

# ELPL Lit Kits

## **X** by Ilyasah Shabazz and Kekla Magoon



Malcolm Little’s parents have always told him that he can achieve anything, but from what he can tell, that’s a pack of lies—after all, his father’s been murdered, his mother’s been taken away, and his dreams of becoming a lawyer have gotten him laughed out of school. There’s no point in trying, he figures, and lured by the nightlife of Boston and New York, he escapes into a world of fancy suits, jazz, girls, and reefer. But Malcolm’s efforts to leave the past behind lead him into increasingly dangerous territory. Deep down, he knows that the freedom he’s found is only an illusion—and that he can’t run forever.

*X* follows Malcolm from his childhood to his imprisonment for theft at age twenty, when he found the faith that would lead him to forge a new path and command a voice that still resonates today.

**About the Authors:** **Ilyasah Shabazz**, third daughter of Malcolm X, is an activist, producer, motivational speaker, and author of the critically acclaimed *Growing Up X* and the picture book *Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X*. She lives in Westchester County, New York.

**Kekla Magoon** is an award-winning author of many young adult novels, including *The Rock and the River*, for which she received the 2010 Coretta Scott King John Steptoe Award for New Talent. Kekla Magoon lives in New York City."

**Discussion Questions (From the Michigan Humanities Council Great Michigan Read Reader’s Guide 2017 – 2018 [http://www.michiganhumanities.org/documents/gmr/XANovel\\_Readers\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.michiganhumanities.org/documents/gmr/XANovel_Readers_Guide.pdf)):**

1. In *X: A Novel*, how does Malcolm’s relationship with his family change over time?
2. Have you ever had a teacher or authority figure dismiss your ambitions? How did it make you feel?
3. How do the words, “Up, up you mighty race?” impact Malcolm’s activist beliefs later in life?

4. How do you think Earl Little would have responded to his son's beliefs throughout his life? Would he approve or disapprove of Malcolm's actions? Why?
  
5. Early in the story Malcolm says "I am my father's son. But to be my father's son means that they will always come for me" (page 5). What does he mean by this? How does this statement foreshadow the difficulties he faces?
  
6. What factors do you think contributed to the Black Legion forming such a strong membership base in the Michigan?
  
7. What kind of advice do you think older Malcolm would give to his younger self?
  
8. In what ways did X: A Novel help to reshape your views on Malcolm X as a historical figure?