

# Black Creators

Fiction, Easy Readers, Early Chapter Books & Graphic Novels

## Fiction

Alexander, Kwame. *Rebound*. In 1988, twelve-year-old Chuck Bell is sent to stay with his grandparents, where he discovers jazz and basketball and learns more about his family's past. Also by Kwame Alexander: *Booked* and *The Crossover*.

Alonso, Harriet Hyman. *Martha and the Slave Catchers*. When the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law passes, thirteen-year-old Martha, the daughter of abolitionists living in Connecticut, embarks on a journey of self-discovery as she travels south to save her kidnapped adopted brother Jake, the orphan of a runaway slave.

Alston, B.B. *Amari and the Night Brothers* (series). Thirteen-year-old Amari gets an invitation from her missing brother to join the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs and join in the fight against an evil magician.

Baptist, Kelly. *The Swag is in the Socks*. Twelve-year-old Xavier gets the courage to step out of the shadows when his great-uncle gives him some outlandish socks and some even stranger requests. Also by Kelly Baptist: *Isaiah Dunn is My Hero*.

Baptiste, Tracey. *The Jumbies* (series). Eleven-year-old Corinne must call on her courage and an ancient magic to stop an evil spirit and save her island home.

Barron, Rena. *Maya and the Rising Dark* (series). 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.

*Black Boy Joy*. From seventeen acclaimed Black male and nonbinary authors comes this vibrant collection of stories, comics, and poems about the power of joy and the wonders of Black boyhood.

Bond, Victoria. *Zora and Me* (series). 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.

Bourne, Shakirah. *Josephine Against the Sea*. When she discovers her father's new girlfriend, Mariss, is actually a sea creature eager to take her place as his first love, Josephine must convince her friends to help her and use her cricket skills to save her dad from Mariss's clutches.

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. *Keeping it Real*. Marigold Johnson is looking forward to a future full of family, friends, and fashion--but what will she do when it all explodes in her face, when she discovers that her entire life is a lie. Also by Paula Chase: *Dough Boys*; *So Done*; and *Turning Point*.

Cline-Ransome, Lesa. *Being Clem*. When nine-year-old Clem's father dies in the Port Chicago Disaster, he is forced to navigate his family's losses and struggles in 1940s Chicago. Also by Lesa Cline-Ransome: *Finding Langston* and *Leaving Lymon*.

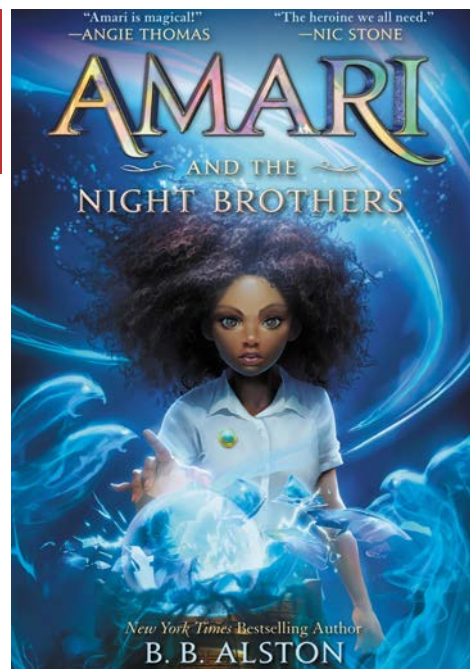
Colbert, Brandy. *The Only Black Girls in Town*. In a predominately white California beach town, the only two black seventh-graders find hidden journals that uncover family secrets and speak to past race relations.

Cummings, Pat. *Trace*. A middle schooler who has recently lost both parents sees a ghost wearing old-fashioned clothing in the basement of the New York Public Library.

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.

Davis, Tanita S. *Partly Cloudy*. In desperate need of clear skies as she starts a new school, Madalyn has cloudy days and serious storms until she learns the power of community and family after disaster strikes. Also by Tanita S. Davis: *Serena Says*.

Draper, Sharon. *Out of My Heart* (series). Melody loves horses but is scared of them. She wants to conquer her fears, so she hopes a summer camp will be the place to welcome someone with cerebral palsy who wants to learn to ride. Also by Sharon Draper: *Blended*.



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 seemed.

Ewing, Eve L. *Maya and the Robot*. A forgotten homemade robot comes to life just when aspiring fifth-grade scientist Maya needs a friend--and a science fair project.

Frazier, Sundee Tucker. *Mighty Inside*. Melvin Robinson wants a strong, smooth voice that lets him say what he wants, when he wants, but the thought of starting high school is only making his stutter worse. And Melvin's growing awareness that racism is everywhere is making him realize that he can't mutely stand by. Also by Sundee Tucker Frazier: *Cleo Edison Oliver*, *Playground Millionaire* (series).

