READs Book List

By simply sending us a short review of a book from this list, you can earn $15 in the form of a VISA Gift Card! This is NOT a book report, just write 1 paragraph (4+ sentences) of your thoughts on the book! We want to know YOUR thoughts, because YOUR voice MATTERS! This review does NOT have to be completed in the same month you receive the book in the mail. Please note that we ONLY send out up to two books per person per month!

All MYVoice programs are open to Minnesota young people ages 12-22 with any lived experience in the foster care and/or adoption systems.

***You are the Prize* by Amnoni Myers**

("Seeing Yourself Beyond the Imperfections of Your Trauma")

This memoir by Black queer author Amnoni (pronounced Ah-mon-knee) Myers describes a childhood of abuse and neglect, including many years in kinship care and foster care. She covers her struggles to enter and succeed in college, as well as later losses and successes, including the death of a sibling and an internship in the White House with Barack Obama.

Note to readers: This is a book with intense with potentially triggering content, so take breaks, remember your self-care skills, and lean on others who care about you if it gets tough when reading. You do not have to finish the book if the content is more than you feel up for dealing with right now. Also, the copies of this book that we currently have on hand are signed by the author, Amnoni Myers! About 190 pages.

***Adulting 101: How Not to Starve!* by Anthony Stover**

("These basic recipes and tips will keep you in the kitchen without burning it down!")

A colorful and image-filled look at how a young person can stock their first kitchen, how to cook easy meals up to more complex ones, along with important food safety information and tons of useful kitchen tips! Part of a series of books by author Anthony Stover. Anthony grew up in the foster care system and writes from the perspective, "Teach them early, what we learned late!" About 80 pages and colorful pictures on every page.

***Adulting 101: How Not to Get Fired!* by Anthony Stover**

("Because life does not come with instructions, only advice")

A colorful and image-filled look at how a young person can plan for success by creating their first resume, nailing their job interview, avoiding common pitfalls in that process, and then keeping that job! This book also includes important information about your rights as a worker. Part of a series of books by author Anthony Stover. Anthony grew up in the foster care system and writes from the perspective, "Teach them early, what we learned late!" About 130 pages, tons of pictures and some pages to fill out or do brainstorms.

***Adulting 101: My First Apartment* by Anthony Stover**

("Because life does not come with instructions, only advice")

A colorful and image-filled look at how a young person can plan to be successful in their first apartment, dealing with roommates, safety, logistics, and more. Includes tips for new car owners too. Part of a series of books by author Anthony Stover. Anthony grew up in the foster care system and writes from the perspective, "Teach them early, what we learned late!" Less than 100 pages, tons of pictures and checklists to fill out.

***Beneath the Mask: For Teen Adoptees* by Various Authors/C.A.S.E.**
("Teens and Young Adults Share Their Stories")
A collection of 2 to 3-page essays by teens who were adopted, organized by different "stuck spots" such as *Identity*, *Difference*, *Loyalty*, and *Missing or Difficult Information*. Each essay is followed up by reflection questions, creative prompts, and journaling opportunities. Less than 100 pages, but over half of the book is essays, with lots of pages for writing and reflection.
Note to readers: This book is about being adopted but isn't just for youth who are adopted—anyone can read and review it!

***Hey Pretty!* by Maya Marchelle**
(*"Teens and Young Adults Share Their Stories")*
A coloring book starring Black girls by Minneapolis author, Maya Michelle. Full of affirmations and some religious ("God Himself") content, this book aims to remind Black girls of their beauty and worth.

***Shopping Cart Boy: Poems of My Life* by Joshua Jordan G.H.**
In this book 16-year-old Cree writer, Joshua Jordan G.H., documents time spent with his mother, her death when he was 12, and after that, years he spent in foster care and homeless. He documents the complications and importance of family and kinship, as well as describing the realities of addiction and poverty. Joshua's work reflects his Indigenous heritage, city life, and 'rez' life. He dedicates this book, "to all the kids who have been taken from their mothers." 40 pages of poems with black and white photographs.

***Families Change: A Book for Children Experiencing Termination of Parental Rights* by Julie Nelson**
This short picture book is written for kids whose families are changing due to foster care, adoption, incarceration, addiction, and other life events. It describes the complex and sometimes conflicted feelings that these changes can create. This book also includes resources for adults who are supporting young people through these life events. 32 pages with lots of colorful illustrations.
Note to readers: This book is written for younger children, but readers of any age can read and review it!

***Already Enough: A Path to Self-Acceptance* by Lisa Olivera**
As a newborn baby, author Lisa Olivera was abandoned by her mother outdoors behind a rock in the woods. Lisa was found and adopted, but carried a story with her for years that something must be wrong with her—otherwise why would her mother have left her? Now an adult and a therapist, Lisa "guides us through reframing our stories so we can remember that we are already enough, just as we are." This author is a white, straight, same-race adoptee.
Note to readers: This book was written for adults, but others may also appreciate its combination of personal narrative and opportunities for reflection designed to help the reader develop true self-acceptance. 256 pages.

