

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK 2022

READER'S GUIDE

WHAT'S **MINE** AND **YOURS**



A NOVEL BY
NAIMA COSTER

WHAT IF EVERYONE READ THE SAME BOOK AT THE SAME TIME, THEN CAME TOGETHER TO TALK ABOUT IT?

When we read a great book, we can't wait to share the experience with others. That's one of the joys of reading. In this spirit, Maryland Humanities created One Maryland One Book to bring together diverse people in communities across the state through the shared experience of reading the same book.

Now in its fifteenth year, One Maryland One Book remains Maryland's only statewide community reading program. Each year, the selection process is guided by a common theme. The theme for 2022 is "New Beginnings."

The Maryland Center for the Book at Maryland Humanities partners with public libraries, high schools, colleges and universities, museums, bookstores, correctional facilities, and other organizations to bring book-centered discussions and other related events to communities across Maryland. But One Maryland One Book is not just about reading or literature; it is also about bringing people together for meaningful dialogue.

The book selected for 2022 is *What's Mine and Yours* by Naima Coster.

GRAB YOUR COPY

Find a copy of *What's Mine and Yours* at your local library or bookstore and get reading! What if a copy of *What's Mine and Yours* finds you? If you're out and about, you might find copies of the book in unexpected places. Our Wandering Books can be found in a myriad of public spaces from bus stops to doctor's offices to coffee shops. If you find a copy, it's yours for a short time. Register the book online so we can see how far it travels (instructions are included inside the book). Read it, review it,

and then leave it somewhere for someone else to find and enjoy.

REACH OUT

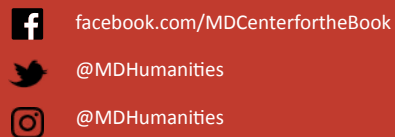
Each year, more than 15,000 Marylanders read the One Maryland One Book selection. How many of those people are your friends or family? Use the book to jumpstart a meaningful conversation in person or virtually with an old friend or to make a new one.

PULL UP A CHAIR

We invite you to join Maryland Humanities and thousands of other Marylanders at one of the many book discussions and related events happening around the state and online from mid-September to mid-November, including the author tour in October. To find One Maryland One Book programs in your area, go to onemarylandonebook.org and click on Events. Be sure to check for the dates and locations of Naima Coster's appearances this fall.

After each One Maryland One Book program you attend, please visit omobfeedback.org and share your thoughts by taking our brief survey.

For all the latest information, "like" or follow us:



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We are thrilled to have you join Maryland Humanities for the fifteenth year of One Maryland One Book, Maryland's largest reading and discussion program. Since 2008, readers across the state have enjoyed reading and discussing the One Maryland One Book title, selected by a committee composed of distinguished members of Maryland's literary community.

Literature has the power to delight, inform, and connect us, offering a glimpse into the lives of those near and far. Each year we explore a specific work of literature through events across the state. Thousands of Marylanders convene in their communities to read and discuss the chosen book through book clubs, libraries, colleges, museums, and more. Whether you read with us every year or are new to the program, welcome!

This year's selection, *What's Mine and Yours* by Naima Coster, is a multigenerational saga. At its core, this novel follows the lives of two families over decades, weaving the complexities of relationships through the lenses of tragedy, identity, familial legacy, community, race, and the impact of life choices. *What's Mine and Yours* is about our shared bonds and the remaking of lives in all their heartbreak and triumph.

We encourage you to pick up a copy of *What's Mine and Yours* and join the conversation at one of our many public discussion events across the state, whether in person or virtually. A program of the Maryland Center for the Book at Maryland Humanities, One Maryland One Book is made possible each year through the generosity of our sponsors and community partners. We greatly thank them for their support. Find out more about how to get involved at www.onemarylandonebook.org.

Please join us!

