

# How to Be More Inclusive in Your Readers' Advisory Work

An Infopeople Webinar

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# WELCOME



# Agenda

- Introduction/ What does *inclusion* mean?
- Why is inclusion important in readers' advisory?
- Identifying and Filling Holes
- Call-In Culture
- Questions

What does inclusion  
mean?



# Selection is Privilege

## Suggestion is Privilege



We have to recognize our privilege as selectors, and, more than likely, as white selectors for diverse readers.

-- Amy Koester

# Inclusion

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/ or groups into processes, activities and decision/ policy making in a way that shares power.  
(University of Washington)

Diversity is being  
invited to the party.  
Inclusion is being  
asked to dance.  
-- Vernā Myers

# Inclusion in Readers' Advisory

Intentionally and authentically promoting and suggesting titles by authors who are traditionally excluded and/ or underrepresented in publishing to your readers.



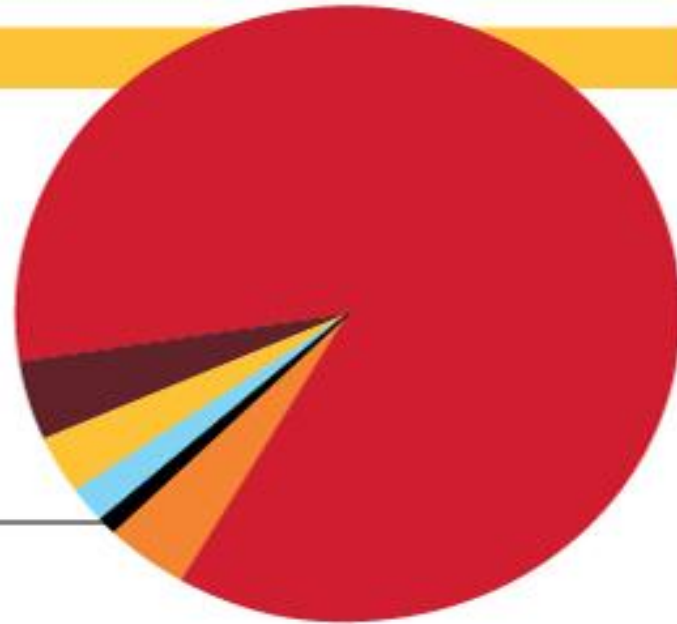
# Why is inclusion important in Readers' Advisory?



We know publishing has a “diversity problem.”

## RACIAL MAKEUP OF PUBLISHING

- White/Caucasian 84%
- Asian 5%
- Mixed Race 4%
- Hispanic 3%
- Black/African-American (non-Hispanic) 2%
- Other 2%



We need diversity in reviewing, too!



# #WeNeedDiverseBooks

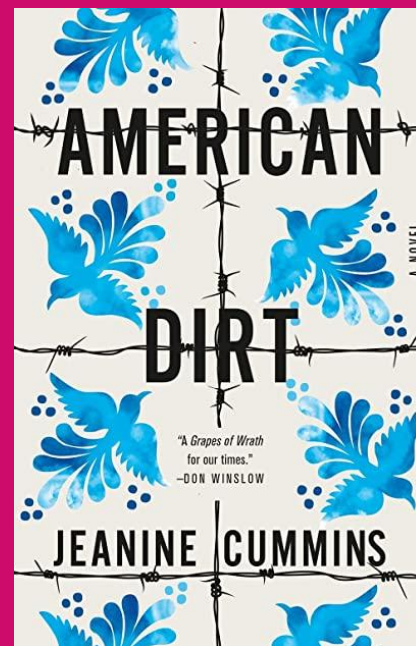
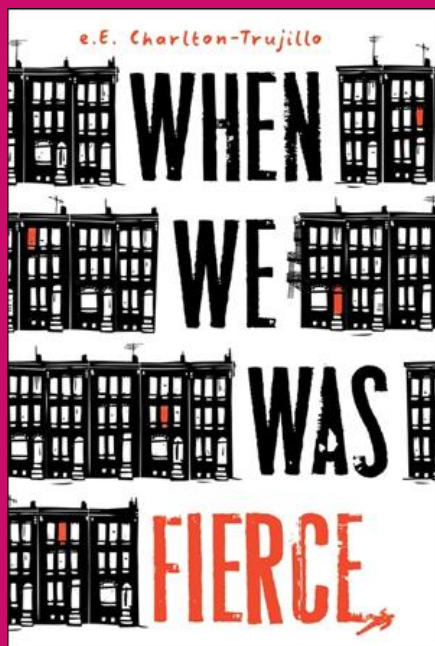
Imagine a world in which  
all children can see  
themselves in the pages of  
a book.

