AFRICAN AMERICAN FICTION READER’S ADVISORY

KDLA
2018
Rich and storied tradition
Spans from slave narratives and the Harlem Renaissance to Urban fiction and romance
Charles W. Chestnutt (1858-1932)
Harlem Renaissance (Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman), 1920’s-1930’s
Great Depression
Civil Rights
Black arts era
Black power era
CURRENT

- Covers all genres and started its own: Urban Fiction
- Awards: BCALA Literary Awards and Street Lit Book Award Medal
- Beginning of 20th century, popularity of self-published “street lit”
A.k.a. Street Lit; Urban Lit.; Ghetto fiction; Hip Hop Lit.; Gangsta Lit.

Two main types: Street Fiction and Urban Erotica

Portrays the struggles, triumphs, & tragedies of African American characters told in the language of the streets

Explicit stories of drug dealers, pimps, sex workers, etc. and focuses on urban violence, sexuality, and racism.

Themes of survival and the code of the streets

Popular in American cities with a large African American population.

Controversial
Origins in a small publishing house called Holloway House in the early 1970’s

Black crime fiction/”black experience” fiction

Robert Beck (Iceberg Slim) & Donald Goines - pioneers

Renaissance of lesser know authors in the later 1970’s: Roland Jefferson & Odie Hawkins

At the same time and forward-movement of middle-class black professionals from the ghettos to the suburbs and mainstream careers

Authors: John Edgar Wideman, Paule Marshall, Andrea Lee, Jake Lamar
True To The Game by Teri Woods (1998)

The Coldest Winter Ever by Sister Souljah (1999)

Let That Be The Reason by Vickie M. Stringer (2001)


Other publishers: Augustus, Cartel, Melodrama, Strebor

More current popular authors: K’wan Foye, Shannon Holmes, Shannon Turner, Wahida Clark

Highly changeable & dynamic authors; new ones every month
Authentic voice and rhythm (authors)

Soundtrack is rap music

Similar to fictional and true crime stories

Usually in trilogies or series with one main character or a large cast of characters

Fast-paced and dialogue driven

High degree of suspense

There is a lighter side
Popular themes:
- Love stories
- Coming-of-age
- Gangster sagas
- Bad girls
- Short stories and novellas
LOVE STORIES

- Tracy Brown: *Black* and *The Dime Piece* series
- Wahida Clark: Thug series
- Keisha Ervin: *Chyna Black, Torn, Material Girl*
- Tu-Shonda L. Whitaker: Flip Side of the Game series
- Teri Woods: True To The Game series
- Shannon Holmes: *B-More Careful*
- Chunichi: *A Gangster’s Girl Saga, Return of a Gangster’s Girl*
- Treasure Hernandez: *The Flint Saga*
- De’nesha Diamond: *Hustlin’ Divas*
COMING-OF-AGE

- T.N. Baker: The Sheisty Series
- Mark Anthony: *Lady’s Night*
- Treasure E. Blue: Harlem Girl Lost series
- Tracy Brown: *Criminal Minded* and The Snapped series
- Endy: In My Hood series
- Jihad: *Baby Girl*
- D. (Kenji Jasper): Got series
- Sister Souljah: The Coldest Winter Ever series
- Lisa Lennox: Crack Head series
- Vickie Stringer: Let That Be The Reason series
- Nikki Turner: *Riding Dirty on I-95*
- Omar Tyree: *Flyy Girl*
GANGSTER SAGAS

- Wahida Clark: Payback Is a Mutha series
- JaQuavis Coleman: The Cartel series and The Dopeman’s Trilogy
- Quentin Carter: Amongst Thieves
- CA$H: Bonded By Blood
- Erick S. Gray: Crave All Lose All serie
- Joy King (aka Deja): Stackin’ Paper series
- K’wan: Gangsta: An Urban Tragedy, Hoodlum, and The Hood Rat series
- Teri Woods: The Dutch series and The Deadly Reigns series
BAD GIRLS

- Deja King (aka Joy): Bitch series
- Vickie M. Stringer: The Dirty Red series
- Kiki Swinson: Wifey series
- Meesha Mink: Real Wifey series
- Nikki Turner: Hustler’s Wife series
- Karen Williams: Dirty To The Grave
SHORT STORIES/NOVELLAS/NONFICTION

- Nikki Turner Presents...Street Chronicles series
- Girls from Da Hood series
- Around The Way Girls series
- Jay-Z: Decoded
- Nathan McCall: Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America
- Felicia “Snoop” Pearson & David Ritz: Grace After Midnight: A Memoir
- Tupak Shakur: The Rose that Grew from Concrete
- Karrine Steffans: Confessions of a Video Vixen
Sexual relations take center stage with street life sometimes as the backdrop.

Zane is the genre pioneer.

Due to the subject matter, Urban Erotica is found mainly in short story anthologies. There are a few full-length novels.
Allison Hobbs: Double Dippin series

Mark Anthony: *Dogism*

Pynk: *Sexaholics*

Noire: *Candy Licker, G-Spot, and Unzipped*

Zane: Addicted series

Short Stories: Flexin’ and Sexin’ series; Sex Chronicles series and Flava series by Zane
Until the 1970's: Samuel R. Delany

African Americans have traditionally not read because they don’t identify with any of the characters

History of slavery rewritten: Africans as masters and Warlocks, Europeans as slaves

Octavia Butler: *Kindred* & *Wild Seed*, writes from a black perspective, but themes are universal, more accessible to the average reader

Steven Barnes/Tanavarie Due

Nalo Hopkinson: *Brown Girl In The Ring* (1998)

Authors inject rhythms takes from histories in Africa, the U.S., & the Caribbean

New science fiction often called speculative fiction

Short story writers: Linda Addison & Nisi Shawl

Short story authors turned novelists: Francis Ray, Sinclair LeBeau, Donna Hill, and Loure Bussey

*Entwined Destinies* by Rosalind Welles (real name Elsie B. Washington)-possibly the first African American romance novel written by an African American author (1980)

Sandra Kitt’s *Adam & Eva*
ROMANCE AUTHORS OF YESTERDAY & TODAY

- Sandra Kitt
- Francis Ray
- Anita Richmond Bunkley
- Lynn Emery
- E. Lynn Harris
- Donna Hill
- Rochelle Alers
- Kayla Perrin
GENERAL FICTION

- Colson Whitehead, Pat G’Orge-Walker, Shelton Johnson, Tiphanie Yanique, Kimberla Lawson Roby
MYSTERY/SUSPENSE

- Early authors: Rudolph Fisher, Walter A. Roberts, Chester Himes, Ishmael Reed, Nikki Baker, Barbara Neely, Gar Anthony Haywood
- Walter Mosley-Easy Rawlins mysteries
- Attica Locke
- Nora DeLoach
- Eleanor Taylor Bland
- Paula L. Woods
Dilemma—goes in Christian Fiction or African American Fiction?

“Christian themes are part of the moral and philosophical fabric of who [African-Americans] are as a people”—Mattison

New(er): Tia McCollors, Kimberley Cash Tate and Booker T. Mattison

Veterans: Victoria Christopher Murray, Sharon Ewell Foster, & Vanessa Davis Griggs
African American readers usually like personal recommendations rather than canned advertisements when it comes to books.

Enjoy book clubs because they want to talk about what they read.

Reading is a social activity.

Readers of Urban Fiction are diverse so don’t assume or stereotype. Most Urban Fiction readers are African American, but don’t assume that all African Americans want to read Urban Fiction.

Don’t assume that your library lacks the audience for Urban Fiction. Purchase some and display them and see if they circulate.
BRAND NEW TITLES

- *If Only For One Night* by Victoria Christopher Murray & ReShonda Tate Billingsley
- *Seeking Sarah: A Novel* by ReShonda Tate Billingsley
- *Finding Gideon* by Eric Jerome Dickey
- *Jazz Moon* by Joe Okonkwo
- *The Yearning: A Novel* by Mohale Mashigo
- *No Loyalty* by De’Nesha Diamond
- *Hustle Hard (If It Ain’t About The Money, book 2)* by Saundra
- *The Banks Sisters Complete (Book 4 in a series)* by Nikki Turner
- *And Then There Was Me* by Sadeqa Johnson
- *Games Women Play* by Zaire Crown
- *Best Laid Plans* by Brenda Jackson
RESOURCES

- Streetfiction.org
RESOURCES, CONT.

- http://www.wrl.org/books-and-reading/adults/100-african-american-writers-mostly-fiction
- http://www.cincinnatilibrary.org/booklists/?id=africanamericanwriters
- http://aalbc.com/


- *African-American Detective Fiction Writers, Heroes, and Heroines.*

  Erich, William E. Paper presented at the Annual Fall Language Arts Conference (Bloomington, IN, November 1993)