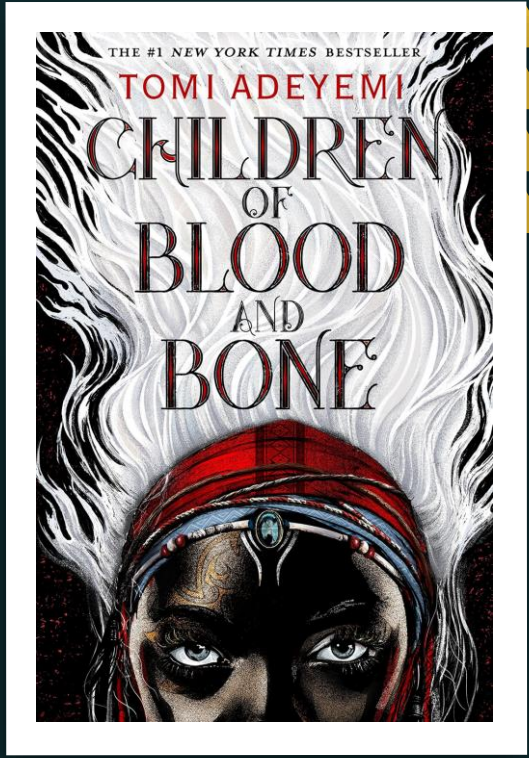
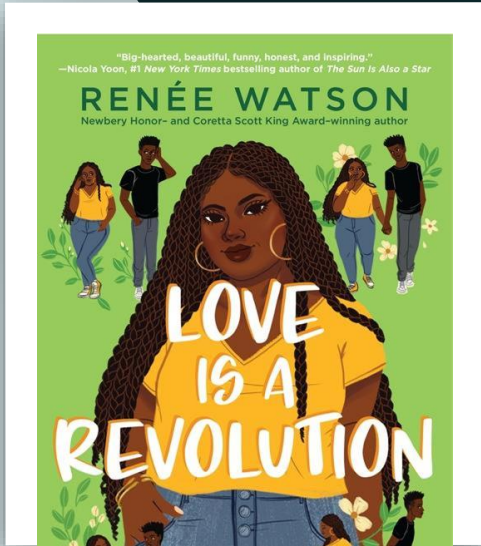
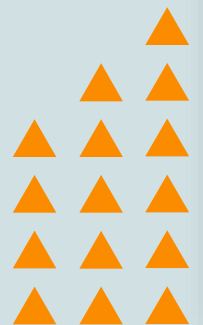


# The Importance of Black Representation in Books/Literature

By *Delaney Dyer, grade 10*

\*Disclaimer: I am not Black, and I do not intend to speak over Black voices, all I wish to do is to spread awareness.



# Why is it important to include Black representation in books/literature?

Representation in books is extremely important, especially in a diverse community like ours. But unfortunately, the book industry lacks books that accurately represent Black people and their cultures.

It is important to share the voices, stories, history and the identities of the Black community because they are rarely reflected in mainstream media and society.

In the rest of the powerpoint, we will be venturing into the world of book recommendations and also look at some personal anecdotes from my friends in the Black community.



The next couple of slides will explore personal anecdotes from individuals in the Black community when asked about the lack of representation in books/literature as well as what society can do to elevate Black voices.

“I am disappointed with the lack of black representation in popular literature. I feel that it’s really important, especially for children to see themselves represented in books. It becomes really hard to do that when all of the main characters are white. I feel like it also pushes the narrative that somehow “white” is better.

As a society I believe we should stop seeing white as the default. The main characters in most popular tv shows, movies, and literature are often times white. I think we should all try to read and consume media that has good representation all around. We should listen to the voices of the people who feel they have been ignored and disregarded for so many years. I feel like a lot of people don’t mean any harm, but they don’t realize how it feels to be a child and only reading about kids that look absolutely nothing like you.” -Jaya (personal friend)

“Growing up, I loved reading so much that most of my free time was spent in the library. I read so often that sometimes my parents would have to pry the book out of my hands so I could go to sleep. But as I read, I always noticed that the main characters always looked the same—or in other words—never looked like me. I started to think that beauty only corresponded with blonde hair, pale skin, blue eyes. Because in the books I was reading, that is what was considered beautiful. It got to the point where I was looking into things to bleach my skin, straighten my hair and hide all my afrocentric features. I feel like as a child and even now, the lack of Black representation in popular books affects the way I perceive myself as well as what I think I can accomplish.

