

2026 African American Booklist

*If This World Were Mine:
Romance and African American Writers*

2026 African American Booklist

The Detroit Public Library has published its African American Booklist for more than 50 years. This bibliography provides a selected list of books by and/or about African Americans. The works of fiction and nonfiction for adults, children and young adults were reviewed and recommended by librarians of the Detroit Public Library.

The African American Booklist began as a way to commemorate Black History Month and since that time has continued to feature the accomplishments of African Americans in the literary world. Our booklist has become an annual tradition in the community and beyond, and continues to be a highly anticipated publication for book lovers all across the nation.

COVER ART:



Jamea Richmond-Edwards (b. 1982), Detroit born and raised, earned a BA from Jackson State University (2004) and an MFA from Howard University (2012). She is a multidisciplinary artist whose work has been exhibited throughout the US, including the Brooklyn Museum, the Charles H. Wright Museum, and the California African American Museum. Her art is monumental in scale, consisting of assemblages and immersive installations. The cover, "Slow Dance with Big Chief," (2019, 6' x 6')) is a mixed media collage of ink, acrylic, oil pastel on canvas.

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Black National Anthem

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

Lyrics by: James Weldon Johnson
(1871-1938)

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet

Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might

Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand.
True to our God,
True to our native land.



From Our Executive Director



PHOTO CREDIT:
KATHRYN DOWGIEWICZ

Maya Angelou once said, “Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.” We know that Black love is limitless, regardless of challenges or circumstances. And “romantic” love is often expressed in the search for those “happily ever after” stories that demonstrate perseverance and resilience. It is this richness that we find in the Black Romance genre, the highlight of our 2026 African American Booklist, *If This World Were Mine: Romance and African American Writers*.

A sincere thank you goes to Dr. Nicole M. Jackson for her enlightening essay, “Love in Black and Black: A Brief History of Black Romance.” She writes that “Black romance authors have a rich history that is still being written, one declaration of love at a time.” A look back at more than 50 years of Black Romance titles is provided by Steve Ammidown, librarian, archivist, and historian of the romance genre.

Sylvia Hubbard’s delightful interview and tribute to Detroit’s own, Beverly Jenkins, is a must read. Ms. Jenkins speaks of herself as “just a little colored girl from the Eastside of Detroit.” However, having written over 30 novels, she is nationally revered as the “Queen of Romance” and is fondly known by many as the “Beyoncé of Romance.”

We greatly appreciate Jamea Richmond-Edwards, born and raised in Detroit, an accomplished Interdisciplinary artist, who graciously granted us permission to use her work, “Slow Dance with Big Chief,” for our cover.

To the dedicated and skillful librarians who create the centerpiece for the Booklist, we are forever indebted. They, without fail, carefully select the best current fiction and non-fiction titles for everyone’s reading pleasure. This year’s current romance titles are identified with a “heart” so you can easily find your next “happily ever after” read.

Finally, last but surely not least, many thanks go to our talented production team. They make magic and annually produce a visually compelling Booklist.

We welcome you to visit us in person or online at www.detroitpubliclibrary.org.

Yours for reading,

Jo Anne G. Mondowney
Executive Director



“Love, Legacy, and Imagination”

A TRIBUTE TO BEVERLY JENKINS, DETROIT’S QUEEN OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ROMANCE

By Sylvia Hubbard



“I’m just a little colored girl from the Eastside of Detroit,”

says **Beverly Jenkins** modestly — a statement that belies her incredible legacy.

For over thirty years, Jenkins has been a literary force: an **NAACP Image Award nominee**, **USA Today Bestselling Author**, and the recipient of countless honors, including the **Romance Writers of America Nora Roberts Lifetime Achievement Award** and two **Career Achievement Awards** from **Romantic Times Magazine**.

When a young Beverly Jenkins from Detroit dreamed of working in a library, she never imagined she’d one day *write* the stories that would inspire generations of readers.

The Beyoncé of Romance

At a recent Black Book Festival, readers crowned Beverly Jenkins the “*Beyoncé of Romance*”—greeting her with a long, thunderous standing ovation that filled the room. It was a moment of well-deserved recognition; as one attendee put it, “It was beautiful to see Beverly receive her flowers personally.”

Jenkins has touched millions with her stories of Black love and perseverance. When asked who she hopes her stories will reach, her answer was immediate and heartfelt:

“Young Black women. I want them to see the possibilities, to recognize the shoulders they’re standing on, and to understand that none of us got here on our own. Someone bent over and did that work every day, opening doors for us. I want them to be proud — of who they are, of their beauty, no matter their skin tone, shape, or size.”

Amazingly, she is now reaching her fourth generation of readers — proof that her words have become timeless.

From Cass Tech to Classic Love Stories

Born in Detroit, a Cass Tech graduate, Jenkins began writing romance novels that focused on 19th century African American life, which was often overlooked in mainstream fiction.

Her first novel, *Night Song*, was published in 1994, marking the start of a career that would change the landscape of romance literature. Since then, she has authored more than 30 novels, skillfully blending historical accuracy with emotional depth to illuminate African American life in the 19th century.

Her books celebrate resilience, community, and joy — all through the lens of love.

The Spark That Started It All

When asked how it all began, Jenkins explained that her inspiration came from the absence of stories that reflected real Black love.

“Love is love. And one of the great things about romance is that it’s finally starting to represent who loves — to plant that flag that love is love. You’re entitled to love, no matter how you identify. That’s one of the best things about this genre. But people still discount it. People don’t always see the connection between these stories and their own lives — and that’s kind of sad.”

For Jenkins, representation isn’t optional — it’s revolutionary.

Love and Joy as Acts of Resistance

When I asked Beverly to talk about how, even in the hardest times, her characters — and the people of those eras — still found love, she reflected deeply:

“It’s like redemption all over again. Redemption was that period after Reconstruction when the people who tore the country apart were given back their land and power.

Love was so important because it grounded you. It gave you something to come home to — to soothe and heal you. If we hadn’t had love, we wouldn’t be here. If we hadn’t found joy with each other, we wouldn’t be here.

In spite of the Klan laws and all the hardships, we still built colleges. We still had babies, christenings, baptisms, and birthday parties. Look at the Gilded Age — we still had balls! And even when we didn’t, we had the juke joints, rent parties, and concerts.

There’s no amusement white people had that Black people didn’t have too — gambling boats, parks, vacation places. The only thing we didn’t have was the Ku Klux Klan, and they can keep that.” *[laughs]*



"We've survived for over 200 years by holding onto joy — even when the world is crazy. When nobody wanted to listen to us, we still found joy with each other."

A Message to Detroit's Dreamers

When I asked Beverly what she would say to a young girl in Detroit who dreams of writing romance but feels hopeless, she didn't hesitate.

"Write it. They are not the boss of you. You can write whatever you want.

Open yourself up to life so you can gain the experiences you'll need as you grow. Don't be afraid to say yes. Don't be afraid to say no. Life is about the journey, not the destination.

And I know growing up in Detroit, it feels like everything begins and ends here — but it doesn't. If you get the chance to see other places, take it. Whether it's going away to school or joining the military — even though I don't really promote that — some people have found good lives that way.

Most importantly: write and read. Read everything. Not just romance — all genres. That's how you learn your voice, build your vocabulary, and understand other people and places.

I read every book in the Mark Twain Library — from the kiddie books to the romances to the adult ones. Then I moved downtown to the branch by Crowley's — what's now the Skillman Library. We just called it 'the library next to Crowley's,' across from Hudson's.

Don't be afraid to do things, see things, read about things. Life is amazing. Who would've thought I'd be here — from St. Mary's Episcopal Church on Canfield, Jones Elementary on Celesta, Barbour Junior High, and Cass Tech? It's all good."

Success Beyond Lists

When I asked her what it feels like knowing her stories have touched so many souls, Beverly smiled.

"DON'T BE AFRAID TO SAY YES. DON'T BE AFRAID TO SAY NO."

"You listen to their stories, and it helps you measure success. The fact that I can touch people in ways that have nothing to do with *The New York Times* list or with movies — that's the real gift."

Sure, we'd love to have movie deals, but I'm not going to stop writing because no one's adapting my books.

Years ago, one of my readers said her grandson had to do a Black History report, and the teacher asked where he got his information. He said, 'My grandmama's Ms. Bev books.'

When you educate a woman, you educate a race. Somebody smarter than me said that — but it's true. And I still sit here thinking, *Me? Little colored girl from the east side of Detroit?* I'm grateful every single day."

Her humility, humor, and brilliance make her not only a literary icon but also a living example of perseverance and grace.

The Heart of Her Legacy

Beverly Jenkins has woven *true Black history* through her romance stories — uplifting the African American experience while redefining the genre itself. She has broken barriers, opened doors, and proven that love stories set in Black life and

history belong in the center of American literature.

As I reflect on our conversation, one quote from Robespierre comes to mind:

"The secret to freedom lies in educating people, whereas the secret to tyranny is in keeping them ignorant."

Through her words, Jenkins continues to educate, enlighten, and empower — one story, one reader, one generation at a time.

Final Thoughts

Books built her world. Imagination fueled her dreams. Now, Beverly Jenkins's words have built worlds for others to believe in — worlds that uplift African American history, break glass ceilings, and give voice to love in a world that once stood silent.

To know and honor this woman through this article is an honor for me. And I leave you with a quote from Beverly Jenkins to hold close to your heart:

"Everything we have in this world started in someone's imagination. Books show us what's possible — and sometimes, you can't imagine being what you can't see."



Award-winning Detroit author and founder of Motown Writers, **Sylvia Hubbard** has independently published more than 65 romance suspense books over the past 25 years. As an avid blogger, podcaster, "mompreneur" expert, social media manager and digital strategist, Sylvia has received literary recognition for her literacy work, in addition to achieving eight #1 bestsellers.



Love in Black and Black:

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BLACK ROMANCE

by: Nicole M. Jackson, PhD

Bowling Green State University / Associate Professor of History

*S*n a recent article from Refinery29, journalist Taryn Finley asserts, “As more Black women join book clubs and profess their love for romance novels on social media, it has become very clear that the demand for literature that depicts Black women as desirable, autonomous and fulfilled in their romantic lives is sky-high.”¹ This joyful sentiment that Black romance is finally having its moment, is not new. Since Black romance novels began to appear on bookshelves it seems that every few years – if not every few months online – someone “discovers” that Black romance authors exist, marvels at what they have found, but rarely looks back to all that has come before. The hidden-in-plain site nature of African American romance history reflects a decades-long problem in the romance genre itself.

¹ Taryn Finley, “These Black Women Authors Are Reclaiming Romance – One Page At A Time,” *Refinery29.com*, Accessed August 20, 2025, <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/black-romance-authors-summer-reads>

Love (con't)

From nearly its inception in the U.S., romance had a race problem, which has obscured much of the groundbreaking work of Black women, on and off the page. In her dissertation on African American romance, Jamee Nicole Pritchard notes that much of this history still lives in “clips from newspaper and magazine articles, digitized author interviews from YouTube, writing manuals authored by African American writers in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and one-off chapters that briefly discuss the rise of multicultural romance, lumping together all novels written by, about, and for people of color.”² The ephemeral nature of this history, literally and figuratively, has meant that the history of Black romance has been passed down from one author to another, one reader or librarian to another, largely absent from most mainstream discussions of the genre, but there are breadcrumbs.

In June 1980, Dell, an imprint of Doubleday, published *Entwined Destinies* by Rosalind Welles under their new dedicated romance line, Candlelight. The book was edited by Vivian Stephens and written by journalist Elsie B. Washington under a pen name. It was also the first Black romance, meaning that the author and all characters in the relationship were Black, published by a major romance press. Besides the fact that both characters were African American, *Entwined Destinies* was unremarkable, a classic romance story following Kathy Godwin, a young reporter in London, and oil tycoon, Lloyd Craig. The hero fights his attraction but still manages to steal

the heroine away for steamy kisses as they fall in love in less than two hundred pages. But its importance lies squarely in that same unremarkability. Together, Welles and Stephens crafted a story that fit neatly into a genre that was so oppressively white it would take another decade and a half for the genre to build on their groundbreaking work. The pervasive beliefs that Black authors could not meet the literary standards of romance, that Black characters did not fall in love the way white people did, and that Black readers did not read romance has persisted so strongly that forty-five years after Welles’ debut, publishing is still surprised to find a large and ravenous audience for Black romances.

“...African Americans have been writing fiction about love for at least a century and a half.”

One of the best ways to enter Black romance is to take it out of the, at times, cloistered space of the romance genre – replete with its own language and origin myths that are entirely white – and connect it to other, more familiar, threads of Black literature. In *Black Love Matters: Real Talk on Romance, Being Seen, and Happily Ever Afters*, Beverly Jenkins, the prolific Detroit-based romance author, begins the story of African American romance in slave narratives, as “the first

² Jamee Nicole Pritchard, “That 90’s Kind of Love: the Rise of African American Romance Novels in Traditional Romance Publishing,” MA Thesis (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2021), 4

instrument used by African Americans to tell their own stories.”³ In narratives as disparate as *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, and *Running a Thousand Miles to Freedom*, formerly enslaved people told of the horrors of slavery alongside the loving bonds that made the hope for freedom possible. After the Civil War, as Black people tested the bounds of their tenuous freedom, that possibility turned into a kernel of hope that exemplified for Jenkins the true definition of a happy ever after (HEA).⁴ Jenkins has penned over thirty Black romances set all over the United States and in the Caribbean, in time periods from the American Revolution to the present – but primarily in the Reconstruction Era – because love, whether romantic, familial, or friendship, has always been a strong thread through Black literature. From Toni Morrison’s literary fiction to Lorraine Hansberry’s plays, Terry McMillan’s women’s fiction, Eric Jerome Dickey’s contemporary fiction, and Zane’s erotica, African Americans have been writing fiction about love for at least a century and a half.

Officially, the romance genre began in England in the 1930s with Mills & Boon novels for women. Harlequin distributed these stories in the United States and Canada, all written by white authors with white, British characters. After some pressure from the American audience for American stories, Avon published *The Flame and the Flower* by Kathleen E. Woodiwiss in 1972, another white romance by a white author. In the mythic origins of the romance genre, many scholars and readers often tell a story that leads back all the way to the Greeks. The truth of this lineage is less important than the assertion that one can make a similar mythos for Black romance.

Jenkins, and others, often call back to Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s *Iola Leroy or Shadows Uplifted* (1892) as the first Black romance. Harper’s story is a sentimental, late-Nineteenth Century novel about a range of social issues – slavery and freedom, race, miscegenation, and temperance – but the relationship between Iola and Dr. Frank Latimer is “the first novel by a Black author to portray the love story (with a happy ending!) of two Black protagonists.”⁵ Similarly, even as Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) has much more to say about Black autonomy and women’s lives in a patriarchal society, readers over many decades have been swept away by Janie and Teacake’s tragic love story. And in 1969, Signet released Rubie Saunders’ *Marilyn Morgan, R.N.*, making it the first book with Black characters published by a Black author for their Nurse Romance line.⁶ None of these books are traditional romances by the standards of late-Twentieth Century definitions – which require a central love story that ends in a HEA – but they provide an important foundation upon which Welles, Stephens, and so many other authors and editors built.

³ Beverly Jenkins, “A Short History of African American Romance,” in *Black Love Matters: Real Talk on Romance, Being Seen, and Happily Ever Afters*, ed. Jessica P. Pryde (New York: Berkley, 2022), 1.

⁴ Ibid, 6

⁵ Steve Ammidown, “A Black Romance Timeline,” Romance Fiction Has a History, Accessed September 6, 2025, <https://romancehistory.com/2021/02/16/a-black-romance-timeline/>.

⁶ Ibid, “Rubie Saunders (1929-2001),” <https://romancehistory.com/2021/02/05/rubie-saunders-1929-2001/>.



Vivian Stephens

Love (con't)

It is hard to imagine that Black romance would exist as it does today without the intrepid leadership of Vivian Stephens. Beginning in 1978, as an editor at Dell, Stephens attempted to push back at the stuffy British roots of the genre and “began looking for writers who could create female characters of substance,” rather than “helpless heroines” and “ninnies.”⁷ Stephens’ focus on creating a modern heroine for the American market also coincided with a diversifying of the genre in other respects. Besides recruiting Washington to write *Entwined Destinies*, she also launched the careers of Mexican American author Marisa de Zavala and indigenous author Jean Hager, to write “ethnic romances,” and developed writing workshops for aspiring authors of color, pushing at the whiteness that defined the genre at the time. Stephens also helped found the Romance Writers of America (RWA) in 1980, eventually rose to editor-in-chief at Dell, before leaving for Harlequin in 1983, and being laid off in 1984. After this, she became an agent and book packager, working with Rochelle Alers, Shirley Hailstock, and Beverly Jenkins.⁸

While there were a few standalone Black romances published throughout the 1980s, including Sandra Kitt’s, *Adam and Eva* (Harlequin, 1985), the 1990s proved to be a lively playground for Black romance. Later coined “The Summer of Black Love,” in 1994, sixteen Black romances were published across four publishers, giving Black readers ample opportunity to see themselves in romance.

