



# Black Comics Matter

MLA Spring Institute  
March 10, 2022



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# Presenters



**Sandra Farag,**  
faraglibrarian@gmail.com

**Head of Youth Services,  
Kalamazoo Public Library**



**Shira Pilarski,**  
ssshira@gmail.com

**Youth Services Librarian  
Saline District Library**

Other committee members:

Public librarians (all ages), school librarians, academic librarians, one publisher librarian  
All members of BCALA and GNCRT



01

**Beginnings**

# 2020

- **May 28, 2020:** Statement Condemning Increased Violence and Racism Towards Black Americans and People of Color.pdf
- **June 1, 2020:** GNCRT Affirms ALA Executive Board Statement Standing with BCALA
- **June 9, 2020:** GNCRT announces launch of collaborative Black Lives Matter comics reading list with BCALA

### Criteria for Inclusion in BCALA x GNCRT #BLM Comics Reading List

Title must be published sequential art, with one or more of the following elements:

- Created by a Black storyteller
- Displays empathy and respect for Black bodies
- Introduces readers to Black art, people, history, organizations and communities
- Represents Black experiences both domestically and throughout the world
- Showcases a diversity of artistic mediums
- Includes the lived experiences of Black people from all demographics
- Reinforces Black stories of success, resistance, endurance and love
- Employs a wide array of genres
- Demonstrates an understanding of cultural nuance
- Represents independent and non-traditional publishing
- Includes stories of ancient Black civilizations as well as Black people's continued existence in the future
- Improves access to authentic Black stories for all patrons
- Exposes Black creators to wider audiences

\*Not all elements listed above are required for inclusion; to date, all titles included are in English

02

**#BLM Main List**

**BCALA x GNCRT:**  
**Black Lives Matter**  
**Black Literature**  
**Matters - Comics**  
**Reading List**







# BCALA x GNCRIT: BLACK LIVES MATTER

## BLACK LITERATURE MATTERS - COMICS READING LIST



Art by  
Crystal  
Chen  
(NYPL  
Librarian &  
Community  
Admin at [We  
Here](#))

### Children's Comics, Graphic Novels & Picture Books

**The Adventures of Sparrowboy**  
by Brian Pinkney  
A paperboy discovers he has superpowers like his hero Falconman.  
Ages 6-8

**Black Heroes of the Wild West: Featuring Stagecoach Mary, Bass Reeves, and Bob Lemmons**  
by James Oba Smith  
Introduction by Kadir Nelson  
This nonfiction graphic novel brings to life the tales of three African American historical figures who made an impact on the Western expansion of the United States and were known for their success as a stagecoach driver, deputy marshal, and horseman.  
Ages 8-12

**The Crossover (Graphic Novel)**  
by Kwame Alexander  
Art by Dawud Anyabwire  
Adapted from the Newbery award-winning novel in verse, this coming-of-age story features twin brothers and their relationships to each other, to their father, and to basketball.  
Ages 9-12

**Dream Big, Little One**  
by Vaashti Harrison  
This beautifully illustrated board book edition of instant bestseller *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History* showcases eighteen women who changed the world and is the perfect goodnight book to inspire big dreams.  
Ages 0-8

**The Little Rock Nine and the Fight for Equal Education**  
by Gary Jeffrey  
Art by Nana Li  
This graphic nonfiction follows the African American students chosen to integrate a high school in Little Rock, Arkansas, after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down school segregation.  
Ages 9-12

**New Kid**  
by Jerry Craft  
When seventh-grader Jordan Banks starts attending a private school that is primarily white, he has to learn how to navigate microaggressions, tokenism, and not fitting in. *New Kid* won the Coretta Scott King Award (2020) and is the first graphic novel to win the Newbery Medal Award (2020).  
Ages 9-12

**Shortcut**  
by Donald Crews  
A group of children encounter a freight train after taking a shortcut on the tracks.  
Ages 0-8

**Bessie Stringfield: Tales of the Talented Tenth, No. 2**  
by Joel Christian Gill  
Imagine a five-foot-two-inch-tall woman riding a motorcycle eight times across the continental United States. Now imagine she is Black and is journeying across the country in the pre-Civil Rights era of the 1930s and '40s.  
Ages 9-12

