



*The Hate U Give*

Written by Angie Thomas  
HarperCollins, 2017, 444 pp.  
ISBN: 978-0-06-249853-3

*The Hate U Give*, Angie Thomas' writing debut, was inspired by the #BlackLivesMatter Movement. This is a riveting young adult novel that stirs emotions in all readers. The story takes place in an urban neighborhood where the protagonist, 16-year-old Starr Carter, is an African-American teenager who is torn between two worlds: the familiar neighborhood she calls home and the upscale, predominantly-White prep school she attends. Starr does her best to balance both worlds until the fateful evening she and her childhood best friend Khalil are pulled over by the police and the unarmed Khalil is shot. Starr can do nothing but watch helplessly as Khalil's life drains from his body and he takes his last breath.

After Khalil's death, Starr is thrown into a world of confusion and chaos and begins her trek on the emotional rollercoaster that has become her life. The death of a defenseless African-American teen at the hands of a Caucasian officer has become a national headline and no matter how hard she tries, Starr cannot escape the flashbacks of that fateful night, now burned in her mind. She struggles with the realization she could easily be dead, just like Khalil. She has to cope with terrible gossip and implications about Khalil's death. Even her best friend at school insinuates Khalil may have gotten what he deserved.

As Starr attempts to deal with untruths about Khalil's death, she is faced with the reality of having to testify in court as the only witness to his shooting. Public awareness over the lack of an investigation into the officer responsible for firing the fateful shot is increasing and so are tempers. The apathy of the authorities to hold the officer accountable causes turmoil and division in the community. The fact that Starr's uncle is a police officer does not help matters. Her family is torn, protesters are gathering, and her neighborhood is quickly escalating into a battle zone.

*The Hate U Give*, also known by the acronym *THUG*, is a page turner for anyone seeking a realistic story covering the topics of race, interracial dating, friendship, police brutality, political activism, grief, addiction, wealth disparity and the media's depiction of African-Americans. The novel touches upon recent and past instances of police shootings. While there is a high degree of harsh language in the book, Thomas deploys it in a way that makes it authentic to the time and location of the story. This text can be paired with other young adult novels dealing with the issues of justice and freedom. Nic Stone's *Dear Martin* (2017) is about an innocent student wrongfully convicted. Afterward, he starts a journal, penning letters to Martin Luther King, Jr., to help him try and figure out what happened and how it impacted his own morals and beliefs. *Anger is A Gift* by Mark Oshiro (2018) shares the story of a young man who is being intimidated by the Oakland Police Department, the same police force that murdered his father.

*The Hate U Give* was a #1 *New York Times* Bestseller. It was also the William C. Morris Award

Winner, Michael L. Printz Honor Book, National Book Award Longlist, Coretta Scott King Honor Book, Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Fiction, Goodreads Choice Awards Best Young Adult Fiction, Walter Dean Myers Grant Winner 2015, and Edgar Allan Poe Award Nominee. It has been published in over twenty countries and is available in Spanish. A feature film based on the book is currently in production.

Angie Thomas is an African-American writer from Jackson, Mississippi. She holds a BFA in Creative Writing from Belhaven University and is a former teen rapper. She claims her greatest accomplishment was having an article about her in *Right-On!* magazine. She is currently working on her second novel, *On the Come Up*.

Laurie Kinne, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX