

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK 2022

TEACHER'S GUIDE

WHAT'S MINE AND YOURS



A NOVEL BY
NAIMA COSTER

WHAT IF EVERYONE READ THE SAME BOOK AT THE SAME TIME, THEN CAME TOGETHER TO TALK ABOUT IT?

When we read a great book, we can't wait to share the experience with others. That's one of the joys of reading. In this spirit, Maryland Humanities created One Maryland One Book to bring together diverse people in communities across the state through the shared experience of reading the same book.

Now in its fifteenth year, One Maryland One Book remains Maryland's only statewide community reading program. Each year, the selection process is guided by a common theme. The theme for 2022 is "New Beginnings."

The Maryland Center for the Book at Maryland Humanities partners with public libraries, high schools, colleges and universities, museums, bookstores, correctional facilities, and other organizations to bring book-centered discussions and other related events to communities across Maryland. But One Maryland One Book is not just about reading or literature; it is also about bringing people together for meaningful dialogue.

The book selected for 2022 is *What's Mine and Yours* by Naima Coster.

GRAB YOUR COPY

Find a copy of *What's Mine and Yours* at your local library or bookstore and get reading! What if a copy of *What's Mine and Yours* finds you? If you're out and about, you might find copies of the book in unexpected places. Our Wandering Books can be found in a myriad of public spaces from bus stops to doctor's offices to coffee shops. If you find a copy, it's yours for a short time. Register the book online so we can see how far it travels (instructions are included inside the book). Read it, review it,

and then leave it somewhere for someone else to find and enjoy.

REACH OUT

Each year, more than 15,000 Marylanders read the One Maryland One Book selection. How many of those people are your friends or family? Use the book to jumpstart a meaningful conversation in person or virtually with an old friend or to make a new one.

PULL UP A CHAIR

We invite you to join Maryland Humanities and thousands of other Marylanders at one of the many book discussions and related events happening around the state and online from mid-September to mid-November, including the author tour in October. To find One Maryland One Book programs in your area, go to onemarylandonebook.org and click on Events. Be sure to check for the dates and locations of Naima Coster's appearances this fall.

After each One Maryland One Book program you attend, please visit omobfeedback.org and share your thoughts by taking our brief survey.

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FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We are thrilled to have you join Maryland Humanities for the fifteenth year of One Maryland One Book, Maryland's largest reading and discussion program. Since 2008, readers across the state have enjoyed reading and discussing the One Maryland One Book title, selected by a committee composed of distinguished members of Maryland's literary community.

Literature has the power to delight, inform, and connect us, offering a glimpse into the lives of those near and far. Each year we explore a specific work of literature through events across the state. Thousands of Marylanders convene in their communities to read and discuss the chosen book through book clubs, libraries, colleges, museums, and more. Whether you read with us every year or are new to the program, welcome!

This year's selection, *What's Mine and Yours* by Naima Coster, is a multigenerational saga. At its core, this novel follows the lives of two families over decades, weaving the complexities of relationships through the lenses of tragedy, identity, familial legacy, community, race, and the impact of life choices. *What's Mine and Yours* is about our shared bonds and the remaking of lives in all their heartbreak and triumph.

We encourage you to pick up a copy of *What's Mine and Yours* and join the conversation at one of our many public discussion events across the state, whether in person or virtually. A program of the Maryland Center for the Book at Maryland Humanities, One Maryland One Book is made possible each year through the generosity of our sponsors and community partners. We greatly thank them for their support. Find out more about how to get involved at www.onemarylandonebook.org.

Please join us!