**Twins**  
by Varian Johnson  
Art by Shannon Wright  
Best friends and twin sisters, Maureen and Francine Carter start to grow apart when they enter the 6th grade.  
Ages 8-12

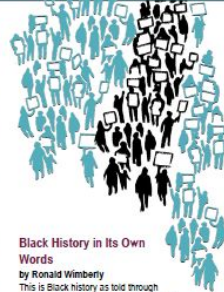
**When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop**  
by Laban Carrick Hill  
Art by Theodore Taylor III  
The beginnings of hip hop in the 1970s and 1980s is introduced through this biography of DJ Kool Herc, starting on the island of Jamaica and moving to the Bronx, NY.  
Ages 6-10

**Woke Baby**  
by Malagony Browne  
Art by Theodore Taylor III  
Woke babies are up early. Woke babies raise their fists in the air. Woke babies cry out for justice. Woke babies grow up to change the world. This lyrical and empowering book is both a celebration of what it means to be a baby and what it means to be woke. With bright, playful art, *Woke Baby* is an anthem of hope in a world where the only limit to a skyscraper is more blue.  
Ages 0-8

### Young Adult Comics & Graphic Novels

**Aya: Life in Yop City**  
by Marguerite Abouet  
Art by Clément Oubrerie  
Translated by Heige Daecher  
Aya and her friends navigate the paths of womanhood available to them in the Ivory Coast during the late 1970s.  
Collects volumes 1-3.

**Bingo Love**  
by Tee Franklin  
Art by Jenn St-Onge and Joy San  
Two young women meet at church bingo in 1963 and fall in love. They are forced apart and both marry men. Decades later, they meet again at church bingo and rekindle their romance.



**Black History in Its Own Words**  
by Ronald Wimberly  
This is Black history as told through quotes from the Black men and women who shaped and made it.

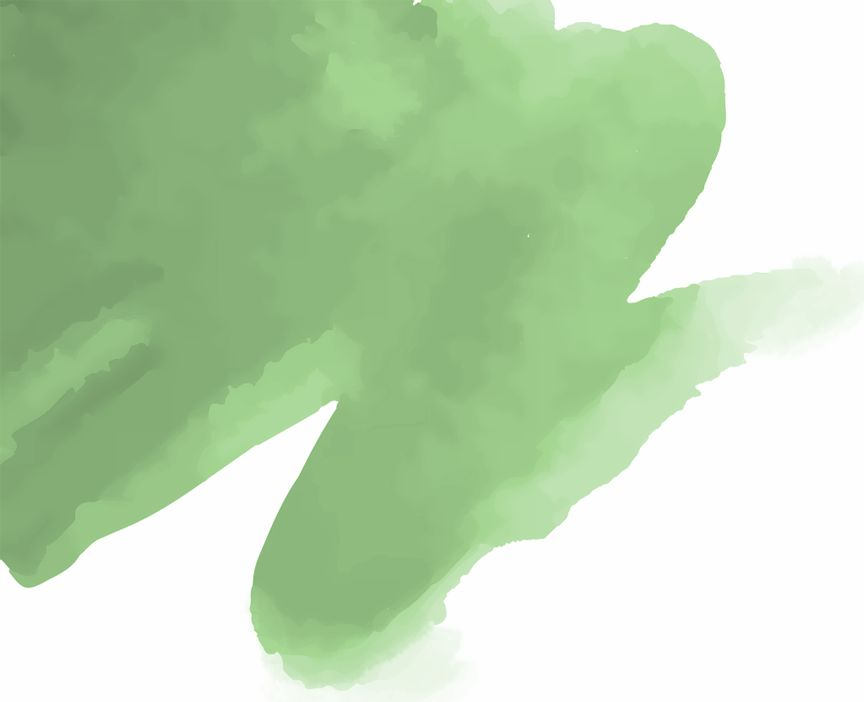
**Black Panther & the Crew: We Are the Streets**  
by Ta-Nehisi Coates and Yona Harvey  
Art by Butch Guioe  
The death of a Harlem activist kicks off a mystery that will reveal surprising new secrets about the Marvel Universe's past—and set the stage for a huge story in the near future... Fear, hate and violence loom, but don't worry. The Crew's got this: They are the streets.

