RELATED READING LIST

The following annotated reading list was developed by advisors Llyr Heller (Los Angeles Public Library) and Emily Mazzoni (Monroe Township Public Library) to offer additional support for the “Imagining Tomorrow” series. Great Stories Club program hosts are encouraged to recommend these titles for additional thematic exploration; plan supplemental programs using the list; or use project or local funding to expand the series to include discussion of one or more of these additional titles.

RELATED READING LIST TO GO WITH

Victories Greater Than Death by Charlie Jane Anders

The Disasters by M.K. England

England’s debut sf adventure has much to recommend: nonstop cinematic action, unabashed embracing of STEM (video games to physics), strong feminist messages, and great diversity of characters (in ethnicity as well as gender and sexual identity). When hotshot pilot Nasir Alexander Hall (Nax) is rejected from Ellis Station Academy, he meets three other rejects while waiting for a shuttle home: British would-be politician Rion, genius navigator Case, and Russian-Kazakhstani soccer star and med student Zinaida. A sudden massacre of station personnel inspires the four to flee the station in a stolen shuttle. Crash-landing on a nearby colony, they are rescued by Asra Haque, who has her own reasons for wanting to leave the colony and have access to an amazingly fast ship. So begins a wild journey to save Earth from a nefarious plot and secure their own freedom and futures. The five form tight bonds, and a satisfying happy ending hints at more adventures of the VSS Swift Kick to come. Fans of Firefly, Star Wars, and space westerns will be happy to hear it. —Debbie Carton for Booklist

#Science Fiction, #Space, #Queer
**Gearbreakers by Zoe** by Hana Mikuta

Godolia enslaves and controls its populace using Windups, towering godlike “mecha” piloted by altered humans trained at the elite Academy. Sona is one of these pilots, implanted with wrist ports and an unmistakable glowing red eye that connect her to her Valkyrie. But Sona has a secret: she joined the Academy in hopes of destroying Godolia from within. Eris is the leader of a crew of teenage Gearbreakers, renegades from the Badlands trained to take down Windups from the inside. After Eris is captured and brought to the capital for questioning under torture, Sona rescues her and pleads to join her crew. What neither expects is their growing attraction. Human connections sustain this dark, action-packed debut, both in the tenderness between Sona and Eris and the familial bickering that animates Eris’s crew in the midst of desperation, loss, and betrayal. The world building in this vaguely Asian, far-future dystopia leaves several questions unanswered, but its young author keeps the stakes high and uses popular tropes to great effect. The twist ending will propel its readers into the sequel. —Angela Carstensen for *Booklist*

#Science Fiction, #Space, #Queer, #Asian

**Tales of Fearless Girls** by Isabel Otter

Throughout history, stories were passed down through the oral tradition. And often, the female characters in these stories were viewed as weak, vain, jealous, or just plain boring! This enchanting anthology of 20 forgotten fairy tales features stories of strong girls from different cultures around the world. Every tale features a female heroine who approaches life with humor, wit, cunning, and bravery. The collection includes stories from countries such as Mexico, Scotland, Siberia, Iran, Japan, China, Nigeria, Spain, Italy, Germany, India, and more. Includes a story map, background information on the stories, talking points, and an index. —Linden Tree Books

#Fantasy, #Fairy tales

**The Abyss Surrounds Us** by Emily Skrutskie

Decades before Cassandra Leung was born, the world flooded and countries and continents separated, leaving everything covered in water and forcing a new way of life upon all who came
after. Cas was raised as a Reckoner trainer, destined to bond with a Reckoner (a genetically modified sea monster) named Durga, whom she will lead in battle against pirates that are part and parcel of life on the sea. But their first time out, Durga is killed and Cas kidnapped by a pirate queen for her skills with the monsters, even though she should have sunk to the bottom of the NeoPacific. Under the threat of certain death, she must train a new Reckoner, named Bao, to defend the pirates against anyone they consider an enemy. She might gain friends, or she might die trying. This is a solid, well-crafted, new adventure story with an interesting, unusual hook. Cas is a tough heroine worth rooting for, and the sea monsters themselves, not the most common of beasts, are sure to pull interest. —Stacey Comfort for Booklist

