker is the combination of Chamberlain's soccer team (which has long served as a doormat) turning into a rising power -- thanks to Saeed and the team's other new Somalian players -- combined with a letter published in the local paper, written by the mayor, in which she urges the town's Somalian residents to not encourage any more immigrants to move to Enniston.

Yessirree! There is nothing like painting a big target on the backs of the Somalian young people attending Enniston's schools, including Chamberlain.

What adds to the mix is the fact that Enniston is not a WASP haven. This is a working class town by and large populated by those of French Canadian descent whose parents or grandparents were immigrants themselves.

OUT OF NOWHERE gets to me for many reasons. The camaraderie that develops among the members of the soccer team, the game action sequences, and the other issues relating to the team, make this a first-rate sports story that I read in one day. The story deals honestly with the issues surrounding a school that is overwhelmed with a need for special services. The bullying aspects of the tale are significant, particularly since the kids who are wrong are jerks but not caricatures. There is a real stand-by-your-friends aspect of Tom Bouchard that we can all stand to learn from and which I loved. There is a pivotal subplot involving a lawyer, the father of a rival soccer player, which touches on issues of parenting and privilege.

But what is equally important for me is that OUT OF NOWHERE is an enlightening story about what it is like to be growing up a practicing Muslim in post-9/11 America. For years, I have wanted to educate myself by reading one of the recently-published nonfiction books for children about what being Muslim is all about. I've felt some guilt about not having done so. By bringing me into the lives and households of these young Somalian immigrants, this story has really enlightened me about Islamic practices and beliefs, and this makes me want to go out of my way to get this exciting and important contemporary teen read into a lot of teen hands.

Richie Partington, MLIS

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Klee says

I confess to being almost equally ignorant on the subjects of both soccer and Somali Muslim culture, at least before reading *Out of Nowhere*. It contains so many components of a good high school read: social strata, changing friendships, class issues, college angst, and good old hormones. It could have stood alone on several story lines and been a good book. But it is a great book with the introduction of the recent Somali refugees. Entirely believable characters give insight into life before and after arrival in America for an elementary boy, male and female teens and adults. The "raise cultural awareness" session at school was pitch perfect.

Claudia Burgoa says

Amazing and surprising read, I'm glad I read it and didn't stir off because it included soccer –a sport I'm not fond of. Though the entire book talked about the sport, it wasn't the story all about High school sports. The writer takes us through one of the most complicated stages of everybody's lives –high school –terrifying place to be for four years.

Though scary, it's where we learn to be adults. Here, Tom –our main character- learns to accept others no matter their religion, origin and other characteristics. The heart-warming story gives you a real picture of how bullying and intolerance can affect others, as well as how one person can make a difference.

Smart plot, great flow and craft and a book that will stay with you for a long time.

Sarah says

(Source: review request by publisher - Random House Children's Books via Netgalley. Thanks to Random House Children's Books, and Netgalley.)

Tom plays soccer, and likes to ignore his college applications instead of filling them in.

The small town where Tom lives has a large Somali immigrant population, and not everyone is happy about it. Race doesn't matter to Tom though, and he is happy to help a boy called Saeed make it onto the soccer team.

After a practical joke gone wrong, Tom finds himself landed with 100 hours of community service, and joins a programme that helps Somali kids get their homework done. Whilst helping out, Tom makes friends with Somali kids, and takes his community service further than expected of him when he starts to help kids with things other than school work.

Tom encounters racism towards the Somali people, and tries to smooth things over, but is annoyed when the mayor then takes a stand by writing a piece in the paper saying that they don't want any more Somali immigrants coming to the town because they can't afford them.

Are the Somali's really that bad? Do they deserve to be treated this way? And who will stand up for them?

I received an invitation to read this book on Netgalley, and I'll admit that I wasn't sure if I wanted to read it or not. I can't really say that I found the blurb all that interesting.

This book had two themes – the racism, and soccer/football, although the two were also intermingled. I liked how Tom was so open, and didn't really see people as different colours. To him Saeed was a good football player first, and a Somali second. He didn't see why people had a problem with Saeed being Somali rather than American, and he always defended the Somali's when it was needed.

I understood the mayor's arguments – I can see why people might be annoyed if they felt that people were coming into the town and taking things that they hadn't earned – such as homes and benefits, whilst the people who had lived in the town all their lives were not given the same treatment. But at the same time the Somali people needed somewhere to live, and bullying on a one-to-one level was not going to solve the immigration problems.