**Colorblind: A Story of Racism**  
by Jonathan Harris  
Art by Donald Hudson and Fahriza Kamaputa  
A fifteen-year-old African American boy relays his experiences with racism and the lessons he learned in this autobiographical story.



Black Lives Matter,  
Black Literature  
Matters - Comics  
Reading List 2022





# GRAPHIC NOVELS ARE REAL BOOKS

IOWA CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY



the benefits of reading graphic novels include:

## VISUAL LITERACY

the ability to interpret information presented in the form of an image



Visual literacy is necessary to navigate today's digital world and is an essential skill in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

## BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

building neural pathways

Taking in both image and text at one and synthesizing them to determine meaning uses both sides of the brain and develops neural connections that reading text alone does not. The reading process is deeper and more complex.



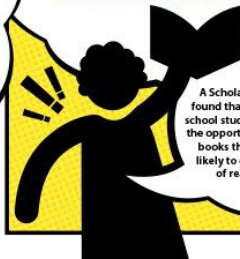
## VERBAL LITERACY

development of language & communication skills

Research shows that viewing pictures along with a story activates the language center of the brain more than just reading does, and images help readers infer the meaning of unfamiliar words. Sequential art helps students develop linear thinking skills.

## MOTIVATION

enthusiasm creates readers



A Scholastic Corp. study found that middle and high school students who are given the opportunity to choose the books they read are more likely to develop the habit of reading for fun.



