



The Hate U Give Book Club Kit

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Book Summary

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful and gripping YA novel about one girl's struggle for justice.

Source: Goodreads.com

Reviews

❖ BookPage

When Starr was 12, her parents taught her the facts of life. Her mother explained the mysteries of sex, while her father instructed her on how African Americans behave if stopped by police. Four years later, Starr remembers her father's words when she and her childhood friend, Khalil, are pulled over. But when Khalil makes an innocent move, the policeman shoots. Starr watches in horror as Khalil dies in the street. The media picks up the story, depicting Khalil as a gang member and drug dealer. Starr, who attends a prestigious, predominantly white high school, is repulsed by the sensationalism and initially tries to deny her involvement. But she learns that such silence grants free reign to racist justifications for violent policing of her tight-knit black community.

Starr's life is rife with contradictions. Her neighborhood friends live in a world where violent death is a real threat, while her wealthier school friends view Khalil's death as an excuse to skip school. Starr's father is a former gang leader who is dedicated to improving their community, while her uncle is a police detective who lives in a safer neighborhood.

In her debut novel, Angie Thomas breathes life into the incidents that inspired the Black Lives Matter movement, with nuanced characters and complex subplots. Like Kekla Magoon's *How It Went Down*, the novel explores the ambiguity of perspective, but in this case, it's always from Starr's deeply personal viewpoint.

❖ Publishers Weekly

At home in a neighborhood riven with gang strife, Starr Carter, 16, is both the grocer's daughter and an outsider, because she attends private school many miles away. But at Williamson Prep, where she's among a handful of black students, she can't be herself either: no slang, no anger, no attitude. That version of herself—"Williamson Starr"—"doesn't give anyone a reason to call her ghetto." She's already wrestling with what Du Bois called "double consciousness" when she accepts a ride home from Khalil, a childhood friend, who is then pulled over and shot dead by a white cop. Starr's voice commands attention from page one, a conflicted but clear-eyed lens through which debut author Thomas examines Khalil's killing, casual racism at Williamson, and Starr's strained relationship with her white boyfriend. Though Thomas's story is heartbreakingly topical, its greatest strength is in its authentic depiction of a teenage girl, her loving family, and her attempts to reconcile what she knows to be true about their lives with the way those lives are depicted—and completely undervalued—by society at large.

❖ School Library Journal

Gr 8 Up—After Starr and her childhood friend Khalil, both black, leave a party together, they are pulled over by a white police officer, who kills Khalil. The sole witness to the homicide, Starr must testify before a grand jury that will decide whether to indict the cop, and she's terrified, especially as emotions run high. By turns frightened, discouraged, enraged, and impassioned, Starr is authentically adolescent in her reactions. Inhabiting two vastly different spheres—her poor, predominantly black neighborhood, Garden Heights, where gangs are a fact of life, and her rich, mostly white private school—causes strain, and Thomas perceptively illustrates how the personal is political: Starr is disturbed by the racism of her white friend Hailey, who writes Khalil off as a drug dealer, and Starr's father is torn between his desire to support Garden Heights and his need to move his family to a safer environment. The first-person, present-tense narrative is immediate and intense, and the pacing is strong, with Thomas balancing dramatic scenes of violence and protest with moments of reflection. The characterization is slightly uneven; at times, Starr's friends at school feel thinly fleshed out. However, Starr, her family, and the individuals in their neighborhood are achingly real and lovingly crafted. VERDICT Pair this powerful debut with Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely's *All American Boys* to start a conversation on racism, police brutality, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

About Angie Thomas

Angie Thomas was born, raised, and still resides in Jackson, Mississippi. Her debut novel *The Hate U Give* was a #1 New York Times Bestseller and was acquired by the Balzer + Bray imprint of HarperCollins Publishers in a 13-house auction. It has received starred reviews from 8 literary journals, one of the highest amounts received for a young adult novel, and will be published in over 20 countries. The New York Times and Entertainment Weekly both called it required reading. Film rights have been optioned by Fox 2000 and Temple Hill Productions with George Tillman attached to direct and Hunger Games actress Amandla Stenberg attached to star; the film was released October 19, 2018.

Thomas holds a BFA in Creative Writing from Belhaven University and an unofficial degree in Hip Hop. She is an inaugural winner of the Walter Dean Myers Grant 2015, awarded by We Need Diverse Books. Thomas is a former teen rapper whose greatest accomplishment was an article about her in *Right-On Magazine*.

Source: Aalbc.com

Other Works

❖ **Concrete Rose** Expected publication: January 12th 2021

International phenomenon Angie Thomas revisits Garden Heights seventeen years before the events of *The Hate U Give* in this searing and poignant exploration of Black boyhood and manhood.

If there's one thing seventeen-year-old Maverick Carter knows, it's that a real man takes care of his family. As the son of a former gang legend, Mav does that the only way he knows how: dealing for the King Lords. With this money he can help his mom, who works two jobs while his dad's in prison.

Life's not perfect, but with a fly girlfriend and a cousin who always has his back, Mav's got everything under control.

Until, that is, Maverick finds out he's a father.

Suddenly he has a baby, Seven, who depends on him for everything. But it's not so easy to sling dope, finish school, and raise a child. So when he's offered the chance to go straight, he takes it. In a world where he's expected to amount to nothing, maybe Mav can prove he's different.

When King Lord blood runs through your veins, though, you can't just walk away. Loyalty, revenge, and responsibility threaten to tear Mav apart, especially after the brutal murder of a loved one. He'll have to figure out for himself what it really means to be a man.

Source: Goodreads.com

❖ **On the Come Up**

Sixteen-year-old Bri wants to be one of the greatest rappers of all time. Or at least make it out of her neighborhood one day. As the daughter of an underground rap legend who died before he hit big, Bri's got big shoes to fill. But now that her mom has unexpectedly lost her job, food banks and shutoff notices are as much a part of Bri's life as beats and rhymes. With bills piling up and homelessness staring her family down, Bri no longer just wants to make it—she has to make it.

On the Come Up is Angie Thomas's homage to hip-hop, the art that sparked her passion for storytelling and continues to inspire her to this day. It is the story of fighting for your dreams, even as the odds are stacked against you; of the struggle to become who you are and not who everyone expects you to be; and of the desperate realities of poor and working-class black families.

Source: Goodreads.com

Further Reading

❖ **Black Girl Unlimited: The Remarkable True Story of a Teenage Wizard by Echo Brown**

A largely autobiographical story infused with magical realism follows the transcendent coming-of-age of a teen from the East Side who transitions from the world of her home to that of a privileged West Side school while navigating an ominous veil of depression.

❖ **Tyler Johnson Was Here by Jay Coles**

When Marvin Johnson's twin brother, Tyler, is shot and killed by a police officer, Marvin must fight injustice to learn the true meaning of freedom.

❖ **Don't Ask Me Where I'm From by Jennifer De Leon**

Liliana Cruz does what it takes to fit in at her new nearly all-white school, but when family secrets come out and racism at school gets worse than ever, she must decide what she believes in and take a stand.

❖ **This Is My America by Kim Johnson**

Sending weekly letters to an organization she hopes will save her innocent father from death row, 17-year-old Tracy uncovers racist community secrets when her track star brother is wrongly accused of murder.

❖ **Light It Up by Kekla Magoon**

Told from multiple viewpoints, Shae Tatum, an unarmed, thirteen-year-old black girl, is shot by a white police officer, throwing their community into upheaval and making it a target of demonstrators.

❖ **I Am Alfonso Jones by *Tony Medina***

The ghost of fifteen-year-old Alfonso Jones travels in a New York subway car full of the living and the dead, watching his family and friends fight for justice after he is killed by an off-duty police officer while buying a suit in a Midtown department store.

❖ **Slay by *Brittney Morris***

An honors student at Jefferson Academy, seventeen-year-old Keira enjoys developing and playing Slay, a secret, multiplayer online role-playing game celebrating black culture, until the two worlds collide.

❖ **Anger Is a Gift by *Mark Oshiro***

A young adult debut by the popular social media personality and critic reflects the racial and economic struggles of today's teens in the story of high school junior Moss, who in the face of a racist school administration decides to organize a protest that escalates into violence.

❖ **Long Way Down by *Jason Reynold***

Driven by the secrets and vengeance that mark his street culture, 15-year-old Will contemplates over the course of 60 psychologically suspenseful seconds whether or not he is going to murder the person who killed his brother.

❖ **Piecing Me Together by *Renee Watson***

Tired of being singled out at her mostly-white private school as someone who needs support, high school junior Jade would rather participate in the school's amazing Study Abroad program than join Women to Women, a mentorship program for at-risk girls.

❖ **I'm Not Dying with You Tonight by *Gilly Segal***

Told from two viewpoints, Atlanta high school seniors Lena and Campbell, one black, one white, must rely on each other to survive after a football rivalry escalates into a riot.

❖ **Dear Martin by *Nic Stone***

Writing letters to the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., seventeen-year-old college-bound Justyce McAllister struggles to face the reality of race relations today and how they are shaping him.

❖ **Calling My Name by *Liana Tamani***

This novel tells a universal coming-of-age story about Taja Brown, a young African American girl growing up in Houston, Texas, and it deftly and beautifully explores the universal struggles of growing up, battling family expectations, discovering a sense of self, and finding a unique voice and purpose.

Source: Novelist

Book Discussion Questions

1. As Starr and Khalil listen to Tupac, Khalil explains what Tupac said "Thug Life" meant. Discuss the meaning of the term "Thug Life" as an acronym and why the author might have chosen part of this as the title of the book. In what ways do you see this in society today? (Chapter 1, p. 17)
2. Chapter 2 begins with Starr flashing back to two talks her parents had with her when she was young. One was about sex ("the usual birds and bees"). The second was about what precautions to take when encountering a police officer (Chapter 2, p. 20). Have you had a similar conversation about what to do when stopped by the police? Reflect upon or imagine this conversation.
3. Thomas frequently uses motifs of silence and voice throughout the book. Find instances in the book where silence or voice and speech are noted, and talk about the author's possible intentions for emphasizing these motifs.
4. At the police station after Starr details the events leading up to the shooting, the detective shifts her focus to Khalil's past. Why do you think the detective did this? Discuss Starr's reaction to this "bait" (Chapter 6, pp. 102–103).

5. Once news of Khalil's shooting spreads across the neighborhood, unrest arises: "Sirens wail outside. The news shows three patrol cars that have been set ablaze at the police precinct.... A gas station near the freeway gets looted.... My neighborhood is a war zone" (Chapter 9, pp. 136–139). Respond to this development and describe some parallels to current events.

6. How do you think Starr would define family? What about Seven? How do you define it?

7. Chris and Starr have a breakthrough in their relationship—Starr admits to him that she was in the car with Khalil and shares the memories of Natasha's murder (Chapter 17, pp. 298–302). Discuss why Starr's admission and releasing of this burden to Chris is significant. Explore the practice of "code switching" and discuss how you might code switch in different circumstances in your own life.

8. How and why does the neighborhood react to the grand jury's decision (Chapter 23)? How does Starr use her voice as a weapon, and why does she feel that it is vital that she does? Refer back to "Thug Life" and discuss how the acronym resonates in this chapter.

9. Starr pledges to "never be quiet" (Chapter 26, p. 444). After reading this book, how can you use your voice to promote and advance social justice? Reflect on how you and your community discuss and address inequality.

Essay Prompt

Minutes before he died, Khalil told Starr what Tupac really meant by T.H.U.G. L.I.F.E.

He, Starr and Big Mav all have slightly different interpretations of The Hate U Give Little Infants F---s Everybody.

Khalil says what society gives the youth comes back to bite them later when the youth “wild out” (17).

Starr says it’s about more than youth. It’s about black people, poor people and everybody at the bottom in society: the oppressed. “We’re the ones who get the short end of the stick, but we’re the ones they fear the most” (168). The government targeted the Black Panthers because they were scared of them. They educated and empowered the people. In 1831, Nat Turner educated and empowered other slaves and it led to one of the biggest slave revolts in history.

Big Mav says the hate they’re giving little infants in today’s society is lack of opportunities, a system designed against them. People in his neighborhood are gangbangers and drug dealers because they need money and don’t have a lot of other ways to get it. Corporate America doesn’t bring jobs to the ghetto and isn’t quick to hire people from the ghetto. The schools in the ghetto don’t prepare kids well enough because they don’t get the resources to equip them. “It’s easier to find some crack than it is to find a good school around here” (169).

What does The Hate U Give Little Infants F---s Everybody mean to you? Critically defend your answer using evidence from the text, from your life and from past or current events.

The Hate U Give Film Discussion Questions

1. What kind of talk does Maverick have with Starr and Seven at the beginning of the movie? What does he teach them about?
2. Who is Chris? Why are Starr and Chris frustrated with each other?
3. How does Starr stand out at Garden Heights? How do her clothes show that she is different?
4. Who is Khalil? Why has he "been busy"?
5. Why do Starr and Khalil leave the party?
6. Why does the police officer pull Khalil over?
7. What do you think about the way Khalil and the officer talk to each other? Do you think Khalil should be talking in this way to a cop?
8. Do you think Khalil has been given the same "talk" Maverick gave Starr? Why or why not? How can you tell?
9. How does Starr react to the cop? Do you think teenagers should have to react to police officers in the way Starr does?
10. What do the detectives investigating the shooting ask Starr? Do they seem interested in getting justice for Khalil? What is important about what they do NOT ask?
11. Who is Uncle Carlos? How does he help?
12. What is tragic about Khalil's death considering his grandmother's health and what he did for her?

13. What does Uncle Carlos tell the family will happen? Why is Starr's testimony potentially dangerous to her and her family?
14. Why is the 2Pac song "Thug Life" important in this movie? What do Maverick and Starr discuss about it?
15. Who is April O'Frah? What does she think Starr should do?
16. Who is King? What does he seem to want Starr to do?
17. Who is Hailey? Is she a good friend to Starr?
18. What happens when Chris meets Maverick? Do you think Maverick's reaction to meeting his daughter's boyfriend is understandable? Why or why not?
19. What does King try to do to Starr and Seven in their dad's grocery store? Why? What happens?
20. What do Maverick and King try to do? What does Sewani do in response and why is this tragic?
21. Do you agree with what Starr does in the movie? Does she do the right thing? Would you do the same or differently?
22. Which character in the movie is the most inspirational?