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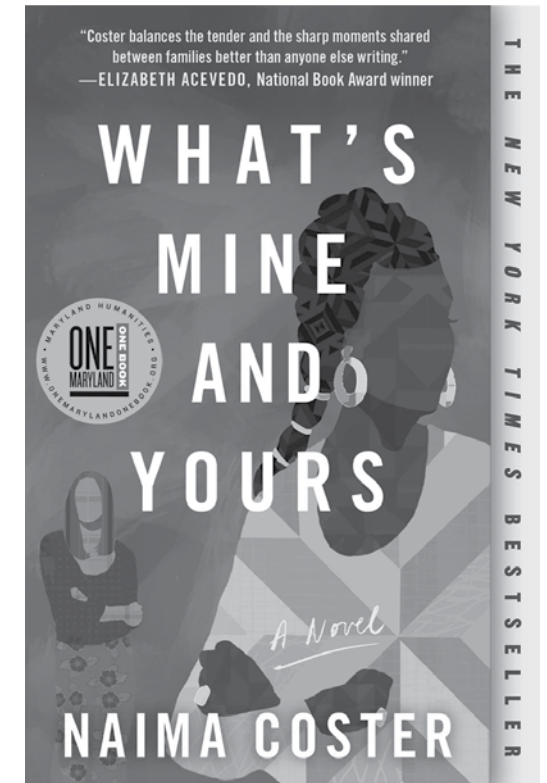
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Naima Coster is *The New York Times* bestselling author of two novels and a recipient of the National Book Foundation's 5 Under 35 honor. Her most recent novel, *What's Mine and Yours*, was a Read with Jenna Today Show Book Club pick, a Book of the Month Club pick, and was named a best book of the year by *Kirkus*, Amazon, *Esquire*, *Marie Claire*, *Ms. Magazine*, *The Millions*, and *Refinery29*.

Naima's first novel, *Halsey Street*, was a finalist for the Kirkus Prize for Fiction and a semifinalist for the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award. Published in 2018, it was named a must-read book of the year by *People*, *Essence*, *BitchMedia*, *Well-Read Black Girl*, *The Skimm*, and the Brooklyn Public Library.

Naima's stories and essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Elle*, *Time*, *Kweli*, *The Cut*, *The Sunday Times*, *Catapult*, *The Paris Review Daily*, among other publications, and in numerous anthologies. She is a graduate of Yale University, Fordham University, and the Columbia University School of the Arts, where she earned her MFA. She has taught writing for over a decade in community settings, youth programs, and universities. She currently teaches in the low-residency MFA program at Antioch University in L.A. She is a 2022 mentor for the Periplus Collective.

Naima is at work on her third novel about early motherhood, class mobility, and the lifelong friendship between two women. She lives in Brooklyn with her family.



ABOUT THE BOOK

In the Piedmont of North Carolina, two families' paths become unexpectedly intertwined over twenty years. Jade and Lacey May are two mothers determined to give their children the opportunities they never had. After a harrowing loss, Jade wants to hand down the tools her son, Gee, will need to survive in America as a sensitive young Black man. Meanwhile, Lacey May, having left the husband she loves, strives to protect her three half-Latina daughters from their charming father's influence.

When a county initiative draws students from the largely Black east side of town into a predominantly white high school on the west, each mother stands on different sides of the integration debate. Gee meets Lacey May's daughter Noelle during the school play, and their families begin to form deeply knotted, messy ties that will shape the trajectory of their adult lives. And their mothers make choices that will haunt them for decades to come.

What's Mine and Yours is an expansive yet intimate multigenerational tapestry of motherhood, identity, and the legacies we inherit. It explores the unique organism that is every family: what breaks them apart and how they come back together.

Note: Reprinted from the book's back cover

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMON CORE STANDARDS

RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

RH.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

RH.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

RL.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

RL.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

RL.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

SL.11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.11-12.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

W.11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research

GENERAL THEMES:

coming-of-age; identity; family; addiction; social class; racism and discrimination; diversity; memory; love; parent-child relationships; sibling relationships; interracial relationships; social norms; womanhood and manhood; acceptance

Content Warning: abortion; miscarriage; racist hate and violence; addiction; sex

CHARACTER LIST:

Ventura Family

- **Robbie:** father of Noelle, Margarita, and Diane; ex-husband to Lacey May; struggles with addiction
- **Lacey May:** mother of Noelle, Margarita, and Diane
- **Noelle:** oldest Ventura sister
- **Margarita:** middle Ventura sister
- **Diane:** youngest Ventura sister
- **Alma:** Diane's partner
- **Nelson:** Noelle's husband
- **Hank:** husband of Lacey May; step father to Noelle, Margarita, and Diane

Gilbert Family

- **Ray:** partner to Jade; father to Gee
- **Jade:** mother of Gee; partner of Ray
- **Gee:** son of Jade and Ray
- **Linette:** guardian/parental figure to Gee; business partner and close friend of Ray

Minor Characters

- **Inéz:** college friend of Noelle's
- **Duke:** high school boyfriend of Noelle's
- **Adira:** high school friend of Gee's
- **Ruth:** neighbor to Ventura family

BEFORE READING QUESTIONS:

These questions can be used in an anticipation guide activity where students respond independently first and then share their responses with partners OR as a fully independent activity, where students complete written reflections.