There were some discussions with regard to religion and religious beliefs, and also about ages and green cards, and other issues the Somali kids had, as well as some romantic issues for Tom.

The storyline wasn't obvious, and I wasn't able to guess what would happen at the end.

Overall; not really my kind of thing, but has a solid storyline, and covers quite a lot of difficult issues.
6 out of 10.

Amanda says

*'Okay, my family live in Somalia, right? And in Somalia there is big, big wars and fighting. Like, everyone is gets killed, and the peoples, they just ... run. You just run, you know?'
No, I didn't say. I don't know. I have absolutely no idea.*

Every once in a while I come across a story that reminds me why I fell in love with young adult contemporary. In the world of ya books there are too many that don't dare tackle hard issues and at the same time portray the characters as the age they actually are. I can't even remember how many books that either refuse to handle real issues in a sensible way and at the same time not glorify the characters to perfection. *Out of Nowhere* is managing to deal with several issues yet keeping our main character to remain what they are. Young people finding their way.

Out of Nowhere is centered around Tom from a small town in Maine. Ever since 9/11, immigrants, mostly from Somalia, have moved to their town which isn't short on narrow-minded people. But Tom is just your average teenager. Sure, he's obnoxious and arrogant, but what high school kid isn't? When several members on the soccer squad suddenly are Somali kids people aren't too happy. Tom though, sees that these kids, especially Saeed, are great athletes. Between soccer, Tom also must deal with his college applications, his old girlfriend, the cultural differences suddenly right in front of him, family disputes on politics. And when Tom's best friend Donnie gets them both in trouble, things just gets harder.

'You know, Captain, outside of your family I doubt anyone much cares where or whether you go to college,' Myla continued. 'But as a healthy, smart white male growing up in one of the safest, most prosperous countries in the world, you know what? You have a moral obligation to do something worthwhile with your life and not be an asshole. Just sayin'.'

The most wonderful thing about this story is how real it is. In a time where immigration and religion, especially islam, are such hot topics with people shouting out opinions from left and right, *Out of Nowhere* offers a story what it's like for the regular small town to suddenly become multicultural. There's racism directed toward the Somali kids and much bigger problems than Tom's college applications, but those problems don't disappear into thin air just like that. Tom's journey through this story is about realizing his place in the world and what he wants to fight for. And it's done exceptionally well, dealing with topics like religion, immigrants, bullying, and more with great sensibility.

Highly recommended!

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

I had no expectations when I picked up *Out of Nowhere* and started reading it other than the casual recommendation of a friend. Well, her recommendation wasn't so casual, she really really liked it and didn't want to influence my opinion. Turns out, I really really liked it as well.

Tom Bouchard is a senior at Chamberlain high school in Enniston, Maine and the kind of character that is usually not the most interesting. He is good-looking, a great soccer player, and a top student with very

supportive parents. But there is a crack in the perfection. His girlfriend, Cherrisse, is a shallow, whinny narcissistic girl who wants is complete attention and his best friend since childhood, Donnie, is a loser willing to get high on anything. But Tom is a supportive kind of guy.

And it is a good thing because into the mix of people in his life come a young Somali refugee who is an ace soccer player. Saeed and his family are part of the ever growing number of Muslim refugees settling down in Enniston, though not particularly welcomed there in light of 9/11. To make matters worse, the mayor of Enniston had a letter published in the local paper asking Somalis' to tell other refugees not to come to Enniston, that there were already too many of them for the town to be able to cope with.

But Tom welcomes Saeed onto the soccer team with enthusiasm, believing that with him, Chamberlain has a fighting chance of beating their arch rivals Maquoit High School. Things are looking pretty good to Tom. That is, until the night Don convinces Tom to pull a prank and paint the Maquoit team's lucky rock, and they get caught.

Given community service at a center in the heart of Saeed's neighborhood, Tom becomes the new homework helper, working together with Saeed's older sister Samira, who makes it clear she does not like Tom at all, and college student Myla, who is more fluid with her feelings about him.

Slowly, as their lives intersect, Tom begins to understand just how difficult and frightening the lives of the Somali refugees were before they came to the US and how poor and difficult their lives still are in a country where many don't want them and believe all Muslims are terrorists. But when Tom innocently extends ordinary American kindness to Samira, there are terrible consequences for her and her family. Tom must accept that Muslim culture and religion are intertwined and may not be as easily assimilated into American life as he thinks they should be.

Out of Nowhere is a real eye-opening novel. It is a novel you would expect to be told from the point of view of Saeed, but instead it is narrated by Tom. It is, after all, his story and his coming to consciousness that it is concerned with. Saeed, though his story is important, is a catalyst here, the spark that brings Tom's insular life to an end and forces him to make changes and decisions which will ultimately set him apart from being just another stereotype.

This is a YA novel, so one should not be surprised that there is some real use of f-bombs throughout this novel (it is, after all, realistic fiction), and some sexual intimations, drinking and drug use.

This book is recommended for readers age 13+

This book was borrowed from a friend.

One of the more interesting points that Padian brings to like in Out of Nowhere is the immigration question surrounding the Somalis. The mayor's letter is based on a real letter the real mayor, Robert MacDonald, had published in the Lewiston ME newspaper back in 2002. It caused quite a hoopla among the people of Lewiston. MacDonald was at it again when he told Somalis to assimilate, to leave their culture at the door when they come to the US. What make Out of Nowhere doubly interesting is that Padian makes clear that make of the residents of Enniston have French-Canadian roots and had migrated to Maine for the same reasons as the Somalis - jobs and a better life.

Meg says

How great was this book? Extra-time-on-the-treadmill-great. I just could not stop reading. Protagonist Tom Bouchard is a star soccer player in his small Maine town. An influx of Somali refugees begins to heavily impact the town - from the classroom to the soccer field. As Tom gets to know his Somali team mates he learns as much about himself as he does this new culture. Gorgeous descriptions, realistic dialogue and an engaging plot come together in this high-school pick.

This review is based on an advanced review copy provided to me by the publisher.

jade says

The writing was flawless, natural, and just lovely to read. There is no heart-stopping action, yet the book is the farthest thing from boring: a true testimony to great writing. Maria Padian left no perspective out whether it be connected to our still-racial society or to the Muslim faith. There were the white supremacists and the extreme liberals, and there were the strictly religious Somalis and others who were more relaxed. She winds these sometimes difficult subjects beautifully around an average high school boy which brings all of these very different (and very real) topics down to a level we as readers can relate to easier. There's a well measured combination of girlfriends, soccer matches, pranks, and people like Saeed. People who had been through hell and back and only wanted a clean sheet to try and rebuild their lives. Saeed is what starts the story and what ends it. He is what changed Tom's life forever. The end was a tad anticlimactic, but oh so realistic and I guess I wouldn't want it any other way. I'm really struggling to write this review because there is so much to this book and honestly, I think it just deserves to be read-- as simple as that. It seems like your average realistic fiction book, kinda boring but with great substance, yet it is so so so much more than that. There are deep and valid points made throughout the book, but at the same time it's just a fantastic story that was nice to get lost in for a while. (I also feel as though I learned a lot about Islam. I'm really glad someone chose to write a YA book on such a topic as this one :))

Reid Osborne says

Tom goes to school at the Enniston High School at a place and time when Somali refugees were coming in. Tom is the star of the soccer team, third of his class, and dating the prettiest and most popular girl in the high school. He's always helping other Somalis and looking for other girls to date or hang out with. However, everything changes after the 9/11 attack.

In the year of 2001 Maine was a "second migration" when Somali refugees came flooding in for a better job and a better life. In Out Of Nowhere many Somalis started to join the school on different school days. Tom was never interested in them and didn't know anything about them until four of them joined the outstanding soccer team. When some of the refugees started to play soccer for the team, they ended up making Enniston history, destroying some major teams that they hadn't ever defeated. Tom does get all the credit because he one of the best all round players and also because he was the captain of the so called "dream team". Though, there are some conflicts between the Somalis and the Americans at school. The 9/11 attack in New York changes the school. Tom does find trouble when trying to expand his friendship with all of the new Somali students, such as when he is trying to talk to them. American students felt like they needed to bully the Somalis. They felt that they were the ones who killed all of the innocent lives. Tom isn't only known as a nice guy, he definitely is known to have a personality. Tom can pick up almost

any girl that he sees, pretty much every girl . Tom is always looking for new girls to hang out with because Cherisse, the one that he is dating, she may be pretty but is quite stupid and annoying. Tom doesn't really care about life, meaning he is a guy that is just living life and cruising through seeing where it will take him. An example of when he is acting lazy is when around the middle of the book when he mentions that he doesn't even care about applying into any college even though almost any college in the United States would happily take him in.

Personally my favorite part about this book is the way Padian transitions from the really detailed soccer games to the way she is explaining Tom Bouchard's life. However when she is explaining Tom's regular day life she doesn't put much context into it. Meaning there isn't a lot to get from knowing about his life because of the lack of detail.

After reading this book I would recommend it to anyone, Maria Padian has written an amazing book about a significant part in the American timeline. And it's not only about history, if you like soccer than this will fit really well for you like it did for me. Including parts of the close soccer games and tough events within the teammates and coaches. Throughout this book Padian wrote a strong book with a lot of detail of and also showed a what is was like during 9/11.

Suzanne says

I'm not a guy, so maybe I'm not the best judge of whether female authors get the male voice and point of view down right—or reasonably so—but Maria Padian does at least a respectable job with the first person narration of Tom Bouchard, Maine grandchild of Quebecois immigrants brought in to work textile factories. I know real live teen boys at my school and I even live with one! Ew, yuck, not like THAT—he's my son. Anyway, Tom sounds like many a scholar-athlete I have known, excelling in school and serious about his role as captain of the soccer team. It's even realistic that he's dating a bit of a bimbo, a hot, popular bimbo, but how many young men in his position would shun such girlfriend riches on offer? Tom has blinders on when it comes to the massive influx of Somali refugees to their town, although even he notices more clueless kids that can't even find their classes, let alone speak much English. Girls in hijab, a headscarf, and people praying towards Mecca in the hallways mostly pass on the periphery of his senior year's start until he notices Saeed's UK soccer jersey and invites him to join the team. Only slowly does he come to understand the challenges the Somali kids and their whole community face, starting from the difficulty of filling in standard athletic paperwork when Saeed's family has neither a phone nor a family doctor to sign the form. Eventually, Saeed and a few other Somali teammates make all the difference, shooting their standings into a ranking worthy of notice, even by rival Maquoit, populated with year-round players from an elite, expensive team that Tom's family couldn't afford some years before.

When Tom is persuaded to a bit of vandalism on Maquoit's hallowed rock, it ends badly, and the two boys face legal and school consequences, ultimately landing Tom at the Somali Community Center, where he begins to work off his 100 community service hours and gets much closer to Saeed's prickly sister, a struggling elementary school student who is crazy about soccer, and local college girl Myla—a petite, cute, do-gooder who's skeptical of the soccer team captain working off his punishment, at first. Saeed continues to make impossible goals, and Tom plays some great soccer leading up to state playoffs. One of the tidbits about the Somali immigrants is that almost none know their precise birthdates or even their years, so those arranging their placement in the states typically made educated guesses about when they were born, but without any specific data, listed January 1 as the birthdates for most everyone; so Maquoit sees an opportunity to get the team's secret weapon off the field by challenging his age and therefore his eligibility to play.

Tom tries to help, figures out he should dump his racist bimbo girlfriend and pursue Myla, and becomes quite involved in the community center; but a massive early ice storm, a political minefield after the mayor writes an open letter to the Somali community asking them to cease the increasing burden of welcoming new refugees to the town, a devastating car accident involving a friend, and Saeed's dilemma make getting his college applications seem like a low priority. Tom had just been coasting along in his comfortable, successful life until the Somali situation came out of nowhere to challenge his complacency and unsettle his existence. Change can be good, but no doubt it's hard. Tom can't be sure what's right or what's right for him.

The book has great soccer action—as far as my vague recollection of 8th grade soccer and the kids' rec league trials—that will attract that segment of readers; and it is a real enough male voice that boys will feel right at home in the story. The “broccoli” part of the novel may well be the strands devoted to the Muslim, African outsiders and how they struggle to fit in a new land with the memory of the brutality of their homeland and the prejudice they face in “the land of the free” shadowing their efforts to make a new home, but it's beautifully done and so worthwhile.

Lynn Plourde says

Don't waste a second reading this review--instead, go get OUT OF NOWHERE, find it ANYWHERE, and read it NOW! It is THAT powerful a book, that amazing, that important. Even though it is a YA (young adult) novel, I wish every high school student and their parents and their grandparents would read this book and talk about it. Maria Padian has done a brilliant job of telling a 21st century American immigrant story--it's real, it's relevant, it's believable. She made me care and she made me think in new ways.

