

# 10 must-read Black History Month book recommendations: Zora Neale Hurston, Kiley Reid and more

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Black history is too rich to cover in a mere month, and so too is black literature. But if you're looking for some fresh titles by black authors to add to your to-be-read pile this Black History Month, we've got some recommendations on where to start.

We've curated a list of 10 recently published and critically-acclaimed works of fiction and nonfiction by black authors to read this February.

The list features canonical favorites, including Zora Neale Hurston; debuts, including Kiley Reid's novel [chosen for Reese Witherspoon's](#) Hello Sunshine book club; and a graphic novel adaptation of an Octavia E. Butler sci-fi classic. The one thing they all indisputably have in common is that they're really, really good.

## 1. **"Hitting a Straight Lick With a Crooked Stick,"** by Zora Neale Hurston (Amistad, fiction)

**What it's about:** A collection of short stories about love, gender, class, racism and sexism by the revered writer of "Their Eyes Were Watching God," including eight "lost" Harlem Renaissance tales.

## 2. **"Such a Fun Age,"** by Kiley Reid (G.P. Putnam's Sons, fiction)

**What it's about:** The young, broke, black babysitter of a privileged white family is accused of kidnapping by a store security guard. The confrontation is caught on tape, and the white family's blogger mother wants to help make things right. Are her intentions really good ones?

**The buzz:** "Charming, challenging, and so interesting you can hardly put it down," says a starred review in Kirkus Reviews.

## 3. **"Parable of the Sower,"** by Octavia E. Butler, adapted into a graphic novel by Damian Duffy and John Jennings (Abrams, fiction)

**What it's about:** It's 2024, and society is collapsing due to the catastrophic effects of climate change. Teen narrator Lauren Oya Olamina begins to develop her own religion, called "Earthseed," around the idea of traveling beyond earth to preserve humanity.

## 4. **"How to Be an Antiracist,"** by Ibram X. Kendi (One World, nonfiction, went on sale Aug. 13)

**What it's about:** The founding director of American University's Antiracist Research and Policy Center methodically examines racism and challenges readers to think about what an antiracist would look like and how they can play a role in creating one.

## 5. **"Children of Virtue and Vengeance,"** by Tomi Adeyemi (Henry Holt and Co., fiction)

**What it's about:** Adeyemi continues her West African-inspired fantasy "Legacy of Orisha" trilogy with this second installment, a sequel to her highly successful "Children of Blood and Bone." Here, Adeyemi's breakdown of power, corruption and identity is explored even deeper.

## 6. **"Red at the Bone,"** by Jacqueline Woodson (Riverhead, fiction)

**What it's about:** Melody prepares for her 16th birthday, wearing the coming-out dress her mother never got to wear because of her teenage pregnancy. Woodson explores the ramifications of unplanned pregnancies on two families and the lifelong consequences of decisions made in youth.

7. **“All the Days Past, All the Days to Come,”** by Mildred D. Taylor (Viking, fiction)

**What it's about:** The saga of the Logan family, made famous by Taylor's Newbery-winning 1976 book “Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry,” comes to a long-awaited conclusion. Their story is also the story of the civil rights movement in the South.

8. **“Riot Baby,”** by Tochi Onyebuchi (Tor, fiction)

**What it's about:** Ella is gifted with supernatural powers. When her brother Kev, born during the 1992 LA riots, ends up incarcerated for no crime greater than being a black man in America, she must decide how to use her gifts.

9. **“How We Fight for Our Lives,”** by Saeed Jones (Simon & Schuster, nonfiction)

**What it's about:** The prize-winning poet bares his soul in this haunting coming-of-age memoir, which recounts the author's sexual awakening as a young, gay black man in Texas and the tumultuous relationships that shaped him.

10. **“The Nickel Boys,”** by Colson Whitehead (Doubleday, fiction)

**What it's about:** Black boys experience horrific abuse at a juvenile reform school in the Jim Crow-era South inspired by the real-life and equally horrific Dozier School for Boys. From the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel “The Underground Railroad.”