

## Literacy and Community Initiative Offers Book Recommendations for Teen Readers



The **Literacy and Community Initiative (LCI)**, a collaboration between the NC State College of Education's Department of Teacher Education and Learning Sciences, the **Friday Institute for Educational Innovation** and community-based organizations, is committed to serving marginalized students through text, including student publications, as well as advocacy and leadership.

To encourage reading among youth involved with CORRAL Riding Academy -- an LCI partner nonprofit organization that pairs rescued horses with girls in high-risk situations while providing physical and emotional support-- LCI has created a book club with a list of recommended reads, which they are resharing more broadly to encourage reading among all youth.

Under the supervision of Assistant Professor **Crystal Chen Lee, Ed.D.**, students and CORRAL undergraduate resident advisors Desiree McClamon and Angelique Marrero curated the list, which consists of books that either one or both of the students have read.

Many books were chosen because they incorporate themes and lessons that teen readers can relate to. Although most selections on this list can be read independently, some should be centered around discussion, as they deal with sensitive topics.

### Middle Grades Recommendations

- ***The Girl Who Drank the Moon* by Kelly Barnhill:** Themes of family and bonding are incorporated into this story about a young girl who was accidentally given magical powers and must learn to control them and protect those she holds dear.
- ***The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo:** Written in poetic verse, this book explores many themes that are relatable to young girls through the story of a young girl in Harlem who discovers slam poetry as a way to understand her mother's religion and her own relationship to the world.
- ***The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros:** Told in a series of vignettes, the book follows the story of a young girl growing up in Chicago and inventing the person she will become. The book shares the good and bad in life as shared from the perspective of the Latina community.

- > ***Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson:** Relatable to many amidst the coronavirus pandemic, this historical fiction book shares the story of 14-year-old Mattie Cook as she and her family fight to stay alive as the Yellow Fever spreads across the United States.
- > ***Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan:** This historical fiction book tells the story of a young girl whose life is turned upside down when she must leave her life of luxury in Mexico and learn to rise above difficult circumstances as she lives in a camp for farm workers in California during the Great Depression.
- > ***The Giver* by Lois Lowry:** This dystopian novel revolves around the perfect organization of society and unquestioned faithfulness of its people and offers students opportunities to work on critical literacy skills like inference and figurative language.
- > ***Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds:** In a story centered around decision making and reflection, this book takes place over the course of the sixty seconds in which a teen must decide whether or not he will murder the man who killed his brother.
- > ***The Astonishing Color of After* by Emily X.R. Pan:** This book handles the topic of grief through the story of Leigh Chen Sanders, who uncovers family secrets and forges a new relationship with her grandparents in Taiwan following her mother's suicide.
- > ***Dear Martin* by Nic Stone:** This book explores issues related to racism through the story of Justyce McAllister, who leaves his rough neighborhood for an Ivy League school but becomes the subject of ridicule in the media following a police shooting.
- > ***Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo:** Dealing with grief and personal growth, this book centers around the story of Opal and the ways in which the dog she found at a local supermarket helps her learn about her mother and the varied residents of her new hometown.
- > ***New Kid* by Jerry Craft:** This graphic novel shares the story of Jordan Banks, who struggles with fitting in at school while staying true to himself when he is sent to a prestigious private school with a low level of diversity.
- > ***Life as We Knew It* by Susan Beth Pfeffer:** Told through a series of journal entries, this story addresses how people learn to live amidst a state of fear after a meteor knocks the moon closer to earth, causing worldwide disasters including tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.
- > ***Scythe* by Neal Shusterman:** In a story about life and death, two teens must grapple with their assigned role to take the lives of others as apprentices to scythes, the only people who can end life in a world without hunger, disease and war.
- > ***Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery:** Dealing with themes of growing up and finding identity, this book follows the story of an orphan with an enormous imagination who hopes she has found her permanent home.
- > ***Saving Fable* by Scott Reintgen:** Set in The Land of Stories, this book follows the tale of Indira, a side character who has failed to become a hero, but must step up to save the day when she begins piecing together clues about who has been threatening their world with dark magic.
- > ***With the Fire on High* by Elizabeth Acevedo:** This book focuses on taking what life throws at you and making the best of your situation through the story of high school senior Emoni Santiago, who dreams of becoming a chef, but doesn't have the time or money to pursue it.

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