

## Community-Wide Book Club

Dana Hoballah ('21), Eliana Swai ('21), and faculty sponsor Mr. Bandel designed this literary conversational experience to connect the EPS community as we navigate times where we have never felt more apart. The theme of this year's Community-Wide Book Club series is **Courage and Defiance**, in a year where we are in conversation around what it means to be a country founded on protest and civil rights movements, the series aims to create and open dialogue on what persistence looks like in the face of injustice through the writing and art of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) authors, activists, and revolutionaries. The series is open to the entire EPS community of students, parents, siblings, family, alumni, and faculty and staff, and will meet to discuss reflections on the title three times this year through the video conferencing platform, Zoom.

### Save the Date

December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 4 PM – 5:30 PM, Title 1: *Becoming* by Michelle Obama

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 4 PM – 5:30 PM, Title 2: *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 4 PM – 5:30 PM Title 3: *Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yi

**RSVP for the April 30<sup>th</sup> Book Club Meeting (to receive the Zoom meeting link, participants must RSVP):** <https://forms.gle/e6TdKCyrKowzz31m9>

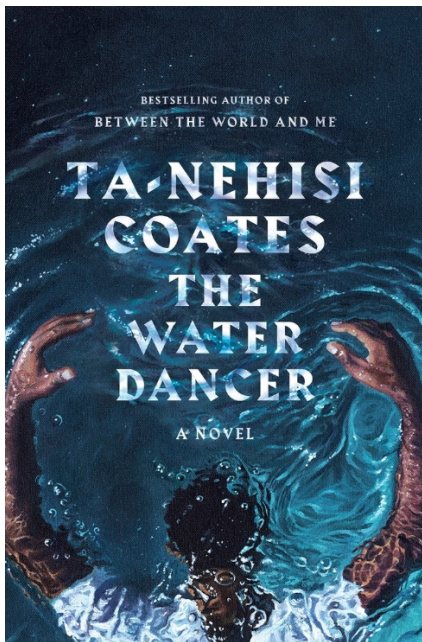


### Title 1: *Becoming* by Michelle Obama

“In a life filled with meaning and accomplishment, Michelle Obama has emerged as one of the most iconic and compelling women of our era. As First Lady of the United States of America—the first African American to serve in that role—she helped create the most welcoming and inclusive White House in history, while also establishing herself as a powerful advocate for women and girls in the U.S. and around the world, dramatically changing the ways that families pursue healthier and more active lives, and standing with her husband as he led America through some of its most harrowing moments. Along the way, she showed us a few dance moves, crushed Carpool Karaoke, and raised two down-to-earth daughters under an unforgiving media glare.

In her memoir, a work of deep reflection and mesmerizing storytelling, Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address.

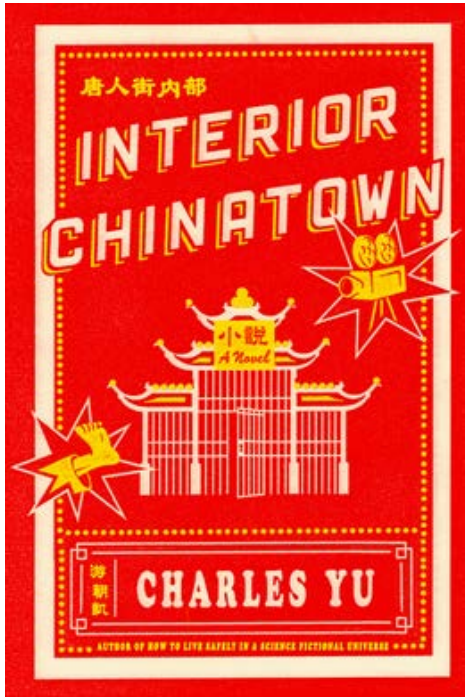
With unerring honesty and lively wit, she describes her triumphs and her disappointments, both public and private, telling her full story as she has lived it—in her own words and on her own terms. Warm, wise, and revelatory, *Becoming* is the deeply personal reckoning of a woman of soul and substance who has steadily defied expectations—and whose story inspires us to do the same.”  
(<https://www.becomingmichelleobama.com/>)



**Title 2: The Water Dancer by Ta-Nehisi Coates**  
“In an essay on race and memory, Toni Morrison wrote of “the stress of remembering, its inevitability, [but] the chances for liberation that lie within the process.” Ta-Nehisi Coates' new novel, *The Water Dancer*, is an experiment in taking Morrison's “chances for liberation” literally: What if memory had the power to transport enslaved people to freedom?

Coates is best known as a writer of nonfiction, including *Between the World and Me* and *We Were Eight Years in Power*, but with a new novel and his work on the Black Panther comic series, he is straying into speculative fiction. The results are mixed. At its best, *The Water Dancer* is a melancholic and suspenseful novel that merges the slavery narrative with the genres of fantasy or quest novels. But moments of great lyricism are matched with clichés and odd narrative gaps, and the mechanics of plot sometimes seem to grind and stall.”

(<https://www.npr.org/2019/09/26/764373265/in-the-water-dancer-memory-is-the-path-to-freedom>)



### Title 3: Interior Chinatown by Charles Yu

“From the infinitely inventive author of *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe* comes a deeply personal novel about race, pop culture, immigration, assimilation, and escaping the roles we are forced to play.

Willis Wu doesn't perceive himself as a protagonist even in his own life: he's merely Generic Asian Man. Every day, he leaves his tiny room in a Chinatown SRO and enters the Golden Palace restaurant, where *Black and White*, a procedural cop show, is in perpetual production. He's a bit player here too. . . but he dreams of being Kung Fu Guy—the highest aspiration he can imagine for a Chinatown denizen. Or is it?

After stumbling into the spotlight, Willis finds himself launched into a wider world than he's ever known, discovering not only the secret history of Chinatown, but the buried legacy of his own family, and what that means for him, in today's America.

Playful but heartfelt, a send-up of Hollywood tropes and Asian stereotypes—*Interior Chinatown* is Charles Yu's most moving, daring, and masterful novel yet.”

(<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/44436221-interior-chinatown>)

**NOTE:** We do not want accessibility to books to be a factor in your participation in this book club. EPS will provide around a dozen copies of each title that can be picked up on campus. If you would like to pick up a copy, please email Mr. Hagen ([phagen@eastsideprep.org](mailto:phagen@eastsideprep.org)) or Mr. Baldwin ([sbaldwin@eastsideprep.org](mailto:sbaldwin@eastsideprep.org)) to reserve your book.

For questions or further information please contact Dana Hoballah ([dhoballah@eastsideprep.org](mailto:dhoballah@eastsideprep.org)) or Eliana Swai ([eswai@eastsideprep.org](mailto:eswai@eastsideprep.org)).