

Own Voices: Black Creators

Contemporary Fiction & Graphic Novels



Contemporary Fiction

Alexander, Kwame. *Booked*. 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. Also by Kwame Alexander: *The Crossover*.

Baptist, Kelly. *Isaiah Dunn is My Hero*. Isaiah is now the big man of the house, but his little sister, Charlie, asks too many questions, and Mama's gone totally silent. At least he can count on his best friend, Sneaky.

Barron, Rena. *Maya and the Rising Dark*. A twelve-year-old girl discovers her father is the keeper of the gateway between our world and The Dark, and when he goes missing she'll need to unlock her own powers and fight a horde of spooky creatures set on starting a war.

Binns, B.A. *Courage*. Ever since T'Shawn's dad died, his mother has been struggling, but he hopes she'll be able to cover the costs when he's offered a spot on a prestigious diving team.

Callender, Kacen. *King and the Dragonflies*. 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. Also by Kacen Callender: *Hurricane Child*.

Chase, Paula. *Turning Point*. Best friends Rasheeda and Monique navigate the ups and downs of a teenager's summer, Mo at home in the Cove; Sheeda at a ballet-intensive sleepaway. Also by Paula Chase: *Dough Boys; So Done*.

Colbert, Brand. *The Only Black Girls in Town*. In a predominately white California beach town, the only two black seventh-graders find hidden journals that uncover family secrets and speak to past race relations.

Davis, Tanita S. *Serena Says*. After her best friend, JC, has a kidney transplant, Serena feels that they are falling out of touch, especially as JC makes a new best friend in the hospital.

Draper, Sharon. *Blended*. Piano-prodigy Isabella, eleven, whose black father and white mother struggle to share custody, never feels whole, especially as racial tensions affect her school. Also by Sharon Draper: *Out of My Mind*.

Frazier, Sundee Tucker. *Cleo Edison Oliver, Playground Millionaire* (series). Cleo Edison Oliver is full of money-making ideas, but things get complicated when she has to keep her business running, be there for her friends, and deal with teasing about being adopted. Also by Sundee Tucker Frazier: *The Other Half of My Heart*.

Getten, Kereen. *When Life Gives You Mangos*. Twelve-year-old Clara loves living on an island! But last summer, a hurricane hit and Clara can't remember what happened after that.

Giles, L.R. *The Last Last-Day-of-Summer* (series). As summer winds down, Otto and Sheed are craving just a little more time for fun. When a mysterious man appears with a camera that literally freezes time, they will have to work to save their town—and each other.

Grimes, Nikki. *Garvey's Choice*. Garvey's father has always wanted him to be athletic, but Garvey is interested in anything but sports. When his only friend encourages him to join the school chorus, his life changes. Also by Nikki Grimes: *Words with Wings*.

Harrington, Janice. *Catching a Story Fish*. Keet never wanted to leave Alabama; at her new school, the kids tease her about her southern accent and she goes quiet. When her beloved grandfather has a stroke. Keet is determined to reel him back to her by telling him stories.

Hyman, Fracaswell. *Mango Delight* (series). When seventh-grader Mango accidentally breaks her BFF Brooklyn's new cell phone, her life falls apart. But Brooklyn's planned revenge—signing up Mango to audition for the school musical—backfires when Mango wins.

Johnson, Varian. *The Great Greene Heist* (series). Jackson Greene has a reputation as a prankster, but is trying to go straight. Yet, when it looks like Keith Sinclair may steal the election for school president from Jackson's friend Gabriela, he has to leap into action.

Jones, Joy. *Jayla Jumps In*. After learning that her mother was a Double Dutch champion, eleven-year-old Jayla forms a team hoping to stand out in her big, quirky family.

Kendall, Christine. *The True Definition of Neva Beane*. Twelve-year-old Neva and her older brother Clayton have been left with their grandparents for the summer, and she is having a difficult time dealing with the changes in both their lives.

Lockington, Mariama. *For Black Girls Like Me*. Eleven-year-old Makeda dreams of meeting her African American mother, while coping with problems in her white adopted family, moving, and being homeschooled.

Magoon, Kekla. *The Season of Styx Malone*. Caleb and Bobby Gene's new neighbor Styx Malone oozes cool, promising the brothers that together they can pull off the Great Escalator Trade—exchanging one small thing for something better until they achieve their wildest dream. Also by Kekla Magoon: *Camo Girl; Robyn Hoodlum* (series); *How it Went Down*.

Maldonado, Torrey. *What Lane?* Biracial sixth-grader Stephen questions society after he notices the way strangers treat him when he hangs out with his white friends and learns about the Black Lives Matter movement. Also by Torrey Maldonado: *Tight*.

Marks, Janae. *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*. Avid baker Zoe Washington receives a letter on her twelfth birthday from her biological father, who is in prison for a terrible crime.

Moore, David Barclay. *The Stars Beneath our Feet*. Unable to celebrate the holidays in the wake of his older brother's death, Lolly struggles to avoid being forced into a gang himself while constructing a fantastically creative LEGO city at the Harlem community center.

Ramee, Lisa Moore. *Something to Say*. A shy girl resists a newcomer who wants to make friends, before the two are paired for a class assignment that she hopes will secure her position on the debate team. Also by Lisa Moore Ramee: *A Good Kind of Trouble*.

continued on back



Learn more: oppl.org/kids-lists

Own Voices: Black Creators

Contemporary Fiction & Graphic Novels

Reynolds, Jason. *Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks*. A collection of short stories that all take place in the same day about kids walking home from school. Also by Jason Reynolds: *As Brave as You*; *Track* (series).

Rhodes, Jewell Parker. *Black Brother, Black Brother*. Suspended unjustly from elite Middlefield Prep, Donte Ellison studies fencing with a former champion, hoping to put the racist fencing team captain in his place. Also by Jewell Parker Rhodes: *Bayou Magic*.

Spicer-Dannelly, Doreen. *Love Double Dutch!* Kayla must salvage her double Dutch dreams after her parents' rocky relationship takes her away from Brooklyn—and her beloved team—to spend the summer in the South.

Stone, Nie. *Clean Getaway*. William "Scoob" Lamar can't seem to stay out of trouble. When G'ma, Scoob's favorite person on Earth, asks him to go on an impromptu road trip, he's in the RV faster than he can say "freedom!"

Stoudemire, Amar'e. *Home Court* (series). Between sports, school, and working for his father, eleven-year-old Amar'e's life is full, but when a group of older boys start hogging the local basketball court he knows that he has to do something to help his friends.

Strong, Karen. *Just South of Home*. Twelve-year-old Sarah wants to spend her summer months reading her favorite science books and bossing around her younger brother, Ellis, but when their troublesome cousin Janie arrives, Sarah's plans are completely squashed.

Tarpley, Natasha. *The Harlem Charade*. Seventh-graders Jin, Alexandra, and Elvin investigate who attacked Elvin's grandfather, leading them to missing art masterpieces, and into conflict with an ambitious politician who wants to turn Harlem into an historic amusement park.

Watson, Renee. *Piecing Me Together*. Tired of being singled out at her mostly-white private school, Jade would rather participate in the school's amazing Study Abroad program than join Women to Women, a mentorship program for at-risk girls.

Williams, Alicia. *Genesis Begins Again*. Thirteen-year-old Genesis tries again and again to lighten her black skin, thinking it is the root of her family's troubles, before discovering reasons to love herself as is.

Williams-Garcia, Rita. *Clayton Byrd Goes Underground*. Feeling most alive when he's playing the blues with his grandfather, Clayton is devastated when his grandfather dies and his mother forbids him from playing music, losses that compel him to run away.

Winston, Sherri. *Jada Sly, Artist & Spy*. Jada Sly, artist and spy with a flair for all things French, is on a mission to find her missing mom, who she believes was also a spy. Also by Sherri Winston: *The Kayla Chronicles*; *President of the Whole Fifth Grade* (series); *The Sweetest Sound*.

Woods, Brenda. *Zoe in Wonderland*. Introverted, daydream-prone Zoe is afraid her real life will never be as exciting as her imaginary one. Also by Brenda Woods: *The Blossoming Universe of Violet Diamond*.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Before the Ever After*. ZJ's friends help him cope when his father, a professional football player, suffers severe headaches and memory loss that spell the end of his career. Also by Jacqueline Woodson: *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*; *Harbor Me*; *If You Come Softly*.

Youngblood, Leslie. *Love Like Sky*. Eleven-year-old Georgie is still adjusting to leaving Atlanta for a small town and having a stepfather when her six-year-old sister, Peaches, suddenly becomes very ill.

Early Chapters

Draper, Sharon. *Sassy: Little Sister is Not My Name* (series). Fashion-savvy Sassy does not like being the smallest student in her fourth-grade class, until a family emergency calls for a pint-sized hero.

Elliott, Zetta. *Dragons in a Bag* (series). In Brooklyn, nine-year-old Jax joins Ma, witch who lives in his building, on a quest to deliver three baby dragons to a magical world, and along the way discovers his true calling.

English, Karen. *Carver Chronicles: Dog Days* (series). Gavin wants to make a good impression at Carver Elementary, where no one knows he excels at soccer and skateboarding, but an annoying big sister, a bully, and his great-aunt's Pomeranian are not helping.

Grimes, Nikki. *Make Way For Dyamonde Daniel* (series). Spunky third-grader Dyamonde Daniel misses her old neighborhood, but when she befriends another new student at school, she finally starts to feel at home.

Lyons, Kelly Starling. *Jada Jones: Rock Star* (series). Jada's best friend moved away but a class project on rocks and minerals, her favorite topic, could mean new friends.

Nuurali, Siman. *Sadiq and the Explorers* (series). After a family hike in a nearby park, Sadiq forms the Explorers Club with his friends, who then help a neighbor create a nature-themed scavenger hunt.

O'Neal, Shaquille. *Little Shaq Takes a Chance* (series). When Little Shaq's class is

assigned projects for the school's upcoming art show, he's not sure that his skills will transfer from the basketball court to the art studio.

Smith, Nikki Shannon. *The Amazing Life of Azaleah Lane* (series). Azaleah can't wait for her class field trip to the zoo, but first she has to help her younger sister crack the case of the stolen stuffed animal.

Wallis, Quvenzhane. *Shai & Emmie Star in Break an Egg!* (series). When Shai Williams loses the lead role in the third-grade musical at her performing arts elementary school in Atlanta, she learns an important lesson about adaptability, from her mother, aunt, and grandmother, all actresses.

Watson, Renee. *Ways to Make Sunshine*. The Hart family of Portland, Oregon, faces many setbacks after Ryan's father loses his job, but no matter what, Ryan tries to bring sunshine to her loved ones.

Graphic Novels

Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover*. Thirteen-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.

Barnes, Daniel. *The Black Mage* (TEEN). When St. Ivory Academy, a historically white wizarding school, opens its doors to its first-ever black student, everyone believes that the wizarding community is finally taking its first crucial steps toward inclusivity. Or is it?

Craft, Jerry. *New Kid* (series). 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. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?

Ewing, Eve L. *Ironheart* (TEEN, series). Riri Williams, the armored hero called Ironheart is thrown for a loop when an old acquaintance from back in Chicago re-enters her life! Now, Ironheart is caught between her need for independence and her obligations at M.I.T.—and when an old friend is kidnapped, she needs to make some tough decisions!

Johnson, Varian. *Twins*. Maureen and Francine Carter are twins and best friends. They participate in the same clubs, enjoy the same foods, and are partners on all their school projects. But just before the

Own Voices: Black Creators

Contemporary Fiction & Graphic Novels

girls start sixth grade, Francine becomes Fran—a girl who wants to join the chorus, run for class president, and dress in fashionable outfits that set her apart from Maureen. Are sisters really forever? Or will middle school change things for good?

Nicholas, Jamar. *Leon: Protector of the Playground*. Hip kid super-hero Leon takes on super villains like Broccoli Rob and Urine Nathan, bullies plotting from detention, and rogue hall monitors.

Wright, Michelle. *Audrey's Magic Nine* (series). Orphan Audrey is adopted by a suburban white couple who want to give her an "excellent life." Her schedule fills up with piano, gymnastics, and French lessons, leaving little time for Audrey's one true passion: drawing. But when her toy puppet, Asa, comes to life and tells Audrey about how he and eight other beings (the titular "magic nine") were banished to Earth from their world by an evil witch, Audrey sketches out a plan to help.