

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK 2019

What the Eyes Don't See

TEACHER'S GUIDE



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By Mona Hanna-Attisha

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 twelfth 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 2019 is "Nature."

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 2019 is *What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City* by Mona Hanna-Attisha.

GRAB YOUR COPY

Find a copy of *What the Eyes Don't See* at your local library or bookstore and get reading! What if a copy of *What the Eyes Don't See* 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 doctors' 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? How many are perfect strangers you sit next to on the train or stand in line with at the grocery store? Use the book to jumpstart a meaningful conversation 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 from mid-September to mid-November, including the author tour. To find One Maryland One Book programs in your area, go to www.onemarylandonebook.org and click on Events.

For all the latest information, "like" or follow us:

 [facebook.com/MDCenterfortheBook](https://www.facebook.com/MDCenterfortheBook)

 [@MDHumanities](https://twitter.com/MDHumanities)

 [@MDHumanities](https://www.instagram.com/MDHumanities)

Look for Mona Hanna-Attisha at several venues in the fall, including the Baltimore Book Festival on Saturday, November 2.

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK 2019

WELCOME LETTER



Thank you for joining Maryland Humanities for the twelfth year of One Maryland One Book, our state's largest reading and discussion program. Since 2008, readers across Maryland have embraced our annual tradition of bringing people together through the reading of one book selected by members of Maryland's literary community. Each year we explore the power of literature through discussions and events across the state. Whether it's in a friend's home for a book club, at libraries, in high school or university classrooms, at senior centers, or in correctional facilities, thousands of Marylanders connect in their communities to read our chosen book. This shared experience lies at the heart of One Maryland One Book. Whether you read with us every year or are new to the program, welcome!

This year's book offers a cautionary tale of what happens when safeguards to protect the public are placed in jeopardy through the breakdown of bureaucratic and democratic processes and how we as individuals can take an active role in ensuring the safety of our communities. When we see a crisis arise, it's often a reflex to say to ourselves, "That could never happen here." What many of us have come to realize in recent years is that no community is immune, and sometimes we must fight to ensure the best outcomes. Pediatrician Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, along with others in Flint, saw the great risk to children (and adults) when high levels of lead contaminated the system following the city's change in water source. Their willingness to sacrifice personal and professional safety may have halted lifelong adverse effects on the children of Flint and, quite possibly, saved an entire city.

We encourage you to pick up a copy of *What the Eyes Don't See* and join the conversation at one of our many public discussion programs across the state. 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 how you can get involved at www.onemarylandonebook.org.

Please join us!

Cynthia Raposo, Board Chair
Phoebe Stein, Executive Director

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha is a pediatrician, professor, and public health advocate who spearheaded efforts to reveal, publicize, and fix Flint, Michigan's water crisis. She knew that the only way to stop the lead poisoning would be to present undeniable proof on a national platform.

Her persistence paid off: the city switched the water back to its original source and President Barack Obama declared a federal emergency. She has since been called to testify twice before the United States Congress, was awarded the Freedom of Expression Courage Award by PEN America, and was named one of *Time* magazine's "100 Most Influential People in the World."

A passionate activist, Dr. Hanna-Attisha created the Pediatric Public Health Initiative, a model program to mitigate the impact of the Flint water crisis. As founder and director of this organization, she combines community and clinical programs, childhood health policy and advocacy, and robust evaluation to give Flint children a better chance at future success.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Flint was already a troubled city in 2014 when the state of Michigan—in the name of austerity—shifted the source of its water supply from Lake Huron to the Flint River. Soon after, citizens began complaining about the water that flowed from their taps—but officials rebuffed them, insisting that the water was fine. Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, a pediatrician at the city's public hospital, took state officials at their word and encouraged the parents and children in her care to continue drinking the water—after all, it was American tap water, blessed with the state's seal of approval.

But a conversation at a cookout with an old friend, leaked documents from an environmental inspector, and the activism of a concerned mother raised red flags about lead—a neurotoxin whose irreversible effects fall most heavily on children. Even as circumstantial evidence

mounted and protests grew, Dr. Mona knew that the only thing that could stop the lead poisoning was undeniable *proof*—and that to get it she'd have to enter the fight of her life.