I think that as a society, writers need to reflect their readers in their literature. At the end of the day, readers come in all different shapes, sizes, races, backgrounds, etc. And if an author is only representing one of those aspects throughout all their books, they are excluding their readers and adding onto the stereotype that “only white is beautiful”, “only blue eyes are beautiful” “only blonde hair is beautiful”. It is important as a writer to showcase that beauty, strength, and success can be found no matter what a character or person looks like.” -Josie (personal friend)

Sometimes best friends aren't forever.



## *Books with Black representation*

The next couple of slides will recognize some amazing books that have Black representation in them. The slides will include a short synopsis and trigger/content warnings.



# One of the Good Ones by Malika Moulite and Maritza Moulite

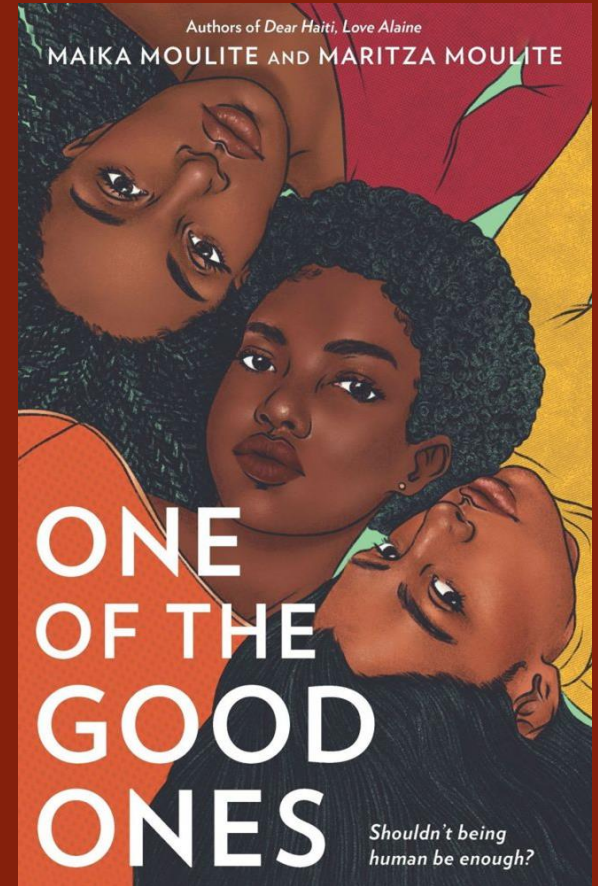
## “ISN'T BEING HUMAN ENOUGH?”

When teen social activist and history buff 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. As Kezi becomes another immortalized victim in the fight against police brutality, Happi begins to question the idealized way her sister is remembered. Perfect. Angelic.

One of the good ones.

Even as the phrase rings wrong in her mind—why are only certain people deemed worthy to be missed?—Happi and her sister Genny embark on a journey to honor Kezi in their own way, using an heirloom copy of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* as their guide. But there's a twist to Kezi's story that no one could've ever expected—one that will change everything all over again.”

**Trigger/content warnings:** police brutality, systemic racism, grief, coming out to religious parents, historical Black trauma, and internalized racism.



