



BCALA and the ALA Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table: Afrofuturism

Last updated March 15, 2021

For the next iteration of our ongoing collaboration between the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) and the Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table of the American Library Association (GNCRT), we are presenting themed Black Lives Matter comics reading mini-lists with a continued focus on Black literature.

Titles are alphabetically arranged with their target audiences denoted in parentheses: A for Adult, YA for Young Adult, and J for Juvenile. However, many of these stories cross age groups! In addition, each list includes supplementary works for a deeper analysis, and each highlights a Black-owned comics publisher.

You may notice that these lists include a slim collection of middle grade titles. This is due to the dearth of readily accessible comics and graphic novels by Black creators by established children's publishing companies. For younger children, while some board books and picture books may suffice, there is a glaring shortage of middle grade comics and graphic novels by Black creators. Evidence has suggested a significant decline in pleasure reading by age nine (Scholastic's "[Decline By Nine](#)"), a critical year to encourage a lifelong love of reading. As essential discussions are being held surrounding diversity in literature, reluctant readers, and attractive titles for young readers, the necessity for representation must be addressed. We implore publishers to uplift Black voices by hiring Black authors and illustrators to tell Black stories of all genres and topics in which Black readers can see themselves, and readers can view different experiences beyond their own lens.

Members of BCALA and GNCRT may have contributed to the items listed here, and may have done so on a voluntary or paid basis.

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

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

- Created by a Black storyteller
- Displays empathy and respect for Black bodies

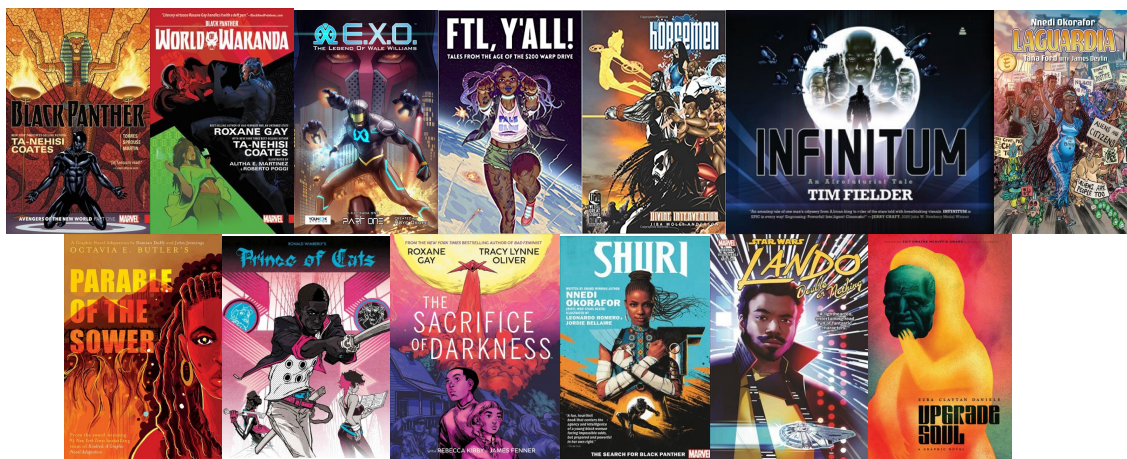
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- Introduces readers to Black art, people, history, organizations and communities
- Represents Black experiences both domestically and throughout the world
- Showcases a diversity of artistic mediums
- Includes the lived experiences of Black people 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
- Enables ease of access without paywalls

This list of 13 titles is centered on stories of a world where the intersection of science fiction, technology, and the arts are seen through the Black lens. It unapologetically celebrates the innovation that Black culture has to offer and have always had. It imagines a future where Black people are able to flourish and thrive without oppression or fear.

Afrofuturism exists in contemporary society not only in the comics and graphic novel spheres, but also in mediums such as music, social media, and films. It challenges the current world and re-envisioning it to one where Black people freely shaped the world to one that is more equitable. Afrofuturism gives power to Black people, Black history, and Black advancement.

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Black Panther: Avengers of the New World, part one (YA)

Ta-nehisi Coates, writer; Wilfredo Torres, artist; Chris Sprouse, artist

2017, Marvel

Set in a contemporary time period, T'Challa must battle enemies within Wakanda while fighting the doubts within himself.

Publisher site:

https://www.marvel.com/comics/collection/62115/black_panther_book_4_avengers_of_the_new_world_part_1_trade_paperback

WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1048047582>

Black Panther: World of Wakanda Vol.1: Dawn of the Midnight Angels (YA)

Roxane Gay, writer; Ta-Nehisi Coates, writer; Yona Harvey, writer; Alitha Martinez, artist; Afua Richardson artist

2017, Marvel

Bound by an oath of loyalty to protect the crown of Wakanda at all costs, Dora Milaje recruits Ayo and Aneka must balance their love for one another with their obligation to the kingdom. When the kingdom's stability is threatened by the king's inability to protect them from internal and external enemies, Ayo and Aneka's actions can either heal or harm efforts to restore calm.

Publisher site:

https://www.marvel.com/comics/series/22549/black_panther_world_of_wakanda_2016_-_2017

WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/987267000>

E.X.O. - The Legend of Wale Williams Part One (YA)

Roye Okupe, writer; Ayodele Elegba, editor; Sunkanmi Akinboye, artist

2016, YouNeek Studios

In 2025 Nigeria, superpowered Wale Williams investigates his father's disappearance.