Night Song (Avon) by Beverly Jenkins was an historical romance set in the aftermath of the Civil War, in the all-Black town of Nicodemus, Kansas. Sandra Kitt’s *Serenade* (Arabesque) was a second chance romance between a jazz singer and the musician who stole her heart ten years prior. Donna Hill’s *Temptation* was a sexy romantic suspense about a wealthy widow in pursuit of answers about her husband’s death as she falls for a mysterious stranger. Joining Hill, Jenkins, and Kitt were authors like Eboni Snoe (*Beguiled*, Arabesque), Shirley Hailstock (*Whispers of Love*, Arabesque), and Margie Walker (*A Sweet Refrain*, Arabesque) and while some of their names have faded from popular memory, their books remain in the personal collections of many Black readers. Pritchard argues that “Black romance appealed to Black readers because it pushed against the traditional romance formula...depicted love in all sizes, shapes, and skin tones and reflected Black communities throughout the Black Diaspora,” and one can see much of that broad appeal in 1994.⁹

The long-held belief in publishing that Black people didn't read – especially not about love – couldn't hold water...

⁷ Mimi Swartz, “Vivian Stephens Helped Turn Romance Writing into a Billion Dollar Industry. Then She Got Pushed Out,” *Texas Monthly*, Accessed August 20, 2025, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/arts-entertainment/vivian-stephens-helped-turn-romance-writing-into-billion-dollar-industry/>

⁸ Alison Doherty, “Who Is Vivian Stephens?: Meet the Legendary Romance Editor Who Helped Define the Genre,” Book Riot, Accessed August 20, 2025, <https://bookriot.com/who-is-vivian-stephens/>.

⁹ Pritchard, “That 90’s Kind of Love,” 28.

The 1990s were the perfect moment for this boom in Black romance. In her analysis of Genesis Press, a small, family-owned, Black romance press targeting Black readers, Ann Yvonne White outlines this moment in literary history. “The 1989 publication of Terry McMillan’s *Disappearing Acts* marked a new step, appealing to a readership broader than the usual highbrowed literary book buyers. *Disappearing Acts* proved an unusual commercial success among African American readers. McMillan’s third book, *Waiting to Exhale*, released in 1992, made the *New York Times* bestseller list and stayed there for 38 weeks.”¹⁰ Outside of literature, Black filmmakers like Spike Lee, Julie Dash, John Singleton, Kasi Lemmons and others were releasing films that spoke to the breadth of Black life – love and pain, northern, southern, and western, rural and urban. And while the rise of Hip Hop has often dominated discussions of Black music in the decade, R&B – songs about love, heartbreak, grief, and joy – was just as dominant on the radio airwaves. The long-held belief in publishing that Black people didn’t read – especially not about love – couldn’t hold water in a culture dominated by Black artists reading, writing, and singing, about exactly that. But bigotry has no logic and the demand for Black romances did not manage to dislodge the dismissal of Black readers.

Efforts to diversify romance and make room for authors and characters of color were, on some level, aimed at appealing to a presumed white audience. The prevailing belief in publishing then, as now, was that books by Black authors had to have “crossover appeal,” because Black readers were an insignificant population for marketing. However, in conversation with scholar Judy Moody-Freeman for the Black Romance Podcast in 2022, Sandra Kitt discusses Vivian Stephens’ feelings about Black readers. “Even in the late 70s and early 80s, she knew there was an audience of Black readers out there who were reading these books by the millions, and they were reading them happily because what they were involved in was the romance of the story. The he and she meeting and coming together – that was the attraction. But she understood and was trying to be the forerunner in letting the industry know that if you write stories with Black characters, you will really draw in a whole other audience that you’ve been ignoring.”¹¹ Still, the belief that a Black romance needed to appeal to a largely, or primarily, white readership, held back the development of Black romances, especially when it intersected with the rigid structure of the genre.

In her study of Harlequin Mills & Boon romances, independent scholar Laura Vivanco notes that each of the publisher’s lines came with “its own guidelines which provides details about elements such as

¹⁰ Ann Yvonne White, “Genesis Press: Cultural Representation and the Production of African American Romance Novels,” PhD diss. (The University of Iowa, 2008), 18.

¹¹ Julie E. Moody-Freeman, “Conversation with Sandra Kitt,” Black Romance Podcast, [Accessed October 15, 2025, <https://www.jprstudies.org/2022/05/conversation-with-sandra-kitt/>].

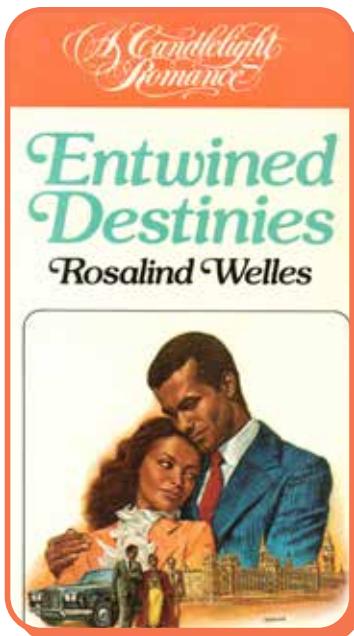


Zora Neale Hurston

Love (con't)

settings, levels of explicit sexual reference, and plot, which distinguish it from other lines...These guidelines, then, serve as detailed descriptions of the constraints within which authors must work."¹² This is most easily seen in the economic conformity of many romances from the early 1970s through the 1990s. As scholar and historical fiction/romance novelist Piper Huguley has suggested of historical romances, the expectation that the romance hero be wealthy has often worked to write Black men out of that role. "What is the [Black] hero doing for a profession? And is it good enough? Valid enough?...Not just financially secure, it's gotta be the jackpot kind of economic situation... You cannot possibly have a Black man doing financially well historically speaking."¹³

In Huguley's assessment, Black historical romances suffered from a belief that there were either too few Black men of means historically or that a working-class hero would disrupt the fantasy necessary for an escapist romance. Even in contemporary romances, a publisher's stronghold on its brand could narrow the bounds of the author's creativity. For this reason, most Black men in romance have been wealthy, educated, middle class or better, or absent.



Take for instance Harlequin's popular *Texas Cattleman's Club* series. This long-running series of category-length romances began in August 1999 with Dixie Browning's *Texas Millionaire*. Originally imagined as a series about five wealthy bachelors, it eventually spawned over one hundred and forty books spread over numerous miniseries, written by dozens of authors. Black authors like Brenda Jackson, Yahrah St. John, and Nadine Gonzalez who have contributed to the series have had to fit their Black characters into a mold that privileged white readers – and editors' – expectations of what love, romance, and intimacy looked like. But not all publishers took this path.

Of the sixteen books published during the "Summer of Black Love," twelve came from Kensington's Pinnacle/Arabesque line. The Arabesque imprint published books written by Black authors, with Black characters, and for Black readers. "Unlike Dell and Harlequin, Pinnacle Books was not concerned with crossover appeal and followed the lead of Black independent publishers in marketing solely to Black readers. This is the difference between the 1980's ethnic romances and the Black romances that launched in 1994."¹⁴ Scholar Ann Yvonne White agreed: "What made the 1992 season different was the rise of authors writing for African American readers first and white readers only incidentally."¹⁵

12 Laura Vivanco, *For Love and Money: The Literary Art of the Harlequin Mills and Boon Romance*, (Tirril, Penrith, UK, 2011), 19.

13 "Author Piper Huguley," Interview with author and Steve Ammidown, *Black Romance Has a History*, <https://blackromancehistory.com/podcast/episode-6-author-piper-huguley/>.

14 Pritchard, 19.

15 White, "Genesis Press," 18.

While some argue that there are no material differences between Black romances and their white counterparts, many suggest that the differences can be stark when you know what to look for. In her discussion of Black historical romances, Rita B. Dandridge argues, "While romantic fiction may seem to avoid the political realm entirely, black women's historical romances actually take strong political positions."¹⁶ In her text, Dandridge argues that Black authors imbue the tropes, structure, and even the HEA with a political sentiment absent from mainstream romance. For instance, in her discussion of Jenkins' historical romance set in pre-Civil War Michigan on the Underground Railroad, *Indigo*, Dandridge argues that the HEA for Hester and Galen was not simply their union, the birth of a free-born child, or even the return of Hester's enslaved mother. In Dandridge's assertion, their HEA could only come at slavery's end.¹⁷ Taking cues from Dandridge's work, I have argued elsewhere that Alyssa Cole's self-published historical romance novellas follow a similar structure. In *Be Not Afraid* (2016), Cole tells the story of Kate and Elijah who meet on either side of the American Revolution. Their HEA revolves around their freedom after the war, but is also encapsulated in a later novella, *That Could Be Enough* (2017), which tells the story of Kate and Elijah's granddaughter, Andromeda, a free-born, queer woman, who finds love and community on her own terms. These novellas illustrate that the HEA as freedom is communal and multi-generational.¹⁸

In a similar vein, Carole V. Bell argues that "while Black romances often hinge on universally popular tropes like fake dating, fated mates, friends to lovers, enemies to lovers, and second chances, many authors take these universal tropes and make them new by grounding them in culturally specific Black experience. Situated in predominantly Black contexts, the world-building around Black community and institutions can be just as essential to these stories as the romantic trope."¹⁹ In her essay, Bell considers Black entrepreneurship and economic independence in Alexandria House's *Let Me Free You* (Self-Published, 2018), but it was also apparent in earlier books as well, including Margie Walker's *Love Signals* (Marron Publishers, 1990), where the couple meets at an anti-apartheid concert. These works illustrate that culturally specific romances can become a winning strategy for publishing success.

Behind the scenes at Kensington's Arabesque, Black editors and other professionals cultivated new generations of Black romance and women's fiction authors for waiting readers. Keeping in close contact

"Small, independent publishers and self-published authors have long made a way out of no way to tell the stories of their hearts."

16 Rita B. Dandridge, *Black Women's Activism: Reading African American Women's Historical Romances* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 5.

17 Ibid, 36.

18 Nicole M. Jackson, "Freedom's Epilogue: Love as Freedom in Alyssa Cole's Historical Novellas," *Journal of Popular Romance Studies*, (2022) 11, <https://web.archive.org/web/20220517162923/https://www.jprstudies.org/2022/05/freedoms-epilogue-love-as-freedom-in-alyssa-coles-historical-novellas/>.

19 Carole V. Bell, "I'm Rooting for Everybody Black: Black Solidarity, Black World-Building, and Black Love," in *Black Love Matters*, 35-36.

Love (con't)

with Black bookstores, book clubs, and industry professionals, editors like Monica Harris, pushed back at the idea that there was no market for Black romances, one book at a time. As Sandra Kitt, Arabesque's first signed author, remembered, "Other authors were writing and submitting novels, but no one was buying them... Once Arabesque came along, if you were an African American writing fiction, you knew you could submit your work to them. Our work had a home."²⁰ In the age of FUBU (For Us By Us), Kensington built Arabesque into a trusted line of books by, about, and for Black women. Over the next four years, Arabesque launched the writing careers of dozens of authors and then sold the line to Black Entertainment Television (BET) Holdings in 1998. BET developed two new lines, Sepia (interracial romances) and New Spirit (inspirational), before selling the lot to Harlequin in 2005 where Arabesque became Kimani before shuttering in 2017. Through its many iterations and publishers, Arabesque was one of all too few spaces in mainstream romance publishing where Black authors, characters, and readers had a home, as Kitt suggested.

But mainstream romance has never been the entirety of the romance story. Small, independent publishers and self-published authors have long made a way out of no way to tell the stories of their hearts. Pritchard noted that Arabesque didn't emerge out of nowhere. "The success of Black indie romance novels proved that Black readers wanted a genre of their own."²¹ While most mainstream romance publishers were skeptical of Black authors, dismissive of Black readers, and sought to constrain the breadth of Black characters, Black publishers and writers had no such hang-ups to overcome.

Genesis Press was founded in 1993 in Columbus, Mississippi by William and Dorothy Colom, "two local attorneys who realized that there was an untapped market for African American romance fiction...and began publishing African American romances in trade paperback under the Indigo romance imprint," later expanding to erotica and interracial romances.²² White calls Genesis a "stepping stone" for authors who would go on to have long careers like Donna Hill, Rochelle Alers, and Seressia Glass to name a few. A bootstrap, family-owned press, Genesis understood at inception what many other publishers still refuse to accept: Black readers wanted to see themselves and their romantic lives on the page and they were willing to pay for the pleasure. And if mainstream publishers wouldn't give it to them, they would go to the source.

"Black romance authors have a rich history that is still being written, one declaration of love at a time."

²⁰ Diane Patrick and Monica Harris, "Ten years of sizzling chocolate kisses and lasting love: now under BET Books, Arabesque celebrates a decade as a black romance publisher," The Free Library, Accessed October 1, 2025, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Ten+years+of+sizzling+choco-kisses+and+lasting+love%3A+now+under...-a0118954930>.

²¹ Pritchard, 19.

²² White, "Genesis Press," 54.

While not technically a part of the “Summer of Black Love,” E. Lynn Harris’ *Invisible Life* is included here as part of that broader Black literary thrust in the ‘90s of books centered on Black life, relationships, and love. Originally self-published, the 1994 release was a traditionally published reissue. Throughout his career, Harris cultivated a dedicated fanbase of Black women and queer men who became fans of characters who looked and sounded like them. “There wasn’t a beauty salon, soul food restaurant, or someone’s living room where people didn’t congregate and talk about E. Lynn’s books.”²³ Harris was but one of a number of Black authors who got their start self-publishing in the 1990s and that tradition has remained strong in romance.

One might assume that after the “Summer of Black Love,” publishers scrambled to find more Black authors to satiate a neglected Black readership, but the reality was more of the same. While a few authors found sustainable success in romance writing, such as Brenda Jackson’s long career with Harlequin and Beverly Jenkins’ thirty-year career primarily with Avon, many of the Black romance authors who debuted in the 1980s and 1990s left the genre or fiction writing entirely, citing poor sales and a lack of publisher support as part of the reason.²⁴ Since the early 2000s, online writing and publishing sites have proved fruitful for romance authors locked out of traditional publishing or wishing to avoid it entirely.

Diverse Black authors such as Alyssa Cole, Talia Hibbert, and Kennedy Ryan either got their start self-publishing or had significant periods self-publishing their books. While authors like Christina C. Jones, Nicole Falls, and Alexandria House have chosen self-publishing as a parallel path, seeking to cultivate a direct relationship with a readership they already knew existed. In the years since the collapse of Harlequin’s Kimani line, some previously traditionally published authors such as Sherelle Green, Elle Wright, and Reese Ryan have turned to self-publishing, entirely or occasionally, to begin a new phase of their careers. Pritchard notes that “for every 100 books published by the leading romance publishers in 2020, only twelve books were written by people of color... In response to the racial and ethnic diversity gap in romance publishing, writers of color have turned to self-publishing and independent presses for visibility within the market.”²⁵ Thus, self-publishing has provided a unique space for telling stories traditional publishing continues to marginalize.



E. Lynn Harris

²³ Terrance Dean, “Commentary: Remembering E. Lynn Harris,” *Essence*, Accessed October 1, 2025, <https://www.essence.com/news/commentary-remembering-e-lynn-harris/>.

²⁴ “Original Arabesque Author Margie Walker,” Interview with author and Steve Ammidown, *Black Romance Has a History*, <https://blackromancehistory.com/podcast/episode-4-original-arabesque-author-margie-walker/>.

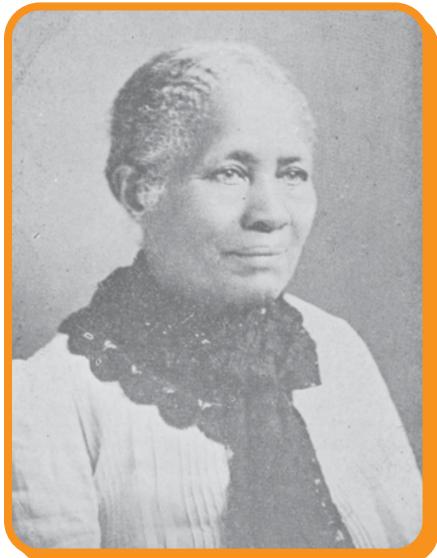
²⁵ Pritchard, 2.

Love (con't)

In the late 2000s and 2010s, publishing professionals and readers alike often looked down their noses at self-published books for lack of editing, uninspired covers, and poor writing among other issues. Authors of all races, genders, and sexualities have been criticized for taking the supposedly easy way out by self-publishing. But many self-published authors and their dedicated

readers see the move as avoiding the gatekeepers of traditional romance, most of whom have never been, and are not, Black. For instance, Tasha L. Harrison's *Truth Duet* series, which tackles the unique position of an African American police officer at the birth of Black Lives Matter, was self-published long before the 2020 reckoning over racism in romance, which came in the wake of both the collapse of RWA (Romance Writers of America) and the murder of George Floyd.²⁶ In Bim Adewunmi's essay for BuzzFeed News discussing Alyssa Cole's Civil War spy trilogy, the *Loyal League*, Adewunmi notes the unique context of the series. "The company has forged a chain uncommon in mainstream publishing: an unbroken line of black women, from the novel's protagonist, via the author, to the editor, to the art director who created the cover art (featuring a black woman). This was a 'black on all sides' mainstream publishing project."²⁷ While this leaves out Cole's agent and other stakeholders, Adewunmi's point stands. In a publishing world dominated by white agents, editors, art directors, and booksellers, Black books must inevitably move through white hands. The languages Black people used to speak to one another – whether it be AAVE (African American Vernacular English) or colloquialisms – must on some level be translated for an audience unfamiliar with Black rhythms and blues and loves. Some authors translate that well, while others refuse that

out of hand. As Christina C. Jones noted of her own decade-long career, self-publishing gave her "the freedom of giving exactly what I want to the world, when I want to give it. My only limits and deadlines are self-imposed, which means I have very few lines to color inside."²⁸ Elizabeth Held notes that "digital self-publishing allowed a certain democratization of publishing to take place. Traditional publishers vastly underestimated the appetite of readers for romance of all kinds, of all subgenres, for diverse characters, for a wider variety of tropes and more. There was just so



Mrs. Francis E.W. Harper

²⁶ Rachelle Hampton, "One Romance Novelist's Fight for Diverse Love Stories," *Slate*, Accessed September 20, 2025, <https://slate.com/culture/2020/09/alyssa-cole-romance-novels-racism-diversity.html>.