#Science Fiction, #Space, #Queer, #Romance

**Crier’s War** by Nina Varela

In a world where alchemy has led to the creation of Automae—humanoid beings who are faster, stronger, and smarter than humans—Ayla is a servant, living each day for the sole purpose of seeking revenge for her family’s death at the order of the Automae king. By killing the king’s daughter, Lady Crier, Ayla will finally see justice for her family. When Ayla accidentally saves Lady Crier’s life and is appointed as her handmaiden, it seems like the perfect opportunity. However, Ayla didn’t count on Crier’s curiosity, her kindness, or her passion for improving the human condition. Crier is meant to marry Kinok, the leader of a radical Automae group the king wishes to keep under his thumb. However, Crier finds herself drawn to Ayla, the brazen human with dark eyes. As the relationship between Crier and Ayla grows more complicated, a plot begins to unfold that could put the entire kingdom at stake. Rife with mystery, romantic tension, and political intrigue, Varela’s debut novel is perfect for readers craving queer fantasy with dense world building. —Rebecca Gonner for Booklist

#Science Fiction, #Fantasy, #Queer, #BIPOC
RELATED READING LIST TO GO WITH

Across a Field of Starlight by Blue Delliquanti

Parable of the Sower by Octavia E. Butler, Damien Duffy and John Jennings
In this graphic-novel adaptation of Octavia E. Butler’s Parable of the Sower by Damian Duffy and John Jennings, the award-winning team behind Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation, the author portrays a searing vision of America’s future. In the year 2024, the country is marred by unattended environmental and economic crises that lead to social chaos. Lauren Olamina, a preacher’s daughter living in Los Angeles, is protected from danger by the walls of her gated community. However, in a night of fire and death, what begins as a fight for survival soon leads to something much more: a startling vision of human destiny . . . and the birth of a new faith.
—Abrams Books
#Science Fiction, #Graphic Novel, #Classic, #BIPOC, #Adaptation

Always Human by Ari North
In the near-future, people use technology to give the illusion of all kinds of body modifications—but some people have “Egan’s Syndrome,” a highly sensitive immune system that rejects these “mods” and are unable to use them. Those who are affected maintain a “natural” appearance, reliant on cosmetics and hair dye at most to help them play with their looks. Sunati is attracted to Austen the first time she sees her and is drawn to what she assumes is Austen’s bravery and confidence to live life unmodded. When Sunati learns the truth, she’s still attracted to Austen and asks her on a date. Gradually, their relationship unfolds as they deal with friends, family, and the emotional conflicts that come with every romance. Together, they will learn and grow in a story that reminds us no matter how technology evolves, we will remain… always human. Rendered in beautiful detail and an extraordinary color palette, Always Human is a sweet love story told in a gentle sci-fi setting by a queer woman cartoonist, Ari North. —Little Bee Books
#Science Fiction, #Graphic Novel, #Queer
**After the Rain** by Nnedi Okorafor and John Jennings

Through a visit to her grandma and grand-aunt in a small Nigerian village, hard-edged Chicago cop Chioma connects to her past and her Nigerian heritage. In this comics adaptation of a short story by Okorafor, the descriptions of environmental horror and healing come alive through a harrowing visual interpretation. After witnessing intense violence against a young boy in Chicago, Chioma is with her family and readjusting to the rhythms of her family’s village in Nigeria. She continually comes across strange fauna, even falling into a portal between worlds on her walk home from the market. Hinting at this slipperiness between worlds, Brame uses the negative space of panel borders to include drawings of Chioma’s current location and mental state, from the plants and animals of the rural Nigerian village to the dark cityscape of Chicago. The unusual force that gets lizards to follow Chioma catches up with her and compels her to confront memories long buried. This exploration of trauma and family history through the body is perfectly adapted to the graphic medium. —Julia Rittenberg for *Booklist*

#Graphic Novel, #Horror, #Environmental, #Adaptation, #BIPOC

**Decelerate Blue** by Adam Rapp

On the solid foundation of the dystopian genre’s great forebear, George Orwell’s *1984*, Rapp constructs a frighteningly familiar world just a few ticks ahead of our own. Angela, a 15-year-old model of social discontent, is trapped in a culture in which all discourse and technology are devoted to speeding things up, allowing corporate masters to control a population too busy moving to slow down and think. Hope emerges in the form of an underground movement devoted to deceleration, in which Angela finds love with another female rebel. But, as in the tradition of classic dystopias, both hope and love are doomed. Rapp’s characters are mainly boiled down to their motivations, but Cavallaro’s sharp, slim-lined cartooning imbues a helping of personality, and his brisk, inventive page compositions keep visual interest high. Rapp uses clever linguistic devices to help define this oppressive culture, and the very structure of the form strengthens the visual metaphor, with word balloons sharply contrasted to indicate social outlook and the
infrequent use of color as a symbol for the transcendent freedom that seems so painfully beyond reach. —Jesse Karp for Booklist

#Science Fiction, #Dystopia, #Graphic Novel, #Queer

**The Darkness Outside Us** by Eliot Schrefer

Seventeen-year-old Ambrose is on an interplanetary mission to rescue his older sister Minerva, whose earlier solo mission to Saturn’s moon Titan seems to have failed. With him is 18-year-old, enigmatic Kodiak. The two boys are representatives of their respective countries, which are engaged in a cold war. Despite that, Ambrose finds himself immediately emotionally and physically attracted to Kodiak, who, nevertheless, remains cold—until, well, he isn’t. Their ship is guided by a seemingly omniscient operating system (think HAL in *2001: A Space Odyssey*) that appears dedicated to their survival, but is it? When something disastrous occurs and a shocking secret is revealed, the boys’ lives will change forever. Readers of this exciting yet thoughtful exercise will willingly suspend their disbelief that such a rescue mission would be conducted by only two people and Minerva’s mission by only her. Everything else that happens in this otherwise ingeniously plotted novel—that for some readers may tangentially evoke another movie, *Groundhog Day*—rings true and stimulates the imagination. Schrefer masterfully evokes and maintains suspense that keeps the pages turning briskly while still taking the time to limn the two boys’ touching, moving relationship. If all of this is a space opera, readers will want an encore. Bravo.—Michael Cart for Booklist

#Science Fiction, #Queer, #Romance, #Space

**On a Sunbeam** by Tillie Walden

When Mia joins a crew tasked with restoring abandoned space ruins, it’s clear she’s running from something. But between the hard work and the spirited characters of her shipmates, there’s hardly time to dwell on it. Interspersed flashbacks of strong-willed Mia at her all-girls boarding school hint at her troubles—a burgeoning romance with her classmate Grace, sneaking into the gym to (disastrously) try flying a small ship—but it’s not until she and her crewmates
Walden’s (Spinning, 2017) swirling, atmospheric artwork is phenomenal: she plays with darkness and shadows in captivating ways perfectly in keeping with the light-poor space atmosphere, and swathes of luminous, saturated color only emphasize that darkness. There aren’t many planets in the inky black, star-speckled backgrounds, but architectural structures float freely, and they’re set together at weird, surprising angles, unconstrained by gravity. There’s an organic, familiar quality to the spaces, with trees, rock formations, window seats, cathedral ceilings, and messy rooms, but the starry expanses outside every window are a stark reminder of their interstellar location. The sparking interplay between familiar and foreign is utterly mesmerizing, and the story carries that through as well: the sf components are inventive and compellingly strange, but the romance between Mia and Grace, not to mention the warm, teasing affection among Mia’s crewmates, grounds the story in a heartening, recognizable place. A remarkable, stunning comic.

—Sarah Hunter for Booklist

#Science Fiction, # Graphic Novel, #Queer

A Snake Falls to Earth by Darcie Little Badger

Before nine-year-old Nina’s great-great grandmother Rosita passes, she dictates a mysterious story in Lipan (partly lost in translation) about a fish girl in a well, which Nina is unable to forget as she grows into her teens. Meanwhile, in the Reflecting World (the land of spirits and monsters), Oli—a cottonmouth snake boy—is venturing out into the world alone for the first time, making enemies with other animal people but also friends in what seems like equal measure. What Nina and Oli don’t know is that their lives are about to converge when Oli learns his toad friend, Ami, is dying. His species is on the verge of extinction on Earth (which is inextricably linked to their world) due to, no surprise, environmental destruction caused by
humans. While on Earth, Oli and his friends help Nina as her world becomes more precarious, answering the questions she has for so long wondered about. Little Badger’s sophomore novel in the manner of traditional Lipan Apache storytelling is just as unique and enchanting as Elatsoe (2020), and it’s sure to garner her an even broader readership. Nina’s third-person perspective is beautifully ruminative compared to Oli’s faster first-person point of view, but it’s the writing on the whole that resonates most, singing like poetry with lyrical, literary wisdom. Magical, stunning, and wholly original. —Mahjabeen Syed for Booklist

#Fantasy, #BIPOC, #Environmental

**Killer of Enemies** by Joseph Bruchac

In a future in the southwest of what used to be the U.S., one fearless, lethal, spiritual young woman must fight the evil of man and the anomalies of nature to rescue her family and start again. Seventeen-year-old Lozen, Apache “Killer of Enemies,” is employed by four evil tyrants in an unstable alliance. Her job is to travel out from Haven, the former penitentiary that is now their shelter, and dispatch the Gemods (genetically modified animal monsters), bloodless zombies, and other threats to the compound. Skilled in hand-to-hand combat, armed to the hilt, and blessed with extrasensory and spiritual gifts, Lozen could easily escape, but the four Ones and their soldiers are keeping her family prisoners. Episodic high-octane chapters alternate between Lozen’s battles in the wilderness and the sinister intrigue in Haven. Though the imaginative dystopian mythology is thick and occasionally heavy, the brisk pace and nonstop action keeps things moving. This original addition to the dystopian genre ends with the open-ended promise of more to come. —Thom Barthelmes for Booklist

#Fantasy, #BIPOC #Dystopia

**The Interrogation of Ashala Wolf** by Ambelin Kwaymullina

It has been centuries since the Reckoning’s floods restored balance to the world by destroying most of humankind. Government accords now control every aspect of society, and citizens are tightly controlled, especially those possessing unexplained telekinetic abilities. Ashala Wolf, leader of
the Tribe, an escaped group of Illegals, uses her sleepwalking ability to monitor government activities and keep the Tribe hidden. After a reconnaissance mission ends in capture, Ashala is subjected to interrogations using a dangerous device that will extract her memories and reveal the Tribe’s location. To save her people, Ashala must rely on her only ally in detention center 3 to escape, but can she trust the very person who betrayed her? This genre-blending story will satisfy a wide range of readers. While character development takes a backseat to the plot-driven narrative, the multilayered story will keep teens guessing until the end. This is well-trod territory with familiar themes, but the author draws upon aboriginal Australian creation stories to bring much needed diversity to the genre. —Summer Hayes for Booklist

#Fantasy, #BIPOC, #Genre-blending, #Aboriginal Australian

**Unwind** by Neal Shusterman

Following in the footsteps of Jonathan Swift, Shusterman uncorks a Modest Proposal of his own to solve a Pro-Life/Pro-Choice dilemma. Set in a future in which abortions are outlawed but parents have the option of signing over their 13- to 17-year-olds to be used as organ donors, the tale focuses on 16-year-old Connor, who falls in with other prospective Unwinds and finds a temporary refuge (thanks to a clandestine organization with its own peculiar agenda) before being captured and sent to Happy Jack Harvest Camp. Though laced with intrigue, betrayals, and narrow squeaks, the story is propelled less by the plot (which is largely a series of long set pieces) than by an ingeniously developed cast and premise. But even readers who gravitate more to plot-driven fiction will find this present-tense page-turner thrilling, though it’s guaranteed to leave some feeling decidedly queasy—despite the (improbable) happy ending. —John Peters for Booklist

