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**TWEENS READ BOOK FESTIVAL GOING VIRTUAL; WILL CONTINUE TO CONNECT  
YOUNG READERS WITH DIVERSE GROUP OF BESTSELLING AUTHORS**

HOUSTON - September 28, 2020  
For Immediate Release

Middle grade readers and fans across the country are invited to attend the tenth annual Tweens Read Book Festival, which will take place virtually this year the week of October 19-24. Tweens Read is a free festival put on in conjunction with Blue Willow Bookshop that offers middle grade readers (students in grades five through eight) a chance to discover new books and connect with established authors and illustrators.

Newbery award-winning author and illustrator Jerry Craft headlines the festival as the keynote speaker. His newest graphic novel, *Class Act*, releases in October from Quill Tree Books, a division of HarperCollins Children's Books. Craft won the Newbery Medal for his graphic novel *New Kid*. He has worked on numerous picture books, graphic novels, and middle grade novels. Jerry is the creator of *Mama's Boyz*, an award-winning syndicated comic strip. He has won five African American Literary Awards, and he is a cofounder of the Schomburg Center's Annual Black Comic Book Festival. He will appear in conversation with colleague and friend Eric Velasquez, illustrator of *Strong Voices: Fifteen American Speeches Worth Knowing*, also from HarperCollins Children's Books.

Over 30 additional local and national authors/illustrators will be in attendance, including Brandy Colbert, Nathan Hale, Nic Stone, and Kelly Yang.

The festival will feature virtual sessions throughout the week that individuals can register for on the Blue Willow Bookshop website. The panels will offer valuable insight into the creative

processes of the diverse group of authors and students will still be able to ask questions of the authors.

Full Author Lineup: James Bird, Dusti Bowling, J.C. Cervantes, Brandy Colbert, Jerry Craft, Adrianna Cuevas, Saadia Faruqi & Laura Shovan, Debbi Michiko Florence, Kereen Getten, Lamar Giles, Nathan Hale, Kate Hannigan & Alex Graudins, Alyssa Hollingsworth, K.A. Holt, Varian Johnson & Shannon Wright, Tae Keller, Tanya Lloyd Kyi, Lily LaMotte, Janae Marks, Gillian McDunn, Daniel Nayeri, Nnedi Okorafor, James Ponti, Lisa Moore Ramee, Leila Sales, Chris Schweizer, Chad Sell, Christina Soontornvat, Nic Stone, Eric Velasquez, Alicia Williams, and Kelly Yang

WHO: Librarians and educators from greater Houston in conjunction with Blue Willow Bookshop

WHAT: Houston Tweens Read Book Festival

WHEN: Week of October 19-24

WHERE: Online; details at [tweensread.com](http://tweensread.com) and [Bluewillowbookshop.com](http://Bluewillowbookshop.com)

COST: Free! Please register to attend individual panels.

WEB: [www.tweensread.com](http://www.tweensread.com), [www.bluewillowbookshop.com](http://www.bluewillowbookshop.com)

Twitter: [@tweensread](https://twitter.com/tweensread), [@BlueWillowBooks](https://twitter.com/BlueWillowBooks)

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About Blue Willow Bookshop: Blue Willow Bookshop has served the greater Houston community for over 20 years. Staffed by a team of avid book lovers, we encourage a passion for reading for all ages, organize over 350 events annually for adults, students, and children, and participate in community outreach at every turn. We invite you to join us in the shop for good conversation and great books—we look forward to welcoming you.

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