²⁷ Bim Adewunmi, "Meet the Women Who Are Building A Better Romance Industry," *BuzzFeed News*, Accessed October 1, 2025, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/bimadewunmi/meet-the-black-women-upending-the-romance-novel-industry>.

²⁸ Amy Jones, "Christina C. Jones: On the Freedom of Indie Publishing," *Writer's Digest*, Accessed October 15, 2025, <https://www.writersdigest.com/be-inspired/christina-c-jones-on-freedom-of-indie-publishing>.

much freedom in self-publishing,” and traditional publishing has taken note.²⁹ In recent years, scores of self-published authors have entered traditional publishing off the strength of their work and reader word-of-mouth, such as Danielle Allen and Chencia C. Higgins. In the 2010s, when editors still recommended that Black authors make their male love interest white, self-publishing allowed Black authors to tell their stories, their way.

Jamee Nicole Pritchard argues that “Black romance does not fit into the traditional structure of white romance, and the constant comparison of Blackness to the norms of whiteness creates limitations in the exploration of Black culture,” a guiding principle of this essay.³⁰ Black romance authors have a rich history that is still being written, one declaration of love at a time.

29 Elizabeth Held, “Romance Authors Thrive in the Self-Publishing Era,” Jane Friedman, Accessed October 10, 2025, <https://janefriedman.com/romance-authors-thrive-in-the-self-publishing-era/>. See also Elizabeth Held, *Love in the Time of Self-Publishing: How Romance Writers Changed the Rules of Writing and Success*.

30 Pritchard, 5

“Since the early 2000s, online writing and publishing sites have proved fruitful for romance authors locked out of traditional publishing or wishing to avoid it entirely.”



Dr. Nicole Jackson is an historian of the modern African Diaspora, Black social movements, and community activism. Her current focus is on the intersection between historical reality and Black popular culture, particularly through Black romantic fiction.

Dr. Jackson's Reading Recommendations

Beverly Jenkins, *Indigo*
(Avon, 1996)

Beverly Jenkins, *Forbidden*
(Avon, 2016)

Beverly Jenkins, *Destiny's Embrace* (Avon, 2013)

Nicole Falls, *sugar butter four love* (Self-published, 2018)

Nicole Falls, *Shots Not Taken* (Self-published, 2019)

Christina C. Jones, *I Think I Might Love You* (Self-published, 2019)

Christina C. Jones, *A Dash of Heat* (Self-published, 2017)

Chencia C. Higgins, *Janine: His True Alpha* (Self-published, 2018)

Chencia C. Higgins, *D'veaughn and Kris Plan a Wedding* (Carina, 2022)

Alyssa Cole, *A Princess in Theory* (Avon, 2018)

Alyssa Cole, *Be Not Afraid* (Self-published, 2016)

Farrah Rochon, *Deliver Me* (Self-published, 2007)

Fiona Zedde, *Femme Like Her* (Self-published, 2020)

Tasha L. Harrison, *The Truth of Things* (Self-published, 2017)

Sandra Kitt, *Adam and Eva* (Silhouette, 2006)

Brenda Jackson, *Taming Clint Westmoreland* (Harlequin Desire, 2008)

Danielle Allen, *Plot Twist* (Self-published, 2022)

Eboni Snoe, *Beguiled*
(Arabesque, 1994)

Leslie Esdale, *Sister Got Game* (Kensington, 2004)

Shirley Hailstock, *A Family Affair* (Arabesque, 2002)

Mildred Riley, *Midnight Moon* (Pinnacle, 1995)

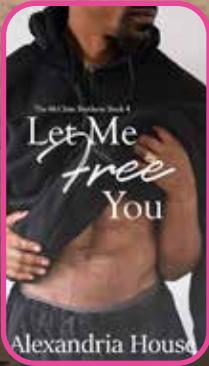
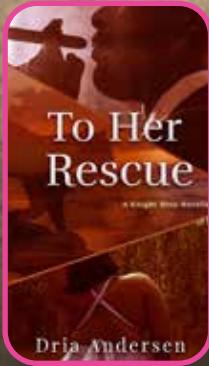
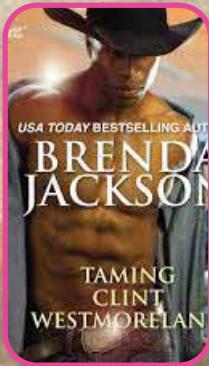
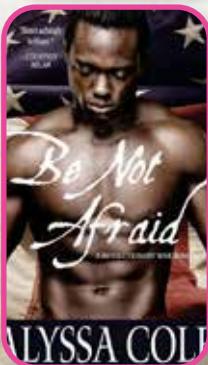
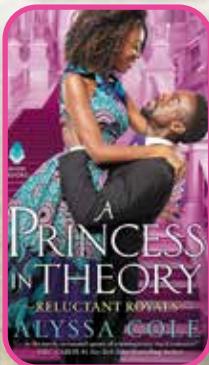
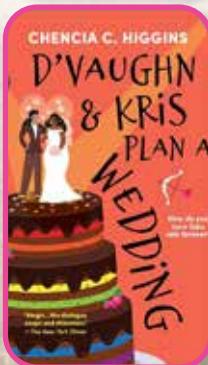
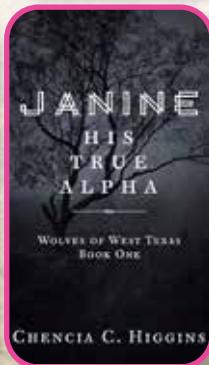
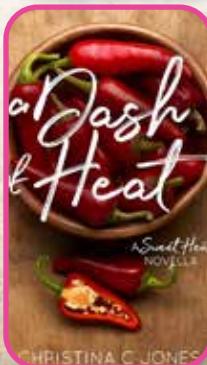
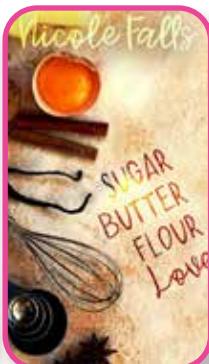
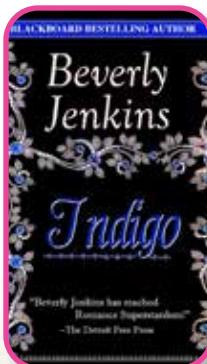
Deanna Grey, *Outdrawn* (Self-published, 2023)

Rebekah Weatherspoon, *Treasure* (Bold Strokes Books, 2014)

Dria Andersen, *To Her Rescue* (Self-published, 2022)

Yahrah St. John, *Her Best Friend's Brother* (Harlequin Desire, 2022)

Alexandria House, *Let Me Free You* (Self-Published, 2018)



Discover 50 Years of Black Romance

Explore more than 50 years of Black Romance! This selection covers some of the most important authors and titles of the genre, but there is also plenty more to explore at your local Detroit Public Library location.

Many early romance novels written by Black authors have become hard to find, mostly because they weren't printed in large numbers. These books are not currently in the Detroit Public Library collection, but that doesn't make them any less important to know about.

Marilyn Morgan, R.N. by Rubie Saunders (1969): This book was the first time a Black author had written Black characters for a romance publisher.

Entwined Destinies by Rosalind Welles (1980): Welles was the pen name of journalist Elsie B. Washington, who was recruited by Dell's Candlelight Romance editor Vivian Stephens to write this book, the first Black romance of the romance novel boom of the late 1970s and 80s.

A Toast To Love by Barbara Stephens (1984): Veronica Mixon at Doubleday recruited several Black authors to write for the publisher's Starlight Romance line. This title was the first Black romance to be published in hardcover.

Looks Are Deceiving by Maggie Ferguson (1994): The pen name of attorney Anita Williams, this book was the first romantic suspense by a

Black author to be published by romance giant Harlequin.

Luckily, the Detroit Public Library has a massive collection of Black romances to choose from, including some of its most important authors.

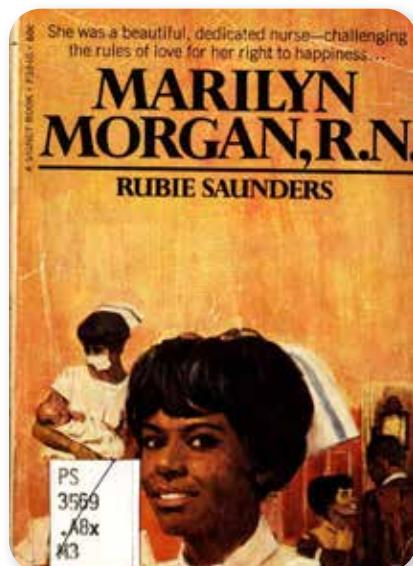
Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted by Frances E.W. Harper (1892): Though it isn't a romance novel, this book, one of the earliest novels to be published by a Black woman, includes the earliest instance of a Black couple, Iola and Frank, having a happily ever after.

Adam and Eva by Sandra Kitt (1985): The first Harlequin romance by a Black author with Black characters.

Rooms of the Heart by Donna Hill (1990): Hill's first novel, published by short-lived influential independent publisher Odyssey Books.

Someone to Love Me by Francis Ray (1992): Originally titled ***Forever Yours***, Francis Ray's debut was also published by Odyssey.

Love Signals by Margie Walker (1990): Walker's first novel, published by independent Marron Books.



1994 was a landmark year for Black romance, called by many “The Summer of Black Love,” with more Black authors appearing in bookstores than any previous year. Most of those books are in DPL’s collection:



Night Song
by Beverly Jenkins
(1994)



Invisible Life
by E. Lynn Harris
(1994)



Serenade
by Sandra Kitt
(1994)



Beguiled
by Eboni Snoe
(1994)



Happily Ever After
by Rochelle Alers
(1994)



Whispers of Love
by Shirley Hailstock
(1994)



Temptation
by Donna Hill (1994)



For The Love of You
by Felicia Mason (1994)



Sweet Promise
by Layle Giusto
(1994)

In the 30 years since 1994’s “Summer of Black Love,” Black authors have flourished in both mainstream and independent romance. These are just a few of them:



Tonight and Forever
by Brenda Jackson
(1995)



A Champion's Heart
by Piper Huguley
(2016)



Bounce Back
by Nicole Falls
(2020)



Jade
by Marcia King-Gamble
(2002)



**An Unconditional
Freedom**
by Alyssa Cole (2018)



Back In The Day
by Katrina Jackson
(2021)



**Huddle With Me
Tonight**
Farrah Rochon
(2010)



Long Shot
by Kennedy Ryan
(2019)

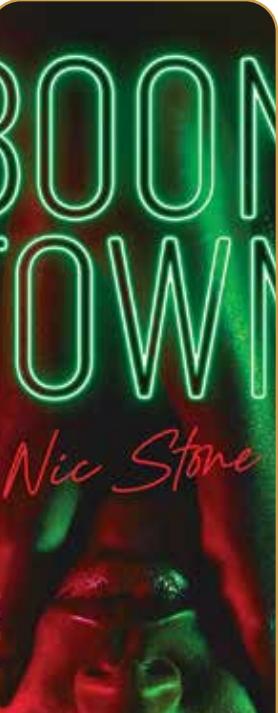
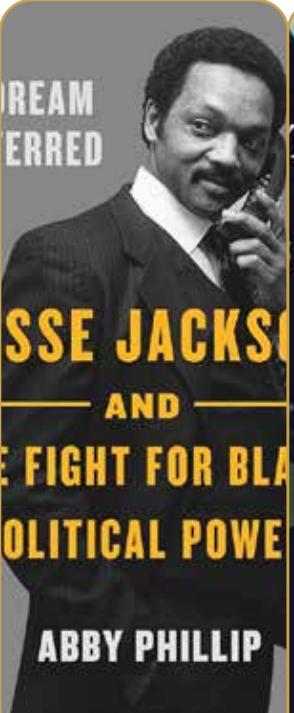
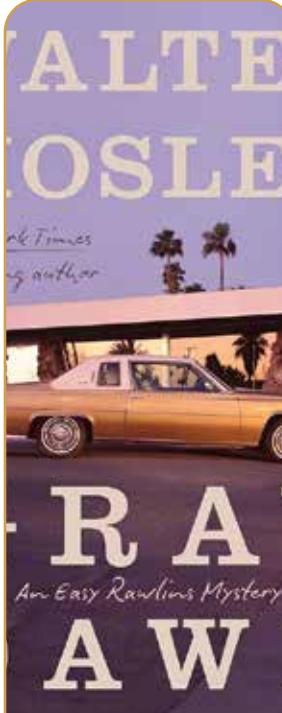
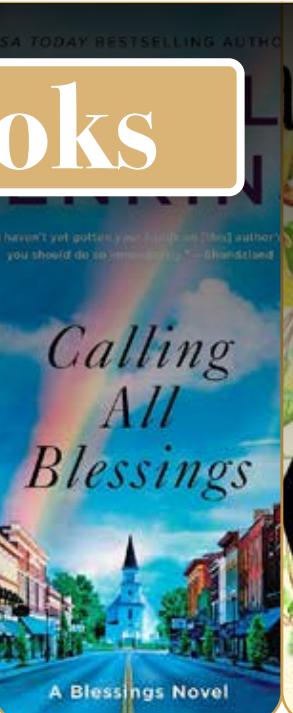
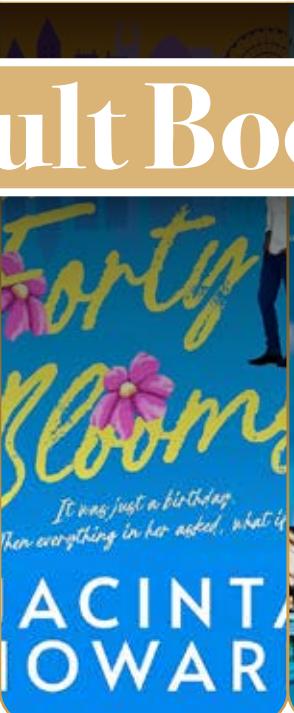
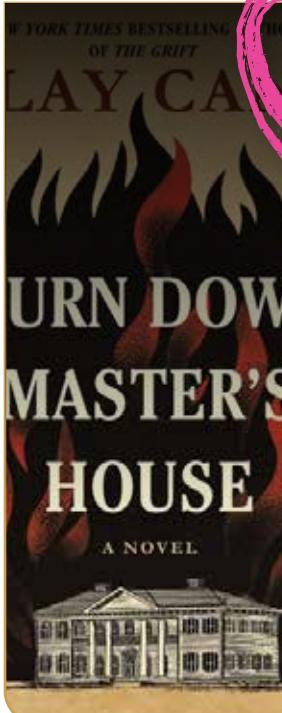


Church Girl
by Naima Simone
(2024)



Steve Ammidown is a librarian, archivist, and historian of the romance genre. He has written about the genre for major publications as well as appeared on many romance-related podcasts. Steve is also the co-host of the *Black Romance Has A History* podcast with Dr. Nicole Jackson.

Adult Books



Top Ten for 2026

Cane, Clay
Burn Down Master's House

Flournoy, Angela
The Wilderness

Howard, Jacinta
When Forty Blooms

Jenkins, Beverly
Calling All Blessings

Jones, Tayari
Kin

Mosley, Walter
Gray Dawn: An Easy Rawlins Mystery

Obama, Michelle
The Look

Phillip, Abby
A Dream Deferred: Jesse Jackson and the Fight for Black Political Power

Smith, Patricia
The Intentions of Thunder: New and Selected Poems

Stone, Nic
Boom Town

FICTION

Abrams, Stacey
Coded Justice: A Thriller
Random House, 2025
Avery Keene and her colleagues investigate a mysterious AI company.

Akinmade, Lola
Bitter Honey
William Morrow, 2025
A mother tries to protect her daughter from their dangerous past.
(e-book available)

Allen, Danielle
Plus Size Player
Bramble, 2025
After the adventure of multiple careers and multiple lovers, Nina finally finds contentment with one job and one love.
(e-book, audio available) ♥

Allen, Jayne and Malcolm Lee
The Best Man: Unfinished Business
Crown Publishing, 2025
Harper Stewart has accomplished the ultimate level of professional success, but a lot has changed between him, an old friend, and family.
(audio available)

Alers, Rochelle
Between Good and Evil
Kensington Publishing, 2025
Three best friends grow up in the turbulent Upper Westside of New York City.

(e-book, audio available)

Bado, Chinazo
Birth of a Dynasty
Harper Voyager, 2025
Prophecy and politics prevent marriage between two noble families and protect the Zenzele Dynasty from destruction.
(e-book available)

Barnett, Amy DuBois
If I Ruled the World
Flatiron Press, 2026
Ambitious magazine editor fights to save her career from her powerful ex-lover.
(e-book, audio available) ♥

Barry, Quan
The Unveiling
Grove Press, 2025
A woman's spiritual and physical strength is tested when she is stranded on a remote island with strangers.
(e-book, audio available)

Black, Regina
August Lane
Grand Central Publishing, 2025
Sparks fly the second time around when a one hit wonder country music star reunites with her teenage flame.
(e-book, audio available) ♥



Adult (con't)

Bryant, Elise

The Game is Afoot

Berkley, 2025

Mavis's personal life is in chaos, so to distract herself she decides to investigate the mysterious death of her daughter's soccer coach.

(e-book, audio available)

Bryce, Denny S.