I was drawn to OUT OF NOWHERE because it is set in Maine (Enniston, a fictional town which is really Lewiston, Maine) and tells of a community with rich Franco-American roots that struggles to find its NEW identity as an influx of Somali refugees overwhelm the town and the school, as the mayor writes a public letter saying the community doesn't want any more Somalis to come to their town. It begins as a sports story told from the perspective of Tom Bouchard, senior captain of the soccer team. I found him to be kind of a jerk as the story began (but by the end, I realized we all have our jerk moments). He is a rich, complex character. The story quickly grows into much more than a sports story--there's prejudice, substance abuse, coming-of-age, romance issues all interwoven.

Padian doesn't find simple solutions. She did her homework. I feel she LIVED her homework and must have immersed herself in so many worlds as she seems to "get" Franco-American culture, the plight of Somali refugee families in the U.S., sports rivalries, teen talk in person and on social media, and so much more. It may be a cliché to say "Don't judge another until you've walked in their shoes," but Padian's novel more than any I can remember has helped me to walk in multiple people's shoes. I am so grateful for that. Now all I can do is shout: Read this book, READ THIS BOOK, PLEASE...READ THIS BOOK!

grieshaber_reads says

Out of Nowhere is a sports book with substance and I can't wait to give it to a teen boy who comes to me looking for a book to read about soccer. Because what he will read is not only a book about a soccer team who works really hard to beat its rival (the rich kids' school, of course), but he'll also be reading a book about

Somali refugees, religion and beliefs, leadership, and doing the right thing.

Out of Nowhere is the story of a small town in Maine that becomes inundated with Somali refugees. Luckily for Tom and his team, several of these refugees can play some amazing soccer. They give the team the boost it needs and lead them through what looks to be a winning season - until the community starts its backlash. How old are these Somali players? Can they prove it? Tom finds himself in the middle of the controversy and finds that the rules of life aren't exactly the same in the world of the Somalian refugee. The Somalian refugee story is interspersed among soccer action, boy-girl drama, friendships, and school stuff. Plenty to keep readers and non-readers interested.

Maria Padian has written an excellent protagonist in Tom. I love that he is gorgeous, popular, captain of the soccer team, and in all AP classes, but he is neither the stereotypical perfect guy nor is he the stereotypical jerk. He's just a normal teenager, who happens to have a few more advantages than others but that makes the same mistakes as others.

As for the Gateway Readers Award, Out of Nowhere is a perfect candidate. In addition to handing this book to my "sports book boys", I'm also looking forward to recommending this to an Assistant Principal and AP Lang teacher at my school. They work with Honors kids and I think they would be interested in reading this book because of Tom's character.

TL says

"Here's the thing about luck: it doesn't have to lock you in. I mean, yeah, it sets you up. Donald Trump's kid is set up for college and yachts, while the kid whose dad got fired from the paper mill is set up for cavities because now they can't afford the dentist.

But you still have choices, no matter how big or small your luck quotient is. "

Wow.. just wow! A beautiful, moving story with characters you can root for... Nothing is black and white in here, the issues in here are handled with grace and care.

A couple characters I wanted to smack (more than a couple), two of them experienced some growth (one more than the other) and it had me smiling :).

Words aren't enough to express how much I love this book.. go read it now! Everyone should :)
This is a true hidden gem.

Not sure why but this song by Kate Voegele played through my head at times while reading this:

*Tears are forming in your eyes,
A storm is warning in the skies,
The end of the world it seems,
You bend down and you fall on your knees,
Well get back on your feet ,yeah,
Don't look away, don't run away, hey
Baby it's only life,
Don't lose your faith,don't run away,hey*

Baby it's only life

*You were always playing hard,
Never could let down your guard, (no)
You can't win, if you never give in,
And to that voice within, its saying pick up your chin,
Baby let go of it , yeah*

*Don't look away,
Don't run away, hey
Baby, it's only life
Don't lose your faith,
Don't run away,
Baby it's only life*

*Don't look away,
Don't run away, hey
Baby, it's only life
Don't lose your faith,
Don't run away,
Baby it's only life*

*Take your hesitance,
And your self defense,
Leave them behind,
It's only life,*

*Don't be so afraid of facing every day,
Just take your time,
It's only life,
I'll be your stepping stone,
Don't be so alone,
Just hold on tight,it's only life,
Oh...*

*Don't look away,
Don't run away, hey
Baby, it's only life
Don't lose your faith,
Don't run away,
Baby it's only life*

*Don't look away,
Don't run away, hey
Baby, it's only life
Don't lose your faith,
Don't run away,
Baby it's only life*

*It's only life, it's only life,
Don't look away...*
