



## *The Boys in the Boat*

by Daniel James Brown

### TIPS FOR FAMILY BOOK CLUB:

When you sit down to talk about *The Boys in the Boat* as a family, try working together to help each other understand the historical context of the book and finer points of rowing, and to identify overarching themes. Encourage each other to open up and share your thoughts; listen to and learn from each other. You're all in it together. Remember, there are no winners or losers in book club!

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Did you know anything about rowing before you read this book? What was the most surprising thing you learned about the sport?
2. How do you think Joe Rantz's tough childhood affected him as he grew up?
3. Rowing requires teamwork and trust. How did the boys in the boat learn to trust each other? Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to trust someone? Share one of those times.
4. The rowers in this story all had to work really hard both on the water and on land. What were their practices like? Talk about how you think that hard work shaped them.
5. Do you think Al Ulbrickson was a good coach? What things did he do that you approve of? Was there anything he did that you didn't like? Does it matter how a coach behaves, so long as his team wins?
6. How were George Pocock and Al Ulbrickson similar and/or different? Who did Joe relate to more and why?
7. Rowing is sometimes thought of as an "elite" sport (and in the 1930s, it certainly was). How did the boys in the boat change that perception?
8. How were the 1936 Olympics different from the ones that came before and after?
9. The book also talks about the rise of Hitler's Germany and the Nazis. What happened to Germany when Hitler came to power? How did that affect how you feel about the 1936 Olympics?
10. What was your favorite scene or moment in this book and why? Compare your answers.