Where the False Gods Dwell

Kensington Publishing, 2026

Three women travel to Jamaica in 1935 but are united when they must find a way to survive a deadly hurricane.

(e-book, audio available)

Burns, V.M.

Murder from A to Z

Kensington Publishing, 2026

Sisters Samantha and Jenna join the residents of Shady Acres in investigating the mysterious death of one of the residents.

(e-book available)

Cage, Jessica

I Accidentally Hired

a Shadow Walker

Caged Fantasies Publications, 2025

Jericha's new contractor comes with an interesting surprise.

(audio available) ❤

Cane, Clay

Burn Down Master's House

Dafina, 2026

Masterful story of resistance and rebellion inspired by the enslaved who dared to fight back.

(e-book, audio available)



Quan Barry
The Unveiling

Cole, Kamilah

An Arcane Inheritance

Poisoned Pen Press, 2025

Ellory discovers her elite university is built on a dark secret.

(e-book, audio available)

Cook, Jeannine

It's Me They Follow: A Novel

Amistad, 2025

A matchmaker who struggles with intimacy develops feelings for a holy man.

(e-book, audio available) ❤

Cooper, Sharon C.

Daring to Love You

Amaris Publishing LLC, 2025

Dorian loves Lynix, but his wild past makes her cautious. ❤

Day, Zuri

Champagne Taste on a Bad Boy Budget

Afterglow Books, 2025

A struggling restaurant owner finds that she is attracted to her hard-headed new chef.

(e-book, audio available) ❤

Eden, Lucy

The Love Audit

Forever, 2025

Sworn enemies pretend to be happily married newlyweds in a desperate attempt to save their jobs.

(e-book, audio available) ❤

Emizi, Akwaeke

Son of the Morning

Avon, 2025

Galilee just wants to be normal. But when she meets Lucifer, she discovers the truth and power about herself. ❤

Eze, Tochi

This Kind of Trouble: A Novel

Tiny Reparations Books, 2025

Recurring problems from the past lead to the separation of a contemporary Nigerian couple.

(e-book, audio available)

Farley, C.J.

Who Knows You by Heart

William Morrow & Company, 2025

Two AI coders discover a disturbing secret.

(e-book, audio available)

Flournoy, Angela

The Wilderness

Mariner Books, 2025

Sisters and friends move through the ups and downs of life together.

(e-book, audio available)

Gray, Ayana
I, Medusa
Random House, 2025
Punished by a jealous god, Meddy finds a way to live with her new identity.
(e-book, audio available)

Harris, Nathan
Amity
Little, Brown and Company, 2025
A formerly enslaved man travels to Mexico to find his sister.

Holmes, Jasmine
Our Sister's Keeper
Mareas, 2026
An ambitious couple moves to an all-Black town, where only women feel and see the pain of the past.

Howard, Jacinta
When Forty Blooms
Honey Blossom Press, 2025
On her 40th birthday, Simone experiences an internal shift that forces her to consider past regrets. ♥

Iker, Beatrice Winifred
I'll Make a Spectacle of You
Run For It, 2025
A graduate student uncovers the secret in the woods surrounding her campus.

J. Jahquel
Don Caselli: Caselli Family Book 2
Dreamscape Media, 2025
Don was happy to follow the one rule his brother ever gave him, until he met and fell in love with Navy. ♥

Jackson-Opoku, Sandra
Savvy Summers and the Sweet Potato Crimes: A Mystery
Minotaur Books, 2025
Cafe owner investigates and

solves a crime with her police officer ex-husband.
(e-book, audio available)

Jamal, Zakiya
Sparks Fly
Berkley, 2025
The day after a failed connection at a sex club, Max walks into Stella's office to both of their surprise.
(e-book, audio available) ♥

Johnson, Sadeqa
Keeper of Lost Children
37 Ink, 2026
The wife of an American officer living in Germany after WWII finds homes for abandoned mixed-race children.

Jones, Tayari
Kin
Knopf, 2026
Lifelong friends adjust to the loss of their mothers in different ways.

Jordan, Ashley
Once Upon a Time in Dollywood
Penguin, 2025
Jamie and Eve are both on healing journeys when they meet in the Tennessee mountains. ♥

Kann, Claire
The Marriage Narrative
Berkley, 2025
Zinnia and Jordan approach marriage as a business partnership, while agreeing to be on a reality television show.
(e-book, audio available) ♥

Key, Justin C.
The Hospital at the End of the World
Harper, 2026
A medical student takes on global AI systems and unravels family

secrets in the near future New Orleans.
(e-book, audio available)

LaDelle, Ebony
You've Got a Place Here, Too: An Anthology of Black Love Stories Set at HBCUs
Delacorte Press, 2025

A touching collection of love stories that take place on Black college campuses.
♥

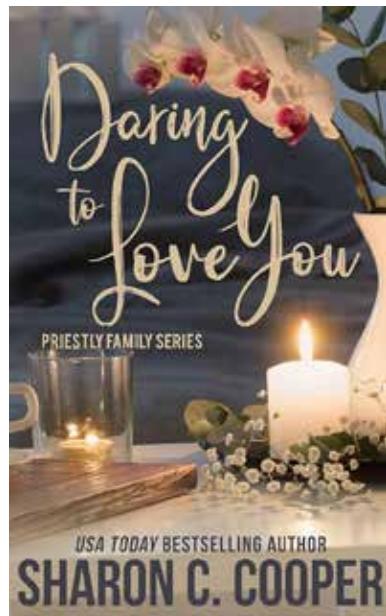
LaQuette
Janae Sanders Second Time Around
St. Martin's Griffin, 2026

Janae considers reconnecting with her high school sweetheart, until she discovers he is the new cost-cutting school superintendent. ♥

McCoy, Taj
The Dating Prohibition
Harlequin, 2025

Childhood friends return home and secretly become involved in a relationship.
(e-book, audio available) ♥

McKinney-Whetstone, Diane
Family Spirit
Amistad, 2025
After years of denying her special premonition skills, Ayana reaches out to her Aunt Lil who was also born with similar skills.



Sharon C. Cooper
Daring to Love You



Adult (con't)

Monroe, Mary

Bad Seeds

Dafina, 2026

A heartbreakingly beautiful betrayal causes Louise to behave outside her normal character.

Morrow, Lauren

Little Movements

Random House, 2025

A woman gives up everything in order to fulfill her dream of joining a prestigious dance company.
(e-book, audio available)

Mosley, Walter

Gray Dawn: An Easy Rawlins Mystery

Mulholland Books, 2025

A woman from Easy's past threatens his peace.
(e-book, audio available)

Natera, Cleyvis

The Grand Paloma Resort

Ballantine Books, 2025

Laura has successfully climbed the ladder to become the manager of a luxury resort. But her sister's reckless behavior may cause her to lose everything.

Payne, Kikki

The Princess and the P.I.

Berkley, 2025

A famous *Reddit* detective hires a private investigator to clear her name.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

Oyeyemi, Helen

A New New Me

Riverhead Books, 2025

Kinga thought she and her

different personalities had an understanding until they discovered a man tied up in their apartment.

Pitts, Delia

Death of an Ex

Minotaur Books, 2025

A private investigator must reconcile the different facets of her ex-husband's life as she investigates his death.
(e-book, audio available)

Ridley, Erica

A Waltz on the Wild Side

Forever, 2025

A tragedy sparks romance when opposites attract.
(e-book available) ❤

Riley, Vanessa

Fire, Sword and Sea

William Morrow, 2026

Jacquette leaves her comfortable life in Tortuga and has to conceal her gender to pursue her dreams of being a swashbuckling pirate.
(e-book, audio available)

Reed, Christina Hammonds

The Johnson Four

Ballantine, 2026

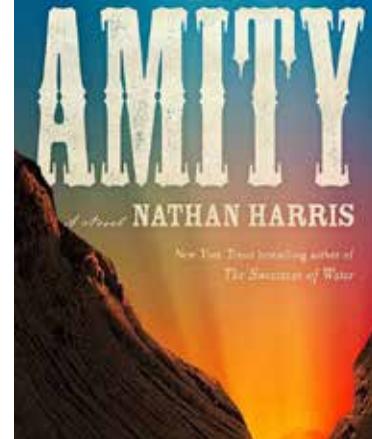
Drama unfolds when the Johnson family discovers Christmas.
(e-book, audio available)

Reynolds, April

The Shape of Dreams

Knopf, 2026

A community of women in East Harlem come together to navigate a neighborhood tragedy.
(e-book, audio available)



Nathan Harris
Amity

Robinson, Shauna

Lauryn Harper Falls Apart

Sourcebooks Landmark, 2025

A woman confronts her past when she is forced to return to her hometown.
(e-book, audio available)

Rochon, Farrah
Pugs and Kisses

Forever, 2025

Evie reconnects with her college crush after losing her fiancé and her job.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

Ryan, Kennedy
Score

Forever, 2026

Ten years after their breakup, Verity and Monk reunite on the set of an epic film. ❤

Simone, Naima
Huntsman

Macmillan, 2025

Love, revenge, and an assassin threaten a family's bond.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

❤ = Romance Selection

- Stetz-Waters, Karelia and Fay**
Stetz-Waters
Taste the Love
 Forever, 2025
 Two foodies bond over their love of food and build a romance.
 (e-book, audio available) ❤
- Streeter, Leslie Gray**
Family & Other Calamities: A Novel
 Lake Union, 2025
 A widow returns home to grieve and address past wrongs.
- Stone, Nic**
Boom Town
 Simon & Schuster, 2025
 When two dancers at the club go missing, Lyriq goes into Atlanta's underworld to investigate.
 (e-book, audio available)
- Swinson, Kiki**
Hunting Ava
 Dafina, 2025
 Ava must stand up to her abuser to save herself and her children.
 (e-book, audio available)
- Tate, ReShonda**
With Love from Harlem: A Novel of Hazel Scott
 William Morrow, 2026
 An intriguing retelling of the life of the famed jazz pianist.
 (e-book, audio available)
- Taylor, Brandon**
Minor Black Figures
 Riverhead Book, 2025
 A queer painter discovers the significance of his artistry as his work leads him to investigate the life and the "career" of a forgotten artist.
 (e-book, audio available)

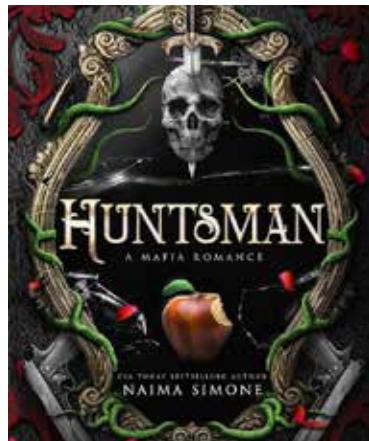
- Townsend, Jacinda**
Trigger Warning: A Novel
 Graywolf Press, 2025
 After surviving a series of devastating events, Ruth returns home with her family to find herself.
 (e-book, audio available)
- Washington, Bryan**
Palaver
 Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2025
 A mother's visit to her son in Tokyo heals a long-standing rift between the two.
 (e-book, audio available)
- Williams, Denise**
The Re-Do List
 Berkley, 2025
 Denise is checking off things on her *re-do* list, including romance with the help of her brother's best friend.
 (e-book, audio available) ❤
- Williams, Frances Mensah**
Sorry, Not Sorry
 Boldwood Books, 2025
 After a less than successful track record, Delilah confronts her past to rebuild her future. ❤
- Wesley, Valerie Wilson**
The Mysterious Death of Junetta Plum (A Harriet Stone Mystery)
 Kensington, 2025
 The murder of a local woman causes chaos and intrigue in the Harlem Renaissance.
 (e-book, audio available)
- Wright, Elle**
The Ex-Dilemma
 Kensington, 2026
 A Detroiter finds he must navigate the chaos of his family and create romance in his life. ❤

GRAPHIC NOVELS / COMICS

- Crownson, David**
Harriet Tubman: Demon Slayer Vol. 1
 Massive Publishing, 2025
 Tubman's story turns supernatural as she finds herself fighting vampires, werewolves, and other evil forces in this reimagining of her life.

- Hill, Bryan Edward and Carlos Villa**
Blade: Red Band. Prodigal Son
 Marvel Universe, 2025
 The comic world's favorite misanthropic vampire-hunting vampire returns, but how much of his bloodlust remains?

- Ewing, Eve L.**
Exceptional X-Men by Eve L. Ewing Vol. 2: The Deep End
 Marvel Universe, 2025
 A new generation of X-Men, under the care of venerable mutants Emma Frost and Kitty Pryde, return for another round of mutant infighting and high jinks.



Naima Simone
Huntsman

Adult (con't)

Fagbamiye, Jibola and Conor McCreery
Fela: Music Is the Weapon
Amistad, 2025
Showcases the creative and politically charged life of the King of Afrobeat.

Mustard, Jamie and Francesca Filomena
Hybred: A Graphic Novel
Street Noise Books, 2025
A nine-year-old survives the violence and upheaval of dystopian, near-future Los Angeles by relying on his imagination and creativity.

Passmore, Ben
Black Arms to Hold You Up: A History of Black Resistance
Pantheon Books, 2025
Covers the history of Black resistance against racism and oppression from the beginning of the 20th century to the present.

Ridley, John, Ryan Parrott and Mike Perkins
Justice League. The Atom Project
DC Comics, 2025
Justice League scientists Ray Palmer and Ryan Choi, who both moonlight as the superhero Atom, find a way to restore power to Earth's defenders, yet one of their own stands in their way.

Roché, Angélique
The First Freedom: The Story of Opal Lee and Juneteenth
Oni Press, 2026
A long overdue graphic biography celebrating the contributions of the Queen of Juneteenth.

Ryan, Seamus and Sean Von Gorman
Kool Keith: Krossover into the Flower Kosmic!
Z2 Comics, 2025
This psychedelic, sci-fi romp sees the hip-hop icon spanning universes and personas to defeat his evil nemesis.

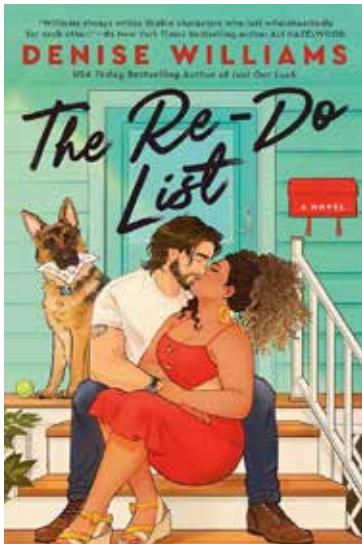
Thorne, Geoffrey and ChrisCross
Blood Syndicate Season One
DC Comics, 2025
The vigilante superhuman gangs fighting for control of Dakota City return, this time with a 21st century spin.

Ziglar, Cody and Marco Renna
Miles Morales Spider-Man 7: God War
Marvel Universe, 2025
Thanks to the Trickster Anansi, Miles Morales gets caught up in a web of chaos involving some of the most feared gods in the Marvel Universe.

ART / MUSIC / POETRY

Bailey, Trenton
Driftin' on a Memory: Celebrating Seventy Years of the Isley Brothers
University Press of Mississippi, 2025
An endearing tribute honors one of the most successful and longstanding R&B groups in the industry.

Barnes, Rhae Lynn
Darkology: Blackface and the American Way of Entertainment
Liveright Pub Corp, 2026
A comprehensive, detailed chronology of blackface caricatures and their larger impact on American society. (e-book available)



Denise Williams
The Re-Do List



25 mai 1923
Le Génial gars qui a
l'avenir, fait, que les blets
et l'avenir que ille a fait
que ille a fait

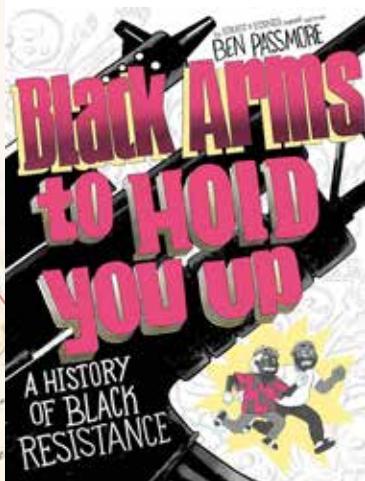
Carte a

Sur demande, merci, etc
et l'avenir que ille a fait

Bennett, Geoff
Black Out Loud: The Revolutionary History of Black Comedy from Vaudeville to '90s Sitcoms

HarperCollins, 2026
The well-known PBS news anchor uses his journalism skills to provide an all-encompassing, vibrant history of Black comedy in America.

(e-book, audio available)



Ben Passmore
Black Arms to Hold You Up: A History of Black Resistance

Beta, Andy
Cosmic Music
Grand Central Publishing, 2026
An expansive biography of the legendary Detroit-born jazz musician Alice Coltrane, offering insights into the interconnected 20th Century Jazz scenes and beyond.

Buchanan, Shonda
The Lost Songs of Nina Simone

Rize, 2025
The Michigan poet's latest collection is a love letter not only to the incomparable Simone, but to all Black women in America on similar creative journeys.

Byas, Taylor
Resting Bitch Face: Poems

Soft Skull Press, 2025
Experiments with both poetry and prose forms explore the relationship between the observer and the observed in art—particularly as it relates to Black women.

(e-book, audio available)

Gaddy, Kristina R. and Rhiannon Giddens
Go Back and Fetch It: Recovering Early Black Music in the Americas for Fiddle and Banjo

University of North Carolina Press, 2025
Music writer Kristina R. Gaddy and Grammy Award winner Rhiannon Giddens explore the history of early Black Atlantic music in this deeply researched songbook with tablature and essays.

Giovanni, Nikki
The New Book: Poems, Letters, Blurb, and Things

William Morrow & Co, 2025
In this final publication before her death, Giovanni reckons with recent political and racial upheaval in America while cultivating hope for the future.

(e-book, audio available)

Keys, Alicia and Lise Funderburg
Hell's Kitchen: Behind the Dream

Plume, 2025
A look into the Broadway musical production based on the Grammy award-winning artist's life featuring photographs, interviews, and commentary.

(e-book, audio available)

Langley, April C. E. and Melba Joyce Boyd
Repoliticizing the Word Through Poetry and Preaching: Early Black Christian

Women's Lives Matter
Wayne State Univ Press, 2025
Examines the works of Phillis Wheatley, Maria W. Stewart, and Jarena Lee whose words laid the foundation for today's social justice movements.

McMillian, Terry
It Was the Way She Said It: Short Stories, Essays and Wisdom

Ballantine Books, 2025
Critiques and samples of the famed author's body of work.

Powell, M. Mick
Dead Girl Cameo: A Love Song in Poems

Random House Publishing Group, 2025
Prose and verse celebrating and honoring deceased iconic figures.



Adult (con't)

Obama, Michelle

The Look

Crown, 2025

Candid stories from the *Forever FLOTUS*, joined with more than 200 photos, invite the reader into the approach and evolution of her graceful style and beauty.
(e-book available)

Shabazz, Rashad

Prince's Minneapolis

University of North Carolina Press, 2026

This sweeping history of the Minneapolis Sound places the artist in the complex world of social forces his genre-bending pop emerged from.

Smith, Patricia

The Intentions of Thunder: New and Selected Poems

Scribner, 2025

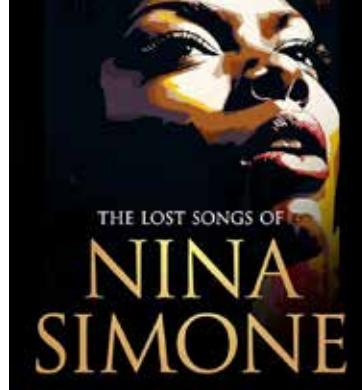
Words shimmy and shine from page to page with a cadence only Smith, one of the most celebrated contemporary American poets, can achieve.

(e-book available)

Wallace, Paula, Rafael Brauer Gomes and Antoine Gregory André Leon Talley: Style Is Forever

Electa, 2025

The life and legacy of the notable fashion icon is celebrated through essays, stories and remembrances.



Shonda Buchanan
The Lost Songs of Nina Simone

Young, Kevin

Night Watch: Poems

Alfred A. Knopf Inc, 2025

At times historical, at times personal, these poems cycle through patchworked stories of loss and redemption.

(e-book, audio available)

BIOGRAPHY / MEMOIRS

Braun, Carol Moseley and Donna M. Owens

Trailblazer: Perseverance in Life and Politics

Hanover Square Press, 2025

A memoir from the first Black woman ever elected to the U. S. Senate, recounts her journey through adversities on her way to making history.

(e-book available)

Brownlee, Katrina

And Then Came the Blues: My Story of Survival on Both Sides of the Badge

Openlens, 2025

NYPD detective channels her trauma into purpose by founding a nonprofit organization to support at-risk women.

(e-book available)

Brown, Austin Channing

Full of Myself: Black Womanhood and the Journey to Self-Possession

Convergent Books, 2025

Examines the societal forces that define and confine every aspect of a woman's life.

(e-book, audio available)

Burney, Lawrence

No Sense in Wishing

Simon & Schuster, 2025

Collection of essays chronicling the author's experiences growing up around music in Baltimore and the joys of fatherhood, embracing the global Black diaspora, and more.

(e-book, audio available)

Coleman, JaQuavis

Dropped Jewelry: Memoir and Blueprint to Money, Power, and Emotional Intelligence

Independently published, 2025

The acclaimed urban fiction author shares life and business lessons as well as anecdotes from his own journey.

Cook, Jeannine A.

Shut Up and Read: A Memoir from Harriett's Bookshop

Amistad, 2026

The owner of the renowned Philadelphia bookstore, opened in February 2020, shares her experiences as a small business owner who survived a global pandemic.

(e-book available)

Dixon, Beatrice
The Soul Instinct
Gallery Books, 2026
An insightful and encouraging memoir from the founder of the wellness brand, *The Honey Pot Company*, shows that dreams can come true.
(e-book, audio available)

Erivo, Cynthia
Simply More: A Book for Anyone Who Has Been Told They're Too Much
Flatiron Books, 2025
The accomplished performer reflects on her personal and professional growth that allowed her to discover and embrace many facets of herself.
(e-book, audio available)

Forte, Thomas and Lovie Smith
Stay in the Game: Making the Most of Every Season
Tyndale Momentum, 2025
NFL Pro-Bowl star shares his life's journey and provides insightful professional advice.
(e-book, audio available)

Golianopoulos, Thomas
The Life of Singleton: From Boyz N the Hood to Snowfall
Andscape, 2025
A meditative examination of the impact and legacy of the late director who influenced modern Black cinema.
(e-book, audio available)

Griffiths, Rachel Eliza
The Flower Bearers
Random House, 2026
An emotional memoir details the traumatic events which led the author to confront grief and heartbreak during a period which should have been filled with joy.
(e-book, audio available)

Hall, Arsenio
Arsenio: A Memoir
Atria/Black Privilege Publishing, 2026
The veteran entertainer pulls back the curtain on his career as a comedian in this candid memoir.
(e-book available)

Kennedy, Jayne
Plain Jayne: A Memoir
Andscape Books, 2025
From Miss Ohio to trailblazing sports broadcaster, the author reflects on the joys and challenges of her journey, offering a story of resilience and empowerment.
(e-book available)

Kriegal, Mark
Baddest Man: The Making of Mike Tyson
Penguin Press, 2025
A reflection on the boxer's rise from a troubled youth to a heavyweight champion.
(e-book, audio available)

Mane, Gucci
Episodes: The Diary of a Recovering Mad Man
Simon & Schuster, 2025
One of the most iconic figures in hip-hop shares his life story and struggles with mental health and addiction.
(e-book, audio available)

Mescudi, Scott
Cudi: The Memoir
Simon & Schuster, 2025
Award winning, multi-talented creative reveals his journey through harrowing circumstances that ultimately resulted in a successful career.
(e-book, audio available)

Morris, Susana M.
Positive Obsession: The Life and Times of Octavia E. Butler
Amistad Press, 2025
Recognized as the first Black woman to publish in the sci-fi genre, Butler's life is examined through the various lenses that impacted her life and writing.
(e-book, audio available)

Neblett, Seth
Mothership Connected: The Women of Parliament-Funkadelic
University of Texas Press, 2025

An introspective, entertaining and at times uncomfortable history of the largely overlooked, yet crucial element of the legendary funk band.

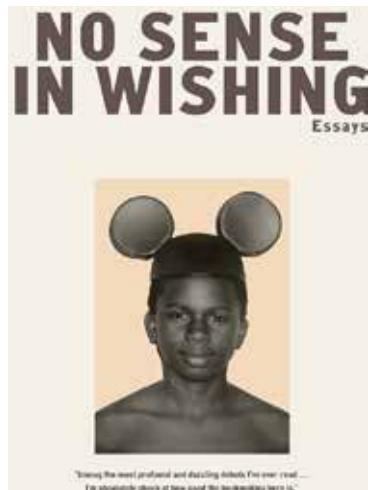
Onyeabuchi, Tochi
Racebook: A Personal History of the Internet

Roxane Gay Books, 2025
The popular Black sci-fi novelist examines his relationship with the web, leading to larger questions about racial identity in the digital age.

(e-book, audio available)

Queen, Khadijah
Between The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: A Veteran's Memoir

Legacy Lit, 2025
Determined to escape Inkster, Michigan, and her troubled family, the author joined the Navy, hoping to create a successful future.



Lawrence Burney
No Sense in Wishing



Adult (con't)

Richie, Lionel

Truly

HarperOne, 2025

Finally, a candid biography chronicling the life and music of the celebrated crooner.

(e-book, audio available)

Roberts, Dorothy

The Mixed Marriage Project: A Memoir of Love, Race, and Family

Atria/ One Signal Publishers, 2026

While sorting through her father's papers, the author discovers unknown information about her parents' marriage.

Shammgod, God

The Word of God

Gallery Books, 2025

From the streets to viral basketball fame, the author discusses mentorship, coaching, and the relationships that have shaped his journey on and off the court.

Sioux, Nia

Bottom of the Pyramid: A Memoir of Persevering, Dancing for Myself, and Starring in My Own Life

Harperhorizon, 2025

A reality TV star provides a glaring look at growing up in front of an audience that was not always kind.

(e-book, audio available)

Snead, David

Urban School Warrior

David Snead, 2025

Inspirational journey and masterclass on urban education.

Wood, Roy

The Man of Many Fathers: Life Lessons Disguised as a Memoir

Crown Publishing, 2025

Comedian, writer and producer delivers a humorous commentary laced with truths he learned from important figures in his life.

(e-book, audio available)

Williams, Dana

Toni at Random

HarperCollins, 2025

Drawing on interviews and archives, this biography takes a close look at Morrison's editorial career and support of other Black writers as she began writing her own legendary novels.

(e-book, audio available)

BUSINESS / FINANCE / CAREER

Asare, Janice Gassam

Rise and Resist: How to Reclaim Workplace Equity and Justice

Berrett-Koehler Pub, 2026

Employs the tactics used by Black resistance movements to build practical, technology-based strategies for dealing with DEI backlash in the contemporary workplace.

(e-book, audio available)



Scott Mescudi
Cudi: The Memoir

Booker-Drew, Froswa' and

Natasha Sistrunk Robinson

Front Porch Wisdom: Navigating Leadership Pressures and Barriers as a Woman of Color

Intervarsity Press, 2025

Offers faith-based advice for overcoming workplace struggles and finding the inspiration to grow professionally.

(e-book, audio available)

Brown, Elaine Meryl, Marsha Haygood and Rhonda Joy McLean

The Next Little Black Book of Success: New Laws of Leadership for Black Women

Storehouse Voices, 2026

In this updated edition to the 2009 classic, three Black female executives explain how anyone can succeed in the corporate world.

(e-book, audio available)

Bryant, John Hope
Capitalism For All: Inclusive Economics and the Future-Proofing of America

Wiley, 2026

The founder of Operation HOPE demonstrates how more economic inclusivity, not less, is needed to ensure prosperity for all.

Burey, Jodi-Ann***Authentic: The Myth of Bringing Your Full Self to Work***

Flatiron Books, 2025

The author discusses how working in negative environments affects our mental and physical health, with solutions on what can be done to combat these effects.

Hill, Francene Mary Diane***Tiny Tots in Tiaras and Tuxedos: The Life, Love, and Business Success of Kermit B. Hill***

Greaterville Press, 2026

The story of a remarkable educational entrepreneur.
(e-book, audio available)

Jean-Baptiste, Annie***Empowerment for All: A Four-Step Framework for Creating Change in Teams and Communities***

Wiley, 2026

An uplifting guide to democratizing workplaces and empowering all employees to achieve their goals together.

Levy, Jessica Ann***Black Power, Inc: Corporate America and The Rise of Multinational Empowerment***

University of Pennsylvania Press, 2026

An examination and exploration of Black empowerment beyond protests.

Wilson, Lauren Wesley***What Do You Need?: How Women of Color Can Take Ownership of Their Careers to Accelerate Their Path to Success***

Hay House Business, 2026

Provides women with the resources they need to soar into leadership positions.

COOKING / ENTERTAINMENT**Benton, Javant*****Make Your Own: 120+ Minimally Processed, Oil-Free, Wheat-Free, Sugar-Free, Plant-Based Recipes***

Balance, 2025

Delicious healthy comfort food recipes to enjoy and explore.

Brown, Kardea***Make Do with What You Have: 100 Delicious New Recipes from Favorite Old-School Meals***

Amistad, 2025

A popular TV chef offers updated versions of beloved classic homestyle dishes.

(e-book available)

Idowu, Remi***Sugar & Spice: Flavor-Packed Dinners and Desserts to Crave***

Interlink Books, 2026

Cookbook features simple yet irresistible meals inspired by Ghanaian and Nigerian favorites.

Malik, Anela and Renae Wilson***American Soul: The Black History of Food in the United States***

National Geographic Society, 2025

A blend of soul-stirring recipes and rich history that celebrates food as both nourishment and a testament to resilience, creativity, and cultural legacy.

Moseley, Davon***Let's Get Into It: 130+ Comfort Food Recipes for Novice Cooks***

DK Publishing, 2025

A cookbook for those who are new to the kitchen but want to create delicious and satisfying meals.

(e-book available)

Vantrece, Deborah***The Twisted Soul Cookbook: Modern Soul Food with Global Flavors***

Universe Publishing, 2025

A chef mixes traditional recipes with new influences and techniques to create over 100 new culinary delights.

Williams, Rawlston***The Caribbean Cookbook***

Phaidon Press, 2026

This collection features classic recipes and lesser-known specialties from a vibrant region.

HEALTH & SCIENCE**Graves, Joseph Jr.*****Why Black People Die Sooner***

Columbia University Press, 2025

The author challenges myths that expose how systemic racism and social inequities contribute to ongoing health disparities in African Americans.

TONI at RANDOM

Dana Williams
Toni at Random



Adult (con't)

Jefferson, Tara Pringle
Bloom How You Must: A Black Woman's Guide to Self-Care and Generational Healing
Amistad Press, 2025
A guide for holistic, mindful, and communal women's wellness.

Lassiter, Jonathan
How I Know White People Are Crazy and Other Stories: Notes from a Frustrated Black Psychologist
Legacy Lit, 2025
A searing yet humorous examination of how Eurocentric mental health practices have harmed African Americans seeking help.
(e-book, audio available)

Lewin, Paige
How to Love Your Afro: Your Natural Hair Care Companion
Bloomsbury Tonic, 2025
The host of the natural hair care podcast *Texture Talks* provides insights into the proper care and maintenance of both your crown and your mental health.

HISTORY

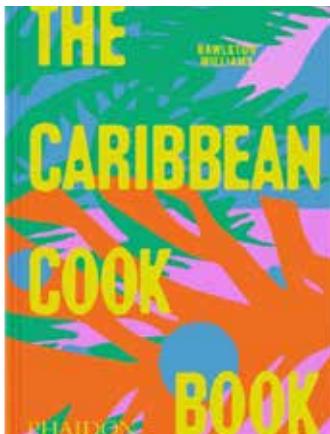
Adams, Char
Black-Owned: The Revolutionary Life of the Black Bookstore
Tiny Reparations Books, 2025
NBC reporter showcases how Black-owned bookstores have served their communities as centers of civic engagement, activism, and anti-racist organizing.
(e-book, audio available)

Akpan, Paula
When We Ruled: The Rise and Fall of Twelve African Queens and Warriors
Pegasus Books, 2025

The author spotlights African women who shaped history, unveiling their leadership, resilience, and the enduring legacy of the Motherland's monarchs.
(e-book, audio available)

Blain, Keisha
Without Fear: Black Women and the Making of Human Rights
W.W. Norton & Company, 2025

The often-overlooked contributions of notable activists are highlighted, showcasing their courage and fearless pursuit of justice and equality on a global scale.



Rawlston Williams
The Caribbean Cookbook

Daniel, Cheryl McKissack and Nick Chiles
The Black Family Who Built America: The McKissacks, Two Centuries of Daring Pioneers
Black Privilege Publishing, 2025
Intriguing story of an enslaved artisan who passed on his trade, creating generations of craftsmen who would go on to design and construct some of America's greatest buildings.
(e-book, audio available)

Givens, Jarvis R.
I'll Make Me a World: The 100-year Journey of Black History Month
HarperCollins, 2026
Traces the evolution in the observance of Black history in America, from its start in 1926 until the present.
(e-book, audio available)

Jones, Brian
Black History Is for Everyone
Haymarket Book, 2025
Argues that the study of Black history is under attack and suggests that forming a healthy curiosity will lead to challenging and understanding generally accepted ideas.
(e-book available)

Nathan, Amy and Sarah Keys Evans
Riding into History: The Surprising Story of Sarah Keys Evans and the Fight to Desegregate Bus Travel
Duke University Press, 2026
Before Rosa Parks or Freedom Riders, Private First-Class Sarah Keys Evans successfully challenged segregation on public transit in her landmark case against the Carolina Coach Company.

Pepera, Luke
Motherland: A Journey Through 500,000 Years of African Culture and Identity
Pegasus Books, 2025
The author explores the continent's deep historical evolution and highlights its enduring cultural and historical influence.

Snorton, C. Riley and Darius Bost
A Black Queer History of the United States
Beacon Press, 2026
This first of its kind analysis emphasizes the connection between movements for racial justice and sexuality or gender-based equality in America.
(e-book, audio available)

INSPIRATIONAL / RELIGION / SELF-HELP

Beach, Elisha
*Balance Is Bullsh*t The Truth About Motherhood and Self-Care*
Health Communications Inc, 2025
A humorous yet thoughtful guide gives mothers permission and grace to draw new boundaries,

easing the stress and guilt women sometimes encounter.

Caraballo, Jor-El
Mindful Meditations for Black Men: Restorative Practices to Soothe Mind, Body, and Spirit
Adams Media, 2026
Expert advice from a licensed therapist presents strategies to assist men with creating a space to develop and prioritize their mental health.
(e-book, audio available)

Fredericks, Kevin
Successful Failure: Lessons Learned Flat on My Face
Convergent Books, 2025
The comedian and creative shares personal stories of setbacks and resilience, offering insights on how defeat can be transformed into determination.