Mary Hastler, Board Chair
Lindsey Baker, Executive Director

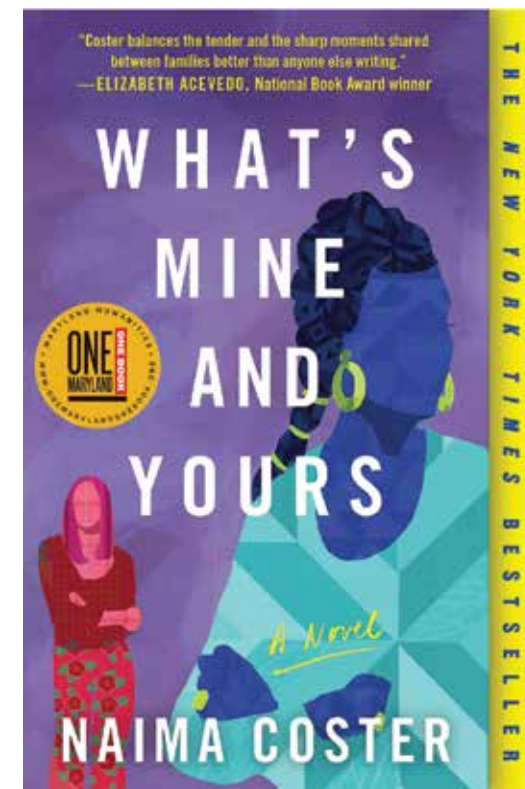
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Naima Coster is *The New York Times* bestselling author of two novels and a recipient of the National Book Foundation's 5 Under 35 honor. Her most recent novel, *What's Mine and Yours*, was a Read with Jenna Today Show Book Club pick, a Book of the Month Club pick, and was named a best book of the year by *Kirkus*, *Amazon*, *Esquire*, *Marie Claire*, *Ms. Magazine*, *The Millions*, and *Refinery29*.

Naima's first novel, *Halsey Street*, was a finalist for the Kirkus Prize for Fiction and a semifinalist for the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award. Published in 2018, it was named a must-read book of the year by *People*, *Essence*, *BitchMedia*, *Well-Read Black Girl*, *The Skimm*, and the Brooklyn Public Library.

Naima's stories and essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Elle*, *Time*, *Kweli*, *The Cut*, *The Sunday Times*, *Catapult*, *The Paris Review Daily*, among other publications, and in numerous anthologies. She is a graduate of Yale University, Fordham University, and the Columbia University School of the Arts, where she earned her MFA. She has taught writing for over a decade in community settings, youth programs, and universities. She currently teaches in the low-residency MFA program at Antioch University in L.A. She is a 2022 mentor for the Periplus Collective.

Naima is at work on her third novel about early motherhood, class mobility, and the lifelong friendship between two women. She lives in Brooklyn with her family.



ABOUT THE BOOK

In the Piedmont of North Carolina, two families' paths become unexpectedly intertwined over twenty years. Jade and Lacey May are two mothers determined to give their children the opportunities they never had. After a harrowing loss, Jade wants to hand down the tools her son, Gee, will need to survive in America as a sensitive young Black man. Meanwhile, Lacey May, having left the husband she loves, strives to protect her three half-Latina daughters from their charming father's influence.

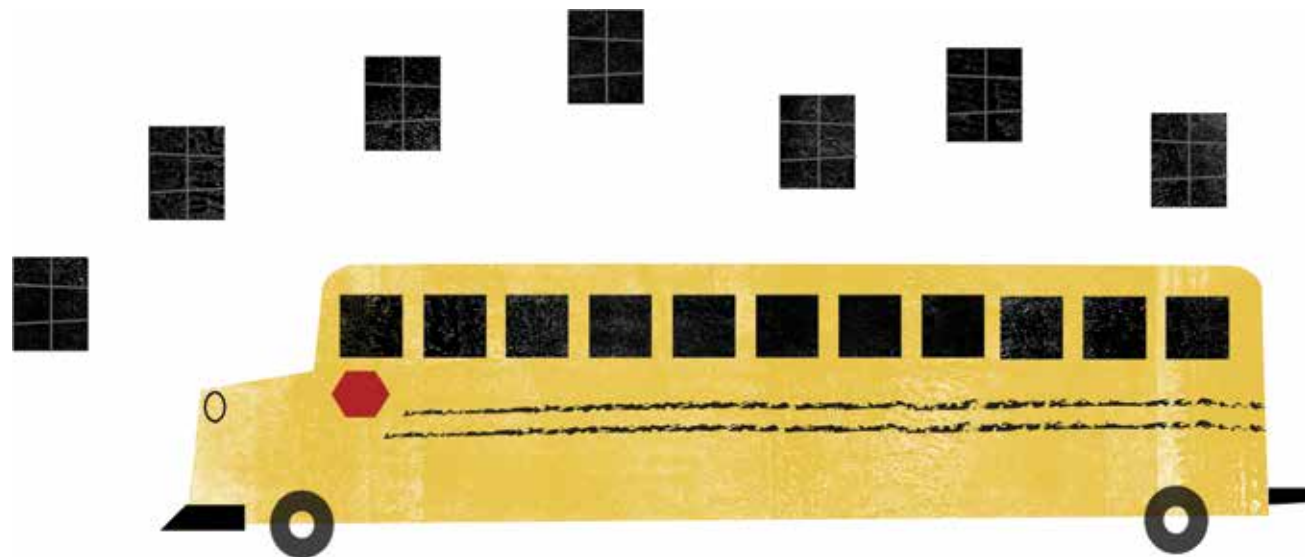
When a county initiative draws students from the largely Black east side of town into a predominantly white high school on the west, each mother stands on different sides of the integration debate. Gee meets Lacey May's daughter Noelle during the school play, and their families begin to form deeply knotted, messy ties that will shape the trajectory of their adult lives. And their mothers make choices that will haunt them for decades to come.

What's Mine and Yours is an expansive yet intimate multigenerational tapestry of motherhood, identity, and the legacies we inherit. It explores the unique organism that is every family: what breaks them apart and how they come back together.

Note: Reprinted from the book's back cover

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The parents and children of *What's Mine and Yours* exist with a significant chasm between them. Discuss the ways that the Ventura daughters and Gee don't often see the motivations behind their parents' choices, nor the sacrifices, and how it resonated with you and your own life.
- How do you view Jade's way of mourning Ray? Do you agree that it was best that she not succumb to her grief and anger in front of Gee? How do you think keeping all of that bottled up affects Jade throughout the rest of the novel?
- Lacey May doesn't see her three daughters—Noelle, Margarita, and Diane—as half-Colombian. She just sees them as hers and ignores their Colombian features (77). What damage does this do to the relationships Lacey May has with her daughters? Why do you think she has adopted this way of thinking?
- When Inéz visits Noelle in Golden Brook, she's afraid that her friend is losing her sense of self while out in the suburbs, especially after hearing the story of a Black woman and her son threatened with the police by a neighbor. How did you feel about the party's reaction to that story and Inéz's criticism of Noelle's silence?
- When Hank proposes to Lacey May and Robbie learns his daughters will be living with them he's not overly concerned, thinking "He knew he'd win the girls back eventually. He was their father; it was in their DNA to choose him" (88). This contrasts with Jade's view of family. Why do you think the author decided to show these two different points of view?
- A woman at the town hall meeting says, "I hear everybody here talking about welcome. New beginnings!" (112). How does this new beginning of the school initiative affect characters differently? ("New Beginnings" is the theme of this year's One Maryland One Book program.)
- Lacey May's speech at the town hall meeting gets the loudest reaction. What do you make of her using the term "*handed*" when she says "that's not right, and that's not American" (116)? What does that say about the make-up of the country? What is "American?" Explain your view.
- "...all the talk of inequality, giving every family a fair shot, rubbed her the wrong way. There were problems in this life, sure, but they were mostly the result of people's own doing" (122). Lacey May has this viewpoint. Do you agree with her? Why or why not? What circumstances is she not considering when thinking this way?
- Jade informs the reader that "...she didn't want him to worry too much about how the world would see him...She wanted him to be free" (196). What do you think "free" means to Jade in regards to Gee? What does she really want for Gee? Why doesn't she communicate this to Gee more clearly?
- Noelle tells her sisters on page 221 that "We can be family on our own terms." Have you ever had a similar conversation with members of your family? Why do you think Noelle chooses this moment to make this offering to her sisters? What took them so long to get to this point?
- The two mothers in the novel, Lacey May and Jade, both wanted what was best for their children, regardless of how it's received by them and the broader implications of their actions. Do you believe Noelle and Gee ultimately reach an understanding as to why their mothers behaved how they did?
- This novel is filled with mostly fraught relationships that ultimately show the depth and complexities of love. Was there a particular relationship in the novel that spoke to you the most? Did it remind you of a relationship in your own life?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Each year we hope that your participation in One Maryland One Book inspires continued exploration of the themes and topics examined in the selected book. This year's selection offers an excellent opportunity to explore coming-of-age, identity, family, addiction, social class, racism and discrimination, diversity, memory, love, parent-child relationships, sibling relationships, interracial relationships, social norms, womanhood and manhood, acceptance, and more. The following list of books, films, podcasts, and music might be of interest after reading *What's Mine and Yours*. While we include suggested age groups for the readings, they are just a guide. Feel free to choose based on your interests. We encourage you to continue your exploration!