Publisher site: <https://youneekstudios.com/exo/>

WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1008757798>

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FTL, Y'all! (YA)

C. Spike Trotman, editor; Amanda LaFrenais, editor

2019, Iron Circus Comics

This science fiction comics anthology features stories that depend on a unique shared premise: instructions for building a faster-than-light engine have appeared on the Internet for anyone and everyone to build without warning, leading to ever-multiplying consequences.

Publisher site: <https://ironcircus.com/?product=ftl-yall>

WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1124341365>

The Horsemen: Divine Intervention (A)

Jiba Molei Anderson, writer; Patrick Brower, artist

2015, Griot Enterprises

In a battle between The Orisha and The Deities, readers are introduced to mythical figures of the Yoruba religion in this visually stunning comic.

Publisher Site: <https://www.griotenterprises.com/thehorsemen>

WorldCat: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/934125139>

Infinitum (A)

Tim Fielder, writer and artist

2021, Amistad

A curse on King Aja Oba leads to lifetimes of identities through poignant historical events, intergalactic travel, and the beginning of something new.

Publisher site:

<https://www.harpercollins.com/products/infinitum-tim-fielder?variant=33007863824418>

WorldCat: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1235778174>

LaGuardia (A)

Nnedi Okorafor, writer; Tana Ford, artist

2019, Berger Books

Set in a time where aliens have arrived on Earth, *LaGuardia* tells the story of Dr. Future Nwaofar Chukwuebuka, a Nigerian-American intent on giving birth to her baby in New York.

Publisher site: <https://www.darkhorse.com/Books/3002-499/LaGuardia-TPB>

WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1110661780>

Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower (A)

Octavia Butler, writer of original work; Damian Duffy, adapter; John Jennings, artist

2020, Abrams ComicArts

This poignant graphic novel, set in the near future, is an illustrated retelling of Octavia E. Butler's novel of the same name. In 2024, scarce resources and jobs have led to lawlessness outside the walls of Robledo. Readers journey with Lauren Olamina, a hyperempath, as she

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navigates her days while holding onto the teachings of her father as she creates a new outlook on life.

Publisher site:

https://www.abramsbooks.com/product/parable-of-the-sower-a-graphic-novel-adaptation_9781419731334/

WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1200245345>

Prince of Cats (A)

Ron Wimberly, writer and artist

2016, Image Comics

Wimberly's *Romeo and Juliet* retelling artfully merges Elizabethan language with hip hop lyricism, while his world-building amplifies the theatrical convention of altering Shakespeare's original setting to the point of alternate reality: fluorescent costumes, katana-driven violence, and a cyberpunk-tinged 1980s NYC-esque setting.

Publisher's site: <https://imagecomics.com/comics/releases/prince-of-cats-ogn-tp>

WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1142518366>

The Sacrifice of Darkness (A)

Roxane Gay, writer; Tracy Lynne Oliver, writer; Rebecca Kirby, artist

2020, Archaia

It's difficult to break the cycle when you're the son of the sun stealer, but Joshua is determined to do so.

Publisher site: <https://www.boom-studios.com/wordpress/series/sacrifice-darkness/>

WorldCat: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1202457042>

Shuri: The Search for Black Panther (A)

Nnedi Okorafor, writer; Leonard Romero, artist; Jordie Bellaire, artist

2019, Marvel Comics

A scientist and superhero, Shuri struggles to find her brother, Black Panther, while meeting the needs of Wakanda and her mother.

Publisher site:

https://www.marvel.com/comics/collection/71845/shuri_vol_1_the_search_for_black_panther_trade_paperback

WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1099523422>

Star Wars: Lando: Double Or Nothing (A)

Rodney Barnes, writer; Paolo Vinelli, artist

2018, Marvel

Self-absorbed smuggler Lando Calrissian learns that money isn't the only reward when he accepts an assignment to liberate oppressed droids.

Publisher site:

https://www.marvel.com/comics/issue/67558/star_wars_lando_-_double_or_nothing_2018_1

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WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1080659483>

Upgrade Soul (A)

Ezra Clayton Daniels, writer and artist

2018, Lion Forge

Aging science fiction writer Hank and scientist Molly volunteer for an experimental procedure to rejuvenate their bodies and minds, much to the dismay of their family. When the results prove to be much stranger than expected, Hank and Molly are forced to confront not only their own mortality, but what it means to be human.

Publisher site: <https://www.lionforge.com/upgrade-soul/>

WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1051680184>

Supplementary Works

Afrofuturism: The World of Black Science Fiction and Fantasy Culture

Ytasha Womack

2013, Lawrence Hill Books / Chicago Review Press

Afrofuturism, a concept that transverses multiple genres of literature, music, and art is discussed in this comprehensive work in which Black cultural identity is liberated through imagination.

Publisher site: <https://www.chicagoreviewpress.com/afrofuturism-products-9781613747964.php>

WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1076670596>

EC Comics: Race, Shock, and Social Protest

Qiana Whitted

2019, Rutgers University Press

Whitted, editor of the Comics Studies Society's *Inks* journal, examines EC Comics' "preachies"—stories that intentionally challenged readers to reflect on the problems of the conservatism and bigotry that dominated 1950s America—and gives a nuanced recounting of their successes and failures as a tool of enlightenment.

Publisher site: <https://www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/ec-comics/9780813566313>

Worldcat: <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1121442874>

Black-Owned Publisher Spotlight

YouNeek Studios

2015

YouNeek™ Studios is a hub for "YouNeek" and creative character-based storytelling and entertainment. Simply put, through the use of graphic novels, animation, video games, and other forms of media, we focus on telling extraordinary stories about extraordinary characters inspired by African history, culture, and mythology. We do this with the ultimate goal of empowering African creatives and storytelling across the globe. (from the [publisher site](#))