



Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

About the Book of the Month: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

Hurricane Child

Kacen Callender (Author)

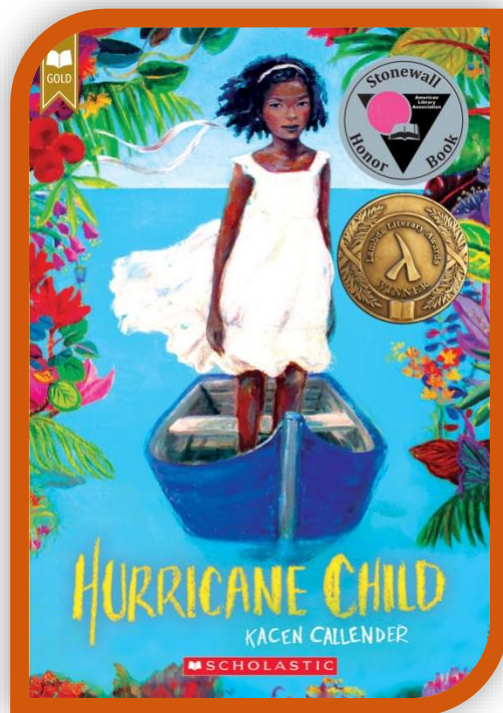
Being born during a hurricane is unlucky, and twelve-year-old Caroline, who lives on Water Island in the U.S. Virgin Islands, has had her share of bad luck lately. But when a new student arrives, Caroline believes her luck is turning around. Kalinda soon becomes Caroline's first friend. Together, the two girls must brave their own feelings of friendship—and love—while they seek to discover why Caroline's mother has disappeared, or risk losing her forever.

ISBN: 978-1338129311

Publisher: Scholastic, Inc.

Year Published: 2019

Age Range: 8–12



Book Themes

Bullying Prevention, Identity, Friendship, LGBTQ Identity, Heterosexism

Key Words

Discuss and define these words with students prior to reading the book and remind them of the meanings as they come up in the book. See ADL's [Education Glossary Terms](#).

- accusation
- brainwash
- conscience
- evidence
- atrocity
- combative
- curse
- geography
- betrayal
- condominium
- escalating
- grateful

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|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| ■ harass | ■ intention | ■ passionate | ■ somber |
| ■ Identity | ■ invisible | ■ pathetic | ■ telepathic |
| ■ Impenetrable | ■ jealousy | ■ perpetrator | ■ tourist |
| ■ inquisitive | ■ misfit | ■ pronounce | ■ trauma |
| ■ inspire | ■ outlandish | ■ selfish | ■ vibrates |

Discussion Questions

As students read the book in small groups or as a whole class, ask discussion questions throughout their reading to check for comprehension and engage them on a deeper level. Some of these questions can also be used as writing prompts.

When students have finished reading the book, choose from the following questions to guide a group discussion:

- What is the book about?
- When you initially meet Caroline, what do you learn about her?
- As the book progresses, what else do you find out about Caroline? How does your impression of her change throughout your reading of the book?
- When Caroline says she “sees things no one else sees,” what does she mean? Have you ever felt this way?
- Who do you think the “woman in black” is?
- What do you learn about Caroline’s mom and how does Caroline feel about her mother’s leaving?
- What do other people say about Caroline’s skin complexion? How does she feel about it?
- In contrast, how is Marie’s skin complexion discussed in the book? What does this tell us about society’s ideas about beauty?
- What is Caroline’s experience in school like? How does her teacher treat her? How do her peers treat her? What impact does this have on Caroline?
- In what ways is Caroline bullied by Anise and the other students at school? What are some examples of the bullying that takes place?
- Is there anyone that acts as an ally to Caroline? If so, who and what do they do?
- What happens when Caroline meets with Miss Joe, the principal? Why do you think Miss Joe gives Caroline a journal?
- Have you ever written letters to someone without sending them? Please explain.
- What does it mean that Caroline is a “Hurricane Child?” What impact do you think it has had on her to be born during a hurricane and told it is bad luck?
- Is there anything significant that happened during your birthdate? If so, how does that impact your identity?
- What happens when Kalinda, a new student from Barbados, comes to Caroline’s school?
- How does Kalinda interact with the other girls and with Caroline?