Marley Dias  
#1000BlackGirlBooks



# What Could Go Wrong?

Quite a little bit, as it turns out.



Time and again, marginalized people have seen their stories taken from them, misused, and published as authentic, while marginalized authors have had to jump hurdle after hurdle to be published themselves. Many feel they must fight to receive even a fraction of the pay, promotion, and praise that outsiders get for writing diverse characters' stories, and that's when they're allowed in the door at all. -- Kayla Whaley



# #OwnVoices

Use the term/ hashtag to highlight books where the creator and main character share some form of marginalization.



**Corinne Duyvis | buy THE ART OF SAVING T...**  · Sep 6, 2015 

Glad important discussions are being had. Would love to be able to walk away with book recommendations. How about a hashtag?



**Corinne Duyvis | buy THE ART OF SAVING THE WORLD!** 

@corinneduyvis

[#ownvoices](#), to recommend kidlit about diverse characters written by authors from that same diverse group.

1:55 PM · Sep 6, 2015



88



90 people are Tweeting about this



A person is not diverse.

A person is Black.

A person is Korean.

But one person is not  
diverse.

@beingabookwurm

## ***word for the day***



Karen Strong @KarenMusings · 14h

Y'all don't say "diverse" characters when you really mean Black characters.

I promise you, it's okay.



1



11



117



Karen Strong @KarenMusings · 14h

Say it with your chest:

BLACK characters! 🙌



3



3



42



specificity matters in your  
advocacy!! just like "Black Lives  
Matter" doesn't mean you don't  
care about other POC,  
it just shows you care about the  
specificity of our concerns

# Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Doors





**Rudine Sims Bishop**

Professor Emerita, Ohio State University

# Rudine Sims Bishop

Professor Emerita, Ohio State University

- **MIRRORS:** We want readers to see and find reflections of themselves
- **WINDOWS:** Look through and see other worlds and see how they match up or don't match up to your own
- **SLIDING GLASS DOORS:** allows you to enter that world
- Diversity goes both ways
  - Not just for readers who have been underrepresented or marginalized
- Readers who always find mirrors of themselves get an exaggerated sense of their own self-worth and false sense of what the world is like

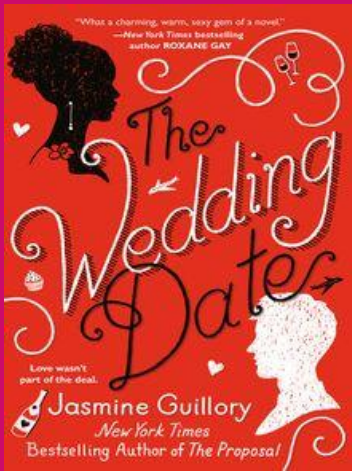


# MIRRORS: Move Beyond “Issue” Books

“Black readers need to see themselves in narratives outside of racism, slavery, Jim Crow, police brutality.”

