



***The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui**

Abrams ComicArts, Abrams Books, 2017

ISBN: 9781419718779 (Hardcover)

*Age Range: 13+ (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 8+ (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

This beautifully illustrated and emotional story is an evocative memoir about the search for a better future and a longing for the past. Exploring the anguish of immigration and the lasting effects that displacement has on a child and her family, Bui documents the story of her family's daring escape after the fall of South Vietnam in the 1970s, and the difficulties they faced building new lives for themselves.

At the heart of Bui's story is a universal struggle: While adjusting to life as a first-time mother, she ultimately discovers what it means to be a parent—the endless sacrifices, the unnoticed gestures, and the depths of unspoken love. Despite how impossible it seems to take on the simultaneous roles of both parent and child, Bui pushes through. With haunting, poetic writing and breathtaking art, she examines the strength of family, the importance of identity, and the meaning of home.

In what Pulitzer Prize–winning novelist Viet Thanh Nguyen calls “a book to break your heart and heal it,” *The Best We Could Do* brings to life Thi Bui's journey of understanding and provides inspiration to all of those who search for a better future while longing for a simpler past.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"Be prepared to take your heart on an emotional roller-coaster journey with this thought-provoking account that completely satisfies as the story comes full circle. Highly recommended for teens and adults; an excellent choice for book clubs."--[Library Journal Online](#), **starred review**

"In creatively telling a complicated story with the kind of feeling words alone rarely relay, *The Best We Could Do* does the very best that comics can do. This is a necessary, ever-timely story to share far and wide."--[Booklist](#), **starred review**

"She does not spare her loved ones criticism or linger needlessly on their flaws. Likewise she refuses to flatten the twists and turns of their histories into neat, linear narratives. She embraces the whole of it... In this mélange of comedy and tragedy, family love and brokenness, she finds beauty."--[Publishers Weekly](#), **starred review**

"A moving, visually stimulating account of the author's personal story and an insightful look at the refugee experience, juxtaposed against Vietnam's turbulent history." - [Shelf Awareness](#), **starred review**

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Abrams Books

Kluby@abramsbooks.com

"A powerful and intimate look at the modern immigrant experience in America." -ICv2

"This bold, brutal book is the new calligraphy—an exquisite marriage of alphabet and imagery. Each sentence, each scene, and each story breaks down a country, a family, and a father. Then, frame by frame, with artistic vigor and monastic devotion, Thi Bui rebuilds a world in which guilt conquers grief and gratitude becomes not only a guide, but our new Deity. *The Best We Could Do* teaches us how to say no to fear and yes to truth."--author of *Bone*, a PEN/Faulkner Award Finalist, *Steer Toward Rock*, winner of the American Book Award, Fae Myenne Ng

"Thi Bui's book took my breath away. In a time of continuing refugee crisis, its message is necessary. *The Best We Could Do* expands one family's personal story into a global, historic context, while condensing generations of war in Vietnam to intimate and human proportions. Beautiful and powerful."--author and illustrator of *Blankets* and *Habibi*, Craig Thompson

"Thi Bui's stark, compelling memoir is about an ordinary family, but her story delivers the painful truth that most Vietnamese of the 20th century know in an utterly personal fashion—that history is found in the marrow of one's bones, ready to be passed on through blood, through generations, through feelings. A book to break your heart and heal it."--Pulitzer Prize winning novelist, Viet Thanh Nguyen

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- 2017 National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) Finalist
- ABA Indies Introduce Winter / Spring 2017 Selection
- ALA 2018 Notable Books Selection

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Pronunciation Guide](#)
- [Teachers Guide](#)

*A NOTE ON AGE RANGES

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

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