- When Caroline thinks to herself that a new student is a chance “to really become someone else-or, perhaps, to really become myself,” what does she mean by that? Have you ever felt that way when a new student comes to school?
- What is Kalinda and Caroline’s friendship like? How does it change and evolve throughout the book?
- What happens when Caroline’s letter to Kalinda about her love for her is discovered by other students? How does Caroline feel? How does Kalinda feel?
- Have you ever seen or experienced this kind of bias against LGBTQ people? Please explain.
- What do you think it was like for Caroline to express her true feelings of being in love with Kalinda? How did Caroline’s classmates treat her when they found out? How does Kalinda react at first, and then later?
- Before sharing their feelings, what are some of the signs that Caroline and Kalinda are falling in love?
- Why do you think it was difficult for Kalinda to share her true feelings with Caroline?
- When Caroline and Kalinda say they are like accordions, what do they mean? What music instrument would be a metaphor for your personality?
- Why is it so important to Caroline to find her mother? What does Caroline need from her Mom?
- Why does Kalinda agree to help Caroline find her mother?
- When Caroline and Kalinda stay overnight in the condominiums for tourists, what do they notice about the differences in how people on the island live versus how the tourists are treated?
- What happens when Caroline and her mother finally meet? What do you learn about why Caroline’s mom left? How do you feel about what Caroline’s mother says?
- How does Caroline feel about her mother’s reason for leaving and how do those feelings change over time?
- How did you feel when the book ended? What do you think will happen next?
- Why do you think the book called *Hurricane Child*?
- What are the overall themes of the book? What message is the author communicating through the story?

Extension Activities

Below are activities in which you can engage students in order to extend the learning from the book.

1. Reader’s Response Writing Activities

Diary Entry of a Character: Have students select one of the main characters (Caroline, Kalinda, Caroline’s Dad, Caroline’s Mom, Anise, Miss Joe the principal, Bernadette) from the book. Have students write imagined journal entries for their chosen character, writing 8–10 entries (which can include illustrations as an option) that the character might have written throughout the events in the book. Explain to students that for the journal entries, the character’s thoughts, feelings and reflections are very important, as well as their reaction to the day-to-day events that happen to them and other characters. You may choose to have students engage in pre-writing discussions with a partner about their character in order to expand some of their ideas. After they have completed the assignment, have them share their journal entries with the class and consider creating an online collection of all the journal entries. The journal entries can also be done as audio journals.

Write an Additional Chapter of the Book: Have students consider what might happen next in the book and then write an additional chapter of how they think it may continue. Remind students how the book ends by asking the following questions: *What do you think happens next in Caroline's relationship with her Mom and her half-sisters? How do you think high school in the countryside is for Caroline? Do Caroline and Marie become friends? Do you think Caroline and Kalinda see each other again and if so, what happens?* Instruct students to write the next chapter of the book as they imagine it would continue. The next chapter can be the next day, next month, next school year or several years later.

Learn about the U.S. Virgin Islands: The book takes place on Water Island (where Caroline lives) and St. Thomas (where Caroline attends school and the family attends church and goes grocery shopping). These islands are in the U.S. Virgin Islands, which consist of Water Island, Saint Croix, Saint John, Saint Thomas, and many other surrounding smaller islands. Engage students in a research project about the U.S. Virgin Islands, either as a whole territory or they can learn about any of the individual islands. First have them brainstorm questions they have about the U.S. Virgin Islands based on what they know, learned and still want to know. You can use a KWL (**K**now, **W**ant to Know, **L**earned) chart to capture their questions. These questions and research projects can focus on one or more of the following topics: history, geography, demographics/people, culture, weather (which plays a big part in the book), etc. You can have them work individually or in pairs to identify and then research their topic, culminating in a project that can be a PowerPoint presentation, research paper, timeline, poster, infographic or illustration.