#Science Fiction, #Dystopic

**Orleans** by Sherri L. Smith

In Smith’s compelling and disturbing novel, the Gulf Coast has been formally separated from the U.S. since 2025, after a deadly plague called Delta Fever emerges from the horrific conditions following years of increasingly destructive hurricanes. A brief but effective “Before” section
summarizes years of backstory with a timeline showing the dates and casualties of seven hurricanes (starting with Katrina in 2005 and ending in 2019). There are also excerpts from the “official” declarations of quarantine (2020) and separation (2025). The “After” section begins with the dialect narrative of 15-year-old orphan Fen de la Guerre. Survivors have divided themselves into tribes based on blood type, which now matters more than race, religion, or wealth. Fen’s tribe is ambushed, and her leader and best friend, Lydia, dies in childbirth, leaving Fen to care for the baby girl. Determined to honor Lydia’s dying request to get the infant outside the Wall to the safety of the Outer Lands, Fen begins her journey and meets Daniel, a determined, naive young scientist who has illegally crossed the Wall, believing he can find a cure for Delta Fever. Alternating chapters of Fen’s strong and often lyrical voice and a third-person account from Daniel’s point of view move the complicated plot briskly. There are a few too many plot threads, but ultimately, they do not detract from the powerful, relevant themes: global warming, racism, political corruption, and the complexity of human nature. —Debbie Carton for Booklist

#{Science Fiction, #Dystopic, #Global Warming}

**RELATED READING LIST TO GO WITH**

*The Sound of Stars* by Alechia Dow

**Ship Breaker** by Paolo Bacigalupi

This YA debut by Bacigalupi, a rising star in adult science fiction, presents a dystopian future like so many YA sf novels. What is uncommon, though, is that although Bacigalupi’s future earth is brilliantly imagined and its genesis anchored in contemporary issues, it is secondary to the memorable characters. In a world in which society has stratified, fossil fuels have been consumed, and the seas have risen and drowned coastal cities, Nailer, 17, scavenges beached tankers for scrap metals on the Gulf Coast. Every day, he tries to “make quota” and avoid his violent, drug-addicted father. After he discovers a modern clipper ship washed up on the beach, Nailer thinks his fortune is made, but then he discovers a survivor
trapped in the wreckage—the “swank” daughter of a shipping-company owner. Should he slit the girl’s throat and sell her for parts or take a chance and help her? Clearly respecting his audience, Bacigalupi skillfully integrates his world building into the compelling narrative, threading the backstory into the pulsing action. The characters are layered and complex, and their almost unthinkable actions and choices seem totally credible. Vivid, brutal, and thematically rich, this captivating title is sure to win teen fans for the award-winning Bacigalupi. —Lynn Rutan for Booklist

#Science Fiction, #World Building, #Fantasy, #Environmental

The Ones We’re Meant to Find by Joan He

In He’s exhilarating and heartbreaking novel, Cee has been stranded on an island for three years with only one goal: find her sister. Meanwhile, Kasey is a young woman who wants to change the world. The narrative alternates between the perspectives of the two girls, luring readers into the mystery of Cee and her sister while exploring a civilization that is suffering from the effects of climate change. Cee’s island home is shrouded in mystery and often feels claustrophobic, as her only company is a house, a stranger’s wardrobe, and spare parts that can be used to construct a boat. Kasey, on the other hand, lives in a futuristic society where hologram parties and built-in AI are a part of everyday life. He spools out small details related to the worlds that slowly unravel the relationship between Cee on her island and Kasey in the eco-city. While the sparse details might frustrate those who want more background information, the desire to uncover the underlying mystery will keep readers invested. This fast-paced sf tale is sure to linger. —Amber Hayes for Booklist

#Science Fiction, #BIPOC, #Global warming

The Last Cuentista by Donna Barba Higuera

In 2061, with Halley’s Comet making a deadly and unstoppable journey toward Earth, a small group of scientists and their children prepare to begin civilization anew on new planet Sagan, more than 300 years away. Among them is Petra Peña, almost 13, who, while she sleeps through the next several lifetimes, will download the biology knowledge of an expert. But Petra’s true
love is the cuentos—the stories—that her grandmother, who stayed behind, told her, and she’s downloading folklore and mythology, hoping to bring all the stories of the world they’re losing. But on the journey, something goes wrong: Petra wakes to discover that in the last few centuries, the small group of people living on the ship as caretakers have become the Collective, a unit single-mindedly focused on redirecting humanity by erasing everyone’s memories of Earth—and even purging entire people, including Petra’s family, altogether. Petra alone retains her memories, and her yearning for a community pushes her to seek out the first ship of Sagan settlers and to try to reach her fellow shipmates through the cuentos she still remembers. In a measured voice that weighs enormous loss against dazzling moments of hope and connection, Higuera braids Mexican folklore with science fiction to craft a tale that remembers storytelling as the beating heart of a people. Easy to sink into and harder to leave, this gorgeously sad, keenly contemplative novel embraces what it means to truly survive. —Maggie Reagan for Booklist