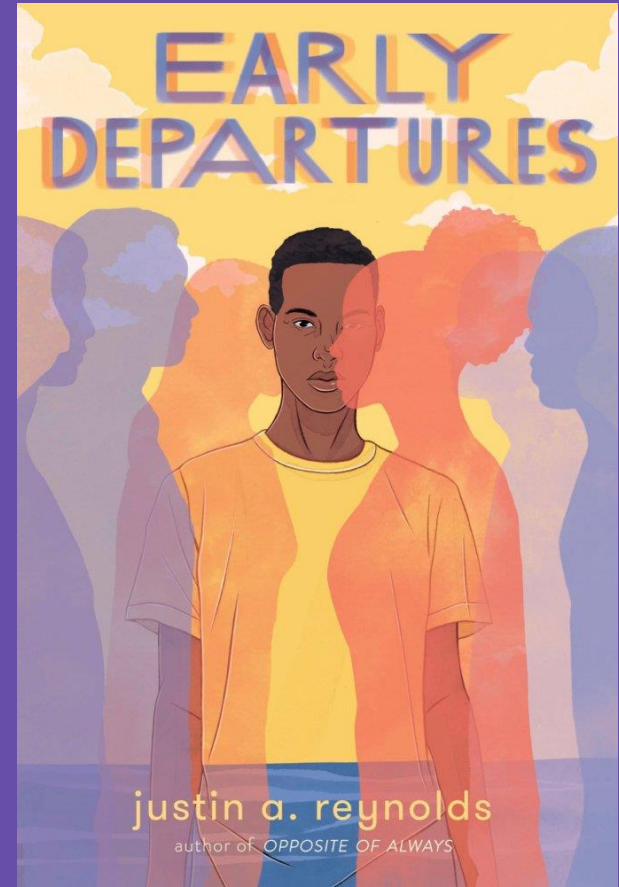
## Early Departures by Justin A. Reynolds

“What if you could bring your best friend back to life—but only for a short time?”

Jamal’s best friend, Q, doesn’t know that he died, and that he’s about to die . . . again. He doesn’t know that Jamal tried to save him. And that the reason they haven’t been friends for two years is because Jamal blames Q for the accident that killed his parents.

But what if Jamal could have a second chance? A new technology allows Q to be reanimated for a few weeks before he dies . . . permanently. And Q’s mom is not about to let anyone ruin this miracle by telling Q about his impending death. So how can Jamal fix everything if he can’t tell Q the truth?”

**Trigger/content warnings:** death of parents, death of close friend, trauma, car accident, grief.





# Children of Blood and Bone by Tomi Adeyemi

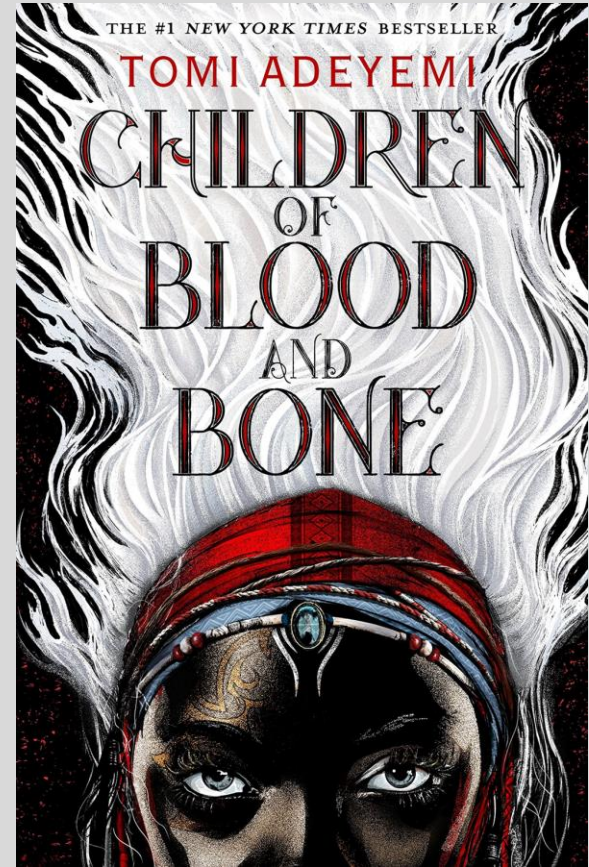
“Zélie remembers when the soil of Orisha hummed with magic. When different clans ruled – Burners igniting flames, Tiders beckoning waves, and Zélie’s Reaper mother summoning forth souls.

But everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, anyone with powers was targeted and killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope. Only a few people remain with the power to use magic, and they must remain hidden.

Zélie is one such person. Now she has a chance to bring back magic to her people and strike against the monarchy. With the help of a rogue princess, Zélie must learn to harness her powers and outrun the crown prince, who is hell-bent on eradicating magic for good.

Danger lurks in Orisha, where strange creatures prowl, and vengeful spirits wait in the waters. Yet the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to come to terms with the strength of her magic – and her growing feelings for an enemy.”

**Trigger/content warnings:** Death, child abuse, self harm, slavery and oppression



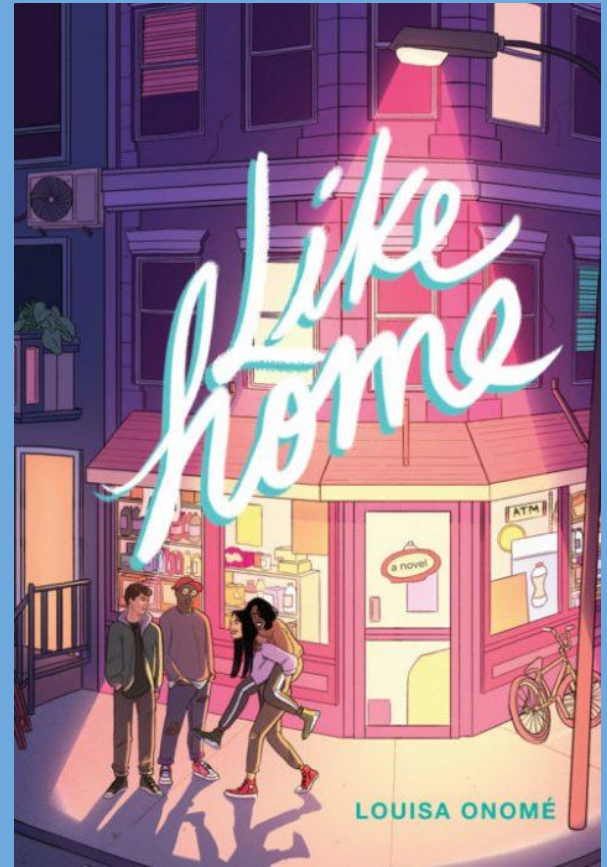
# Like Home by Louise Onome

“Chinelo, or Nelo as her best friend Kate calls her, is all about her neighborhood Ginger East. She loves its chill vibe, ride-or-die sense of community, and her memories of growing up there. Ginger East isn't what it used to be, though. After a deadly incident at the local arcade, all her closest friends moved away, except for Kate. But as long as they have each other, Nelo's good.

Only, Kate's parents' corner store is vandalized, leaving Nelo shaken to her core. The police and the media are quick to point fingers, and soon more of the outside world descends on Ginger East with promises to “fix” it. Suddenly, Nelo finds herself in the middle of a drama unfolding on a national scale.

Worse yet, Kate is acting strange. She's pushing Nelo away at the exact moment they need each other most. Nelo's entire world is morphing into something she hates, and she must figure out how to get things back on track or risk losing everything—and everyone—she loves.”

