

Own Voices: Black Creators

Historical Fiction & Graphic Novels

Historical Fiction

Bond, Victoria. *Zora and Me*. A fictionalized account of Zora Neale Hurston's childhood with her best friend Carrie as they learn about life, death, and the differences between truth, lies, and pretending.

Bradby, Marie. *Some Friend*. In 1963, Pearl, an eleven-year-old in Fairfax, Virginia, learns about the real nature of friendship.

Cline-Ransome, Lesa. *Finding Langston*. Discovering a book of Langston Hughes' poetry in the library helps Langston cope with the loss of his mother, relocating from Alabama to Chicago as part of the Great Migration, and being bullied.

Cline-Ransome, Lesa. *Leaving Lymon*. In this companion to *Finding Langston*, Lymon is being raised by his loving grandparents, with whom he shares a love of music. When he's sent on a journey to a Northern city far from the country life he loves-and the version of himself he knows Lymon struggles to find his way.

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Journey of Little Charlie*. When his sharecropper father is killed in an accident and leaves the family in debt, twelve-year-old Little Charlie agrees to accompany fearsome plantation overseer Cap'n Buck as he travels to the north.

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Mighty Miss Malone*. Twelve-year-old Deza Malone, her older brother Jimmie, and their parents endure tough times in Gary, Indiana, and later Flint, Michigan, during the Great Depression.

Davis, Tanita S. *Mare's War*. Teen girls learn about strength, independence, and courage from their grandmother, who tells about growing up Black in 1940s Alabama and serving in Europe during World War II.

Draper, Sharon. *Stella By Starlight*. When Klan activities causes panic and fear in 1932 Bumblebee, North Carolina, fifth-grader Stella must face prejudice and find the strength to demand change in her segregated town.

English, Karen. *It All Comes Down to This*. In 1965, Sophie's family becomes the first African Americans to move into their upper middle-class neighborhood in Los Angeles. When riots erupt in nearby Watts, she learns that life is more complicated than it had seemed.

Flake, Sharon. *Unstoppable Octobia May*. In 1953 ten-year-old Octobia May lives in her Aunt's boarding house in the South, surrounded by an African American community which has its own secrets and internal racism.

Jackson, Linda Williams. *Midnight Without a Moon* (series). Rose Lee Carter dreams of life beyond the Mississippi cotton fields during the summer of 1955, but when Emmett Till is murdered and his killers are unjustly acquitted, Rose is torn between seeking her destiny outside of Mississippi or staying and being a part of an important movement.

Johnson, Varian. *The Parker Inheritance*. Twelve-year-old Candice Miller is spending the summer in Lambert, South Carolina, in the old house that belonged to her grandmother. When she finds the letter that once sent her grandmother on a disastrous treasure hunt, she finds herself caught up in the mystery to find the inheritance, exonerate her grandmother, and expose an injustice once committed against an African American family in Lambert.

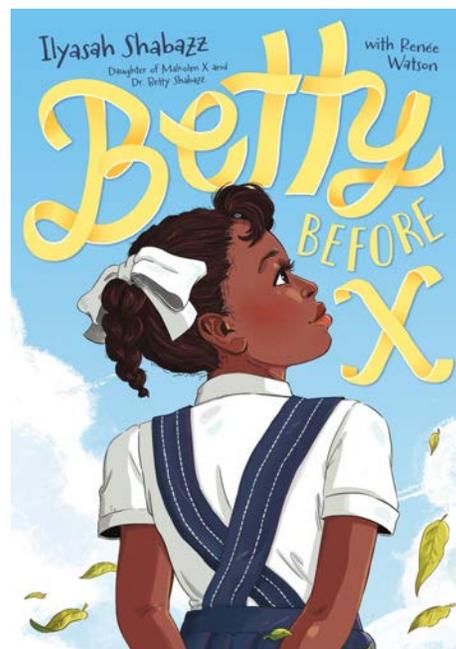
Magoon, Kekla. *The Rock and the River and Fire in the Streets*. In the aftermath of Dr. King's assassination in 1968, Chicago fourteen-year-olds Sam and Maxie weigh joining the Black Panthers or the nonviolent civil rights movement.

Mbalia, Kwame. *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*. Seventh-grader Tristan Strong tumbles into the MidPass and, with allies John Henry and Brer Rabbit, must entice the god Anansi to come out of hiding and seal the hole Tristan accidentally ripped in the sky.

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. *No Crystal Stair: A Documentary Noel of the Life and Work of Lewis Michaux, Harlem Bookseller*. The story of a man with a passion for knowledge and of a bookstore whose influence has become legendary.

Neri, Greg. *Ghetto Cowboy*. After being sent from Detroit to Philadelphia to live with the father he's never known, twelve-year-old Cole gets involved with a group of African American "cowboys" who rescue horses and use them to steer youths away from drugs and gangs.

Parsons, Karyn. *How High the Moon*. Eleven-year-old Ella seeks information about her father while enjoying a visit with her mother, a jazz singer, in Boston in 1944, then returns to the harsh realities of segregated, small-town South Carolina.