#Science Fiction, #BIPOC, #Dystopic, #Mexican folklore

**Adaptation** by Malinda Lo

The birds seem driven to attack all over the continent. Communication shut-down. Martial law is declared. And high-school debate partners Reese and David see their tournament chaperon killed as they try to get back home to San Francisco. Reese has little memory of the subsequent car accident or of recovering in a strange hospital in the Nevada desert that makes her sign a nondisclosure agreement before her release. Within days, the stitches covering her body disappear, and Reese is left with fleeting recollections of a womblike cell and powerful sensations she has never before experienced. When she meets vivacious and beautiful Amber, her world spins even faster. What does it mean that she is attracted to a girl but still yearning for David? Soon Reese and David find themselves caught in a web of conspiracies that shatter her world but would do the *X-Files* proud. The pace of this sci-fi thriller picks up even further as secrets of universal proportions are revealed just before a cliff-hanger ending. Sequel? Affirmative. —Heather Booth for Booklist

#Science Fiction, #BIPOC, #Queer, #Fast Paced
**Rebel Seoul** by Axie Oh

In her brilliantly crafted debut, Oh brings us to the year 2199. The planet’s East and West have been consumed by war for the past 50 years, and the newly formed Neo Alliance (Korea, Japan, and China) are ruthless in their ambition to control the world. Enter Lee Jaewon, fresh off his military placement exam from one of Neo Seoul’s elite military academies and assigned to the Tower—home of the government’s most top-secret project. Here Jaewon meets Tera, a teenage girl who has undergone years of military testing to turn her into a supersoldier with the ability to pilot one of Korea’s advanced God Machines, a weapon capable of leveling a city block in one blow. Abandoned by those who were meant to love him the most, Jaewon is committed to doing his part to contribute to the war effort. But as he and Tera grow closer, and the mystery of his father’s death comes to light, Jaewon begins to question his loyalties. Will love for another open his eyes to the true nature of war? Equal parts K-drama (Korean drama) and sci-fi blockbuster, Oh blends futuristic tech, authentic Korean culture, and romance in this complex, utterly engrossing, and wholly fresh story that is sure to entice a wide array of readers.

—Rebecca Kuss for *Booklist*

**#Science Fiction, #BIPOC, #Romance, #Dystopia**

**RELATED READING LIST TO GO WITH**

**War Girls** by Tochi Onyebuchi

**Children of Blood and Bone** by Tomi Adeyemi

Magic is gone in Zélie’s kingdom; it was violently eradicated by power-hungry King Saran, and anyone with the capacity for magic abilities—the maji, who all have snow-white hair—is now a second-class citizen. But Zélie holds tight to the old stories, and she’s secretly learning to fight, unwilling to take the unjust treatment of her people lying down. Meanwhile, Saran’s daughter, Amari, has escaped her cruel father’s palace with a relic containing the power to reignite magic among maji, and after a chance run-in with Zélie and her brother,
Tzain, the trio traverses the kingdom, hoping to use the relic to restore magic to every maji. But Amari’s own brother, Inan, who’s convinced magic is too dangerous to permit, is hot on their trail. Adeyemi’s expansive debut plunges readers into a dense, vivid world full of intriguing politics, evocative magic, and brutal violence. Cinematic pacing, alternating viewpoints, and well-choreographed action make the pages fly toward the cliff-hanger ending, which will surely leave readers eager for the next installment. Though she often uses tried-and-true fantasy tropes, Adeyemi keeps it fresh with an all-black cast of characters, a meaningful emphasis on fighting for justice, a complex heroine saving her own people, and a brand of magic made more powerful by the strength of heritage and ancestry. Perfect for fans of the expansive fantasy worlds of Leigh Bardugo, Daniel José Older, and Sabaa Tahir. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** This debut trilogy opener is already building lots of buzz, thanks to a movie deal in the works and a huge marketing campaign. —Sarah Hunter for Booklist

