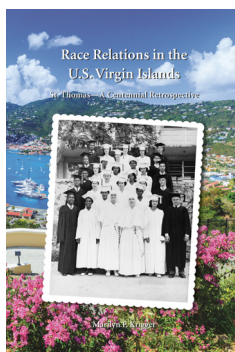


Great Reads from the U.S. Virgin Islands

2025 Adult Great Read

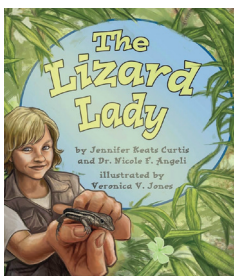


“Race Relations in the U.S. Virgin Islands: St. Thomas -A Centennial Retrospective,” by Dr. Marilyn F. Krigger, was chosen as the USVI’s adult Great Read for 2025. It is an account of the results of a 1917 territorial acquisition by the United States. Known previously as the Danish West Indies, it is now the U.S. Virgin Islands. The book’s main focus is on the changes that have taken place since the 1917 purchase, particularly greater economic growth (largely through tourism) and greater racial and social separation. Dr. Krigger interviewed or consulted 209 persons who are a testimony that this project was a lifelong labor of love.



University of the Virgin Islands Professor Emerita of History Dr. Marilyn F. Krigger is a native and resident of the U.S. Virgin Islands. In anticipation of the 2017 centennial of American rule, she was inspired to add to her previous research and writing on American racial influences on the social, political, economic, and cultural life of the Virgin Islands and to compile this book, while also appealing for greater morality and respect in human relations everywhere.

2025 Youth Great Read



“The Lizard Lady,” by Jennifer Keats Curtis and Dr. Nicole F. Angeli, has been designated as the USVI’s youth Great Read for 2025. Join the Lizard Lady as she cuts her way through thick Caribbean forests searching for critically endangered ground lizards that have been hunted to extinction on the island of St. Croix and can only be found on surrounding islands. Readers learn that a day in a life of a woman scientist can be anything but boring.



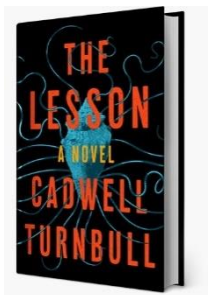
Jennifer Keats Curtis is a longtime author who regularly, and delightedly, works with biologists, environmental specialists, and science experts to research and write her books. Some of her books include: Children’s Choice Book Award Winner *Kali’s Story: An Orphaned Polar Bear Rescue*, CBC favorite *Pooper Snooper*, and NSTA Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children: *After A While Crocodile: Alexa’s Diary*, *Moonlight Crab Count*, and *Maggie: Alaska’s Last Elephant*. The realistic fiction, *Creek Critters*, co-authored with scientists at Stroud Water Research Center, was a finalist for the AAAS/Subaru SB&F Prize for Excellence in Hands-on Science Books.



Dr. Nicole F. Angeli is the Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife for the U.S. Virgin Islands and a research associate at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of Natural History. She received a PhD at Texas A&M University, a MSc at the University of Maryland, and a BA in Behavioral Biology at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Angeli studies how species can survive in a changing world where threats still exist. The goal of her work is to inform conservation decision-making for endangered species today.

Great Reads from the U.S. Virgin Islands

2024 Adult Great Read



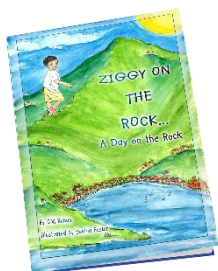
“The Lesson,” a novel by Cadwell Turnbull, tells the story of an alien ship resting over Water Island. For five years the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands have lived with the Ynaa, a race of super-advanced aliens on a research mission they will not fully disclose. They are benevolent in many ways but meet any act of aggression with disproportional wrath. This has led to a strained relationship between the Ynaa and the local Virgin Islanders and a peace that cannot last. A year after the death of a young boy at the hands of an Ynaa, three families find themselves at the center of the inevitable conflict, witness and victim to events that will touch everyone and teach a terrible lesson.



Turnbull, who grew up in St. Thomas, is an award-winning author. “The Lesson” won the 2020 Neukom Institute Literary Award in the debut category. The novel was also shortlisted for the VCU Cabell Award and longlisted for the Massachusetts Book Award.

For more information, visit cadwellturnbull.com.

2024 Youth Great Read



“Ziggy on the Rock,” by C.M. Rohan, has been designated as the USVI's youth Great Read for 2024. The book tells the story of Ziggy, a vibrant, adventurous, and kind boy who is growing up in the beautiful U.S. Virgin Islands. The book follows Ziggy and his friends as they explore their island home and embrace their Caribbean culture.

