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*For Immediate Release*  
August 21, 2024

## **Texas Book Festival Hosts 29th Annual First Edition Literary Gala on Friday, November 15th**

(Austin, Texas) - Texas Book Festival announced its **2024 First Edition Literary Gala** taking place Friday, November 15 at 6:00 pm at the [Fairmont Austin](#). This annual fundraiser provides essential resources to fulfill Texas Book Festival's mission and fund their literary programs. The event celebrates books, authors, and literacy and will feature a distinguished lineup of authors from this year's Festival.

2024 Gala speakers include:

**Jay Ellis** (Headlining Author)

Born in Sumter, South Carolina, to a military family, **Jay Ellis** spent his childhood inventing new personas for every town he landed in. After college, he moved to Hollywood, where he got his start in a recurring role on BET's *The Game*. An actor, philanthropist, and entrepreneur, Ellis is best known for his role as Lawrence on HBO's *Insecure*, for which he won an NAACP Image Award. He appeared alongside Tom Cruise in *Top Gun: Maverick*. Ellis is the author of the 2024 memoir *Did Everyone Have an Imaginary Friend (or Just Me)?: Adventures in Boyhood*.

**Cristina Rivera Garza** (Headlining Author)

Cristina Rivera Garza is the award-winning author of *The Taiga Syndrome* and *The Iliac Crest*, among many other books. A recipient of the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for her memoir *Liliana's Invincible Summer: A Sister's Search for Justice*, as well as a MacArthur "Genius" grant and the Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Prize, Rivera Garza is professor of Hispanic studies at the University of Houston, where she also directs the creative writing program.

**Claire Messud** (Headlining Author)

Claire Messud is the author of six works of fiction, including the critically acclaimed *The Emperor's Children*. Her latest novel, *This Strange Eventful History*, is longlisted for the 2024 Booker prize. A recipient of Guggenheim and Radcliffe fellowships and the Strauss Living Award

from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, she teaches at Harvard University and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**Mark Updegrave (Emcee)**

Mark K. Updegrave is the president and CEO of the [LBJ Foundation](#) and presidential historian for ABC News. He is the author of five books on the presidency, including *Incomparable Grace: JFK in Presidency*. Earlier in his career, he was the director of the LBJ Presidential Library and publisher of *Newsweek*. He has interviewed seven U.S. presidents.

Gala proceeds fund free access to the annual Festival, year-round Reading Rock Stars and Real Reads programs in Title I schools, collection enhancement grants to Texas public libraries across the state, and free literary programming throughout the year. Gala authors will also be featured in programming during Festival Weekend, November 16–17, to discuss their latest books.

Author Assets: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OWjGhAhLZWxeCFC7Fv796ultiGujvs3C>

2023 Gala Photos: <https://www.texasbookfestival.org/2023-first-edition-literary-gala/>

Gala Tickets and Sponsorship Opportunities: <https://www.texasbookfestival.org/gala/>

The Texas Book Festival is presented by H-E-B. Other major sponsors include Brigid Cockrum and Family, Tejemos Foundation, Tres Grace Family Foundation, Tocker Foundation, *Kirkus Reviews*, Still Water Foundation, The Rea Charitable Trust, Downtown Austin Alliance, Buena Vista Foundation, Tapestry Foundation, Central Market, *Texas Monthly*, Jordan Foster Construction, the *Austin Chronicle*, and RNDC. BookPeople is the official Festival bookseller.

Visit [www.texasbookfestival.org](http://www.texasbookfestival.org) for more information and follow along on Instagram, Facebook, and X @texasbookfest.

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**About Texas Book Festival**

With a vision to inspire Texans of all ages to love reading, [Texas Book Festival](#) connects authors and readers through experiences that celebrate the culture of literacy, ideas, and imagination. Founded in 1995 by former First Lady Laura Bush, Mary Margaret Farabee, and a group of volunteers, the nonprofit Texas Book Festival promotes the joys of reading and writing through its annual Festival Weekend, the Reading Rock Stars Title I elementary school program, the Real Reads Title I middle and high school program, grants to Texas libraries, and year-round literary programming.

This year's Texas Book Festival will take place November 16 and 17, with events happening in downtown Austin and at the Texas Capitol, featuring renowned authors, panels, book signings, and activities. Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, and volunteers, the Festival remains free and open to the public.