Martin, Desmond and Corey Hajim
Friends of the Good: How Remarkable Friendships Transform Our Lives
Storehouse Voices, 2026
Successful CEO uses a philosophical framework to illustrate how friends and loved ones propelled him to prosperity.
(e-book, audio available)

Monroe, Shafia
Mothering the Mother
Balance, 2026
Tips and tools to help healing postpartum mothers of African descent.
(e-book, audio available)

Senghor, Shaka
How to Be Free: A Proven Guide to Escaping Life's Hidden Prisons
Authors Equity, 2025

An inspirational roadmap to help unlock and build the mental strength required for personal growth.
(e-book, audio available)

Smith, L. Michelle
Call and Response: 10 Leadership Lessons from the Black Church
Amistad Press, 2026
Employs a multidisciplinary and research-based approach to affirm the value of the Black Church not just as a house of worship, but as an institution that creates resilient leaders.
(e-book, audio available)

Timberlake, Tim
The Bumpy Road to Better: Unlocking the Hidden Power in Hard Things
Thomas Nelson Inc, 2025
A practical guide suggests that avoiding the temptation to seek quick solutions to problems can develop positive transformation.
(e-book, audio available)

Vanzant, Iyanla
Spiritual Hygiene: A Practical Path for Clean Living, Inner Authority, and Divine Freedom
Atria, 2026
This spiritually focused guidebook takes readers on a personal healing journey.

POLITICAL / SOCIAL SCIENCE / EDUCATION

Adams, Michelle
The Containment: Detroit, the Supreme Court, and the Battle for Racial Justice in the North
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2025
Historical account of the legacy of segregation in Detroit Public Schools and the city.
(e-book, audio available)



Adult (con't)

Andrews, Kehinde

Nobody Can Give You Freedom: The Political Life of Malcolm X

Bold Type Books, 2025
A reexamination of El-Hajj Malik's life and teachings that debunks myths about his alleged misogyny and violence, while highlighting his vision for inclusive Black liberation.

Cobb, Jelani

Three or More Is a Riot: Notes on How We Got Here: 2012-2025

One World, 2025
A renowned journalist and historian offers a powerful look at the current social justice movement through a collection of new and retrospective writings. (e-book, audio available)

Cornelissen, Sharon

The Last House on the Block: Black Homeowners, White Homesteaders and Failed Gentrification in Detroit

University of Chicago Press, 2025
An honest, up-close examination of how supposed revitalization could not save one of the city's longstanding communities.

Couvson, Monique

Girls Unlimited: How to Invest in Our Daughters With More Than Money

New Press, 2025
Dr. Monique Couvson explores how the needs and experiences of girls are overlooked in society and offers recommendations to

parents and policy makers on the best ways to invest in girls' potential.

Dagbovie, Pero G.

Forever in the Path: The Black Experience at Michigan State University

Michigan State University Press, 2025
A historical in-depth disquisition of African American culture at the first U.S. agricultural university.

Jones Jr., Franklin R.

Learn Black American Sign Language: A History and Complete Beginner's Guide with Over 200 Words and Phrases

Wellfleet Press, 2026
An engaging introduction to Black ASL highlights the importance of understanding and making the dialect more accessible. Includes photo illustrated instructions. (e-book available)

Kendi, Ibram X.

Chain of Ideas: The Origins of Our Authoritarian Age

One World, 2026
The unparalleled National Book Award winner returns with a deep dive into the "great replacement theory," the debunked belief that non-white communities are supplanting white populations. (e-book, audio available)

Larycea, Rachel

Black Capitalists: A Blueprint for What is Possible

Crown Publishing Group (NY), 2025

Explores the strategies and successes of Black entrepreneurship, offering a blueprint for economic empowerment, wealth building, and generational prosperity.

O'Donovan, Susan Eva

Moving Toward Freedom: The Political Education of Enslaved Americans

Penguin Press, 2026
Using primary source materials, this reckoning with previous historical narratives centers on the voices of enslaved people before the Civil War, clarifying their pivotal role in their own future emancipation. (e-book, audio available)

Orr, Marion

House of Diggs: The Rise and Fall of America's Most Consequential Black Congressman, Charles C. Diggs Jr.

University of North Carolina Press, 2025
An in-depth biography of the influential politician who represented Michigan's 13th Congressional District for a quarter of a century.

Phillip, Abby
A Dream Deferred: Jesse Jackson and the Fight for Black Political Power
Flatiron Books, 2025
Noted television journalist delivers an impactful and detailed examination of the famed Civil Rights leader and his historic presidential campaigns.
(e-book, audio available)

Smith, Zadie
Dead and Alive Essays
Penguin Press, 2025
A collection of essays diving into the lives of many prolific writers and historical moments.
(e-book, audio available)

Watson, Jamal and Al Sharpton
The Student Debt Crisis: America's Moral Urgency
Broadleaf Books, 2025
A comprehensive resource explores the history and impact of student loans through a Civil Rights lens.

SPORTS & RECREATION

Bryant, Vanessa
Mamba & Mambacita Forever
MCD, 2025
Collected stories and images from the artistic community pay a fitting and loving tribute to Kobe Bryant the beloved father, husband and sports icon and his daughter.
(e-book, audio available)

Curry, Stephen
Shot Ready
One World, 2025
A once overlooked player's rise to NBA legend status explains how discipline, faith, and focus paved his way to lasting success.
(e-book, audio available)

Hardaway, Tim and Jacob Uitti
Killer Crossover: My Life from the Chicago Streets to Basketball Royalty
Sports Publishing, 2025
Established as one the best of all time, Tim Hardaway recounts his upbringing and how mental toughness helped him on and off the court.
(e-book available)

Knepper, Paul
Moses Malone: The Life of a Basketball Prophet
University of Nebraska Press, 2025
Enlightening biography of the highly celebrated pioneer and sports icon whose records still stand to this day.
(e-book available)

Parish, Robert and Jake Uitti
The Chief
Triumph Books, 2026
Iconic NBA player Robert Parish opens up, talking about his career playing for the Boston Celtics and stepping away from the game on his own terms.

Parker, Candace
The Can-Do Mindset: How to Cultivate Resilience, Follow Your Heart, and Fight for Your Passions
Zando-Get Lifted Books, 2025
WNBA superstar and history maker shares insights on developing a resilient mindset, encouraging readers to follow their passion, and to pursue their goals with confidence.

Sewell, Roderick
Iron Will: An Amputee's Journey to Athletic Excellence
Legacy Lit, 2025
The first bilateral above-knee amputee and Paralympic swimmer

shares his inspiring journey, showing that mental strength and perseverance are essential for achieving success in sports.

Shrager, Mark
The First Kentucky Derby: Thirteen Black Jockeys, One Shady Owner, and the Little Red Horse That Wasn't Supposed to Win
Eclipse Press, 2026

Examines the lesser-known role African American jockeys played in the foundation of one of the biggest sporting events every year.

Smith, Johnny and Randy Roberts
The Fight of His Life: Joe Louis's Battle for Freedom During World War II
Basic Books, 2025
In this latest biography, the Brown Bomber's fight for Civil Rights and social justice is highlighted.
(e-book available)

Epplin, Luke
Moses and the Doctor
Grand Central Publishing, 2025
Basketball superstars Julius "Dr. J" Erving and Moses Malone join forces and revolutionize the NBA in this historical underdog story.

Williams, Neftalie
The Skateboard Life: Movers, Shakers, Makers & Rulebreakers: The Quintessential Story of Skateboard Culture
Artisan Books, 2025
A sociologist overviews and celebrates the sport while highlighting some of the biggest new names like Briana King and Kareem Campbell.

Coming Soon-Adult Titles

Benedict, Marie and
Victoria Christopher Murray
A Pair of Aces

Berry, Mary Frances
Slavery after Slavery

Beta, Andy
*Cosmic Music: The Life, Art and
Transcendence of Alice Coltrane*

Cooper, Desiree
*Black Summers: Growing Up in the
Urban Outdoors*

Ervin, Keona K.
*Refusal: Black Women Workers
and Emancipatory Struggle*

Harris, Shawntae
and Jesseca Harris-Dupart
*The Way Love Goes: A Guide to
Building a “Beaautiful”
and Everlasting Relationship*



Mosley, Walter
Ghaleen: A Romance in Black

Nissel, Angela
Good Grief, Pass the Bread, Mom Is Dead: A Memoir

Riley, Vanessa
A Deal at Dawn

Roberts, Sarah Jakes
The Power in Surrender: 100 Ways to Tap Into the Courage to Trust God's Plan Over Fear, Worry, and Doubt

Tawwab, Nedra Glover
The Balancing Act

Youth Books



Top Ten for 2026

Anatol, Giselle

Small-Girl Zora and The Shower of Stories

Brown, India Hill

Girl From The Ashes

Cline-Ransome, Lesa

Ida B. Wells and the Untold Truth of a Country

Cooke, Sam

A Change Is Gonna Come

Douglass, Ryan

The Great Disillusionment of Nick and Jay

Henderson, Leah and Patricia Gauch

I Am the River: Sarah E. Ray and the Bob-Lo Boat

McBride, Amber
The Leaving Room

Myall, J.D.

Heart's Gambit

Nargi, Lela

Miss Betti, What Is This?: How Detroit's School Lunch Lady Got Good Food on the Menu

Ransome, James

A Place for Us

PICTURE AND BOARD BOOKS

Anatol, Giselle

Small-Girl Zora and The Shower of Stories

Viking Books for Young Readers, 2026

Young Zora Neale tells funny stories to gather people's happy tears to water her mother's garden.

(e-book, audio available)

Barlow, Charnelle Pinkney

Two Artists, Grandad and Me

Doubleday Books for Young Readers, 2026

The author explores the special relationship she had with her grandfather, the late Jerry Pinkney.

(e-book, audio available)

Bingham, Winsome

Fish Fry Friday

Harry N. Abrams, 2025

A young boy and his grandmother spend the day together fishing, prepping and cooking a feast for the family.

(audio available)

Boston-Weatherford, Carole

A Hug Like Michelle's, A Voice Like Beyoncé's

Harry N. Abrams, 2025

A celebration of Black women throughout history and the modern age.

(e-book, audio available)

Boston-Weatherford, Carole

Family Feast

Crown Books for Young Readers, 2025

A great family tale celebrating the joyful commotion of a holiday feast and the many hands involved in its preparation.

(e-book, audio available)

Campbell, Xavier Michael

A Single Dreadlock

Groundwood Books, 2025

A story celebrating differences and the importance of believing in yourself and building confidence through self-care.

(e-book available)

Charles, Tami

Together, United

Orchard Books, 2025

A call to work together to make the world a better place through love and our individual talents.

(e-book, audio available)

Cooke, Sam

A Change Is Gonna Come

Little Bee Books, 2025

Beautiful illustrations by Nikkolas Smith paired with lyrics from Cooke's Civil Rights anthem.

(e-book available)

Copeland, Misty

Bunheads, Act 2: The Dance of Courage

Nancy Paulsen Books, 2025

A sweet tale of young ballerinas and their friendships through disappointments and challenges.

(e-books, audio available)



Youth (con't)

Cortez, Rio

The Blue Velvet Chair

Denene Millner Books, 2025
From a comfy chair, a little girl spends her mornings peering out a window to notice the world around her.

(e-book available)

Datcher, Michael

A Song for Two Homes

Random House Studio, 2025
Auset uses music to help her learn to feel the love in the midst of her parents' divorce.

(e-book available)

DeHoney, Jeanine

This Sunday My Daddy Came to Church

Sleeping Bear Press, 2025
A family story for churchgoers.

(e-book available)

Ejata, Diana

Making Art

Rise X Penguin Workshop, 2025
A celebration of the everyday expressions of art.

(e-book available)

Ewing, Clothilde

Stella and Roger Are on the Move

Denene Millner Books, 2025
Little Stella and her bestie try to prevent her family's out-of-state move.

(e-book available)

Hall, Carla

Carla and the Tin Can Cake Party

Denene Millner Books, 2025
A celebration of the magic of grandmothers and the special place family and food play in our childhoods.

(e-book available)

Harper, Janelle

Salon Saturday

Viking Books for Young Readers, 2025
A peek into a little girl's day at the salon as she ponders a new hairstyle.

(e-book available)

Honoré, Leslé

My Brown Boy

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2026
A lyrical affirmation to brown boys of the brilliance, power, and potential they possess.

(audio available)

Jackson, Bea

The Fairy Fashion Show: Ready-To-Read Level 1

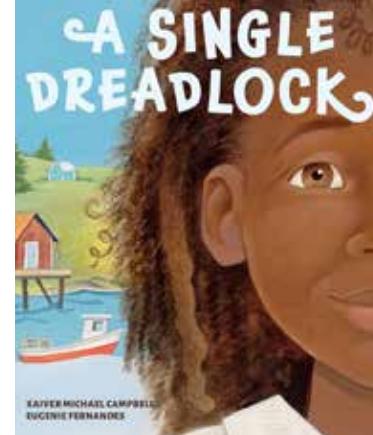
Simon Spotlight, 2025
A fairy helps her friend prepare for an enchanting fashion show.

(e-book available)

Johnson, Keyshawn

Once Upon a You

Bushel & Peck Books, 2025
An inspirational book by an NFL star who defied the odds by believing in himself and his dreams.



Xavier Michael Campbell
A Single Dreadlock

Keller, Shana

Cee Cee: Underground

Railroad Cinderella

Charlesbridge, 2025
An inventive retelling of the classic fairytale and the risks she takes for freedom.

(e-book available)

Lee, Jen Hayes

The Golden Hoops

HarperCollins, 2025
A celebration of the confidence and pride that can come from a girl's first pair of earrings.

McBride, Amber

Magick Hoodoo Child

HarperCollins, 2026
The story of a girl visiting her grandmother to partake in a significant African spiritual practice.

Mikai, Monica

My Quiet Place

Chronicle Books, 2025
A story of creating tranquility when feeling overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle of the day.

(audio available)

Miller, Sharee
Jordan's Perfect Haircut
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2025
Jordan needs to choose the ideal haircut for picture day at school.

Moore, Sharise B
A City Dream
HarperCollins, 2025
Inspired by Baltimore, the dreams of a young girl envision a city transformed by the efforts of her community.

Myers, Christopher
Henri Is Full: Matisse and His World
Six Foot Press, 2025
A creative story explaining the influence of African and Asian art forms in the works of the famous French artist.

Newsome, Malcolm
The Daddy-Daughter Dance
Henry Holt & Co 2025
Daddy and daughter excitedly prepare for their special night together.
(e-book, audio available)

Pumphrey, Jerome and Jarrett Pumphrey
The Old Sleigh
Norton Young Readers, 2025
An old sleigh must step back and allow a younger sleigh to continue the tradition of delivering care to their community.
(e-book available)

Rajan, Rekha
This is Hip Hop: And Other Street Dances
Rise X Penguin Workshop, 2025
The latest installment in this board book series all about dance.
(e-book, audio available)

Ramsey, Calvin Alexander
The Library in the Woods
Carolrhoda Books, 2025
A young boy's family moves to the segregated South in the late 50's and explores a real library for African Americans the author visited during his childhood.
(e-book available)

Ransome, James
A Place for Us
Nancy Paulsen Books, 2025
A wordless picture book about a young, unhoused boy and his mom's daily routine.
(e-book available)

Rand Hess, Mary and Randy Preston
Mini Musical Tales from Bird Mountain School
Free Spirit Publishing, 2025
This new series combines physical books with online access to real scripts and original music to bring the stories to life.
(e-book available)

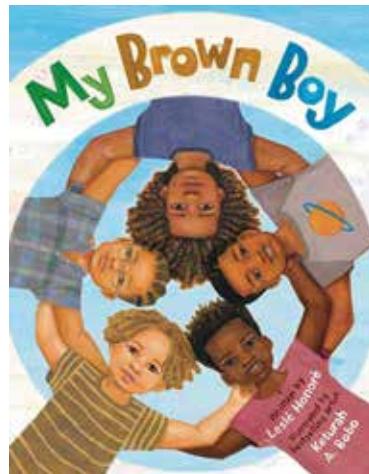
Sewankambo, Yvonne
How My Family Says I Love You
Candlewick, 2025
An ode to family and how they express love.
(e-book available)

Shepherd, Sherri
The Sunshine Queens
Tommy Nelson, 2025
An adorable story about the connection between best friends and the importance of girls being supportive of each other.
(e-book, audio available)

Thompkins-Bigelow, Jamilah
Together We Are Sunshine
Random House Studio, 2025
A colorful tale about the love between three sisters as they learn to embrace sisterhood and the beauty of nature.
(e-books, audio available)

Tripplett, Natasha
Downtown Doors
Waterbrook, 2025
A boy's community is explored during walks with his mother as they pass a variety of doors that tell the stories of their inhabitants.
(e-book available)

Vanece, Ariel
Searching for Mr. Johnson's Song
Rocky Pond Books/Penguin, 2025
A young boy helps his elderly neighbor remember a hymn that holds a special place in his heart.
(e-book available)



Leslé Honoré
My Brown Boy



Youth (con't)

♥ = Romance Selection

Velasquez, Eric
The Polar Bear and the Ballerina
Holiday House, 2025
A polar bear at the Central Park Zoo sets out on an epic journey to return a lost scarf to a ballerina from the Harlem Children's Ballet. (e-book available)

Wallace, Gwendolyn
Dancing with Water
Kokila, 2025
The culture and traditions of well digging and the importance of water in communities of color is highlighted in this warm story. (e-book available)

Williams, Nyasha and Sidney Rose McCall
Once Upon a Kwanzaa
Running Press Kids, 2025
Ten cozy stories of Kwanzaa with an informative glossary.

Williamson, Dorena
Every Breath, Every Blessing: Finding Hope on Tough Days
Zonderkidz, 2025
Helpful tools for kids weathering hard times with a religious element. (e-books, audio available)

Wynter, Anne
While We're Here
Clarion Books, 2026
Mom and daughter relish the small things of life as they spend time together in the city. (audio available)

JUVENILE FICTION

Baptiste, Tracey
Moko Magic: Museum Mayhem
Freedom Fire, 2025
A touch of history and Caribbean American culture make an exciting story where the kids are the heroes. (e-book available)

Chambers, Veronica
Flora la Fresca & the Plot to Make Millions
Dial Books, 2025
An illustrated chapter book follows a young girl's entrepreneurial plan to become rich. (e-book, audio available)

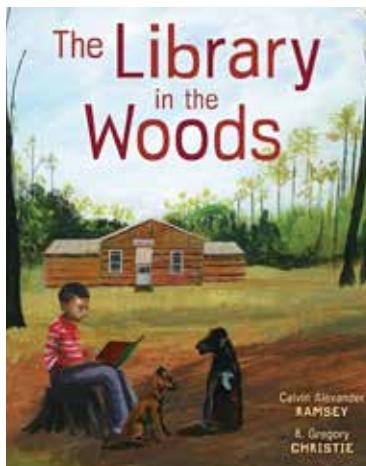
Coelho, Joseph
Relic Hamilton, Genie Hunter
Candlewick Press, 2026
This action-packed adventure series begins when an evil genie escapes. (e-book available)

Colbert, Brandy
Let's Get Together
Clarion Books, 2025
Identical twins discover each other at school and set out to learn their story and transform their past. (e-book, audio available)

Costa Bates, Janet
Rica Baptista (Book 2: A Week of Shenanigans & Book 3: The Box of Possibilities)
Candlewick, 2025
Illustrated beginner chapter books from a fun series featuring an imaginative little girl and her best friend. (e-book available)

Crawford, Terrance
Hawkeye and Spiderman Take Aim (Marvel After School Heroes)
Simon Spotlight, 2026
The latest addition to the series of beginner chapter books for kids who love the tales of superheroes. (e-book available)

Davis, Tanita
Berry Parker Doesn't Catch Crushes
HarperCollins, 2025
After seeing how new relationships change her loved ones, Berry vows to show them all how much better it would be without crushes. (e-book, audio available) ♥



Calvin Alexander Ramsey
The Library in the Woods

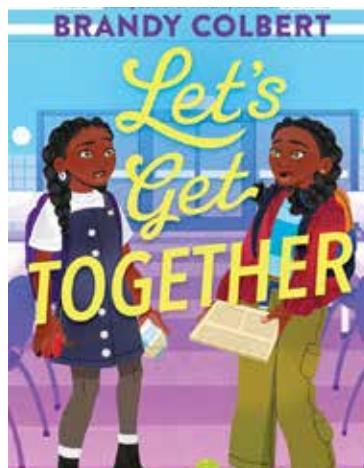
Durham, David Anthony
A Rage of Lions (The Shadow Prince Book 3)
Tu Books, 2025
An action-packed tale based in ancient mythology, featuring young heroes fighting to save Egypt.
(e-book, audio available)

Hendrix, Isi
Adia Kelbara and the High Queen's Tomb (Adia Kelbara Book 2)
Storytide, 2025
Danger and adventure abound in this continuation of an action-packed series starring a brilliant young heroine.
(e-book, audio available)

Jackson, Tiffany D.
Blood in the Water
Scholastic Press, 2025
This haunting murder mystery features a young sleuth who is a fish out of water on a small ritzy island.
(e-book, audio available)

Johnson, Micah
Aku: Journey to Ibra (Aku Book 1)
Random House Books for Young Readers, 2026
This first installment provides the backstory of a timid tween who transforms into a space hero.
(e-book, audio available)

Lieb, Ama Ofosua
Goldenborn
Scholastic, 2026
A story with magic, gods, and no way to know who to trust.
(e-book, audio available) ❤



Brandy Colbert
Let's Get Together

Mbalia, Kwame
Jax Freeman and the Tournament of Spirits (Jax Freeman Book 2)
Freedom Fire, 2025
Our tween summoner is back in another adventure and must find out who is putting everyone in danger to save the day.
(e-book available)

Miedoso, Andres
Beast Mode Unleashed (Desmond Cole Ghost Patrol Book 26)
Little Simon, 2025
A new installment in the ghostly adventures of Desmond Cole and his friend Andres.
(e-book available)

Moses, Rucker
Encounter at Owl Rock
Nancy Paulsen Books, 2025
Twin brothers must battle aliens to save their community.
(e-book, audio available)

Ochieng, Patrick
Displaced
Carolrhoda Books, 2025
A Kenyan boy's life is turned upside down when an election erupts in political violence killing his father and destroying his home and community.
(e-book, audio available)

Questlove and S. A. Cosby
Time for a Change (The Rhythm of Time Book 2)
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2026
Rahim and Kasia are back traveling through time in this exhilarating sci-fi series.
(e-book, audio available)

Russell, Ally
Mystery James Digs Her Own Grave
Delacorte Press, 2025
A spooky tale filled with ghosts, vampires, and real-life monsters who threaten the livelihood of a young girl and her family's funeral home.
(e-book, audio available)

Sokunbi, Adeola
Sleepover Surprise (Destiny Ink Book 1)
Nosy Crow, 2026
Can this creative protagonist make it through her first ever sleepover or will nerves get in the way?
(e-book, audio available)

Starling-Lyons, Kelly
Top Chef (Miles Lewis Book 6)
Penguin Workshop, 2025
Fun story of friendship and kitchen mayhem.
(e-book, audio available)

Youth (con't)

Thomas, Porsche

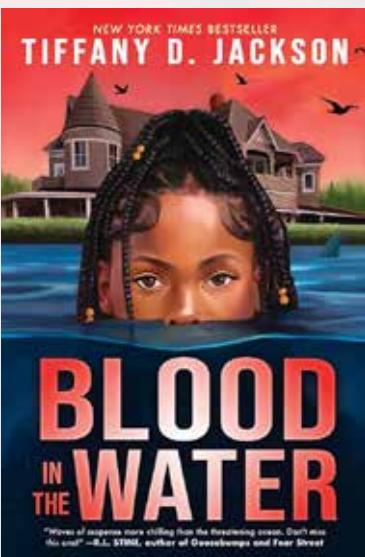
Twins but Different

Random House Books for Young Readers, 2025
Fun tale celebrating the friendship between twin brothers as they discover their own identities.
(e-book, audio available)

Winston, Sherri

Destiny of the Diamond Princess

Bloomsbury USA Children's Books, 2026
Zahara-Grace seeks answers to her past and finds more than she expected!
(e-book, audio available)



Tiffany D. Jackson
Blood in the Water

Wright, Tanya

The Great Birthday Surprise (Hairette of Harlem Book 1)

Source Books Young Readers, 2025
A young girl uses her imagination to create a fun day out of her disappointing birthday gifts.
(e-book, audio available)

JUVENILE NON-FICTION

Abari, Tonya

The Six Triple Eight: A True Story of the Black Woman Battalion of WWII

HarperCollins, 2025
The story of the women who increased soldier morale by organizing and delivering letters and packages.
(audio available)

Brown-Wood, JaNay

This Hair Belongs

Astra Publishing House, 2026
The history of Black hairstyles told through beautiful art and poetry.
(e-book available)

Copeland, Misty

Letters to Misty

Aladdin, 2025
Positive affirmations and uplifting advice based on letters from fans of the first Black principal ballerina of the American Ballet Theatre.
(e-book, audio available)

Crews, Nina

Liftoff! How the Apollo Moon Missions Made Alma Thomas's Art Soar

Millbrook Press, 2025
The little-known story about the connection between the work of an artist and the science that inspired her.
(e-book available)

Dockery, Patricia

Abolition and the African American Story

Crown Books for Young Readers, 2025
Unfamiliar Civil War and Reconstruction Era facts are brought to the forefront of history from the African American point of view.
(e-books, audio available)

Duncan, Alice Faye

The Dream Builder's Blueprint: Dr. King's Message to Young People

Calkins Creek/Astra Books for Young Readers, 2026
This erasure poem uses Dr. King's powerful words to inspire kids to "keep moving" and design their "life's blueprint."
(e-books available)

Hinton, KaaVonia

Unsung Voices of Black History (From the Archives)

Children's Press, 2025
This new series celebrates overlooked people who have made significant contributions to Black history.
(e-books, audio available)

Hinton, KaaVonia
Overlooked Milestones of Black History (From the Archives)
Children's Press, 2025
This new series celebrates overlooked events that have made significant contributions to Black history.
(e-books, audio available)

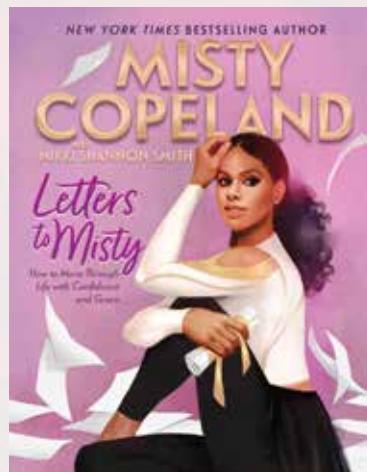
Howard, Joy and Deanna F. Cooke
Cupcake Class: 50 Fun Themes & Totally Amazing Designs for Kids to Make & Share
Storey Publishing, 2025
Cupcakes for kids from start to finish.
(e-book available)

Leslie, Jay
Hidden Landmarks of Black History (From the Archives)
Children's Press, 2025
This new series celebrates overlooked places that are significant in Black history.
(e-books, audio available)

Mangal, Mélina and Sun Yung Shin
Revolutions Are Made of Love: The Story of James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs
Carolrhoda Books, 2025
The story of an activist couple with a connection to Detroit.
(e-books available) ❤

Morall-Baker, Monica B.
Hip Hop Style: Fashion Forward
Lerner Publications, 2025
The influence of Hip Hop on fashion around the world is explored.
(e-books available)

Morall-Baker, Monica B.
Hip Hop and Social Justice: Rhymes of Resistance
Lerner Publications, 2025
The history of Hip Hop and its artists' involvement in various movements for justice.
(e-books available)



Misty Copeland
Letters to Misty

Morall-Baker, Monica B.
Hip Hop Around the World: Beats Without Borders
Lerner Publications, 2025
The massive influence of Hip Hop on world culture is explored.
(e-books available)

Nelson, Kadir
Basket Ball: The Story of the All-American Game
Little Brown, 2026
From 1891 to today, learn about the history of basketball and those who have made the sport great.
(e-book, audio available)

Qualls, Sean
Fros, Fades, and Braids: A Brief History of Black Hair in America
HarperCollins, 2026
A bold homage to Black hairstyles, people, and culture.

Rajan, Rekha
That Swingin' Sound!: The Musical Friendship of Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong
Beach Lane Books, 2025
A little-known history of the friendship between two musical icons and their collaboration and contributions to Jazz.
(e-book available)

Slade, Suzanne
Women on a Mission: The Remarkable Heroes Who Put Men on the Moon
Charlesbridge, 2025
A tribute to the 12 women who made contributions to the Apollo program.
(e-book available)

Smith, Clint and Adapted by Sonja Cherry-Paul
How the Word Is Passed (Adapted for Young Readers): Remembering Slavery and How It Shaped America
Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2025
An explanation of slavery's impact on America using monuments and public landmarks to help tell the story.
(e-book, audio available)



Youth (con't)

Turner, Myra Faye

Harlem Hellfighters: Elite Infantry Soldiers of World War I

Capstone Press, 2025

The true story of a heroic group of African American soldiers who battled racism and their enemies on the battlefield.

(e-book available)

Weston, Margeaux

Everything But Typical: Influential Neurodivergent People Who Have Shaped the World

Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2025

An ode to neurodivergent people who have achieved greatness.

(e-book, audio available)

JUVENILE GRAPHIC NOVELS

Andral, Dolores

Rosie and the Race Towards Freedom: An Underground Railroad Graphic Novel

Stone Arch Books, 2025

A young girl embarks on a journey towards freedom in this work of historical fiction set in 1850's Virginia.

(e-book available)

Bagley, Jessixa

Dear Jackie

Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2025

The awkward drama of middle school comes to a head when a young girl sends herself a fake love note from a secret admirer.

(e-book available) ♥

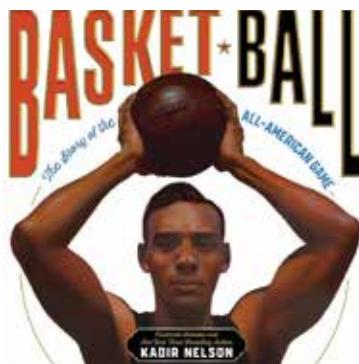
Baptiste, Tracey

Kid X (Boy 2.0 Book 2)

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2026

Coal is getting better with his powers, but someone may be on to him!

(e-book, audio available)



Kadir Nelson
Basket Ball: The Story of the All-American Game

Byrd, Jesse

Dream Warriors: A New World

Paw Prints Publishing, 2025

Preteen Khi awakens in the realm of dreams and nightmares in this fast-paced fantasy.

Miller, Sharee

Curlfriends: Back in Business (Curlfriends Book 2)

Little Brown Ink, 2025

Nola and her friends set out to solve her mom's financial troubles while preparing for their middle school talent show.

(e-book available)

Rhodes, Jewell

Ghost Boys: The Graphic Novel

Little, Brown Ink, 2025

This graphic novel adaption of *Ghost Boys* examines the history of racism and how it impacts Black communities today.

(e-book available)

Timothy, Chanté

Supa Nova

Nosy Crow, 2025

A STEM-obsessed tween aims to solve an environmental problem.

Williams, Jarrett

Harper Sharp: Kid Detective

Random House Graphic, 2026

This is the first book in a new hilarious and action-packed mystery series.

(e-book available)

JUVENILE BIOGRAPHIES

Alston, Bria

Serena Williams: A Little Golden Book Biography

Golden Books, 2025

The life story of a tennis trailblazer written for young readers.

(e-book available)

Bolling, Valerie

A Flea for Justice: Marian Wright Edelman Stands Up for Change

Charlesbridge, 2025

A call-to-action account of a tenacious Civil Rights and children's rights leader fighting for justice.

(e-book available)

Brewer, Caroline
Harriet Tubman, Force of Nature: A Biography in Poems
What on Earth, 2025
Rich poetry and eye-catching collages tell the story of an African American hero in this picture book biography.

Clinch, Shasta
Rosa Parks: A Little Golden Book Biography
Golden Books, 2025
An introduction to the life of a great historical figure in the Civil Rights movement.
(e-book available)

Henderson, Leah and Patricia Gauch
I Am the River: Sarah E. Ray and the Bob-Lo Boat
Levine Querido, 2026
Establishing her place in the history of the Detroit River, Sarah bravely battles racial discrimination that prevented African Americans' access to the Bob-Lo boat and island.
(e-book, audio available)

Jewel, Kirsti
Who is Beyoncé?
Penguin Workshop, 2025
A thorough profile of the life of a living superstar and musical icon.
(e-book available)

LaNier, Carlotta Walls and Lisa Frazier Page
Carlotta's Special Dress: How a Walk to School Changed Civil Rights History
Little, Brown, 2026
A moving picture book memoir from one of the Little Rock Nine.
(audio available)

Moses, Sheila and Who HQ
Who Was Katherine Johnson?
Penguin Workshop, 2025
An in-depth look at the life of NASA mathematician and trailblazer.
(e-book, audio available)

Myvett, Kirstie
What You Never Knew About Rihanna
Capstone Press, 2025
This well-known popstar is highlighted in a new Hi-Lo series.
(e-book available)

Myvett, Kirstie
What You Never Knew About Sza
Capstone Press, 2025
This well-known R&B star is highlighted in a new Hi-Lo series.
(e-book available)

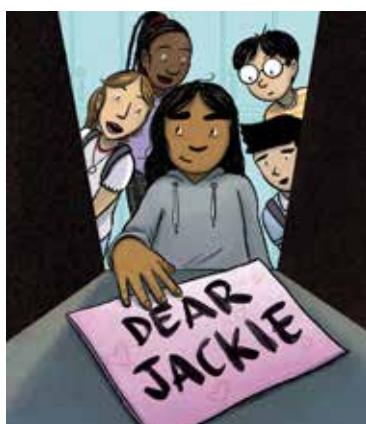
Nargi, Lela
Miss Betti, What Is This?: How Detroit's School Lunch Lady Got Good Food on the Menu
Sleeping Bear Press, 2025
When a Detroit cafeteria worker decided that 46,000 kids deserved better, she ditched soggy fries and sparked a fresh food revolution that led to a school garden boom!
(e-book available)

Ramirez, Ainissa
Spark: Jim West's Electrifying Adventures in Creating the Microphone (The Black Innovators)
MIT Kids Press, 2025
The life of a prolific inventor highlights one invention used daily by people around the world.
(e-book available)

Smith Jr., Charles
Through the Telescope: Mae Jemison Dreams of Space
Orchard Books, 2025
A beautifully illustrated biography that gives a glimpse into the childhood of the trailblazing astronaut.
(e-book available)

Thomas, Garen and Lori Rozsa
The Dream & the Hope: The Historic Rise of Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Nation's Highest Court
HarperCollins, 2026
This biography shows pivotal points of Justice Brown's life that influenced her to become a U.S. Supreme Court Justice.
(e-book, audio available)

Thomas, Peggy
Writing Toward Justice: The Life and Reporting of Alice A. Dunnigan
Calkins Creek, 2026
Getting her first job at just 13 years old, the story of this reporter starts early.
(e-book available)



Jessixa Bagley
Dear Jackie

Youth (con't)

Weatherford, Carole Boston and Rob Sanders

André: André Leon Talley – A Fabulously Fashionable Fairy Tale

Henry Holt, 2025

A celebration of the beauty of Blackness and this trailblazing fashion figure.

(e-book available)

TEEN FICTION

Adjoa, Delali

The Free Verse Society

Peachtree Publishers, 2026

Two frenemies must work together to plan the end of year poetry event.

(e-book available) ♥

Arnold, Marie

Split the Sky

Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2025

A teen with the powers of premonition must use her gift to battle systemic racism.

(e-book available)

Atta, Dean

I Can't Even Think Straight

Quill Tree Books, 2025

A coming out tale with all the pressures, angst, and heartbreak of teen love.

(e-book, audio available) ♥

Bayron, Kalynn

Make Me a Monster

Bloomsbury USA Children's Books, 2025

When Meka's teen romance reaches a devastating twist, she realizes it may not be the end after all.

(e-book available) ♥

Barnes, Derrick

The Incredibly Human Henson Blayne

Viking Books for Young Readers, 2025

A football phenom is torn between making a stand against injustice and playing the game he loves.

(e-book, audio available)

Burch, Ciera

Out of Step, Into You

Farrar, Straus, & Giroux (BYR)

Former best friends turned distant frenemies and track rivals are

thrust back into each other's lives as teammates and maybe more...

(e-book, audio available) ♥

Burton, Gabi

To Steal a Throne

Bloomsbury YA, 2026

A fast-paced romantasy thriller that propels the protagonists from enemies to partners.

(e-book, audio available) ♥

Carmichael, Jessica

The Full Picture

Hibiscus Press, 2025

Robyn's winter break gets complicated when a love triangle and a family mystery causes her to question everything.

(e-book available) ♥

Chase, Paula

Balancing Act (The Heights Series Book 1)

Wednesday Books, 2025

Drama, romance, competition: all the things expected from a posh high school.

(e-book, audio available)

Cole, Olivia and

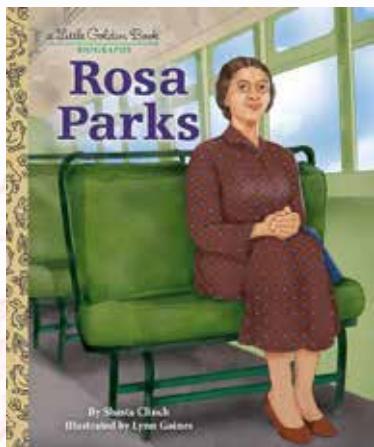
Ashley Woodfolk

Call Your Boyfriend

Simon and Shuster Books for Young Readers, 2025

Revenge and unexpected love rule the day in this queer romance.

(e-book, audio available) ♥



Shasta Clinch
Rosa Parks: A Little Golden Book Biography

Comerford, Helen
The Hero Complex (The Love Interest Book 2)
Bloomsbury, 2025
Jenna struggles to be just friends with her superhero partner.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

Dass, Sarah
It Lurks in the Night
Disney Publishing Worldwide, 2026
A boat trip gone dangerously wrong lands a group of friends on a mysterious island.
(e-book available)

Davenport, Nia
Love Spells Trouble
Bloomsbury YA, 2025
A star-crossed magical love story.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

de León, Aya
Undisclosed
(*The Factory Book 3*)
Candlewick, 2025
A spy infiltrates a summer music camp and finds it hard to focus on her mission when the band she joins totally rocks.
(e-book available) ❤



Kalynn Bayron
Make Me a Monster

Dennings, Hayley
Our Vicious Descent (Ravenous Fate Book 2)
Sourcebooks Fire, 2025
Elise and Layla are drawn back together to uncover horrific secrets that threaten NYC in the Roaring Twenties.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

Douglass, Ryan
The Great Disillusionment of Nick and Jay
HarperCollins Children's Books, 2026
A moving retelling of *The Great Gatsby* that takes place in Harlem.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

Dow, Alechia
Until the Clock Strikes Midnight
Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, 2026
Enemies find themselves falling for each other in this new romantasy.
(e-book available) ❤

Egbe, Amaka
Run Like a Girl
HarperCollins, 2025
A track star's life is upended by social media fallout.
(e-book, audio available)

Elle, J.
Fortress of Ambrose (House of Marianne Book 3)
Razorbill Oct 2025
Quell must choose between saving the world or saving her unlikely love from his own darkness.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

Emezi, Akwaeke
Somadina
Alfred A. Knopf, BFYR, 2025
A magical tale of a twin's journey



Jessica Carmichael
The Full Picture

to save her brother as she faces otherworldly danger.
(e-book, audio available)

Forest, Kristina
Heartsick
Penguin Young Readers, 2025
A former couple find themselves on the run after discovering the twisted truth behind a heartbreak remedy.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

Franco-Cook, Andrea
Excavating Fate
Lodestone Books, 2025
Time travel, an alternate reality, and an ancient love triangle make for interesting reading.
(e-book available) ❤

Garrett, RaeChell
The Boyfriend Launcher
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2026
When Dru's exes keep finding their soulmates, can an elaborate plan help her find hers?
(e-book available) ❤



Youth (con't)

Girma, Tigist

Eternal Ruin (Immortal Dark Book 2)

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2025

This dark academia series continues with more questions than answers for Kidan.

(e-book, audio available) ♥

Goodwin, Idris

King of the Neuro Verse

Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2025

A '90s-meets-Y2K story of a neurodivergent teen who transforms his frustrations into a spoken-word journey.

(e-book, audio available)

Harris, Pamela

Through Our Teeth

Quill Tree Books, 2025

The alleged suicide of a young teen inspires her friends' valiant attempts to find the true culprit.

(e-book, audio available)

Henderson, Alexis

When I Was Death

Penguin Young Readers Group, 2026

Roslyn, a new reaper, wonders if the cost is worth it when Death himself spares her.

(e-book, audio available)

Henry, Helena Haywoode

Last Chance Live!

Nancy Paulsen Books, 2025

A teen faces deadly consequences in a sinister reality show.

(e-book, audio available)

Isabelle, S.

The Great Misfortune of Stella Sedgwick

HarperCollins/Storytide, 2025

An historical romance reminiscent of Bridgerton.

(e-book, audio available) ♥

Jackson, Tiffany D.

The Scammer

HarperCollins Children's Books, 2025

Jordyn's life gets complicated and terrifying when a manipulating new character moves into her life and home.

(e-book, audio available) ♥

Johnson, Brittany

Deadly Ever After

Penguin Young Readers Group, 2025

Two princesses are offered a chance to return from the dead—all it costs is true love's kiss.

(e-book, audio available) ♥

Johnson, George M. and Leah Johnson

There's Always Next Year

Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2025

Cousins start the New Year tackling personal and romantic challenges.

(e-book, audio available) ♥

Kelly, Erin Entrada and Kwame Mbalia

On Again, Awkward Again

Will the stars align for two lovable teens from different backgrounds?

(e-book, audio available)



Nia Davenport
Love Spells Trouble

Lewis, Brittany

Blood Moon

Page Street YA, 2025

A paranormal romantasy packed with tension.

(e-book, audio available) ♥

Lockington, Miriama

I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR), 2025

A holiday romance where opposites attract from a Stonewall Honor winning author.

(e-book, audio available) ♥

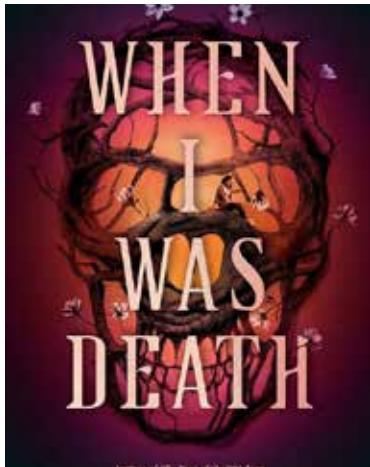
Mbalia, Kwame

Star Wars: The Last Order

Random House/ Star Wars, 2025

Two former stormtroopers take on the First Order in another epic battle.

(e-book, audio available)



Alexis Henderson
When I Was Death

McBride, Amber
The Leaving Room
Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, 2025
Gospel helps young souls cross from the world of the living to the dead.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

McLeod, Ella
The Map that Led to You
Yellow Jacket, 2025
A sea faring romance that blends the enchanting stories of the past and present.
(e-book available) ❤

Mendez, Jasminne
The Story of My Anger
Dial Books, 2025
A Black, Dominican American high school student learns to channel anger into activism.
(e-book, audio available)

Morris, Brittney
This Book Might Be About Zinnia
S. & S., 2025
One story connecting two strangers, told from two different perspectives.
(e-book, audio available)

Myall, J.D.
Heart's Gambit
Wednesday Books, 2026
Can a young couple break a generational curse in this time traveling fantasy?
(e-book, audio available) ❤

Nedd, Alexis
How We Play the Game
Bloomsbury YA, 2025
She is a top gamer, and so is her rival. Can success and love coexist in this competitive world?
(e-book, audio available) ❤



Brittany Johnson
Deadly Ever After

Page, Shelly
Charmed and Dangerous
Random House Children's Books, 2026
The Bureau of Mystical Affairs has their hands full when a new agent takes the case of a love charm gone wrong.
(e-book, audio available) ❤

Perry, Jamar J.
Finding Prince Charming
Bloomsbury YA, 2025
A royal romance blooms from a make-believe relationship between two young teens in this coming out story.
(e-book, audio available)

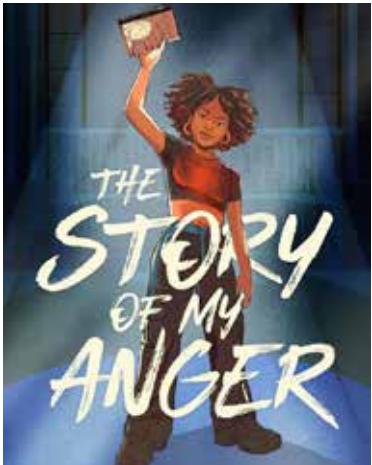
Qurratulayn
Blood & Breath
Page Street Publishing, 2025
An immersive historical fantasy set in New Orleans.
(e-book, audio available)

Raughley, Sarah
Livewire
Blackstone, 2025
Delve into the digital world with a teen who must reveal her true self to save the ones she loves.
(e-book available) ❤

Reynolds, Jason
Coach (Track Book 5)
Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2025
Get a glimpse into the coach's troubled childhood through his back story.
(e-book, audio available)

Sawyerr, Hannah V.
Truth Is
Amulet/Abrams, 2025
A novel in verse tackling access to reproductive healthcare.
(e-book available)

Youth (con't)



Jasminne Mendez
The Story of My Anger

Springer, Lisa
Who's All Going (to Die)?
Delacorte Press, 2025
A teen horror story takes place at a luxury spa where the beauty treatments may be deadly.
(e-book, audio available)

Tamani, Liara
This Ain't Our First Rodeo
Greenwillow Books 2026
A young cowgirl longs for the freedom to ride horses and love her cowboy.
(e-book, audio available) ♥

Tew, Jewel
An Ocean Apart
Joy Revolution, 2025
A dystopian tale of deception and a noble mission potentially compromised by a budding love story.
(e-book, audio available) ♥

Tucker, Talia
Solo Stan
Kokila, 2025
An accidental meeting between two concertgoers leads to romance.
(e-book, audio available) ♥

Vinson, Arriel
Under the Neon Lights
J.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2025
A teen love story sparks during a fight to save a classic skating rink from gentrification.
(e-book, audio available) ♥

Wellington, Joelle
Girls Who Play Dead
Simon and Schuster, 2025
Siblings make dangerous discoveries as they search for answers regarding the murder of a friend.
(e-book, audio available)

Wilson, Lakita
Pretty Girl County
Viking, 2025
Two friends navigate the difficulties of the social system in their hometown.
(e-book, audio available)

Whitcomb, Leah
Between Us (About the Boy Book 2)
Starclay Publishing, 2026
One friend plans the best summer ever for their friend group before it all ends.
(e-book available) ♥

Williams, Tia
Audre & Bash Are Just Friends (Seven Days in June: Companion Novel)

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2025
A story of how to live a little, and maybe fall in love?
(e-book, audio available) ♥

Woolridge, Addie
Reel Love
Delacorte Romance, 2025
Their grandmothers are rival "granfluencers." Does their love stand a chance?
(e-book, audio available) ♥



Qurratulayn
Blood & Breath

TEEN NON-FICTION

Katz, William Loren and Herb Boyd
Black Legacy: A History of New York's African Americans
Triangle Square, 2026
This edition gives a thorough history of African Americans in New York since 1609.
(e-book available)

Olusoga, David, Yinka Olusoga and Kemi Olusoga
Black History Every Day of the Year
Experiment LLC, 2025
A collection of Black history from all over the world.
(e-book, audiobook available)

TEEN BIOGRAPHIES

Griner, Brittney and Michelle Burford
Coming Home (Adapted for Young Adults)
Bright Matter Books, 2026
A basketball player struggles to return from a Russian prison and her journey of discovery along the way.
(e-book, audio available)

Jackson, Ketanji Brown
Lovely One (Adapted for Young Adults)
Bright Matter Books, 2026
The personal and professional life of the first Black woman appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court.
(e-book, audio available)

Cassidy, Taylor
Black History Is Your History
Atheneum, 2025
A collection of short biographies by the creator of the TikTok series "Fast Black History."
(e-book, audio available)

TEEN GRAPHIC NOVELS

Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem and Raymond Obstfeld
Champion
Ten Speed Graphic, 2025
This fictional sports book cleverly highlights the social justice work of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.
(e-book available)

Barnes, Rodney
Quincredible: A Better World
Oni Press, 2025
A coming-of-age superhero tale set in New Orleans.
(e-book available)

Glendining, Bex
On Starlit Shores
ABRAMS Kids, 2025
A young girl returns to her magical small town and learns more about her late grandmother's life.
(e-book available) ❤

Joseph, Bobby and Abbigayle Bircham
My Dad Fights Demons
Selfmadehero, 2025
A non-binary teen is faced with an unwelcome addition to their drama-filled life when their dad turns out to be a sorcerer.

McKinney, L. L.
Nubia: Too Real (Nubia Book 3)
DC Comics, 2025
A superstrong superhero struggles on and off the



Ketanji Brown Jackson
Lovely One
(Adapted for Young Adults)

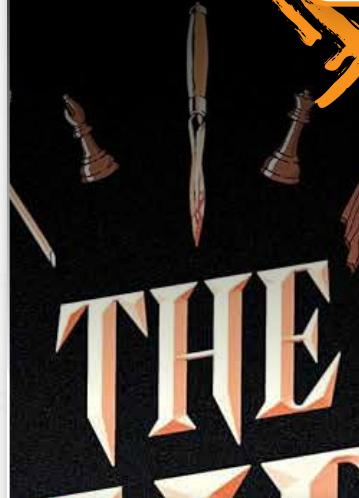
battlefield, as she trains with the Amazons.
(e-book available)

Ukazu, Ngozi
Flip
First Second, 2025
A girl's promposal goes terribly wrong, leading to a hilarious body swap between her and her crush.
(e-book available)

Waiters, Tyrell
Vern: Custodian of the Universe
Flying Eye Books, 2025
A young man finds himself in the middle of an intergalactic adventure in this sci-fi graphic action novel.

Walls, Jasmine
Rerolled (The Last Session Vol. 2)
Maverick, 2025
Four former friends use their newfound social media fame to save an important piece of their past.
(e-book available)

Coming Soon-Youth Titles



Àbiké-iyímídé, Aridah
The Heirs



Bou-Montes, Louangie
Take It to Your Grave



Ellis, Sami
Funerals Are for the Living



Turner, Erika
When We Almost Came Undone



A FAMILY TOGETHER QU



LNGIE BOU-s





2026 Calendar

JANUARY

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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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FEBRUARY

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MARCH

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29	30	31				

APRIL

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MAY

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JUNE

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JULY

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AUGUST

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SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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27	28	29	30	31		

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313.481.1550



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12800 Harper
Detroit, MI 48213
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Detroit, MI 48235
313.481.1580



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**HUBBARD BRANCH LIBRARY**

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Detroit, MI 48235
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**JEFFERSON BRANCH LIBRARY**

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**KNAPP BRANCH LIBRARY**

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**LINCOLN BRANCH LIBRARY**

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Detroit, MI 48203
313.481.1780

**MAIN LIBRARY**

5201 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48202
313.481.1300

**MONTEITH BRANCH LIBRARY**

14100 Kercheval
Detroit, MI 48215
313.481.1800

**PARKMAN BRANCH LIBRARY**

1766 Oakman Blvd.
Detroit, MI 48238
313.481.1810

**REDFORD BRANCH LIBRARY**

21200 Grand River
Detroit, MI 48219
313.481.1820

**SHERWOOD FOREST BRANCH LIBRARY**

7117 W. Seven Mile
Detroit, MI 48221
313.481.1840

**SKILLMAN BRANCH LIBRARY**

121 Gratiot Avenue
Detroit, MI 48226
313.481.1850

**WILDER BRANCH LIBRARY**

7140 E. Seven Mile
Detroit, MI 48234
313.481.1870





The Mission

The Detroit Public Library enlightens and empowers people by providing diverse and dynamic pathways to literacy and learning.

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