

IDENTITY & BELONGING

● Suggested for ages 8-11 ●

The aims of The Conscious Child: Family Book Discussion Kits are: 1) To celebrate diverse voices; and 2) to help facilitate family discussions about racial equity, identity, and justice. Included in this kit are discussion questions for each book, and a list of further recommended reading.

CHECK OUT THESE KITS TOO!

- Immigration & Refugees
- Justice & Systemic Racism
- Solidarity & Activism

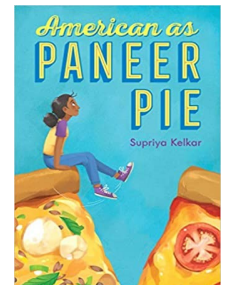
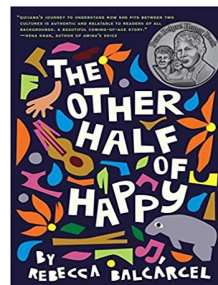
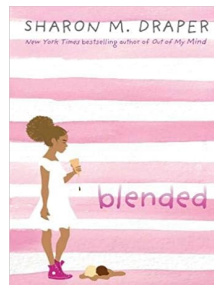
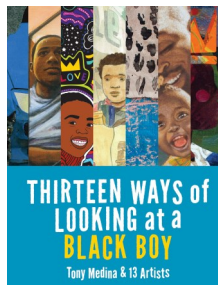
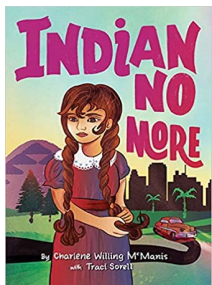


The Lane Libraries, 2021

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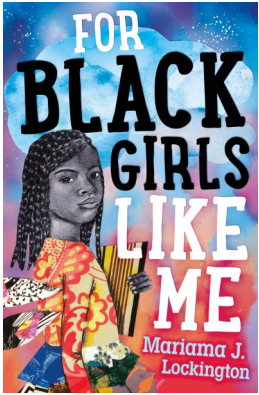


IDENTITY & BELONGING: Further Recommended Reading



- **Indian No More** by Charlene Willing McManis with Traci Sorrell
- **Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Boy** by Tony Medina
- **Blended** by Sharon M. Draper

- **The Other Half of Happy** by Rebecca Balcárcel
- **The Best at It** by Maulik Pancholy
- **American as Paneer Pie** by Supriya Kelkar



FOR BLACK GIRLS LIKE ME by Mariama J. Lockington

BEFORE READING: Define and discuss **microaggressions**. (Merriam-Webster definition: "A comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group.") As you read, try to identify the many microaggressions Keda experiences throughout the book. How do these make her feel? Can you think of any microaggressions that have been directed at you? Or that you have directed (intentionally or unintentionally) at others?

DURING/AFTER READING:

- Compare Keda's first day of school at El Rio Charter Academy to Eve's.
 - How does Keda feel when she hears Katy say the N-word? How do Keda's classmates respond to hearing it? What would you do in that situation?
 - In the chapter "June in the Desert," Keda thinks, "I want a mother who sees me. Glistening. Even under all this cracked and flaking skin" (p. 154). Why do you think she feels that way?
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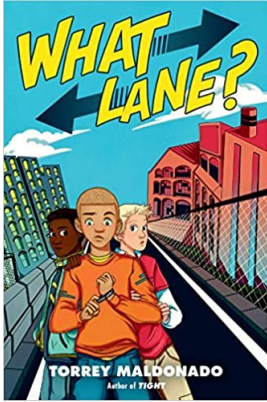
BLACK BROTHER, BLACK BROTHER by Jewell Parker Rhodes

BEFORE READING: Define and discuss examples of **colorism**: "A practice of discrimination by which those with lighter skin are treated more favorably than those with darker skin. This practice is a product of racism in the United States, in that it upholds the white standards of beauty and benefits white people in the institutions of oppression (media, medical world, etc.)." -National Conference for Community and Justice (<https://www.nccj.org/colorism-0>). See the article "The Difference Between Racism and Colorism" (<https://time.com/4512430/colorism-in-america>) for important talking points.

DURING/AFTER READING:

- In what ways do people treat Trey and the boys' father differently than Donte and their mother?
 - After Donte is arrested, his mother says, "School-to-prison pipeline. This is how it starts. Arresting kids of color" (p. 23). Research the school-to-prison pipeline. How does Donte's arrest relate?
 - How does Donte change as he learns to fence? In what ways does he begin to think differently?
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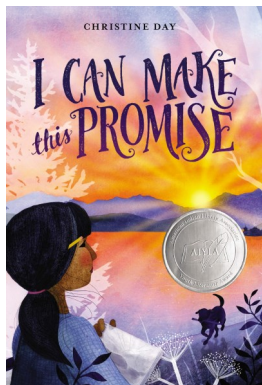
- Keda and Lena have a strong friendship. What makes Lena such a good friend?
 - When Keda's mother becomes angry at a dressing room attendant for describing Keda as "just some Black girl," she says, "People just can't see past color can they?" (p. 198). How and why does Keda react to the idea of "seeing past color"?
 - What do you think Keda means when she says, "My skin is a home and a hurt" (p. 317)?
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- In the chapter "Book Sense," Zarra shares her excitement over reading about women fencers and fencers of color. Discuss why representation is so important, particularly for children. (Read Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop's seminal essay, "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors"—available at <https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf>—for important talking points, and use the included graphic "Diversity in Children's Books 2018" to further your discussion.)
 - Also in the chapter "Book Sense," Trey wonders, "Why around here are fencers mainly white?" Coach replies, "Racial bias. But class bias, too. Public schools don't offer fencing. Private schools do" (p. 203). Discuss how racial and class biases can affect children's opportunities.
 - How do Donte and Trey's friends support them? What specific actions do they take to make the brothers feel safer and more included at school? What do you think it means to be an ally?



WHAT LANE? by Torrey Maldonado

DURING/AFTER READING:

- In what ways is Stephen treated differently from his white friends throughout the book?
- When Dan starts noticing the ways Stephen is treated differently, how does he stand up for his friend? What could you do if you witnessed similar prejudice? Brainstorm with your family about ways you can confront and take action against racism.
- During the class discussion about race in Chapter 22, Elizabeth says, “I don’t even see race. I just see humans,” and, “Why are we even talking about this?” (p. 89). Why is this **colorblind** attitude problematic? What could Elizabeth do to become a better ally to her classmates?



I CAN MAKE THIS PROMISE by Christine Day

DURING/AFTER READING:

- How does Edie feel when her teacher asks her “What are you?” (p. 2). How would you feel?
- In Chapter 27, as Edie sketches Old Man House, her mother reminds her to add people to her drawing: “‘Don’t worry,’ Mom coos. ‘It’s a common mistake. Landscape artists have been getting it wrong for

years, for generations. But the American West has never been an empty wilderness. It has always had people and architecture, civilizations and traditions. If you want to draw these landscapes, Edie, please do it right by recognizing how full they are. Find the beauty others have missed, and show it the way only someone like you can’” (p. 199). Why do you think it’s so important to Edie’s mother that she represents the Native peoples of the region in her artwork?

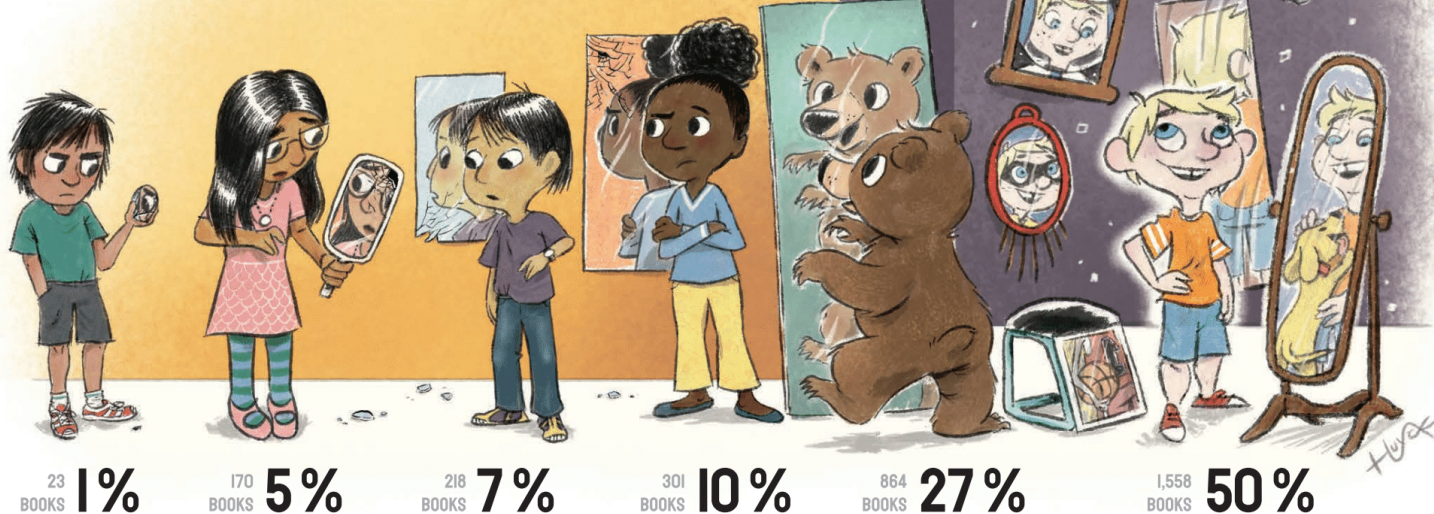
- How did you feel when you found out what happened to Edith Graham?



- Read the Author's Note starting on p. 255, and research Sacheen Littlefeather and the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. (For a February 2020 article about current threats to the ICWA go to: <https://www.vox.com/identities/2020/2/20/21131387/indian-child-welfare-act-court-case-foster-care>)
- After finishing the book, reflect on the titles of the prologue ("Where Are You From?") and the epilogue ("Where Are You Going?"). What is the significance of these chapter titles?
- Reflect on the title of the book. Who does Edie make this promise to and how might she honor it in the future?

DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018

Percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds based on the 2018 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison:
ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp



**American
Indians/
First Nations**

Latinx

**Asian Pacific
Islander/Asian
Pacific American**

**African/
African
American**

Animals/Other

White

Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen
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The CCBC inventory includes 3,134 books published in 2018. This graphic would not have been possible without the statistics compiled by the CCBC, and the review and feedback we received from Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Horning, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner. Many thanks.