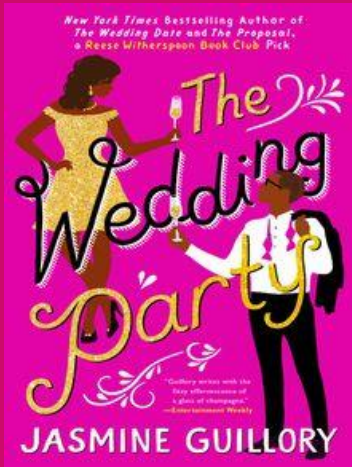


“In order to create a safe world for Black people, books that don’t focus on ‘issues’ need to be given just as much space. They provide an opportunity for Black readers to have a moment for themselves, to take a breath, readjust, and simply exist.” -- L.L. McKinney

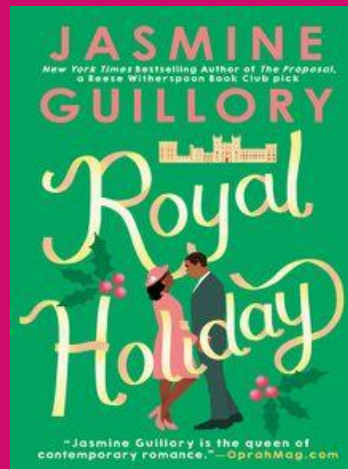
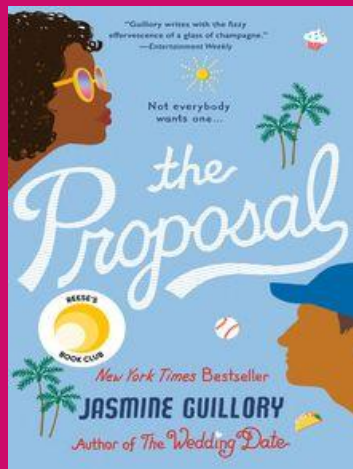


# WINDOWS: Reading Anti-Racist Nonfiction Is a Start. But Don't Underestimate the Power of Black Fiction

“Racism is not the only thing to know about what it means to be Black. **Our joys, our sorrows, our love, our grief, our struggles to fit in, our families, our accomplishments and our triumphs—these things also matter.** Black children matter, and not only the ones killed before their time. You may think you already know that, but history has proved otherwise. ... Black lives are not a problem to be solved or an academic text that can be studied. **To recognize Black lives as ones to celebrate, empathize with and care about, here's your antiracism work: read more fiction by and about Black people.**”



Article by  
Jasmine  
Guillory  
time.com  
June 30, 2020



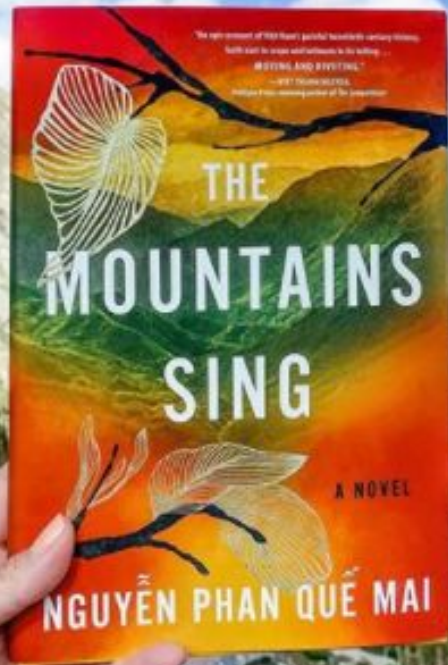


# Don't Just Read About Racism— Read Stories About Black People Living



Article by Nic Stone, [cosmopolitan.com](https://www.cosmopolitan.com), June 8, 2020

# SLIDING DOORS



readingmountains • Following  
Colorado



I'm seeing Black bookstagrammers and authors say that their pain is laid bare for white and non-Black POC to marvel over, with little meaningful change, and I have to ask myself – what really comes from reading about someone else's trauma? Are we reading this for our own edification? Do we just say, "wow, that's horrible" and then go back to our normal lives?

I don't have the answer. In the case of historical fiction, I read about trauma to get better perspective on world events and dynamics. I read to understand parts of history I knew nothing about. Historical fiction opens a door, but do we walk through it? Do we venture down a different pathway than we did before? I hope so.



Liked by [libros.con.coffee](#) and others

AUGUST 31

Add a comment...

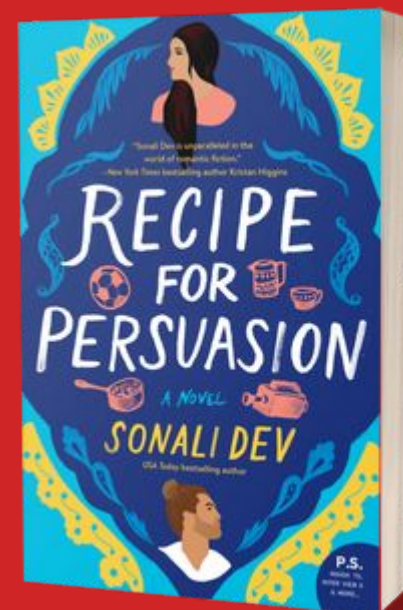
Post

Identifying and  
filling holes

# Whose Voices Are Missing?

## Sonali Dev's RWA 2018 Librarians' Day Keynote

- Take a look at your past acquisition lists.
  - Whom are you allowing to speak? Whom are you silencing?
- Are there rules like benchmarks for how many reviews a book needs?
  - Fight to change those rules
- Is your collection all White?
  - add 1% of stories that are not White and straight and able-bodied this year.
- Is your collection 80% White?
  - Take that down to 70%
- “FIGHT FOR US”
  - Don't make us do this alone”
- Don't be complicit in our silencing
  - If you don't do one single thing differently, you are complicit.





# Whom are you allowing to speak and whom are you silencing?

## The Diversity Audit

- The first audit
  - Create criteria
  - Establish a baseline
  - Identify holes and trends / patterns
- Establish goals and make improvements
- After some time, repeat the audit
  - Did you improve?
  - Identify holes and trends / patterns
- Wash, rinse, repeat
- Goal is for each subsequent audit to show more diversity than the last



# How to Audit

- Choose what you will audit
  - Go Big!
    - The whole collection
  - More manageable
    - Part of a collection, book discussion titles, acquisition orders, marketing emails, suggestions
- Create a list of criteria you want to audit
- Evaluate titles
- Calculate the diversity level





# Example Audit

Author Identity (how does the author identify?)

Same as Main Character Identity with a couple of exceptions

Race	Multiple Choice-- select all that apply
Race/Ethnicity if not listed	Short answer text
Ethnicity/Nationality	Short answer text
Other identity traits	Multiple Choice-- select all that apply
LGBTQIA+	Short answer text
Disability/Neurodiverse	Short answer text
Religious affiliations	Short answer text
Other pertinent information	Short answer text
Is this an Own Voices book?	Yes, No, Not applicable

**THIS IS TIME CONSUMING!!!**

**(and worth it)**

Where do we find the books?!

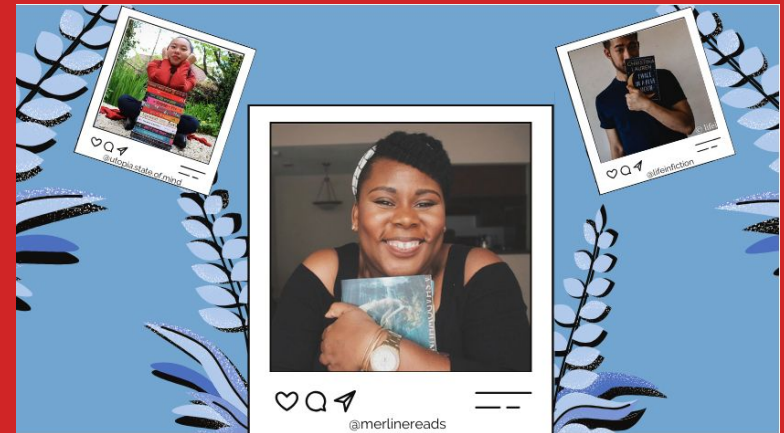
# Look Outside of Traditional Sources: Instagram