#BIPOC, #African Folklore, #Fantasy

**Half of a Yellow Sun** by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Adichie surpasses her award-winning debut, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), with a magnificent novel in which the dreams and tragedies of 1960s Nigeria are filtered through the minds and experiences of stupendously compelling characters. From page 1, an unbreakable bond is forged between the reader and Ugwu, a bright and kind young teen who has left his barebones village to serve as houseboy to Odenigbo, a robust and radical professor full of hope for newly independent Nigeria in spite of ingrained ethnic divides and colonialism’s deleterious aftereffects. Ugwu becomes devoted to Odenigbo’s beautiful and cultured lover, Olanna, as Odenigbo’s treacherous mother plots against her, and her estranged twin sister, tough and sardonic Kainene, takes up with a gentle Englishman. The momentous psychological and ethical pressures Adichie engineers could support an engrossing novel in their own right, but her great subject is Nigeria’s horrific civil war, specifically the fate of Biafra, the doomed breakaway Igbo state. “Half a yellow sun” is Biafra’s emblem of hope, but the horrors and misery Adichie’s characters endure transform the promising image of a rising sun into that of a sun setting grimly over a blood-soaked and starving
land. Adichie has masterminded a commanding, sensitive epic about a vicious civil war that, for all its particular nightmares, parallels every war predicated by prejudice and stoked by outside powers hungry for oil and influence. —Donna Seaman for Booklist

#BIPOC, #Civil War, #Fiction

*Rise of the Red Hand* by Olivia Chadha

A rare, searing portrayal of the future of climate change in South Asia. A streetrat turned revolutionary and the disillusioned hacker son of a politician try to take down a ruthlessly technocratic government that sacrifices its poorest citizens to build its utopia. —Erewhon Books

#Science Fiction, #Cyberpunk, #Apocalyptic, #Climate Change

*Shuri: A Black Panther Novel* by Nic Stone

Shuri, 13, may be the baby sister to T’Challa, king of Wakanda, but her knowledge of all things science and technology deem her a force in her own right. The queen thinks Shuri should spend less time in her lab and more time socializing, but Shuri’s convinced that she’s better off tinkering with new gadgets and Vibranium experiments. With the challenge ritual coming up, Shuri has been busy with just that—designing a new Black Panther habit for her brother, infused with the Heart-Shaped Herb. She soon finds, however, that she must stop an invasion of her beloved Wakanda or else the nation and their supply of Heart-Shaped Herb (which gives the Black Panther their powers) is doomed. Together, Shuri and her Dora Milaje—in-training, K’Marah, set out on a quest that begins what readers will hope to be an ongoing series. Seasoned Marvel fans will delight in Ororo Monroe’s big-sister role to a young Shuri, while all will appreciate getting into the head of Wakanda’s resident genius and (hopefully) soon-to-be Black Panthress. While we do hear directly from Shuri in her mission-log notes, the action of the story feels muted at times by third-person narration. Nevertheless, the science, comedy, and unapologetic Black girl magic will make this title a surefire hit. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** The combination of best-selling Stone and the scene-stealing Shuri from the blockbuster *Black Panther* is a match made in high-demand heaven. —Melanie Marshall for Booklist

#Fantasy, #BIPOC, #Media, #Marvel
Okoye to the People by Ibi Zoboi

Zoboi’s exploration of Okoye and the Dora Milaje adds color to the popular Black Panther characters while highlighting the casualties of gentrification. In this story taking place before the events of the movie, Okoye has just joined the honored ranks of the Dora Milaje, and she is excited to represent her people while on a diplomatic mission to New York City. She expects opulence in New York and is surprised to come across poverty in Brownsville, Brooklyn. The more Okoye gets to know the teens who live in the neighborhood, the more similarities she sees between her people and the forgotten residents of Brownsville. When a real estate mogul introduces a dangerous new drug to destroy the area, Okoye joins the people and fights to save their community. In her compelling story, Zoboi effectively underlines the resilience of Black people and the ability to find joy in times of strife. While the drug that is introduced is fantastical, its side effects are rooted in reality. Fans of Marvel will appreciate this in-depth look at Okoye and the parallels Zoboi draws between Wakanda and the people of Brownsville, Brooklyn.

HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: The popularity of Black Panther in the hands of such a skilled, sharp writer as best-selling, award-winning Zoboi means this one’s liable to fly off the shelf.

—Amber Hayes for Booklist

#Fantasy, #BIPOC, #Media, #Marvel