

## HARINGEY LIBRARIES: BOOK LIST and REVIEWS for Adults

Enjoy a selection of black history & culture books, or ones written by black authors. Selections have been made and book reviews have been written by library staff, book club attendees and community groups.

If you would like to add your own review, please send it to [libraries@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:libraries@haringey.gov.uk)

All titles listed below are available for loan from the [online catalogue](#). We also have a selection of black history and culture themed eBooks available by visiting this link <https://haringey.overdrive.com/collection/1109644>

### BOOK LIST

#### Adult Fiction:

- ***Another Country*** by James Baldwin
- ***Girl, Woman, Other*** by Bernadine Evaristo
- ***Salvage the Bones*** by Jesmyn Ward
- ***The Blacker the Berry*** by Wallace Thurman
- ***The Bluest Eye*** by Toni Morrison
- ***Their Eyes Were Watching God*** by Zola Neale Hurston
- ***Well Read Black Girl*** by Glory Edim

#### Adult Nonfiction:

- ***Black and British: A Forgotten History*** by David Olusoga
- ***How to Argue with a Racist*** by Adam Rutherford
- ***How to be an Antiracist*** by Ibram X. Kendi
- ***Me and White Supremacy*** by Layla Saad
- ***Natives: Race & Class in the Ruins of Empire*** by Akala
- ***Never Again: Rock Against Racism and the Anti-Nazi League 1976-1982*** by David Renton
- ***The Autobiography of Malcom X*** by Malcom X and Alex Haley
- ***They Can't Kill Us All*** by Wesley Lowery
- ***The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*** by Khalil Gibran Muhammad
- ***Walls Come Tumbling Down: The Music and Politics of Rock Against Racism, 2 Tone and Red Wedge*** by Daniel Rachel
- ***Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*** by Reni Eddo-Lodge

### BOOK REVIEWS:

#### ***THE BLACKER THE BERRY*** by Wallace Thurman

*The Blacker the Berry is a truly classic novel and one from a great time period - the Harlem Renaissance. Wallace Thurman weaves an unfamiliar tale of an African American woman who struggles with her skin colour, the acceptance of family members and racism within the black community.*

*At the time **The Blacker the Berry** was written, it was the first novel of its kind to address issues widely known among the black community, but never discussed.*

*It's about a young woman, Emma Lou, who's darker skin tone, brings anguish and breeds hatred not only for herself but from her lighter skinned relatives. Set in the 1920s, the main character travels from Boise, Idaho to Harlem, New York in hope of escaping her problems back home. However, she only runs into deeper problems in the new city.*

*Emma Lou shares with us her journey for self-love and social equality. Every woman of any race or background can relate to this book in some manner. would encourage all people of colour to read it and examine their own views on skin colour and share them with others in hopes of breaking down barriers.*

*The Blacker the Berry is a book for the ages.*

**Reviewer: D.M**

### **THE COLOR PURPLE** by Alice Walker

*This novel of love, in its many forms, and the general unfairness and injustices of life's battles- loss and camaraderie - faced and experienced by people of colour generally, but women especially. Set in 1930's America it highlights women's oppression - that which existed within the African-American community - exposed and hidden, as well as externally in the wider community of the American-South. The main character is an abused and uneducated woman struggling for empowerment, justice, safety, happiness and love. Published in 1982 it was awarded a Pulitzer prize in 1983, and Alice Walker's voice has such richness in its' portrayal of female characters and use of African-American English, which touched me when I first read it in my adolescence, and continues to do so now. I find it worthy of re-visiting again and again, as it speaks of many issues including women's oppression, racial and sexual discrimination – still prevalent today as issues and topics we seem to have come so far with but are yet to overcome – there's still a long way to go.*

*So good in fact it was made into a film: in 1985 Steven Spielberg directed an acclaimed film adaptation of the book. Starring Whoopi Goldberg as the main character (Celie), Danny Glover as Albert and Oprah Winfrey (Sofia). The Color Purple was also adapted for the theatre, and the first Broadway production premiered in 2005.*

*In all formats it is a beautiful story to learn from and gain understanding about the trials and tribulations women across all cultures of the world face on a global scale – here it speaks of the added pressures faced and lived by African-American women of colour.*