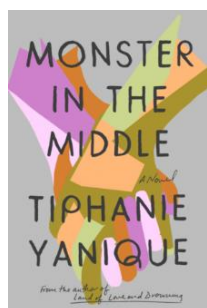
C.M. Rohan was born and raised in the U.S. Virgin Islands. She has worn many hats throughout the years. After the birth of her nephew and her daughter, she was unable to find children's books that were inclusive of life in the Caribbean. At this point she decided to write children's books that children of the Caribbean could identify with and feel represented at story time. With her nephew as her inspiration, she wrote several stories of his adventures on the island.

For more information, visit ziggyontherock.com.



Great Reads from the U.S. Virgin Islands

2023 Adult Great Read



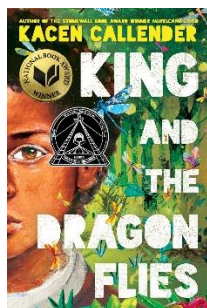
"Monster in the Middle," by Tiphanie Yanique, is a novel and short story collection explores intimacy through a generational, historical and societal lens. "It provides a rare look into colonialism in America, as well as the experience of being Black in America and the Caribbean over the past 50 years," said Yanique.

"Monster in the Middle," published in 2021, is featured on numerous best-of-the-year lists and was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award and the Townsend Prize.

Born and raised in St. Thomas, Yanique, a professor of creative writing and literature at Emory University, now resides in Atlanta. Her writing has won the Boston Review Prize in fiction, a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers Award, a Pushcart Prize, an Academy of American Poet's Prize and two Fulbright Scholarships.

For more information, visit tiphanieyanique.com.

2023 Youth Great Read



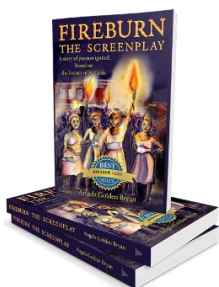
"King and the Dragonflies," by best-selling and award-winning author Kacen Callender, tells the story of 12-year-old Kingston James, who is sure his brother Khalid has turned into a dragonfly. When Khalid unexpectedly passed away, he shed what was his first skin for another to live down by the bayou in their small Louisiana town. Khalid still visits in dreams, and King must keep these secrets to himself as he watches grief transform his family. "King and the Dragonflies" won the National Book award, the Coretta Scott King Author Honor and the Lambda Literary Award.

A native Virgin Islander, Callender has written multiple books for children, teens and adults. They enjoy practicing their art and focusing on healing and growth in their free time.

For more information, visit kacencallender.com.

Great Reads from the U.S. Virgin Islands

2022 Adult Great Read



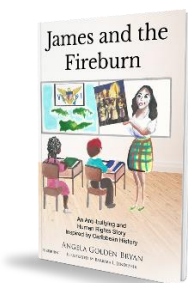
"Fireburn the Screenplay," written by Angela Golden Bryan, is based on the history of St. Croix and the U.S. Virgin Islands' bloody labor revolt of 1878. Bryan's historical fiction is a tribute to the three "queens" who rose to leadership by taking a fiery stance against the unfair labor conditions that existed for the emancipated laborers. Her book weaves a tale of passion, purpose, and revenge and delivers an electrifying and visceral experience to the reader. The vivid descriptions, historical references, and turbulent relationships create a myriad of emotions. "Fireburn the Screenplay" was well received and hit the #1 spot as an Amazon Bestseller in July of 2019.



Bryan, an award-winning author, actress, and producer grew up on St. Croix and is the founder and Executive Director of the nonprofit Fireburn Heritage, Inc. She holds a master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Chaminade University of Honolulu, a Master of Practical Theology from Wesley Seminary, is a chaplain, and holds numerous certifications in human behavior.

For more information, visit AngelaGoldenBryan.com and fireburnheritage.org.

2022 Youth Great Read



"James and the Fireburn," also written by Bryan, is an anti-bullying human rights story set against the backdrop of the Fireburn. The story focuses on the importance for children to learn right from wrong and to avoid destructive bullying behavior. The book provides lessons in making wise choices for children while educating readers about a piece of U.S. Caribbean history.

"James and the Fireburn" takes challenging subjects and presents them in a fun rhyme, making both the story and lesson easier to learn and remember," said Bryan. "In an age-appropriate manner, the book explores what happens when silence prevails and also encourages children to stand up for what is right."

"James and the Fireburn" provides for healing and advocacy as Bryan reads it to elementary school children and discusses the pain that bullying brought to her family. During her school appearances, she shows kids how to be a part of the solution.