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, Lamar. *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.



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## Fiction, cont.

Hermon, Daka. *Hide and Seeker*. Something is wrong with twelve-year-old Zee, who has returned after a year's absence; nobody knows where he was or what happened to him, but now he is distracted, violent, and talking about some approaching danger.

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

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 acquitted, Rose is torn between seeking her destiny outside of Mississippi or staying and being a part of an important movement.

James, LeBron. *We are Family*. When Jayden and his teammates find out there's not going to be a Hoop Group this year, they have to learn to lean on each other if they want to save their basketball program.

Johnson, Varian. *Playing the Cards You're Dealt*. Ten-year-old Anthony is finally old enough to play in the spades tournament. His friends are stressing about homework and girls, but he thinks only of his father's expectations at the card table. Also by Varian Johnson: *The Great Greene Heist* (series) and *The Parker Inheritance*.

Jones, Joy. *Jayla Jumps In*. After learning that her mother was a Double Dutch champion, eleven-year-old Jayla forms a team, hoping to wow 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: *Robyn Hoodlum* (series).

Maldonado, Torrey. *What Lane?* Biracial sixth-grader Stephen has questions 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. *A Soft Place to Land*. Twelve-year-old Joy dreams of writing music for the movies, but first she has to survive her family's move into a small apartment when her father loses his job. Also by Janae Marks: *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*.

Mbalia, Kwame. *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* (series). 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. Also by Kwame Mbalia: *Last Gate of the Emperor*.

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 community center.

Neri, Greg. *Ghetto Cowboy* (series). After being sent to Philadelphia to live with the father he's never known, 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*. Ella seeks information about her father while enjoying a visit with her mother, a Boston jazz singer, then returns to the harsh realities of segregated South Carolina.

Patterson, James and Kwame Alexander. *Becoming Muhammad Ali: A Novel*. A biographical novel tells the story of Cassius Clay, the determined boy who would one day become Muhammad Ali, one of the greatest boxers of all time.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Loretta Little Looks Back: Three Voices Go Tell It!* Loretta, Roly, and Aggie B. Little relate their Mississippi family's struggles and triumphs from 1927-68 while struggling as sharecroppers, living under Jim Crow, and fighting for Civil Rights.

Ramée, 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 Ramée: *A Good Kind of Trouble*.

*Recognize! An Anthology Honoring and Amplifying Black Life*. An anthology featuring over thirty Black authors and illustrators to honor Black life past, present, and future.

Reed, Dwayne. *Simon B. Rhymin'*. Chicago fifth-grader Simon, an aspiring rapper who lacks self-confidence, uses his rhymes to help bring his community together.

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*; *Miles Morales*, *Spider-Man*; and *Track* (series).

Rhodes, Jewell Parker. *Paradise on Fire*. Bronx middle-grader Addy, who struggles with a family tragedy by drawing maps and studying mazes, joins other city youngsters on a wilderness adventure in California that turns deadly when wildfires erupt. Also by Jewell Parker Rhodes: *Black Brother*, *Black Brother*; *Ghost Boys*; and *Towers Falling*.

Rhuday-Perkovich, Olugbemisola. *It Doesn't Take a Genius*. Emmett has to find a new group of friends at summer camp since his older brother is a junior counselor and doesn't seem to have time for him anymore. Also by Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich: *Two Naomis* (series).

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 Brooklyn neighborhood in 1948, although many of his neighbors are not happy at all.

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.

Smith, Nikki Shannon. *Girls Survive* (series): *Ann Fights for Freedom (Underground Railroad)*; *Charlotte Spies for Justice (Civil War)*; *Lena and the Burning of Greenwood (Tulsa Race Massacre)*; *Noelle at Sea (Titanic)*; and *Sarah Journeys West (Oregon Trail)*. Explore history with brave Black girls throughout time!

Smith, Ronald L. *Gloom Town*. Twelve-year-olds Rory and Izzy try to foil the world domination plans of Lord Foxglove and his inhuman accomplices. Also by Ronald L. Smith: *Black Panther*, *The Young Prince* (series); *Hoodoo*; and *The Mesmerist*.

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

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

Stone, Nic. *Fast Pitch*. Shenice Lockwood, captain of the Fulton Firebirds, is hyper-focused when she steps up to the plate, but will life's curveballs stop her from leading her team to the championship? Also by Nic Stone: *Clean Getaway* and *Shuri: The Vanished*.

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 squashed.

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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, Renée. *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. Also by Renée Watson: *Piecing Me Together*.

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. Also by Rita Williams-Garcia: *One Crazy Summer* (series).

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: *President of the Whole Fifth Grade* (series) and *The Sweetest Sound*.

Woods, Brenda. *When Winter Robeson Came*. In August 1965, twelve-year-old Eden's older cousin from Mississippi comes to visit her in Los Angeles, and while the Watts Riots erupt around them, they continue their investigation of the disappearance of Winter's father ten years earlier. Also by Brenda Woods: *The Unsung Hero of Birdsong, USA* and *Zoe in Wonderland*.

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: *Harbor Me* and *If You Come Softly*.

Youngblood, Leslie C. *Love Like Sky* (series). 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.

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

## Easy Reader, Early Chapter, and Series Books

Atinuke. *Too Small Tola* (Early Chapter). Adventurous Tola lives in an apartment in the busy city of Lagos, Nigeria, with her sister, brother and grandmommy.

Brimner, Larry Dane and Kaylani Juanita. *Racing Ace: Drive It! Fix It!* (Early Chapter series). Ace has built her very own car and is getting ready to race, but when a missing part and a rut in the middle of the track threaten to keep her in last place, Ace has to think fast to finish strong!

Cummings, Pat. *Where is Mommy?* (Easy Readers, Level 1). A girl, her mother, and their cat are snuggled up on a couch and reading a book. The girl falls asleep, and when she wakes up, Mommy is gone.

Dillard, J. *J.D. The Kid Barber: J.D. and the Great Barber Battle* (Early Chapter series). Eight-year-old J.D. turns a tragic home haircut into a thriving barber business!

Elliott, Zetta. *Dragons in a Bag* (Early Chapter series). In Brooklyn, nine-year-old Jax joins Ma, a witch who lives in his building, on a quest to deliver three baby dragons to a magical world.

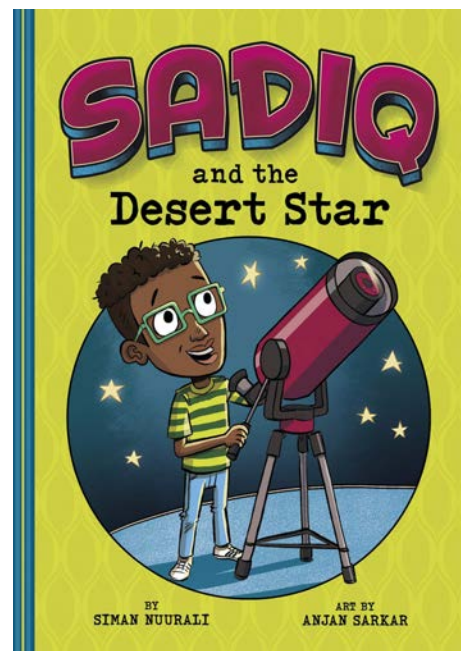
English, Karen. *Carver Chronicles: Dog Days* (Early Chapter series). Gavin wants to make a good impression at Carver Elementary, where no one knows he excels at soccer and skateboarding, but an annoying big sister, a bully, and his great-aunt's Pomeranian are not helping.

Grimes, Nikki. *Make Way For Dyamonde Daniel* (Early Chapter 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* (Early Chapter series). Jada's best friend moved away but a class project on rocks and minerals, her favorite topic, could mean new friends.

Lyons, Kelly Starling. *Ty's Travels: Zip, Zoom!* (Easy Readers series, Level 1). Ty cannot wait to ride his new scooter, but when he has a hard time learning and wants to quit, a new friend encourages him to give it another try.

Nolen, Jerdine. *Bradford Street Buddies: Springtime Blossoms* (Easy Readers series, Level 2). It's springtime on Bradford Street and twins Jada and Jamal Perkins are helping their parents with yardwork as they look for signs of spring.



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

O'Neal, Shaquille. *Little Shaq: Takes a Chance* (Early Chapter 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.

Platt, Christine. *Ana & Andrew: Summer in Savannah* (Easy Readers series, Level 2). Ana and Andrew travel to visit their grandparents in Savannah, Georgia where they learn that Grandma and Grandpa's church was built by enslaved people.

Roe, Mechal Renee. *I Love Being Me!* (Easy Readers, Level 1). Whether reading, playing soccer, cooking, swimming, or gardening, there's so much joy to be found in being yourself!

Smith, Nikki Shannon. *The Amazing Life of Azaleah Lane* (Early Chapter 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, Quvenzhané. *Shai & Emmie Star in Break an Egg!* (Early Chapter series). When Shai Williams loses the lead role in the third-grade musical at her performing arts elementary school, she learns an important lesson about adaptability, from her mother, aunt, and grandmother, all actresses.

Watson, Renée. *Ways to Make Sunshine* (Early Chapter series). 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.

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## 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?

Doucet, Rashad. *Pax Samson: 1, The Cookout*. Twelve-year-old Pax Samson has to decide between his chef aspirations and the family business...being superheroes.

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!

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.

Gill, Joel Christian. *Tales of the Talented Tenth, Bass Reeves; Bessie Stringfield* (GN BIO REE and STR) and *Robert Smalls* (TEEN BIO SMA). True adventures of amazing African Americans! Revel in the stories of a man who escaped slavery and became one of the most successful lawman of the Old West, the woman who became known as The Motorcycle Queen of Miami, and the enslaved African, who pulled off one of the most daring and largest heists of the Civil War.

Harris, Johnathan. *Colorblind: A Story of Racism*. Based on real events, fifteen-year-old Johnathan Harris tells his story of living in Long Beach, California. He loves playing soccer with his friends, and listening to their favorite rapper, Snoop Dogg. His mom, dad, and three brothers are tight, but one of the most influential family members for Johnathan is his Uncle Russell, a convict in prison, serving fifteen years to life.

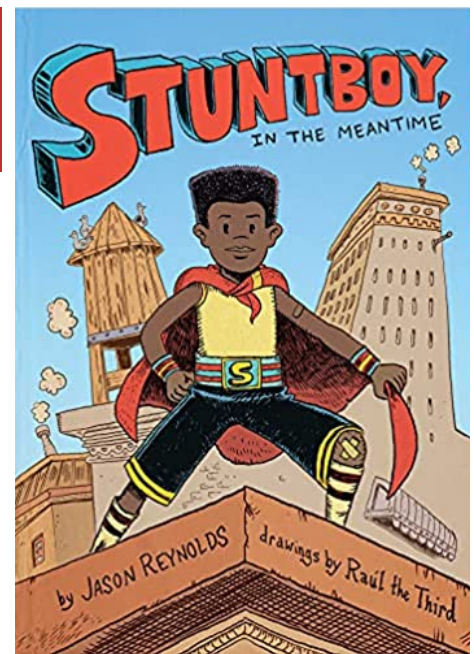
Johnson, Varian. *Twins*. Maureen and Francine Carter are twins and best friends. They participate in the same clubs, enjoy the same foods, and are partners on all their school projects. But just before the girls start sixth grade, Francine becomes Fran—a girl who wants to join the chorus, run for class president, and dress in fashionable outfits that set her apart from Maureen. Are sisters really forever? Or will middle school change things for good?

Larson, Hope and Brittney Williams. *Goldie Vance* (series). Sixteen-year-old Goldie Vance lives at a Florida resort with her dad, who manages the place. Her mom, who divorced her dad years ago, works as a live mermaid at a club downtown. Goldie has an insatiable curiosity, which explains her dream to one day become the hotel's in-house detective. When Charles, the current detective, encounters a case he can't crack, he agrees to mentor Goldie in exchange for her help solving the mystery.

Lewis, John. *March: Book One/Two/Three*. (series, 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.

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

Nisson, Sam. *Power Up*. Forging a powerful team online, two gamers who do not realize that they attend the same middle school find their virtual and real lives turned upside down by an act of wrongdoing that challenges their partnership.



Reynolds, Jason. *Stuntboy, In the Meantime*. Portico Reeves's superpower is making sure all the other superheroes—like his parents and two best friends—stay super. And safe. Super safe. And he does this all in secret. No one in his civilian life knows he's actually...Stuntboy!

Reynolds, Justin. *Miles Morales: Shock Waves*. Miles Morales is a normal kid who happens to juggle school at Brooklyn Visions Academy while swinging through the streets of Brooklyn as Spider-Man. After a disastrous earthquake strikes his mother's birthplace of Puerto Rico, Miles springs into action to help set up a fundraiser for the devastated island.

Robinson, Craig. *Jake the Fake Keeps it Real* (series). Having faked his way into the Music and Art Academy, a performing arts school for gifted students where his talented older sister rules, sixth-grader Jake, a jokester who can barely play an instrument, will have to think of something quick before the last laugh is on him.

Smith, James Otis. *Black Heroes of the Wild West* (GN 978.02 SMI). The extraordinary true tales of three black heroes who took control of their destinies and stood up for their communities in the Old West.

Taylor, Whit. *Harriet Tubman: Toward Freedom* (GN BIO TUB). Graphic biography detailing Harriet Tubman's escape from slavery and her efforts with other abolitionists to rescue dozens of those still enslaved.

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.