ADULT FICTION

New York, My Village by Uwem Akpan

Ekong Udousoro is eager for his new beginning—a guest editorship at a publishing house in NYC, far away from his Nigerian home. Culture shock, hypocrisy, and homesickness threaten to derail his stay, but instead a sense of community and hope prevail.

Razorblade Tears by S.A. Cosby

Ike and Buddy Lee are two fathers with a lot in common—rural southerners, ex-cons with a history of violence, estrangement from their hipsterish, married-to-each-other sons. What's not in common is race: Buddy Lee is white, Ike is Black. When their sons are murdered, the fathers team up to punish whoever executed their boys, navigating a minefield of race relations, toxic masculinity, homophobia and corruption. Think *John Wick* and *The Equalizer* roaming around the underbelly of the south.

Cantoras by Carolina De Robertis

Uruguay is under a dictatorship in 1977, and homosexuality is to be punished severely. In these dire times, five women find solace, creativity, friendship, and sometimes love in isolated Cabo Polonio over the next 35 years.

L.A. Weather by María Amparo Escandón

The Alvarado sisters led a seemingly charmed and privileged upbringing in Los Angeles. They are shocked when their mother announces she's divorcing their father after nearly forty years of married life. This thoughtful work is about the impact of loss, change and secrecy on family relationships and the complicated expectations of legacy for immigrants—but also about the redemptive nature of forgiveness and love.

A Good Neighborhood by Therese Anne Fowler

A Greek chorus-style retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* set in a progressive college town in the American South. This sharply written tale uses racism, greed, class, religion, and fear to set off a battle pitting neighbor vs. neighbor with devastating consequences. It's an intense, thought-provoking read and an excellent book discussion choice.

What the Fireflies Knew by Kai Harris

A tender coming of age story featuring young KB and her older sister, Nia. KB and Nia had a great life growing up in Detroit in the 1990s. Then in an instant, their lives change forever when their father suddenly dies. The girls are sent to stay with their estranged grandfather while their mother seeks treatment for depression. Will this move end up being exactly what they needed?

Evvie Drake Starts Over by Linda Holmes

Evvie Drake married her high-school sweetheart. On the day she's planning to change her life, her husband is killed in a car accident. In an instant, Evvie is left to regroup and find the strength to start over again. What will her new beginning look like?

The Kindest Lie by Nancy Johnson

Upwardly mobile, happily married Ruth is guarding a life-altering secret: as a high schooler, she gave up a baby for adoption. She returns to her small town to find some resolution but instead, Ruth, who is Black, finds herself mothering a white boy from the wrong side of the tracks. This is a beautifully written examination of race, socioeconomic class, and family ties both blood and chosen.

The Leavers by Lisa Ko

After his undocumented mother is deported back to China, Deming Guo is renamed Daniel Wilkinson by his well-meaning adoptive parents. This story explores the face we present to the world vs. the true self we hide, the cost of starting over, and the ties of family.

The People We Keep by Allison Larkin

April is a singer-songwriter and has dreams of making it big. Feeling like she has nothing left to give in her current life, she steals a car and leaves town to start over. Through the people she meets and the songs that she writes, she finally discovers who she is and the life she wants to live.

Pachinko by Min Jin Lee

Sometimes the possibilities in starting a new life echo down through the generations, as is the case in *Pachinko*. When Sunja is impregnated by her wealthy, married lover, she rejects a life of servitude with him to marry a minister on his way to Japan. In leaving her native Korea, will she, or the generations that follow, ever find a new home?

The Thousand Crimes of Ming Tsu by Tom Lin

A western set during the post-Civil War period featuring anti-hero Ming Tsu, a Chinese orphan turned assassin for hire on a quest to reunite with his white wife while exacting revenge on the men who tore their marriage asunder. Gothic, thriller, romance, adventure, and battle pepper, this mythic journey is driven by one man's intense desire for love, redemption, and belonging in a society equally determined to cast him out.

Black Cake by Charmaine Wilkerson

When Eleanor Bennett died, her two estranged children are brought together to listen to her final recording. Eleanor has a desire for her children to share a black cake when the moment is right. What life altering secrets will Eleanor reveal in her recording?

No Land to Light On by Yara Zgheib

January 28, 2017: it's the first day the President's travel ban targeting Muslims is in effect and Syrian-born Hadi, returning to the US after attending his father's funeral, is deported—barred from returning to his wife, his new baby, his home. The title is taken from a quote from author Michael Ondaatje, evoking the dilemma of refugees, “With no land to light on, they look back without nostalgia, and look forward with a frayed hope.”