7 QUEER BOOKSTAGRAMMERS ON BOOKS AND  
ACCOUNTS THEY LOVE

**10 BOOKSTAGRAMMERS  
ALL ABOUT DIVERSITY IN  
LITERATURE THAT YOU  
NEED TO FOLLOW**

**24 Black Bookstagrammers Who  
Should Be On Your Radar**

20 Bookstagrammers of  
Color to Follow in 2020





# Black-Owned Bookstores to Support Right Now (and Always)

c/o Libro.fm





Utilize NetGalley's OwnVoices Category  
Nominate titles for LibraryReads





A photograph of a library book display. The display consists of several black shelving units. At the top, a green sign reads "GOOD READS". Below it, books are arranged in rows. Some books are standing upright, while others are stacked horizontally. In the foreground, there are several stacks of books. The background shows more library shelves and a wooden cabinet. Three red text boxes are overlaid on the image, containing the text "Focusing on Staff AND Patrons", "Displays", "Staff lists", and "Book discussion choices".

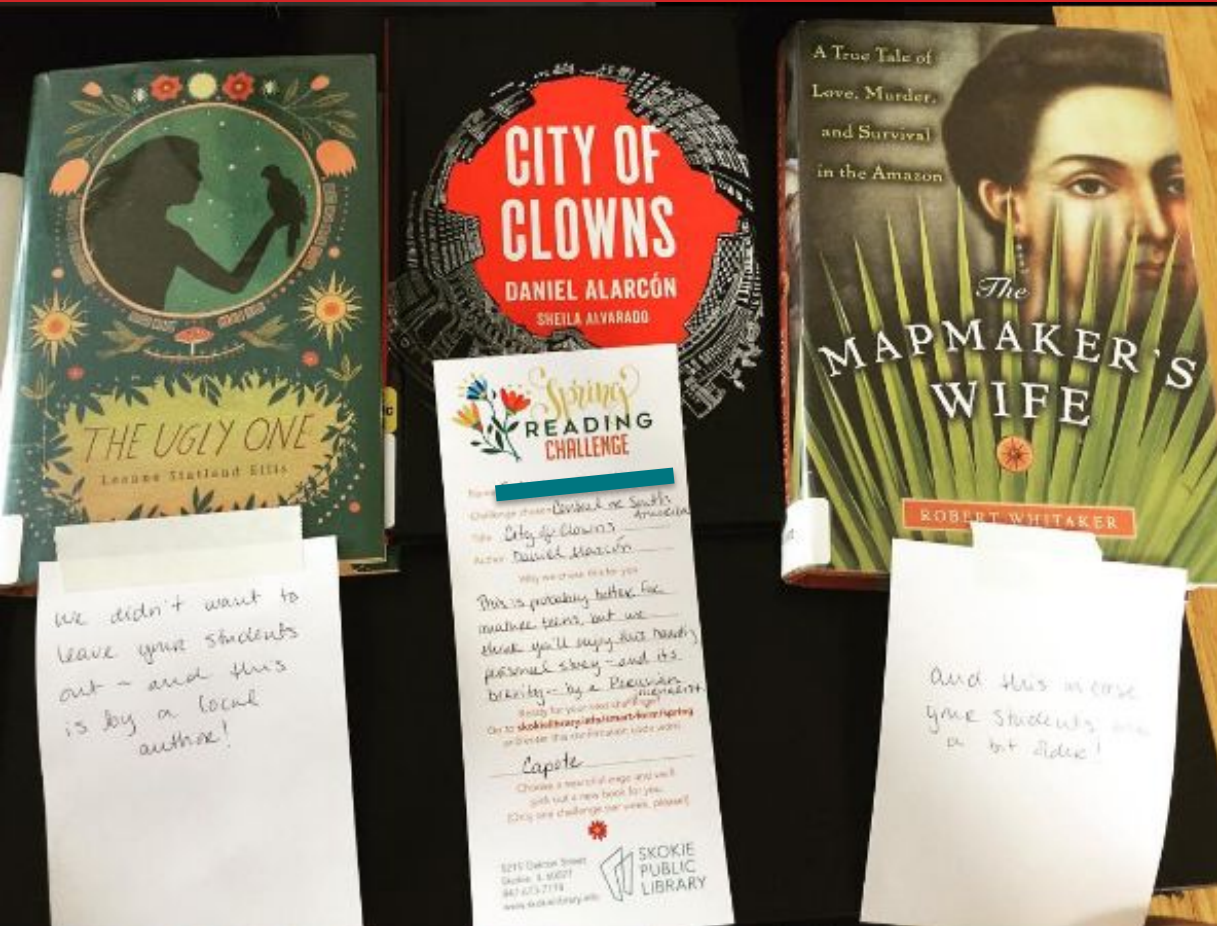
# Focusing on Staff AND Patrons

Displays

Staff lists

Book discussion choices

# Spring Reading Challenge



Follow

... Loving the Spring Reading Challenge by @skokielibrary 📖 Their choices for me have been spot on - for this week's challenge I chose Central/South America bc I'm currently teaching about Peru:

Local author ✓

Peruvian author ✓

YA ✓



APRIL 15

Add a comment...



# Everyday Book Suggestions

Focus on appeals of the book-  
not just the author's identity



# Censorship vs. Curation

**Censorship** is the suppression or prohibition of a work (refusing to print content, banning books, etc.)

**Curation** is the selection and organization of things (your displays, book lists, suggestions)

What you curate is a direct representation of your mission and your values.

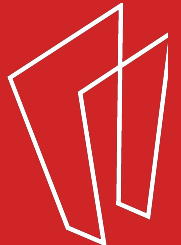
-- Women & Children First





# How Do You Know If It's Harmful?

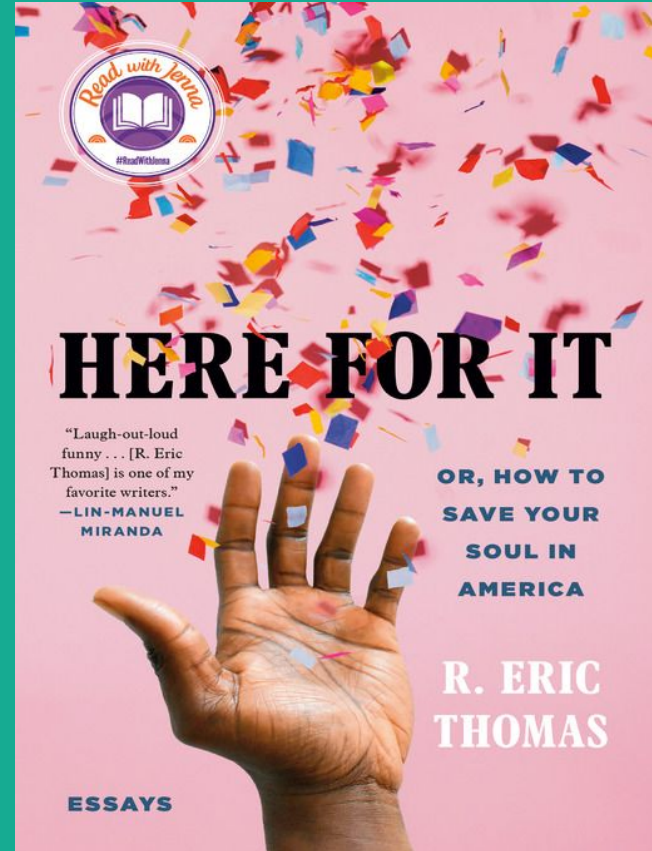
- Gut check
- Evaluate books you suggest most often
- Google TITLE and
  - controversy
  - problematic
- Believe people who say there are problems with representation or stereotypes in the book.



Calling In

# Call-In Culture

- Hold each other accountable
- Be courageous
- Team effort
- Be ***Here For It*** when someone makes you aware of a problematic book
- Goal: don't want to harm readers or perpetuate anything that is problematic



**If you simply stop here, you are complicit.  
What will you do to make real change in  
your advisory practice?**

Questions?

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Laurel: [ljohnson@skokielibrary.info](mailto:ljohnson@skokielibrary.info)