\*I could not find the trigger warnings



# The Black Kids by Christina Hammonds Reed

*"Los Angeles, 1992*

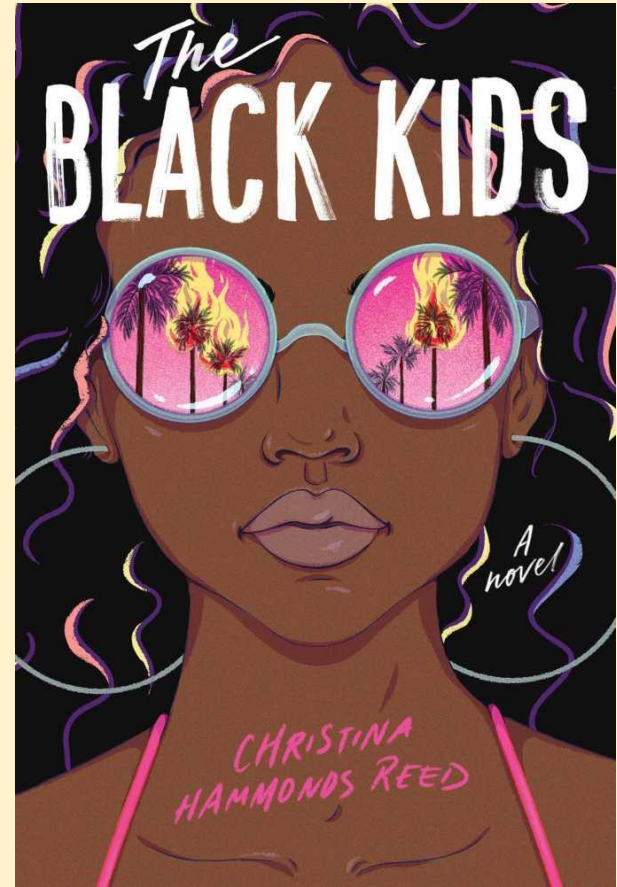
Ashley Bennett and her friends are living the charmed life. It's the end of senior year and they're spending more time at the beach than in the classroom. They can already feel the sunny days and endless possibilities of summer.

Everything changes one afternoon in April, when four LAPD officers are acquitted after beating a black man named Rodney King half to death. Suddenly, Ashley's not just one of the girls. She's one of the black kids.

As violent protests engulf LA and the city burns, Ashley tries to continue on as if life were normal. Even as her self-destructive sister gets dangerously involved in the riots. Even as the model black family façade her wealthy and prominent parents have built starts to crumble. Even as her best friends help spread a rumor that could completely derail the future of her classmate and fellow black kid, LaShawn Johnson.

With her world splintering around her, Ashley, along with the rest of LA, is left to question who is the *us*? And who is the *them*?"

**Trigger/content warnings:** Racism, racial violence and slurs; drinking and drug use



## Some Other Now by Sarah Everett

“Before she kissed one of the Cohen boys, seventeen-year-old Jessi Rumfield knew what it was like to have a family—even if, technically, that family didn’t belong to her. She’d spent her childhood in the house next door, challenging Rowan Cohen to tennis matches while his older brother, Luke, studied in the background and Mel watched over the three like the mother Jessi always wished she had.

But then everything changed. It’s been almost a year since Jessi last visited the Cohen house. Rowan is gone. Mel is in remission and Luke hates Jessi for the role she played in breaking his family apart. Now Jessi spends her days at a dead-end summer job avoiding her real mother, who suddenly wants to play a role in Jessi’s life after being absent for so long. But when Luke comes home from college, it’s hard to ignore the past. And when he asks Jessi to pretend to be his girlfriend for the final months of Mel’s life, Jessi finds herself drawn back into the world of the Cohens. Everything’s changed, but Jessi can’t help wanting to be a Cohen, even if it means playing pretend for one final summer.”