***Locomotion* by Jacqueline Woodson**
This novel tells the fictional story of Lonnie C. Motion, an 11-year-old African American boy in Brooklyn, New York who ended up in foster care after his parents died when he was 7. This book is told from Lonnie's perspective as he tries to make sense of his earlier life with his parents and sister, as well as life events such as time spent in group homes, his current foster home with Miss Edna, his ongoing separation from his little sister, and his present experience as a fifth grader. This book consists entirely of poetry written by Lonnie's character as he sorts out his feelings and describes different aspects of his complicated young life. About 150 pages, but it seems much shorter because it's poetry!

***The Girl I Am, Was, and Never Will Be: A Speculative Memoir of Transracial Adoption* by Shannon Gibney**
This book by Minneapolis-based author and transracial adoptee Shannon Gibney, "explores the often surreal experience of growing up as a mixed-Black transracial adoptee through the stories of two girls on two different timelines bridged by a mysterious portal." Throughout the story, Gibney includes photos and documents from her own adoption and life as she explores identity, possibility, and the "absurdities of the adoptee experience." 230 pages.

***What I Carry* by Jennifer Longo**
Inspired by her own daughter, an early-childhood adoptee with experience in foster care and informed by interviews she conducted with teens in foster care, Jennifer Longo writes a fictional story of Muir, a white 17-year-old who is about to age out of the system. Muir has gone through endless moves while trying to maintain her freedom. But in a new household again, she faces new choices about relationships, attachments, and making her own way in the world. 300+ pages.

***You Only Live Once, David Bravo* by Mark Oshiro**
David Bravo has a disastrous first week of 7th grade, but luckily a talking, shapeshifting, time-travelling dog arrives to help. But then things get even more complicated! In addition to being at a new school and being asked invasive questions about his adoption, his Latinx identity, and the birth parents he never knew, David is now jumping across timelines and things are getting messy. All the while, David is trying to figure out who he is, how to speak his truth, and what exactly his feelings are for his best friend, Antoine. Written by queer, Latinx, transracial adoptee author, Mark Oshiro.
Note to readers: This book is fantastical in many fun respects. 375 pages.

***For Black Girls Like Me* by Mariama J. Lockington**
This young adult novel follows Keda, an eleven-year-old Black girl who was adopted as a baby into a white hippie family with a mom, dad, and an older biological child, as they move from Baltimore to New Mexico. As her family starts over in Albuquerque, Keda feels isolated, misunderstood, and racially targeted at home and at school. She misses her best friend and fellow Black transracial adoptee, Lena, and she has so many questions about her birth mother that can't be answered. Author Mariama J. Lockington is a Black transracial adoptee and also has a story in the anthology, "When We Become Ours."
Note to readers: This book includes an adult suicide attempt and portrays some of the impacts that a parent's mental illness can have on a family. 316 pages.

When We Become Ours: A YA Adoptee Anthology edited by Shannon Gibney and Nicole Chung
This groundbreaking collection of fictional short stories for teens was written by 15 adult adoptees. These authors are mostly transracially and internationally adopted individuals who were adopted as infants, but their stories reflect many different realities, challenges, and experiences.
Note to readers: The plots of some stories in this collection include violence, drug/alcohol use, suicide, sibling separation, a teacher who abuses his power by pursuing a teen student "romantically," as well as microaggressions toward adoptees and descriptions of overt racism. About 300 pages.

"You Should Be Grateful" Stories of Race, Identity, and Transracial Adoption
by Angela Tucker
This book is by Angela Tucker, an author, documentary film-maker, and the founder of the Adoptee Mentoring Society. Angela, who is African American, was adopted as a baby and raised by white parents in a predominantly white town in Washington state. Now, she's a leading voice in describing the role systemic racism and white saviorism play in adoption. This book shuts down the idea that adoptees "should be grateful" for being adopted and centers the voices of adoptees. Angela Tucker explores complex issues of rejection, identity, and belonging while telling the story of her life and the lives of other adoptees.
Note to readers: This book is written for an adult audience. However, teen readers may still connect with the stories, struggles, and successes Angela shares about her life. Just under 200 pages.

The ABCs of Foster and Kinship Care **by Raquel McCloud, illustrated by Taylan McCloud**
This short children's book breaks down terms that young people in the foster care system have probably heard lots of times. From "C is for Court" to "H is for Home Visits" to "P is for Permanence," words are defined and illustrated in accessible ways. The author of this book is a "former child of kinship care, birthmom in reunion, and kinship adoptive mom."
Note to readers: This book is written for younger children, but readers of any age can read and review it!

Tell Me My Story: Why Do You Live With Your Grandparents?
by Raquel McCloud, illustrated by Taylan McCloud
This short children's book tells the story of two kids who meet on a playground. One lives with her parents, the other with her grandparents. As the latter is talking with her grandmother, she learns more about how her situation is similar and different from her friend. Dispelling stigma, this book normalizes a common experience for young people in care. The author of this book is a "former child of kinship care, birthmom in reunion, and kinship adoptive mom."
Note to readers: This book is written for younger children, but readers of any age can read and review it!

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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES