

Race in Middle Grade Literature

Bajaj, Varsha. **Count Me In: a novel.** (JUV BAJAJ)

Told from two viewpoints, sixth-graders Karina and Chris use social media to stand up to racism in Houston, Texas, after an attack puts Karina's Indian American grandfather in the hospital.

Callender, Kacen. **Hurricane Child.** (JUV CALLE)

Born on Water Island in the Virgin Islands during a hurricane, which is considered bad luck, twelve-year-old Caroline falls in love with another girl--and together they set out in a hurricane to find Caroline's missing mother.

Cline-Ransome, Lesa. **Finding Langston.** (JUV CLINE)

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.** (JUV CLINE)

Raised by his grandparents, first in Mississippi then in Wisconsin, ten-year-old Lymon moves to Chicago in 1945 to live with the mother he never knew, while yearning for his father.

Colbert, Brandy. **Only Black Girls in Town.** (JUV COLBE)

In a predominately white California beach town, the only two black seventh-graders, Alberta and Edie, find hidden journals that uncover family secrets and speak to race relations in the past.

Craft, Jerry. **New Kid.** (JUV GN CRAFT)

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. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds--and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?

Day, Christine. **I Can Make This Promise.** (JUV DAY)

When twelve-year-old Edie finds letters and photographs in her attic that change everything she thought she knew about her Native American mother's adoption, she realizes she has a lot to learn about her family's history and her own identity.

Dias, Marley. **Marley Dias Gets it Done: and so can you!** (JUV 305.23 DIAS)

In this accessible "keep-it-real" guide, Marley explores activism, social justice, volunteerism, equity and inclusion, and using social media for good.

Draper, Sharon M. **Stella by Starlight.** (JUV DRAPE)

When a burning cross set by the Klan 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.

Hudson, Wade. **We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices.** (JUV 303.4 HUDSO)

What do we tell our children when the world seems bleak, and prejudice and racism run rampant? With 96 lavishly designed pages of original art and prose, fifty diverse creators lend voice to young activists.

Johnson, Varian. **The Parker Inheritance.** (JUV JOHNS)

Twelve-year-old Candice Miller is spending the summer in Lambert, South Carolina, in the old house that belonged to her grandmother, who died after being dismissed as city manager for having the city tennis courts dug up looking for buried treasure--but when she finds the letter that sent her grandmother on the treasure hunt, she finds herself caught up in the mystery and, with the help of her new friend and fellow book-worm, Brandon, she sets out to find the inheritance, exonerate her grandmother, and expose an injustice once committed against an African American family in Lambert.

Kadohata, Cynthia. **Kira Kira.** (JUV KADOH)

Chronicles the close friendship between two Japanese-American sisters growing up in rural Georgia during the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the despair when one sister becomes terminally ill.

Khan, Hena. **Amina's Voice.** (JUV KHAN)

A Pakistani-American Muslim girl struggles to stay true to her family's vibrant culture while simultaneously blending in at school. After her local mosque is vandalized, she is devastated. Her friend Soojin is talking about changing her name. Does Amina need to become more "American" and hide who she really is?

Levine, Kristin. **The Lions of Little Rock.** (JUV LEVIN)

In 1958 Little Rock, Arkansas, painfully shy twelve-year-old Marlee sees her city and family divided over school integration, but her friendship with Liz, a new student, helps her find her voice and fight against racism.

Lockington, Mariama. **For Black Girls Like Me.** (JUV LOCKI)

Eleven-year-old Makeda dreams of meeting her African American mother, while coping with serious problems in her white adopted family, a cross-country move, and being homeschooled.

Lowery, Lynda Blackmon. **Turning 15 on the road to freedom: my story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March.** (JUV 323.119 LOWER)

A 50th-anniversary tribute shares the story of the youngest person to complete the momentous Selma to Montgomery March, describing her frequent imprisonments for her participation in nonviolent demonstrations and how she felt about her involvement in historic Civil Rights events.

Ramée, Lisa Moore. **A Good Kind of Trouble.** (JUV RAMEE)

After attending a powerful protest, Shayla starts wearing an armband to school to support the Black Lives Matter movement, but when the school gives her an ultimatum, she is forced to choose between her education and her identity.

Reynolds, Jason. **Look Both Ways: a tale told in ten blocks.** (JUV REYNO)

Jason Reynolds conjures ten tales (one per block) about what happens after the dismissal bell rings, and weaves them into one funny, poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life.

Rhodes, Jewell Parker. **Ghost Boys.** (JUV RHODES)

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.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. **Esperanza Rising.** (JUV RYAN)

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

Shabazz, Ilyasah. **Betty Before X.** (JUV SHABA)

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.

Stone, Nic. **Clean Getaway.** (JUV STONE)

For the life of him, William "Scoob" Lamar can't seem to stay out of trouble--and now the run-ins at school have led to lockdown at home. So 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. With G'ma's old maps and a strange pamphlet called the 'Travelers' Green Book' at their side, the pair takes off on a journey down G'ma's memory lane. But adventure quickly turns to uncertainty: G'ma keeps changing the license plate, dodging Scoob's questions, and refusing to check Dad's voice mails. And the farther they go, the more Scoob realizes that the world hasn't always been a welcoming place for kids like him, and things aren't always what they seem--G'ma included.

Warga, Jasmine. **Other Words for Home.** (JUV WARGA)

Sent with her mother to the safety of a relative's home in Cincinnati when her Syrian hometown is overshadowed by violence, Jude worries for the family members who were left behind as she adjusts to a new life with unexpected surprises.

Williams, Alicia. **Genesis Begins Again.** (JUV WILLI)

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. **One Crazy Summer.** (JUV WILLI)

In the summer of 1968, after traveling from Brooklyn to Oakland, California, to spend a month with the mother they barely know, eleven-year-old Delphine and her two younger sisters arrive to a cold welcome as they discover that their mother, a dedicated poet and printer, is resentful of the intrusion of their visit and wants them to attend a nearby Black Panther summer camp.

Woodson, Jacqueline. **Brown Girl Dreaming.** (JUV BIO WOODS)

Jacqueline Woodson, one of today's finest writers, tells the moving story of her childhood in mesmerizing verse. Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement.

Woodson, Jacqueline. **Harbor Me.** (JUV WOODS)

When six students are chosen to participate in a weekly talk with no adults allowed, they discover that when they're together, it's safe to share the hopes and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world.

Wright, Barbara. **Crow.** (JUV WRIGH)

In 1898, Moses Thomas's summer vacation does not go exactly as planned as he contends with family problems and the ever-changing alliances among his friends at the same time as he is exposed to the escalating tension between the African-American and white communities of Wilmington, North Carolina.

Yang, Kelly. **Front Desk.** (JUV YANG)

Recent immigrants from China and desperate for work and money, ten-year-old Mia Tang's parents take a job managing a rundown motel in Southern California, even though the owner, Mr. Yao is a nasty skinflint who exploits them; while her mother (who was an engineer in China) does the cleaning, Mia works the front desk and tries to cope with demanding customers and other recent immigrants--not to mention being only one of two Chinese in her fifth grade class, the other being Mr. Yao's son, Jason.