AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE GREAT STORIES CLUB SERIES

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TEXTS

“Tomorrow will bring a better you, better me,” sang R&B artist Tevin Campbell when I was a young teen back in the early 1990s. Songs and stories about tomorrows beyond our wildest imaginings have long captured the popular imagination. We wonder what the world will be like when we graduate from high school or college, get our first job, move out of the home, and realize our dreams.

It can be difficult to think about tomorrow when there are so many problems today. From social media to the daily news, we are confronted with many challenging issues: climate change, pandemics, natural disasters, water crises, political unrest, social division, and economic uncertainty. Perhaps that is why superhero comics and fantasy stories are so popular right now, from the Marvel and DC universes on TV and at the movies, to stories like the Percy Jackson series and Tracy Deonn’s *Legendborn*, to games like *Roblox*, *Minecraft*, and *Fortnite*. These games, movies, and shows may allow us to think about what it would be like to alter or escape our current realities, but no kinds of stories speak to the future in quite the same way as science fiction.
When we think about science fiction, franchises like Star Wars, Star Trek, and Doctor Who immediately come to mind. But humans have always told stories about what they believed tomorrow might be like—not only in faraway places in the distant future, especially during times of uncertainty, but also about diverse people right here on Earth. You see, stories provide mirrors, windows, and doors into other existences, both real and imagined. Some think that science fiction is just escapist dreaming, bearing only limited relation to the most pressing issues of our day. But a sense of the infinite possibilities inherent in the word “tomorrow” has drawn children, teens, and adults from all over the world to tell stories about the future.

In Natasha Marin’s book Black Imagination, we’re invited to consider the audacious idea that we, too, can shape the future, and by extension, past and present. Published in 2020, Marin curated responses from a wide variety of people around the Seattle area. She asked each of them:

1. What is your origin story?
2. How do you heal yourself?
3. Describe/Imagine a world where you are loved, safe, and valued.

The weight of these questions and ideas resonate with the promise of tomorrow. We live during a time when dreaming of any kind of future may seem impossible, but dream we must—for our survival, for the sake of our planet, and for the sake of everyone who will come after us. Despite all that we've experienced, even after everything we've been through now and in the past, people from every background have imagined brighter tomorrows. Imagining otherwise brings both catharsis (a release of emotional tension, as after an overwhelming experience, that restores or refreshes the spirit) and hope.

And so, this Great Stories club asks: How can we imagine and dream of our shared futures together, alongside each other, in order to create better tomorrows? Going back to Marin’s first question, “what is your origin story?”, we also need to acknowledge and reckon with
the past to imagine and build futures more equitable than our present. The books in this series point toward the ways that we might build shared futures while acknowledging the lessons of our origin stories. First, each of these Great Stories emphasize the significance of our lives in the past, present, and future—these characters’ lives matter within their worlds, just like our lives matter within ours. Secondly, each story offers insight into how young people might live in future worlds where they face obstacles toward love, safety, and value, but find friendships and relationships that overcome every barrier. Finally, these stories demonstrate the power and importance of imagination in transforming our world. We cannot change tomorrow if we cannot “imagine otherwise,” and dream of times that are different from today.


Tina may seem like an everyday teen, but she’s really the clone of a galactic legend, Captain Argentian. She’s always known that one day, a rescue beacon inside her chest would be activated, and she would be thrown into the middle of a civil war. Along with her best friend Rachael, she is spirited away from Earth by the Royal Fleet. However, the sinister group known as the Compassion are set on murdering her in their quest to create chaos amid the stars. In this action-adventure space opera novel that affirms all characters’ identities and backgrounds, breaking through gender binaries, Tina learns that she’s more than a mere copy, all while becoming the hero that she always needed.

**Book 2: Delliquanti, Blue. *Across a Field of Starlight*. Penguin, 2022.**

Lu lives in a science and art commune that values their research and happiness over getting involved in a massive intergalactic conflict. During one of their expeditions in this delightful graphic novel, Lu meets Fassen. Fassen lost their parents in an accident, and is now a member of the Fireback Brigade, also known as the “biggest resistance force the Ever-Blossoming Empire’s ever seen.” They stay in touch and grow into their respective roles until Fassen is faced with the truth of the Brigade, and gets in touch with Lu—who then must choose between friendship and politics.

In a near-future world ravaged by climate change, the ability to dream has all but disappeared except for among Indigenous and First Nations people. Frenchie is a Metis teen who is rescued by Miigwans, who is Anishinaabe, from the Recruiters, sinister agents who are looking to extract their bone marrow. Traveling with a group of eight other Indigenous people he meets through this dystopian novel, Frenchie and his friends find ways to survive, and grow into becoming their own family.


Ellie is living in a post-invasion Earth dominated by an alien species known as the Ilori. Her parents find ways to cope with the new reality, while Ellie resists through books that are now forbidden for humans to read. Morris (MoRr1S) is labmade preparing for the second phase of the invasion, when the true Ilori will arrive. A clandestine lover of the human music that’s forbidden to him, he discovers Ellie’s secret, then saves her from death—which launches their adventure.


150 years from now, the Earth is ravaged by climate change, and there is civil war between the nations of Nigeria and Biafra in the south. Onyii is from Biafra, and Ify from Nigeria—that doesn’t stop their close friendship until they’re separated from each other. Over time, Onyii becomes a great warrior, while Ify grows into an incredible scholar and thinker. When they meet each other again, this time on opposite sides of the conflict, their bond of sisterhood is put to the test.