03

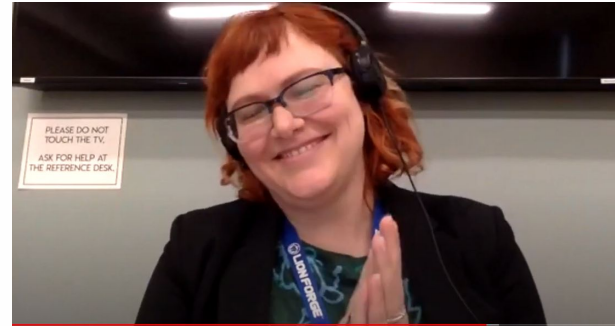
**Webinars**

# Black Lives Matter: Comics as a Powerful Lens for Social Justice



September 23, 2020

# GNCRT X BCALA Panel - Black Lives Matter Comics Reading List (ALA MW Virtual 2021)



January 25, 2020

# Black Future Month: featuring Jerry Craft & Ariell Johnson



February 10, 2021

# Infinitum and Beyond featuring Tim Fielder



June 24, 2021



# National Conference of African American Librarians 2021 (virtual)




11TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LIBRARIANS

SPONSORED BY


**ALA** American  
Library  
Association

Sandra Farag Is Presenting


## Presenters




Tatanisha "Tiki" Love




Tamela Chambers




Deimosia Webber-Bey




Susen Shi




Sandra Farag




Sandra Farag



Susen Shi



Tatanisha "Tiki" Love



Deimosia Webber-Bey

July 31, 2021

# A Hero's Heart: Girl Power as Imagined by Eve L. Ewing



January 24, 2022



04

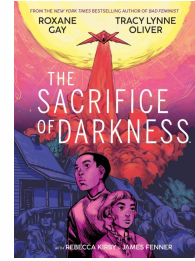
# Themed Lists

# Thematic Lists

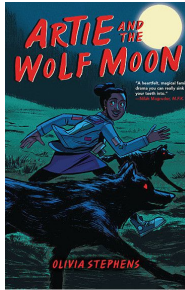
## Superheroes



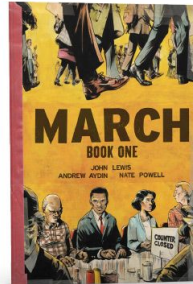
## Afrofuturism



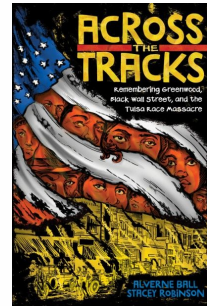
## Fantasy & Horror



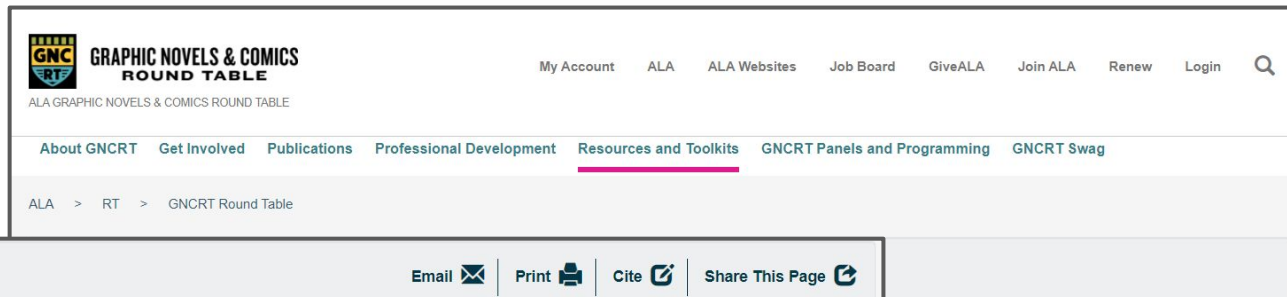
## Good Trouble



## Greenwood Avenue



# On GNCRT Site



## GNCRT

- About GNCRT
- Get Involved
- Publications
- Professional Development
- Resources and Toolkits

Best Graphic Novels Reading Lists

- **BCALA and GNCRT Collaboration: Black Lives Matter, Black Literature Matters**

Black Lives Matter, Black Literature Matters - Comics Reading List

BCALA and the ALA Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table: Supplemental Reading Lists

Guide to Reading Library Comics at Home

Social Justice & Comics Reading Lists

## BCALA and GNCRT Collaboration: Black Lives Matter, Black Literature Matters

### BCALA x GNCRT: Black Lives Matter Black Literature Matters - Comics Reading List

#### About the Project



As the next iteration of our ongoing collaboration between the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), and the Graphic Novels & Comics Round Table of the American Library Association (GNCRT), we are launching an updated version of our Black Lives Matter comics reading list with a focus on Black Literature. Black Lives Matter, Black Literature Matters.

This list of 50 comics titles for Juvenile, Teen (YA), and Adult audiences is centered on Black creators, Black stories, and Black histories for all ages. This list includes many titles from our earlier comics list, while adding others. The goal of this list is not to be a prescriptive spectrum of all the subject or format content out there in the landscape of Black stories or comics. Rather, this is a step, another step, towards building collections and conversations that spark hope, demand justice, address erasure, and agitate for learning - using both sides of our brains through words and pictures. Because when 'Black lives are lost, Black stories are lost' (Stacey Robinson).

# On BCALA Site

## BOOKLISTS

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[Best of the Best 2021 Booklist](#)

[BCALA and the ALA Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table: Greenwood Avenue](#)

[BCALA and the ALA Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table: Fantasy and Horror](#)

[BCALA Book Joy: 2021 Summer Reading List](#)

[BCALA and the ALA Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table: Supplemental Reading Lists](#)

[BCALA and the ALA Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table: Afrofuturism](#)

A large, irregular green watercolor splash on a white background. The splash is centered and has a soft, feathered edge. The text is overlaid on the splash.

05

What's Next

# 2022

- **Teen Art Contest:** Stay tuned!
- **Thematic lists:**
  - LGBTQ2IA+
  - Black Women Creators
- What else?







### King Protea

- South Africa
- Diversity
- Overcoming wildfires

Here is a newsletter that contains much of the information we discussed during today's session.

## BCALA x GNCRT Presents:

*Comics and Graphic Novels*

### The Why

What began as an idea for a reading list led to something very powerful.

Looking for a way to take part in the conversation regarding activism and its place in libraries, a group of comic and graphic novel lovers discussed looking at literature. We focused on comics and graphic novels that presented nuanced examples of the Black experience, as well as creations that included Blacks as primary characters and artists (writers, illustrators, etc.).

The collaboration morphed into something bigger. Our ideas became tribbles and each conversation and meeting doubled and tripled in ideas. Our partnership morphed from what-ifs to let's do.



<https://www.smore.com/uvk7z>



Thank  
You!

Do you have any  
questions?

**Black Caucus of the American Library  
Association**

**ALA Graphic Novels & Comics Round  
Table**

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