**\*I could not find the trigger warnings**

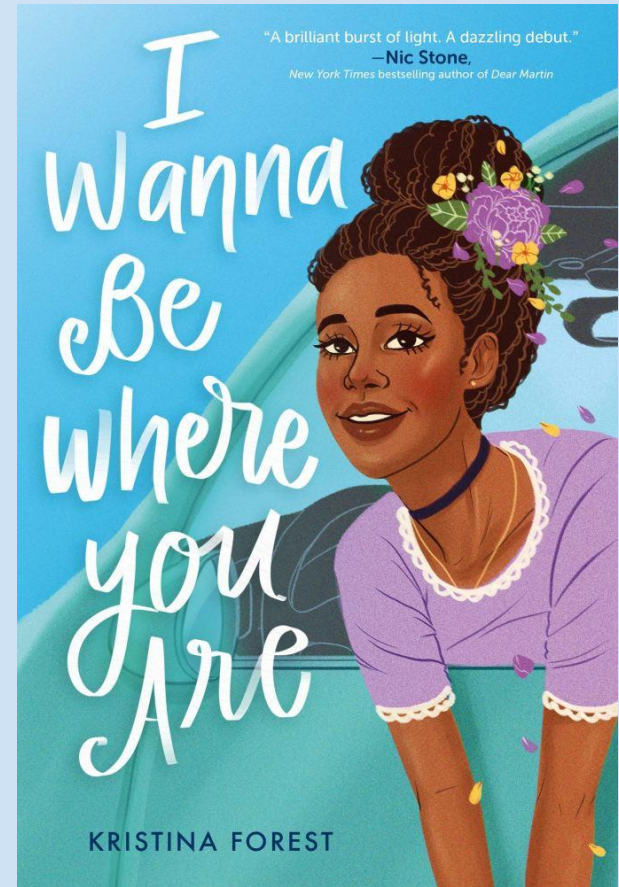


# I Wanna Be Where You Are by Kristina Forest

“When Chloe Pierce’s mom forbids her to apply for a spot at the dance conservatory of her dreams, she devises a secret plan to drive two hundred miles to the nearest audition. But Chloe hits her first speed bump when her annoying neighbor Eli insists upon hitching a ride, threatening to tell Chloe’s mom if she leaves him and his smelly dog, Geezer, behind. So now Chloe’s chasing her ballet dreams down the east coast—two unwanted (but kinda cute) passengers in her car, butterflies in her stomach, and a really dope playlist on repeat.

Filled with roadside hijinks, heart-stirring romance, and a few broken rules, Kristina Forest's *I Wanna Be Where You Are* is a YA debut perfect for fans of Jenny Han and Sandhya Menon.”

**Trigger/content warnings:** loss of a parent (not narrated), car accident.

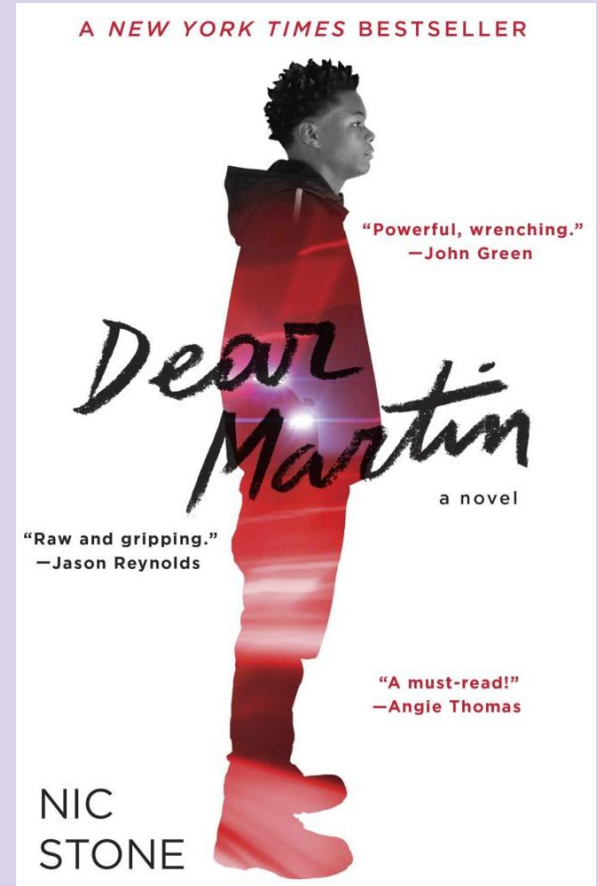


## Dear Martin by Nic Stone

“Justyce McAllister is top of his class and set for the Ivy League—but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs. And despite leaving his rough neighborhood behind, he can't escape the scorn of his former peers or the ridicule of his new classmates. Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers. But do they hold up anymore? He starts a journal to Dr. King to find out.

Then comes the day Justyce goes driving with his best friend, Manny, windows rolled down, music turned up—way up, sparking the fury of a white off-duty cop beside them. Words fly. Shots are fired. Justyce and Manny are caught in the crosshairs. In the media fallout, it's Justyce who is under attack.”

**Trigger/content warnings:** Racism, Sexism/Misogyny, Violence, & Police Brutality.



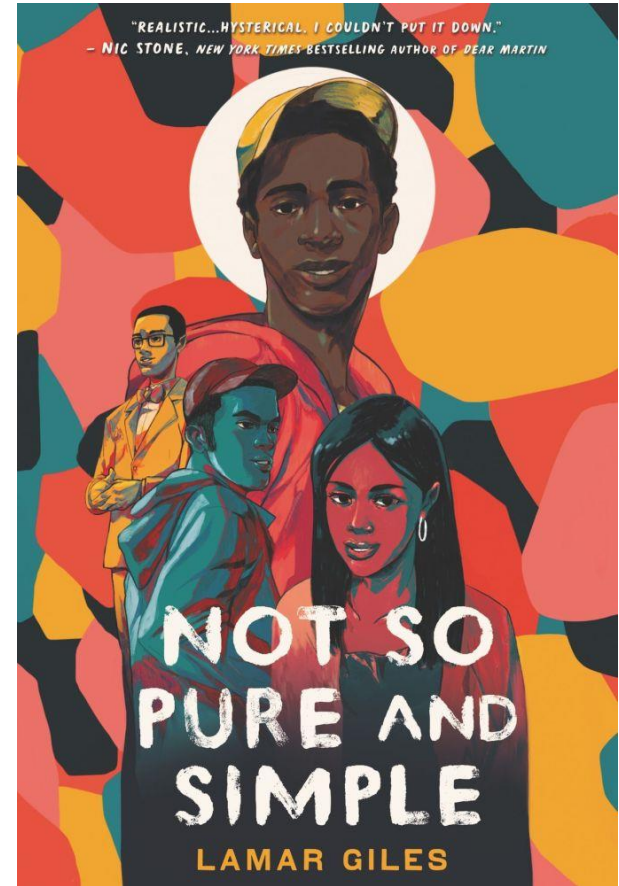
# Not So Pure and Simple by Lamar Giles

“Del has had a crush on Kiera Westing since kindergarten. And now, during their junior year, she’s finally available. So when Kiera volunteers for an opportunity at their church, Del’s right behind her. Though he quickly realizes he’s inadvertently signed up for a Purity Pledge.

His dad thinks his wires are crossed, and his best friend, Qwan, doesn’t believe any girl is worth the long game. But Del’s not about to lose his dream girl, and that’s where fellow pledger Jameer comes in. He can put in the good word. In exchange, Del just has to get answers to the Pledgers’ questions...about sex ed.

With other boys circling Kiera like sharks, Del needs to make his move fast. But as he plots and plans, he neglects to ask the most important question: What does Kiera want? He can’t think about that too much, though, because once he gets the girl, it’ll all sort itself out. Right?”

**Trigger/content warnings:** conversations around sex, underage drinking, slut shaming, toxic masculinity, male entitlement, sexual assault