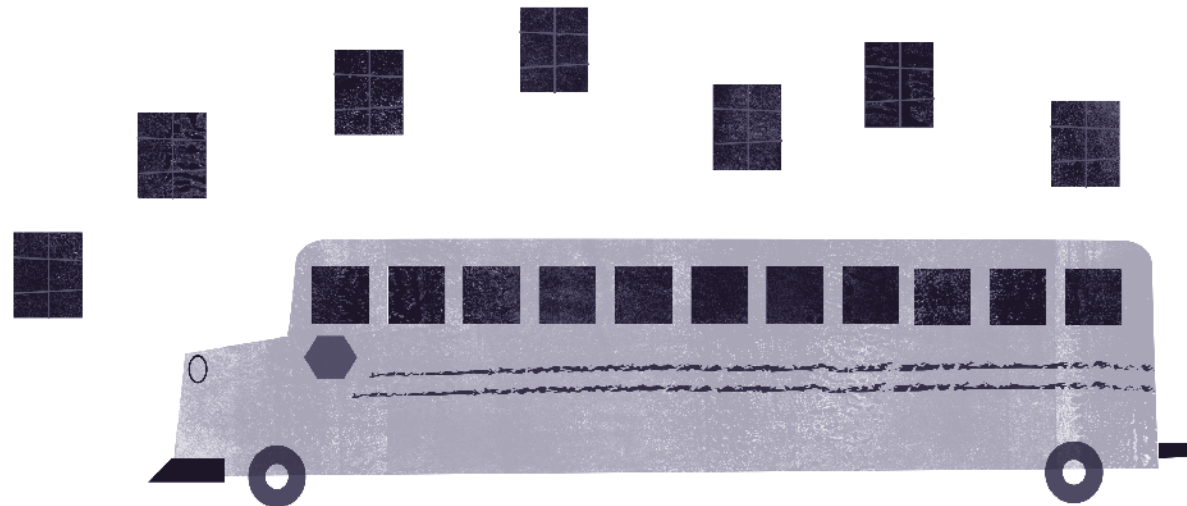
- How does where you're from influence who you are? Be as specific as possible in your response, using real-world examples.
- What lessons have you learned directly from or through your relationship with your parents/guardians? These lessons may be positive, negative, or somewhere in between. Be as specific as possible in your response.
- Is diversity an important and valuable aspect of students' educational experience? Explain why or why not in your response and support your opinion with personal and/or real-world examples.
- How does a person's experience with race and racism shape their perspective? Explain your answer with support from your own experiences with race.
- How does a person's social class influence their values/beliefs? Explain your answer with support from your own experiences with social class.

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

Activity #1 - Analyzing the Title

Create a discussion-based activity that uses the questions and steps below:

- **Step #1:** Write for 2 minutes on the following question → In your life, what parts of you are JUST YOURS? List as many things as you can think of. These can be physical possessions, qualities/characteristics about yourself, things you love, dreams/aspirations you have, etc. Example: the guitar you own; your cellphone
- **Step #2:** Write for 4 minutes on the following question → In your life, what parts of you are YOURS and someone else's (meaning this part of you is shared in some way)? These can be physical possessions, elements of your culture/background, qualities/characteristics, dreams/aspirations, things you love, etc. Be specific about WHO this thing is shared with—you could share this with a family member, a friend, an entire community of people, etc. Example: your religious identity
- **Step #3:** Compare both lists and reflect on what you notice about them. Is there any overlap? Is one list longer than the other?
- **Step #4:** Based on this comparison, what do you think this reveals about what is truly yours? What is the larger message about identity and culture?
- **Step #5:** Share out your ideas/insights from Steps #3 and #4 with a partner or a small group. (You may also share or reference your lists in Step #1 and #2 but don't have to if you feel uncomfortable). Then together, discuss the title of this text, *What's Mine and Yours*. Based on this activity, what themes/ideas do you predict this story might be about?



Activity #2 - Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a prominent Black woman scholar and American civil rights advocate, currently a professor at UCLA School of Law and Columbia Law School. Create a discussion-based activity that uses the questions and follows the steps below:

- **Step #1:** Look at an identity wheel like this one <https://images.app.goo.gl/ZbAdKRQzpvPRQwx9>, and list as many parts of your identity as you can.
- **Step #2:** Based on your list, choose 3 parts of your identity that you believe impact your day to day life THE MOST. Write one sentence about WHY you choose each part, incorporating examples/evidence from your life if possible.
- **Step #3:** Based on your list, choose 3 parts of your identity that you believe MOST SIGNIFICANTLY impact how OTHER PEOPLE view you and/or treat you. Write one sentence about WHY you choose each part, incorporating examples/evidence from your life if possible.
- **Step #4:** Based on your list, choose 1 part of your identity that you believe gives you power OR limits your power in society today. Write one sentence about WHY you choose each part, incorporating examples/evidence from your life if possible.
- **Step #5:** Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRci2V8PxW4>. According to this video, what is intersectionality? What parts of Emma DeGraffenreid's identity impacted how she was treated by the business that refused to hire her? What can intersectionality help us understand about social justice and about how people are viewed and/or treated in society?
- **Step #6:** Think back to previous stories we've read in this class and/or stories you are familiar with (these could be books, movies, comics, etc.) Focus on a main character and answer the following questions with examples from the story: What parts of identity have the biggest impact on this character? How do multiple aspects of this character's identity impact the way they are viewed and/or treated by others in the story? Do any parts of their identity either give them power or limit their power?
- **Bonus Step #7:** Interested in investigating further? Read this article from GlobalCitizen.org: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/what-is-intersectionality-explained/> and this article from Columbia School of Law: <https://www.law.columbia.edu/news/archive/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality-more-two-decades-later>

Teacher Note: You can repeat this activity halfway through the novel or at the end of the novel. Have students complete an intersectional analysis of a character in the novel, completing the same steps FOR the character.

READING QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

- Characterize Ray. What aspects of his identity define him? Consider his job, his childhood/background, his friendships, and his family.
- What dreams does Ray have for himself and his family, and what is he doing to make them a reality?
- The main setting for this chapter is Superfine, which is located on Beard Street. What type of environment is this? What hopes do Ray and Linette have for this shop?
- What do we learn about Jade from Ray's perspective? When did Jade have Gee, and how has being a working mother shaped her?
- What happens at the end of the chapter at cousin Wilson's house? Predict how this incident will impact Gee and Jade.

Chapter 2

- Characterize Lacey May. What aspects of her identity define her? Consider her social class, her relationship with her husband, and her role as a mother.
- Identify the challenges Lacey May faces through this chapter. How does she address and/or attempt to solve them? Do you think she is successful? Why or why not?
- Describe Lacey May's relationship with her daughters. How does Lacey May's financial situation influence her interactions with them? Be specific about how their interactions change from the beginning of the chapter to the end.
- What does Lacey May's home symbolize now compared to when she and her husband Robbie first bought it? Consider the significance of homeownership in society today.

Chapter 3

- Compare how Noelle describes her life in the Golden Brook suburbs to how Inéz describes Noelle's life in the suburbs.
- The last time we saw Noelle she was a child. What new details do we learn about her as an adult? Compare her demeanor as a child to her demeanor as an adult.
- Why is Noelle interested in motherhood? How does her role as a wife and her struggles in her marriage connect to this interest?
- Noelle says being a wife is "mostly waiting" (40). How does this describe her life with Nelson? Use details about how their marriage has changed since moving to the suburbs.
- How do people at the Suttons' party react to Inéz? How is this related to race?
- What incident recently happened at the neighborhood pool? How does Inéz respond compared to the rest of the party guests?
- What does the conversation between Noelle and Diane reveal about the state of the Ventura daughters and their mother?

Chapter 4

- What are some of the ways that Jade deals with her grief about Ray? What type of emotional response is she modeling for Gee? Do you believe she has a healthy or unhealthy response to his death? Explain with details from the text.
- How does Ray's death impact Jade's life financially? What are some of the challenges she faces with him gone?
- Compare the assistance Jade gets from the two men in this chapter: the Team Leader at the grocery store versus her attending physician at the hospital. What does this reveal about the various ways that single women are treated by men?
- On page 67, Jade gives her definition of family that goes beyond blood relatives. Create your own definition for family, and consider who is in your family that fits your definition yet isn't related by blood.

Chapter 5

- Consider how Lacey May's relationship with Hank changed since we last encountered them. What is motivating Lacey May to be with Hank? What does he value versus what she values?
- The chapter opens with Robbie's release from prison. How do the three daughters react to his return? Compare their different reactions.
- What happens with Diane and the dog at the beach? What does Hank's reaction reveal about him as a person?
- What does Lacey May represent to Robbie? Support your response with evidence from the chapter.
- Describe the fight between the Ventura sisters the day Lacey May drops them at Robbie's and he is not there. Why do you think they treat each other this way? Consider how they have been affected by their parents' behavior. What is the larger message about power and neglect?

Chapter 6

- Why does Jade want Gee to attend Central High School?
- How does Gee feel about changing schools? What is he concerned about?
- At the welcome meeting, school administrators tell parents "It is our duty...to open our doors" (111). What happens when this is said?
- Why are local Central parents against this change? Use evidence from Speakers 1 and 2 at the meeting.
- What does Jade say at the meeting and how does Lacey May respond? Explain what definition each woman is using for "fairness."
- What does Gee's teeth grinding symbolize? Consider what motivates Gee to grind.

- On page 125, when Noelle is talking with Duke about the new students, she says, "Of course it's because they're black" that local parents are upset. What is she noticing that others aren't? How is this connected to colorblind racism, "a device to disengage from conversations of race and racism entirely...construct[ing] a society that denies negative racial experiences, undermines cultural heritage and invalidates unique perspectives" (Asare 2017)?
- According to Noelle, what kind of person does she want to be versus what doesn't she want for herself?

Chapter 7

- Characterize the relationship between Nelson and Jemima. How do they relate to each other professionally and romantically?
- Describe Nelson's early life with Noelle. When did their relationship shift?
- What does Noelle represent to Nelson? Support your answer with details about their early relationship.
- Why is Nelson angry with Noelle in the present? How has this influenced his behavior towards her?
- What does Paris represent to Nelson? Use evidence from his first summer abroad and his current work trip.

Chapter 8

- How does Margarita react to Diane's voicemails about their mom? What does this reveal about their relationship?
- What contrasts do you notice in how Margarita presents her life online compared to her life in real life?
- What does the conversation between Margarita and Celeste about housing reveal about their difference in social class?
- When Margarita leaves Celeste, what picture does she post? Why do you think she does this?
- The chapter ends with Robbie saying to Margarita, "No matter what happened, the family survived." Do you think this is true? Support your answer with evidence from the text so far.

Chapter 9

- How has Diane handled Alma and her family? How is this changing now that her sisters are arriving?
- Characterize Noelle. How does she treat Diane and Alma? What is Diane's point-of-view on her?

- In Diane and Alma's argument about Diane's family and identity, what is each person's main argument? What does each person want?
- The chapter ends with Alma saying to Diane, "It's only our life if we say so. Otherwise it belongs to them" (180). In what ways does Diane's life belong to others?

Chapter 10

- How does Mr. Riley treat Gee in English class?
- Describe what happens to Adira involving her hair.
- What does Gee suggest Adira do about this, and how does Adira respond to his suggestion? What does her response indicate about what she understands about the transfer students at Central?
- Why is Noelle determined not to have a baby? What consequences does she list out?
- Why does Noelle resent her mom, Lacey May?
- At the dinner with Mr. Riley, Jade and Mr. Riley disagree. What is their disagreement and what is each person's position?
- Gee says Adira is "a torch." What does he mean by this and why does he believe "it didn't spare her."
- Jade and Gee listen to a Nirvana song on the ride home from Mr. Riley's. How does the Nirvana song symbolize what Jade wants for Gee?
- How do Jade and Noelle meet? Describe their interaction in one word and explain why you choose this word.
- What is Noelle's goal for the play? Do you think it will be successful?

Chapter 11

- This chapter opens with a phone call to Noelle from Nelson. What does this usually mean in their relationship? What does it actually mean this time?
- When Noelle confronts Nelson about cheating, how does she expect him to respond? What does he do instead?
- What is revealed at the sushi lunch between the Ventura sisters?
- How do Noelle and Margarita figure out how to find their dad, Robbie?

Chapter 12

- What important decision does Robbie make about the house without informing Lacey May?
- Describe how Noelle and Gee's friendship develops. How do they spend time together? How does Gee interact with Noelle in a way that's different than with other people?
- What happens in Noelle's favorite scene of *Measure for Measure*? What do you think the

larger message of that scene is? How does this message apply to Noelle's life?

- What gifts does Robbie give each of his three daughters? What could each gift represent about his relationship with each daughter?
- What does Duke post on the school bulletin board? What are he and the protestors hoping to convey about the transfer students at Central?
- How does Gee react to seeing the article about Ray's death?

Chapter 13

- Robbie claims that "the highs weren't what kept him alive; it was Lacey May" (252). What does Lacey May symbolize to Robbie?
- How does Lacey May feel about seeing Robbie again?
- When did Lacey May know it was over between her and Robbie? What reasons did she give for giving up on them?
- Characterize Noelle and Nelson's reunion. What does each want?
- How is the way Jemima wanted Nelson different from the way Noelle wanted him?
- How does Noelle signal she is done with Nelson? Describe this behavior.
- At the end during her conversation with Hank about Lacey May, Noelle says, "We keep her mad. That's her life source. Rage" (266). What do you think fuels Lacey May? What fuels each of the characters we've gotten to know so far: Robbie, Noelle, Margarita, Diane, Nelson, Jade?

Chapter 14

- How does the school administration respond to the protesters' posters? What two incidents of hate speech occur afterwards? What does this reveal about how racism/bigotry and power work?
- In what ways is the play meant to be a "safe space?" Do you believe that it is?
- What secrets does Noelle share with Gee when they run lines? What is powerful about sharing secrets with other people? What does it reveal about your relationship with them?
- What happens to Gee the next day, after Beckett sees him with Noelle? Be specific about what language is used as well as what physical behavior occurs?
- What sparks Noelle moving out of Lacey May's house?
- Why doesn't Lacey May like Gee? What associations does she have with blackness?
- What does Noelle notice about herself after moving out of Lacey May's? In what ways is she similar to her mother? In what ways is she different?
- What does Gee dream about? How are these dreams connected to his assault?
- How did Jade and Gee "find" or begin their relationship with Ray?
- What is the difference in Jade's and Gee's reactions to the boys who attacked him? What

does each person value?

Chapter 15

- Compare Noelle's new life after divorcing Nelson to her old one. How are her goals/desires similar or different?
- How is the way that Lacey May treats Alma different from Nelson?
- What observation does Noelle make about race, racism, and progress, based on her experience with Nelson and the "progress" people in her life have made?
- Explain what Noelle means by "never admit how they played their parts" (294).
- What flaws does Noelle acknowledge about Ruth and her treatment of Nelson?
- What lesson did Noelle learn about race from loving Nelson?
- Nelson writes an email where he reflects on his relationship with Noelle. Identify three insights he shared as he reflects on his relationship with Noelle and what it helped him understand.

Chapter 16

- How does Gee feel about Jade not going to the play?
- How do the students choose to end the play? Why does Noelle want to end it this way?
- Explain the meaning behind the name "Gee." Why do you think Gee chooses this moment to transition to his full name "Nelson James Gilbert?"

Chapter 17

- What is different for Nelson at his first wedding without Noelle?
- Adira refers to Noelle and Gee (Nelson)'s relationship as a "fairytale." Why is this ironic? Why are interracial relationships often labeled this way? What does it reveal about what people believe to be inherently true about these relationships?
- Nelson asks Noelle about motherhood. What were some of her struggles at the beginning?
- How does the opening night of *Measure for Measure* go? What are the trials? What are the triumphs?
- At the end of the novel, Nelson visits Jade for the first time in years. How does Nelson feel about Jade when he compares himself to her?
- Why did Jade take down the picture of Ray? How did her removal of this picture affect Gee?
- Describe the final image of the novel. Explain why this moment is significant.

POTENTIAL CHAPTERS

Chapter 6

Chapter 10

Chapter 12

Chapter 14

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES TO DIG DEEPER WHILE OR AFTER READING

Housing and School Segregation

Have students watch this video about redlining (<https://youtu.be/O5FBjyqfoLM>). Then have them explore one or more sources about housing segregation and its lasting impact on schools in the US today. Students can use the following reflection questions to put these sources in conversation with the core text, *What's Mine and Yours*.

Reflection Questions:

- What quotes stand out to you in the source(s) you explored? Reflect on why they stood out to you as significant or meaningful.
- What connections do you notice between the nonfiction sources and the issues with parents and students at Central High School?
- Is diversity an important and valuable aspect of students' educational experience? Explain why or why not in your response and support your opinion with personal and/or real-world examples.
- Consider your own schooling experience. How has it been influenced by housing segregation? You may want to use this source to see how your school district has used district lines to reduce or increase segregation: <https://www.vox.com/2018/1/8/16822374/school-segregation-gerrymander-map> What are the similarities and differences between your experiences and the students' experiences at Central High School?

Sources:

- "Podcast Examines How 'Nice White Parents' Become Obstacles In Integrated Schools" <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/12/922092481/podcast-examines-how-nice-white-parents-become-obstacles-in-integrated-schools>
- "Why racial inequities in America's schools are rooted in housing policies of the past" <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/11/02/how-redlining-still-hurts-black-latino-students-public-schools-column/6083342002/>
- "Housing Redlining and Its Lingering Effects on Education Opportunity" <https://www.heritage.org/education/report/housing-redlining-and-its-lingering-effects-education-opportunity>
- "We can draw school zones to make classrooms less segregated. This is how well your district does." <https://www.vox.com/2018/1/8/16822374/school-segregation-gerrymander-map>

Chapter 6

Colorblindness

Chapter 8

Chapter 10

Chapter 12

Chapter 14

When Noelle is talking with Duke about the new students coming to Central High, she notices that the local parents are upset and says “Of course it’s because [the new students are] black” (125). However, Duke denies this, and other characters like her mother Lacey May, the parent protesters at Central High, and her neighbor Ruth also deny that they have issues with race and blackness. However, throughout her relationship with Gee (Nelson), Noelle notices how the white people in her life treat him and other Black people in discriminatory ways, though they likely will “never admit how they played their parts” (294).

Have students explore the following sources and discuss their understanding of colorblind racism, which is “a device to disengage from conversations of race and racism entirely...construct[ing] a society that denies negative racial experiences, undermines cultural heritage and invalidates unique perspectives” (Asare 2017), and how they connect to the characters’ experiences in the novel.

Sources:

- "Debunking the myth of color blindness in a racist society" <https://bowdoinorient.com/2017/04/13/debunking-the-myth-of-color-blindness-in-a-racist-society/>
- "Colorblind Ideology Is a Form of Racism"
 - Reflection Questions: According to these two authors, what is colorblindness? What does it erase or ignore and why is it a dangerous aspect of racism? <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/culturally-speaking/201112/colorblind-ideology-is-form-racism>
- "63 Black Harvard Students Share Their Experiences In A Powerful Photo Project" https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/alisonvingiano/21-black-harvard-students-share-their-experiences-through-a?utm_source=dynamic&utm_campaign=bfsharecopy
 - Reflection Questions: Review the comments these students have received while attending Harvard. What is the tone of these comments? What do these comments assume about these students’ identity and personhood? Do you notice any connections between these students’ experiences and Gee’s and Adira’s experiences at Central?
- "The Exceptional Negro: Fighting to be Seen in a Colorblind World"
 - Reflection Question: What is the problem with the phrase “When I look at you, I don’t see color?” <https://youtu.be/xqvZRO2LPmw>

Chapter 2

Social Class and Gender

Chapter 8

Chapter 10

Through the novel, all of the women struggle financially—whether it is Jade and Lacey May struggling to support their families as single mothers, or Noelle, Margarita, and Diane dealing with the challenges this financial hardship presents to them as children and adolescents.

Have students explore these sources and then discuss/analyze how poverty specifically impacts women—both in this story and in these real-world examples.

- "Women, Poverty And Opportunity" <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2021/04/12/women-poverty-and-opportunity/?sh=5e077064e168>
- "The Basic Facts About Women in Poverty" <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/basic-facts-women-poverty/>
- "How poverty impacts women, and what we can do to end it" <https://medium.com/we-the-peoples/how-poverty-impacts-women-and-what-we-can-do-to-end-it-8fe84d0108fa>

If you completed the intersectionality activity, have students make connections back to the original Kimberlé Crenshaw video.



Chapter 5

Coming of Age

Chapter 6

Chapter 8

Chapter 9

Chapter 10

Chapter 12

Chapter 14

Chapter 16

In literature, a coming-of-age story is typically about a character's experiences transitioning from the innocence of childhood into the (sometimes harsh) realities of adulthood. The story centers on an event or set of experiences that deepens the character's understanding of the world, pushing them to grow. Many of the characters in the novel transition from childhood to adulthood—examples include Noelle, Gee (Nelson), Margarita, and Diane.

Have students engage with a supplemental poem that focuses on a coming-of-age issue that is also present in the novel: family, self-acceptance, parent/child relationships, depression, racism/discrimination, LGBT+ identity, social class, etc. Students can analyze the poem, and compare and contrast the poem's central coming-of-age truth/understanding to that of a character in the novel.

Places to access poems:

- Living Poets Library
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vSnUY2_seW5JHR0zyhWn7Uy8R7Czd3-TGwcFR9V0CQxsr__RNwsQAZ3b1gEXGXOZfrr378LgaoWXMg/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=3000&slide=id.g494e2c291f_0_39
- Button Poetry
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5DH3eN81b0RGJ7Xj3fsjVg>
- Poetry Foundation <https://www.poetryfoundation.org>

**AFTER READING - ESSAY OR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:****Theme: Family analysis**

Much of Coster's novel focuses on children's relationships with their parents. Write an essay where you examine a main character's relationship with his or her parents. Recommended characters include Noelle, Gee (Nelson), and/or Margarita. Characterize this person's mother and/or father through the character's interactions with and memories of them. Then analyze what lessons the character learns from their parent(s). These lessons may be positive, negative, or somewhere in between.

Theme: Women and Gender Norms/Stereotypes analysis

Throughout the novel, Coster explores gender norms and stereotypes, focusing on women and femininity in particular. Write an essay in which you define traditional feminine expectations and stereotypes, and then examine the ways one or more of the main characters —Lacey May, Jade, Noelle, Margarita, Diane—either conforms to or challenges it. Be sure to analyze how and why they conform to or challenge it. What freedoms, what relationships, what individual or collective power, does your character gain or lose by conforming to or resisting these gender norms/stereotypes?

Characterization: Antihero analysis

In literature, an antihero is defined as a protagonist who lacks traditional heroic qualities. An antihero's flaws and complexities can help the audience interrogate their own humanity. Write an essay where you analyze the character of Noelle or Gee (Nelson) and explain why they may be considered an antihero in the novel. Be sure to discuss what lessons about humanity and their flaws and complexities can help the audience to explore and understand.

Genre: Coming of Age analysis

In literature, a coming-of-age story is typically about a character's experiences transitioning from the innocence of childhood into the (sometimes harsh) realities of adulthood. The story centers on an event or set of experiences that deepens the character's understanding of the world, pushing them to grow. Write an essay where you analyze a main character who we see transition from childhood to adulthood. Examples include Noelle, Gee (Nelson), Margarita, and Diane. Examine their experiences and discuss how these experiences pushed them into the realities of adulthood. What lessons did they learn that deepened their understanding of the world and pushed them to grow?



Theme: Motherhood analysis

Much of Coster's novel focuses on Jade's and Lacey May's roles as mothers. Write an essay where you explore one or both women's definitions of motherhood. Your analysis should include a distinct definition of motherhood from the character's perspective, and this definition should be supported by evidence in the text that demonstrates them living this definition.

Theme: Race, Diversity, and Discrimination analysis

Throughout the novel, Coster explores issues of race, often by contrasting the beliefs, values and perspective held by Noelle and Gee with the beliefs, values and perspectives held by their mothers Lacey May and Jade. Through the magnet program and redistricting of Central High School, all four of these characters are influenced by ideas of the benefits of diversity as well as the challenges and violence of discrimination. Write an essay analyzing the race, diversity, and discrimination in the novel. What truths or understandings does Coster reveal through these characters' experiences?

NOTES:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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