

# What Do Famous People’s Bookshelves Reveal?

In quarantine, people are inadvertently exposing their reading habits — embarrassing, surprising and impressive.

**By Gal Beckerman**

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Bibliophiles do not approach bookshelves lightly. A stranger’s collection is to us a window to their soul. We peruse with judgment, sometimes admiration and occasionally repulsion (Ayn Rand?!). With celebrities now frequently speaking on television in front of their home libraries, a voyeuristic pleasure presents itself: Are they actually really like us?

## Carla Hayden



Library of Congress

On the Library of Congress Twitter account, [April 24](#)

1. **“Heart of the Ngoni,”** by **Harold Courlander with Ousmane Sako:** A collection of centuries-old stories from the Malian kingdom of Segu, translated from the original Bambara, that recount trials and tribulations of chiefs and tribal battles.

2. "[Minders of Make-Believe](#)," by **Leonard S. Marcus**: A history of children's literature, from the colonial era until today, along with a running account of the battles that were waged over what young people should read.

3. "[Losing My Cool](#)," by **Thomas Chatterton Williams**: Williams tells the story of how his father saved him from hip-hop culture by deploying books, lots of them, to give a wider view of the world.