ADULT NONFICTION & POETRY

The Good Immigrant: 26 Writers Reflect on America Edited by Nikesh Shukla and Chimene Suleyman

This collection of essays from first- and second-generation American writers strives to deconstruct the idea of “the good immigrant” as a super-hero figure and instead, offers the breadth of experiences and longings more reflective of the diverse people making their new home in the United States.

Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival, and Hope in an American City by Andrea Elliott

New York Times reporter Elliott follows the vibrant, intelligent Dasani and her family through chronic homelessness, generational poverty, addiction, and the labyrinthine social services system. It's a sobering reminder of the cyclical nature of generational trauma, but one in which the readers cheer Dasani as she is given opportunities for a new start.

Somebody's Daughter by Ashley C. Ford

A compelling memoir from Ford, who idolized her father her whole life, even though he was imprisoned. As she matures into adulthood and experiences her own traumas, the truth of her father's past comes to light. A powerful story of both loving and overcoming your family.

Elizabeth and Hazel: Two Women of Little Rock by David Margolick

A picture tells a thousand words: a photo of Elizabeth, one of the first Black students to integrate Little Rock's high school, followed by an angry white mob featuring Hazel screaming epithets. Each woman's story is more than the legacy assigned to them by that snapshot but also a story of the racial divide in America.

Aftershocks by Nadia Owusu

The author, of Armenian and Ghanaian heritage, writes a lyrical and moving memoir about her childhood, marked by traumatic loss, change and feelings of isolation. Owusu shares that history is “carried in our bodies” and out of destruction can come freedom and hope.

Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir by Natasha Trethewey

Trethewey, the biracial daughter of a Black mother, writes movingly about their life after a divorce, then ends with the murder of her mother by her estranged new husband. Sometimes it is only through tragedy that a new life can be born.

The Undocumented Americans by Karla Cornejo Villavicencio

The author shares immigrant stories of ordinary, everyday people as opposed to heroes and DREAMers, and in doing so, exposes the harm perpetrated by the untrue stereotypes surrounding the undocumented in the United States.

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson

The United States actually has an unspoken caste system, posits Wilkerson, and this is the root of our racism and other systemic inequalities. Well-researched and deeply thought provoking.

TEEN

Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo

Camino is a teenage girl living in the Dominican Republic with her aunt. Her father, who lives in New York, comes to visit every summer, and Camino lives for those visits. Yet on the day his plane is to set arrive, she waits for him at the airport and learns that his plane has crashed. Another teenage girl, Yahaira, lives in New York. Her father goes home to the Dominican Republic each summer. One morning she is called out of her class and told by her mother that her father's plane crashed. Both of these girls deal with so much pain and discover a secret that their fathers have hidden. How will this secret change their already transformed lives?

What I Carry by Jennifer Longo

Muir has lived in twenty houses in seventeen years. She has one more year in the foster care system and then her life can really begin. Muir just has to avoid anyone or anything that will get in her way, but then her life changes in an unexpected way. Will this change impact the freedom she has been wanting for eighteen years?

The Radius of Us by Marie Marquardt

Phoenix and Gretchen are teenagers whose lives connect in the most surprising ways. Phoenix, an asylum-seeker and survivor from El Salvador, is taken in by a wealthy couple in Atlanta while his little brother is left in a detention facility in Texas. Meanwhile, Gretchen connects with Phoenix because they are both deeply changed by trauma that they have suffered. Will discovering their similarities allow them both to heal and start over again?

The Stars Beneath Our Feet by David Barclay Moore

Harlem comes to life through Lolly, a twelve-year-old Trinidadian-American boy mourning the death of his brother through the Legos that he uses to rebuild. Diverse and complex secondary characters, from a school counselor to the “weird girl,” give Lolly the sense of community he needs.

More Happy Than Not by Adam Silvera

After a series of traumas, Aaron considers a “memory-alteration” procedure to wipe it all away. Then he becomes friends with Thomas, the new guy in the neighborhood.

CHILDREN

Ahmed Aziz’s Epic Year by Nina Hamza

Ahmed Aziz and his family have moved from Hawaii to Minnesota for medical treatment for his father. Ahmed is not excited about the move and not excited to start at new middle school. There, Ahmed deals with bullies, being in an all-white school, making new friends, and higher teacher expectations. How will Ahmed deal with all these changes?