**Reviewer: V.O**

### **THE LONELY LONDONERS** by Samuel Selvon

*The book portrays the journeys of those who came to London during the 1950's when Britain opened its doors to all citizens of British colonies, inviting them to come to the country without needing a visa, and they came searching for a dream life. At this time, there were more jobs available in Britain than could be filled and some of these employment opportunities were advertised to many in the Caribbean. The reality of British winters, discrimination and survival in a foreign land is portrayed with honesty and wit in Selvon's book.*

*Many of those who accepted the invitation to come to the UK discovered that they were not welcomed when they arrived. Many were young men who came with the intention of finding a home and a steady job so they could send for their family or stay for a 'few years' and then return home to a better life they had saved for.*

*The characters help you to explore the isolation, identity crises, nostalgia, displacement, segregation and discrimination of people coming to a foreign land. Some of the key characters include Moses, Galahad, Big City, Cap and Tolroy. The ability to be inside the characters' heads as they go about their daily life in a 'hostile' country*

*in search of employment and with dreams of a better life lets you understand what your grandparents, parents and their peers had to go through when they first came to the UK*

*Moses sums it up beautifully 'It has people living in London who don't know what happening in the room next to them... It divides up into little worlds'. Moses' character also serves to guide the reader through the experience of looking for work and being rejected because of the colour of your skin and the interracial relationships that happen as the immigrants have left their loved ones behind.*

*Their lives intertwine when they meet up on Sundays and share experiences. The meetings also serve to reinforce the sense of a tight knit community who have no choice but to rely on each other for support as a way of dealing with their loneliness.*

*The book not only serves as a narrative insight into life in the 50's for those early immigrants but also describes characters that seem familiar even today.*

**Reviewer: L.C**

**THE MEMORY OF LOVE** by Aminatta Forna

*In contemporary Sierra Leone, a devastating civil war has left an entire populace with secrets to keep. In the capital's hospital, a gifted young surgeon is plagued by demons that are beginning to threaten his livelihood. Elsewhere in the hospital lies a dying man who was young during the country's turbulent postcolonial years and has stories to tell that are far from heroic.*

*As past and present intersect in the buzzing city, these men are drawn unwittingly closer by a British psychologist with good intentions, and into the path of one woman at the centre of their stories. A work of breath-taking writing and rare wisdom, The Memory of Love seamlessly weaves together two generations of African life to create a story of loss, absolution, and the indelible effects of the past—and, in the end, the very nature of love.*

**Reviewer: M.A.K**

**SO LONG A LETTER** by Mariama Ba

*It is a brilliant and first novel of the writer Mariama Ba. So Long a Letter is written in the form of a letter between two women, Ramatoulaye and Aissatou. It is a semi-autobiographical account of Mariama's marriage and the life of women living in an Islamic and male dominated Senegalese society.*

*We are introduced to Ramatoulaye in the first chapter as a woman mourning the sudden death of her husband Modou of over 25 years and the role she has to take as the widow in the proceedings within the Islamic faith. We soon realise that Ramatoulaye is not only dealing with the grief of the loss of her husband but also the loss of her marriage through the practice of polygamy. We learn about Modou her husband and his decision to introduce another woman much younger to their marriage, who happens to be a school mate of Ramatoulaye's daughter Aissatou.*

*Ramatoulaye's longtime school friend, Aissatou (who her daughter is named after) becomes her confidante and support during her grief and loss. Through an exchange of letters, they talk about their marriage and friendship. Aissatou talks about her experiences in her marriage after her husband takes on a second wife. But unlike Ramatoulaye who chose to remain in her marriage, Aissatou deals with her polygamous marriage by divorcing her husband and moving to the United States.*

*I thoroughly enjoyed the discussions that take place between the two women providing the reader with their intimate and deep analysis of their society; particularly on how they both handle the polygamous marriages that*



*they have been brought up to accept. It touches on many issues of inequality, class, sexism, feminism, modernism, religion, and other issues that remain topics of debate today within African societies, and society in general.*

*An excellent and short novel packed with a tremendous and detailed insight and offers an opportunity for discussion on marriage and relationships between gender and inequality.*