2. Bullying and the Roles We Play

The bullying behavior towards Caroline is a major focus of the book. On most days, Caroline's classmates engage in bullying her which includes teasing, name-calling, excluding, ignoring, threatening and physically attacking. Elicit a definition of **bullying** as when a person or a group behaves in ways—on purpose and over and over—that make someone feel hurt, afraid or embarrassed. (Note: This definition is for elementary students. For older students, use the definition in ADL's [Education Glossary Terms](#)). Explain that in a bullying situation, there are several roles that people can play, as follows:

Aggressor: Someone who says or does hurtful things on purpose over and over.

Ally: Someone who helps or stands up for someone who is being bullied or the target of prejudice.

Bystander: Someone who sees bullying or prejudice happening and does not say or do anything.

Target: Someone who is bullied or treated in harmful ways by a person or group of people on purpose over and over.

Explain that most people have played each of these roles at different points in their lives and in different situations. Therefore, it's important to be mindful not to label people, only behaviors. Ask students for examples when bullying, bystanding and ally behavior takes place in the book. Then, place four pieces of chart paper around the room marked Aggressor, Ally, Bystander and Target. Have students move around the room and write on the chart paper when each of those behaviors took place in the book. Then have students choose one of the behaviors/pieces of chart paper to stand next to and have them discuss that one in more depth with each other, including a discussion of their own experiences with that role. When they are finished talking, reconvene the class and ask a few students to share their reflections with the class.

3. LGBTQ People, Bias and Acting as an Ally

Through Caroline's eyes and her relationship with Kalinda, we see a young person reflecting on their sexual orientation and we also see how others treat her. Talk with students about what the term LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning) means. As you discuss this, be sensitive and thoughtful about whether you have students (or parents) in your class who may be LGBTQ. Ask students to identify some of the challenges that Caroline and later Kalinda deal with because of this aspect of their identity and their love for each other. Explain to students that for some people, it can be difficult to share their sexual orientation with others ("coming out") because they may worry about gaining acceptance from family, friends and others in the community. This happened to Caroline when she shared her romantic feelings with Kalinda; she was told it was a "sin" and "disgusting." Also, talk with students about what it means to act as an ally to someone who is being bullied or the target of bias. Ask students: *Have you ever acted as an ally to someone who was targeted based on an aspect of their identity? What happened and how did you feel?* Use [6 Ways to be an Ally](#) to explore the various ways you can act as an ally.

ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and educational resources on identity, bullying prevention and LGBTQ identity.

Curriculum Resources

How Natural Disasters Discriminate, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/how-natural-disasters-discriminate.

Identity-Based Bullying, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/identity-based-bullying.

Understanding Heterosexism and How to Be an Ally, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/understanding-heterosexism-and-how-to-be-an-ally.

Unheard Voices: Stories of LGBTQ History, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/unheard-voices-stories-of-lgbt-history.

Websites

6 Ways to Be an Ally

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-to-be-an-ally-en-espanol

Some simple things a student can do to be an ally to targets of name-calling and bullying. (Also in Spanish.)

LGBTQ Pride Month and Education Resources

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/lgbtq-pride-month-and-education-resources

Curated resources you can use to celebrate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Pride Month in the month of June.

Safe and Inclusive Schools for All

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/safe-and-inclusive-schools-for-all

This resource provides information about how to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive school community.

The Time is Now: Bringing LGBTQ Topics into the Classroom

www.adl.org/blog/the-time-is-now-bringing-lgbt-topics-into-the-classroom

This blog discusses the enormous strides on marriage equality and addressing LGBT topics in the classroom.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

[Bullying Awareness & Prevention](#)

[LGBTQ People & Heterosexism](#)

[People, Identity & Culture](#)