Measuring Up by Lily LaMotte

Cici and her family move from Taiwan to Seattle. Even though Cici seems to be adjusting to life in her new home, she misses her grandma who, unfortunately, can’t afford a plane ticket to visit. When Cici and a new friend discover a local cooking contest for kids, Cici wants to enter. If she wins, the prize money will be enough for a plane ticket for grandma! This heartwarming graphic novel is perfect for fans of Raina Telgemeier.

A Soft Place to Land by Janae Marks

When Joy’s family is forced to downsize to an apartment, it is a tough transition. She has to go to a new school, make new friends, and figure out her new place at home. Will Joy finally feel like she belongs in her new community?

The Insiders by Mark Oshiro

To escape the bullying at his new school, Héctor resorts to hiding in the janitor’s closet, fully aware of the irony of it all. At first, it seems like a normal closet, but one day it transforms into a room with everything he could ever want. Two other kids from completely different parts of the country soon find the room, too, for different reasons. The kids have no idea how this happened, but they do know that this adventure is just what they need for a new beginning.

Other Words for Home by Jasmine Warga

When life in Syria begins to grow volatile, Jude and her mother move to America to stay with relatives, leaving her father and brother behind. Not only does she miss her family, but America is much louder and faster than she could have imagined. Will it ever become like a home?

New from Here by Kelly Yang

When coronavirus hits Asia, Knox and his family leave their Hong Kong home to come to California. Fear about the virus, as well as anti-Asian racism because of it, are just the tip of their worries, but their love for each other will overcome. This contemporary novel is a warm depiction of family life.

FILMS & TV

Dear White People (2014, R, 108 minutes) (2017–2021, TV-MA)

First a film, then a Netflix series, Justin Simien’s comedy-drama focuses on a group of Black students attending a fictional Ivy League university.

Minari (2020, PG-13, 115 minutes)

A Korean immigrant family move to rural Arkansas in hopes of starting a self-sustaining farm. A moving and much-lauded portrayal of attempts to find the American dream.

This is Us (2016–2022, TV-14)

This is Us is a heartwarming television series that tells the story of the Pearson family. They have a unique set of triplets who the audience watches grow up and have families of their own. Through emotional flashforwards and flashbacks, beautiful, emotional, and tragic life moments are shared. This series touches heartstrings like no other.

Turning Red (2022, PG, 100 minutes)

Dorky 13-year-old Mei Lee is growing up. She is trying to figure out who she is while trying to be the best daughter that she can be. She is finding new interests and feeling new feelings and if that isn’t enough, whenever she gets too excited she turns into a giant red panda! This Disney movie touches on topics of adolescence yet is still fun for the whole family.

Woodlawn (2015, PG, 123 minutes)

A fictionalized drama of Miami Dolphins player Troy Nathan and the life of a Black football player in 1970’s Woodlawn, Alabama.



PODCASTS, WEBSITES & MUSIC

30 by Adele

Adele's fourth album, *30*, is dedicated to the strong feelings divorce and its aftermath bring. Adele uses her struggles and her new beginning to create beautiful heartfelt music that explains her actions and thoughts to her son and to her listeners.

Nice White Parents

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/nice-white-parents/id1524080195>

What happens when affluent parents send their progeny to the local public school in Brooklyn, composed primarily of children of color? These five episodes are a thoughtful listen on how good intentions do not necessarily yield good—or equitable—results.

Story Corps: American Pathways

<https://storycorps.org/stories/?collection=american-pathways>

Short vignettes that allow you a brief glimpse into the lives of our neighbors on this planet.

This American Life: The Problem We All Live With

<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-one>

Reporter Nikole Hannah-Jones explores the beneficial influence of desegregation on academic performance and its impact on school choice in this two-part podcast.

We Can Do Hard Things

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/we-can-do-hard-things-with-glennon-doyle/id1564530722>

Glennon Doyle, her sister Amanda, and her wife Abby, sit down twice a week and discuss all of the hard things that they are encountering in this thing called life. The difficult questions they ask and discuss will have you seeing your life in a whole new way. This sounds incredibly deep, and it can be, but it is also like sitting down and talking to your best friends.

What's Mine and Yours [Spotify playlist]

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/OggJI810GSazifLzjLTWpJ>

Actress Emma Roberts and her friend Kereh Preiss run the Belletrist Bookclub and a beautiful book related Instagram. They have also made playlists for some of their favorite books, including this year's selection!



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