Rhodes, Jewell Parker. *Ghost Boys*. After seventh-grader Jerome is shot by a white police officer, he observes the aftermath of his death and meets the ghosts of other fallen black boys including historical figure Emmett Till.

Rhodes, Jewell Parker. *Sugar*. In 1870, Reconstruction brings big changes to the Louisiana sugar plantation where ten-year-old Sugar has always lived.

Robinet, Harriette. *Forty Acres and Maybe a Mule*. Born with a withered leg and hand, Pascal, who is about twelve years old, joins other formerly enslaved people in a search for a farm and the freedom which it promises.

Robinet, Harriette. *Walking to the Bus-Rider Blues*. Twelve-year-old Alfa Merryfield, his older sister, and their grandmother struggle for rent money, food, and their dignity as they participate in the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott in the summer of 1956.

Robinson, Sharon. *The Hero Two Doors Down: Based on the True Story of Friendship Between a Boy and a Baseball Legend*. Eight-year-old Steve Satlow is thrilled when Jackie Robinson moves into his neighborhood in Brooklyn in 1948, although many of his neighbors are not.

Shabazz, Ilyasah. *Betty Before X*. Raised by her aunt until she is six, Betty, who will later marry Malcolm X, joins her mother and stepfamily in 1940s Detroit, where she learns about the civil rights movement.



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Graphic Novels

Shabazz, Ilyasah. *X: A Novel*. Malcolm Little's parents have always told him that he can achieve anything, but from what he can tell, that's a pack of lies—after all, his father's been murdered, his mother's been taken away, and his dreams of becoming a lawyer have gotten him laughed out of school.

Smith, Ronald L. *Hoodoo*. In 1930s Alabama, twelve-year-old Hoodoo Hatcher is the only member of his family who seems unable to practice folk magic, but when a mysterious man called the Stranger puts the entire town at risk from his black magic, Hoodoo must learn to conjure to defeat him.

Smith, Sherri L. *Flygirl*. During World War II, a light-skinned African American girl "passes" for white in order to join the Women Air Force Service Pilots.

Watson, Renee. *Some Places More Than Others*. Amara visits her father's family in Harlem for her twelfth birthday, hoping to better understand her family and herself, but New York City is not what she expected.

Williams-Garcia, Rita. *One Crazy Summer/P.S. Be Eleven/Gone Crazy in Alabama* (Gaither Sisters Trilogy). Sisters Delphine, Vonetta and Fern Gaither are growing up in the late 1960s and early '70s, getting to know their Black Panther mother, idolizing the Jackson 5 and spending time with their traditional Southern grandmother.

Woods, Brenda. *The Unsung Hero of Birdsong, USA*. Twelve-year-old Gabriel gains new perspective when he becomes friends with Meriwether, a Black World War II hero who has recently returned to the unwelcoming Jim Crow South.

Zoboi, Ibi Aanu. *My Life as an Ice Cream Sandwich*. In the summer of 1984, twelve-year-old EbonyGrace of Huntsville, Alabama, visits her father in Harlem, where her fascination with outer space and science fiction interfere with her finding acceptance.

Gill, Joel Christian. *Strange Fruit: Uncelebrated Narratives from Black History and Strange Fruit II*. (GN 973.049 GIL). A collection of stories from early African American history that represent the oddity of success in the face of great adversity. Each of the illustrated chapters chronicles an uncelebrated African American, plus historical and cultural commentary on heroes whose stories are not often found in history books. Includes the tales of Henry 'Box' Brown, who escaped from slavery by mailing himself to Philadelphia; Alexander Crummel and the Noyes Academy, the first integrated school in America, established in the 1830s; Marshall 'Major' Taylor, a.k.a. the Black Cyclone, the first Black champion in any sport; Cathay Williams, the only known female buffalo soldier, and Eugene Bullard, a fighter pilot who flew for France during World War II. These beautifully illustrated stories offer a refreshing look at remarkable African Americans.

Gill, Joel Christian. *Tales of the Talented Tenth, Bass Reeves and Bessie Stringfield*. (GN BIO REE and STR) True adventures of amazing African Americans! Revel in the stories of a man who escaped slavery and became one of the most successful lawmen of the Old West and the woman who became known as The Motorcycle Queen of Miami!

Lewis, John. *March: Book One/Two/Three*. (GN BIO LEW) A first-hand account of Congressman John Lewis' lifelong struggle for civil and human rights, meditating in the modern age on the distance traveled since the days of Jim Crow and segregation.

Neri, Greg. *Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty*. (Tween GN Neri) Based on the true story of Robert "Yummy" Sandifer, an eleven-year old African American gang member from Chicago who shot a young girl and was then shot by his own gang members.

Walker, David. *The Life of Frederick Douglass* (GN BIO DOU). From Douglass's life as a young enslaved man through his forbidden education to his escape and growing prominence as a speaker, abolitionist, and influential cultural figure during the Civil War and beyond, this is a portrait of the man who stood up and spoke out for freedom and equality.