

Urban Fiction for Teens



Compiled by Monroe County Library System
Teen Services Librarians 2022

I'm Not Dying With You Tonight by Gilly Segal and Kimberly Jones

Two teen strangers, Lena and Campbell — one black and one white — must rely on each other to safely make it through the night when their small town is engulfed by riots after a fight breaks out at their racially divided Atlanta high school.



Dear Justyce by Nic Stone

What leads a bright kid down the road to a murder charge? How do two boys who grew up in the same area turn out to be so different? An unflinching look into the flawed practices and silenced voices in the American juvenile justice system.

Light It Up by Kekla Magoon

A girl walks home from school. She never makes it home. In the aftermath, while law enforcement tries to justify the response, one fact remains: a police officer has shot and killed an unarmed thirteen-year-old girl.



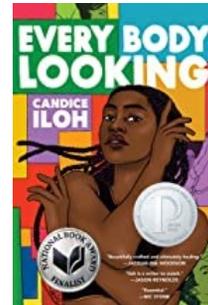
On the Come Up By Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Bri wants to be one of the greatest rappers of all time. As the daughter of an underground hip hop legend who died right before he hit big, Bri's got massive shoes to fill.



This is My America by Kim Johnson

Every week Tracy Beaumont writes letters to Innocence X, asking the organization to help her father, an innocent Black man on death row. After seven years, Tracy is running out of time— her Dad has 275 days left. In this crucial look at the American Justice system, love conquers hate and justice is delivered in the face of injustice.

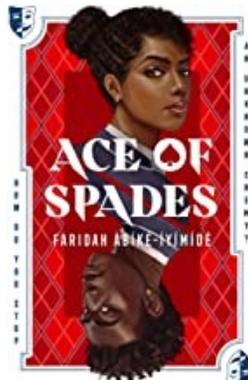


Every Body Looking by Candice Iloh

When Ada leaves home for her freshman year in college, it's the first time that she's been able to make her own choices and to seek her place in this new world. This novel in verse is about bearing the weight of other's expectations and finding the courage to shape a life of one's own.

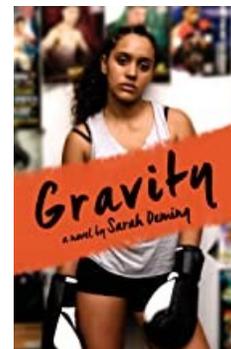
Ace of Spades By Faridah Abike-Iyimide

After the headmaster appoints them to leadership roles for the senior class, an anonymous person, Aces, begins sending malicious text and video messages about Devon Richards and Chiamaka Adebayo to the whole student body.



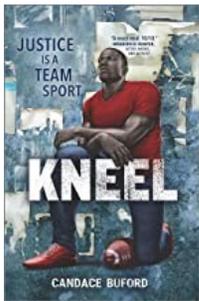
Gravity by Sarah Deming

Gravity "Doomsday" Delgado is good at breaking things. Maybe she learned it from her broken home. Since she started boxing, she finds her talent has an upside.



Somewhere Between Bitter and Sweet by Laekan Zea Kemp

Penelope Prado has always dreamed of opening her own pasterleria next to her father's restaurant. But her mom and dad have different plans-she must choose between not disappointing her parents or following her own path. Then she meets a cute new hire who see through her hard exterior and asks the questions she's been to afraid to ask herself.



Kneel by Candace Buford

For guys like Russell Boudreaux, football is the only way out. When his best friend and teammate is unfairly arrested and kicked off the team, Rus faces an impossible choice: Speak up or live in fear.

Like Home by Louisa Onome

Chinelo is all about her neighborhood, Ginger East. She loves it's chill vibe, the sense of community and her memories growing up there. After a deadly incident, everyone moves away except for Kate. As long as her best friend is there, Nelo's good.



One of the Good Ones by Maika Moulite and Maritza Moulite

When teen social activist Kezi Smith is killed under mysterious circumstances after attending a social justice rally, her devastated sister, Happi and their family are left reeling in the aftermath.



Blackout edited by Dhonielle Clayton

A summer heatwave blankets New York City in darkness. When the lights go out, people reveal hidden truths. Love blossoms, friendship transforms and all possibilities take flight.



A Love Hate Thing by Whitney Grandison

After recovering from being shot and surviving the rough streets of Lindenwood, Tyson Trice doesn't care about anyone or anything, much less how the rest of his life will play out. After learning her parents are taking in a troubled boy, Nany Smith fears her summer plans, as well as her reputation will go up in flames.

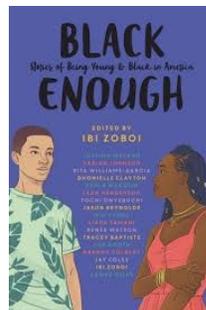
Cracking the Bell by Geoff Herbach

Isaiah loves football. In fact, football saved Isaiah's life, giving him structure and discipline after his sister's death tore his family apart. But when Isaiah gets knocked out cold on the field, he learns there's a lot more to lose than football. What would prevent him from sliding back into the habits that nearly destroyed him?



Black Enough: Stories of Being Young & Black in America edited by Ibi Zoboi

A star-studded anthology edited by National Book Award finalist Ibi Zoboi that will delve into the closeted thoughts, hidden experiences, and daily struggles of black teens across the country.



What I Carry by Jennifer Longo

Growing up in foster care, Muir has lived in many houses. And if she's learned one thing it is to pack light. Muir has just one year left before she ages out of the system. One year before she's free. One year to avoid anything or anyone that could get in her way.

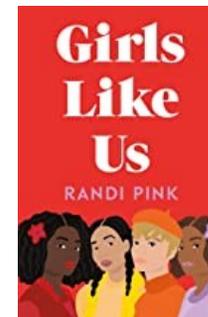
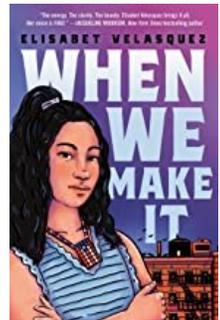


Punching the Air by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam

Amal Shaihid has always been an artist and a poet. One fateful night, an altercation in a gentrifying neighborhood escalates into tragedy. Suddenly Amal is convicted of a crime he did not commit and sent to prison. This never should have been his story. But can he change it?

When We Make It by Elisabet Velasquez

Sarai is a first generation Puerto Rican who sees the truth, pain, humor and beauty of the world. Sarai knows that asking questions is the smartest thing she can do especially when navigating family trauma, masculinity in it's most toxic form and the systemic pressures of life in Brooklyn.



Girls Like Us by Randi Pink

Four teenage girls. Four different stories. What they all have in common is that they're dealing with unplanned pregnancies.