## The Cost of Knowing by Brittany Morris

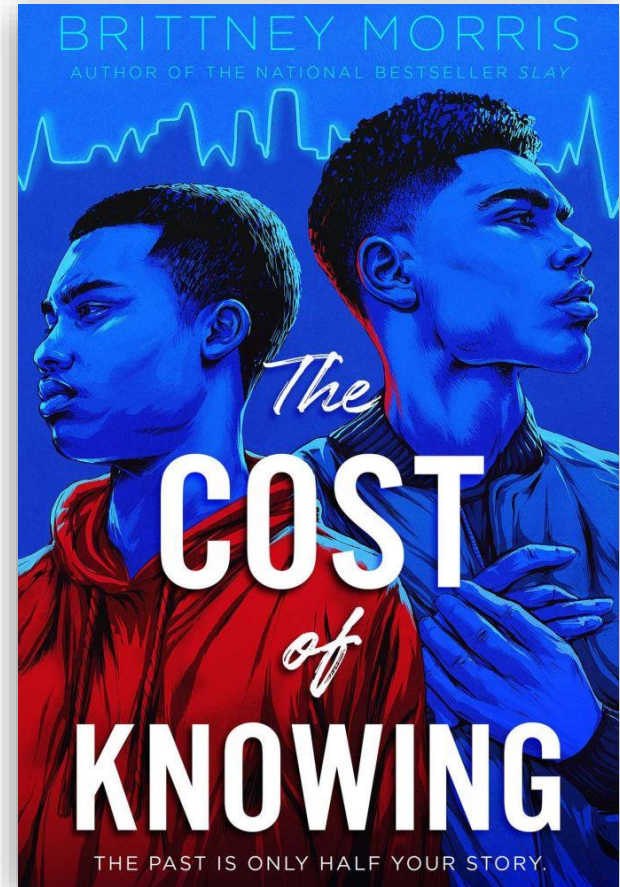
“Sixteen-year-old Alex Rufus is trying his best. He tries to be the best employee he can be at the local ice cream shop; the best boyfriend he can be to his amazing girlfriend, Talia; the best protector he can be over his little brother, Isaiah. But as much as Alex tries, he often comes up short.

It’s hard to for him to be present when every time he touches an object or person, Alex sees into its future. When he touches a scoop, he has a vision of him using it to scoop ice cream. When he touches his car, he sees it years from now, totaled and underwater. When he touches Talia, he sees them at the precipice of breaking up, and that terrifies him. Alex feels these visions are a curse, distracting him, making him anxious and unable to live an ordinary life.

And when Alex touches a photo that gives him a vision of his brother’s imminent death, everything changes.

With Alex now in a race against time, death, and circumstances, he and Isaiah must grapple with their past, their future, and what it means to be a young Black man in America in the present.”

**\*I could not find the trigger warnings**





# A Love Hate Thing by Whitney D. Grandison

“Despite having been shot, Tyson Trice has survived the mean streets of Lindenwood, so nothing can faze him—not even being tossed into the affluent coastal community of Pacific Hills.

Nandy Smith, the golden girl of Pacific Hills, is not pleased when she hears her parents are taking in a troubled teen boy. Nandy suddenly fears her summer plans, as well as her reputation, will go up in flames.

The wall between Trice and Nandy’s bedrooms feels as thin as the line between love and hate. Through time, Trice brings Nandy out of her shell, and Nandy attempts to melt the ice that’s taken over Trice’s heart. Only, with the ever-present pull back to the Lindenwood streets, it’ll be a wonder if Trice makes it through this summer at all.”

**Trigger/content warnings:** Dealing with grief, parental death, violence, breaking the law, racial prejudice, stereotyping



## Clap When You Land Elizabeth Acevedo

“Camino Rios lives with her aunt in the Dominican Republic, and waits all year for her dad to visit her for the summer. Yahaira Rios lives in New York with her parents, and asks every year if she can go with her dad on his annual business trip. Neither sister knows about the other – until their dad dies in a plane crash leaving New York for the Dominican Republic.”

**Trigger/content warnings:** Cheating mentioned. Pregnancy, childbirth (labour) & premature birth. Grief depiction. Death of a father.



# Now That I've Found You by Kristina Forest

“Following in the footsteps of her überfamous grandma, eighteen-year-old Evie Jones is poised to be Hollywood’s next big star. That is until a close friend’s betrayal leads to her being blacklisted . . .

Fortunately, Evie knows just the thing to save her floundering career: a public appearance with America’s most beloved actress—her grandma Gigi, aka *the Evelyn Conaway*. The only problem? Gigi is a recluse who’s been out of the limelight for almost twenty years. Days before Evie plans to present her grandma with an honorary award in front of Hollywood’s elite, Gigi does the unthinkable: she disappears.

With time running out and her comeback on the line, Evie reluctantly enlists the help of the last person to see Gigi before she vanished: Milo Williams, a cute musician Evie isn’t sure she can trust. As Evie and Milo conduct a wild manhunt across New York City, romance and adventure abound while Evie makes some surprising discoveries about her grandma—and herself.”

**\*I could not find the trigger warnings**