What the Eyes Don't See is the inspiring story of how Dr. Mona—accompanied by an idiosyncratic team of researchers, parents, friends, and community leaders—proved that Flint's kids were exposed to lead and then fought her own government and a brutal backlash to expose the truth to the world. Paced like a scientific thriller, this book is a riveting, beautifully rendered account of a shameful disaster that became a tale of hope, the story of a city on the ropes that came together to fight for justice, self-determination, and the right to build a better world for their—and all of our—children.

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. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

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:

The importance/role of family; ethics; trust; hope; determination; acceptance; prejudice; compassion; empathy; truth and justice; indifference; community health; institutionalized racism; environmental injustice

CHARACTER LIST:

Dr. Mona (Muna) Hanna-Attisha: Iraqi immigrant, narrator/protagonist of the story; physician, scientist, and activist who has been called to testify twice before the United States Congress and awarded the Freedom of Expression Courage Award by PEN America

Mark (Muaked) Hanna: Dr. Mona's brother

Mufak Hanna: Dr. Mona's father; achieved his doctorate in metallurgy; worked for General Motors; progressive and pacifist

Talia Hanna: Dr. Mona's mother; chemist trained at Baghdad University

Haji (Khalil): Dr. Mona's maternal grandfather; businessman who lived in Baghdad

Mama Latifa: Dr. Mona's maternal grandmother; elementary school teacher who lived in Baghdad

Mama Evelyn: Dr. Mona's paternal grandmother; Iraqi who emigrated to Southfield, MI

Dawood Hanna: Dr. Mona's paternal grandfather, deceased; railroad station manager

Elliott Attisha: Dr. Mona's husband; pediatrician

Elin (Warn) Betzano: Environmental engineer who lived in DC; Mona's high school friend

Marc Edwards: Civil engineer

Jenny LaChance: Research coordinator

Dr. Eden Wells: Chief Medical Officer for the Michigan Health Department

BEFORE READING QUESTIONS

Discussion:

1. Do you know of any examples when prejudices and preconceived ideas about people have influenced a group's or individual's behavior? Explain your response.
2. How can one's social and economic status affect the access they have to basic human rights? Elaborate with examples.
3. How does one's background and culture influence how one approaches challenges? Support your response.
4. Does society have any particular responsibility to individuals in a community? If so, what are those responsibilities?
5. Do you believe that federal and local governments across the U.S. work fairly to protect the rights of citizens? Support your response.
6. What does it mean to challenge injustice?

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: In Chapter 9 of the text, the author discusses the rise and fall of the auto industry in Flint, Michigan. Research the mechanization of America and how it has impacted the workforce. What do you predict America's future will look like if companies continue to use machines over humans? Can humans continue to adapt to the industrial changes? Some websites that might be helpful are as follows:

<http://harvardpolitics.com/online/rise-robotic-workforce/>

<https://www.mobileautomation.com.au/effects-increased-mechanisation-industries/>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2011/10/why-workers-are-losing-the-war-against-machines/247278/>

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/583f3fca725e25fcd45aa446/t/5ab8376d8a922dbfc6b7d48a/1522022342844/Robots+and+Rights+Concept+Note_March+2018.pdf

<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/03/08/wave-of-agriculture-robotics-holds-potential-to-ease-farm-labor-crunch.html>

ACTIVITY 2: To deepen your understanding of the economic impact the automobile industry had on Michigan when Dr. Mona's father worked for General Motors, research the Rust Belt of the 1980s. Locate a digital map of the Rust Belt and list the economic impact of the declining industrial heartland, especially the steel- and automobile-producing regions in the Northeast and Midwest. Possible source: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/miscellaneous-us-geography/rust-belt>

ACTIVITY 3: Create a list of the detrimental effects of lead poisoning on humans or, more specifically, in children age 5 and under. Be sure to use credible internet sources with web addresses ending in .org and .edu.

ACTIVITY 4: The author, Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, and her family are Iraqi immigrants who emigrated to America because of Saddam Hussein's terrifying reign. He created a "Republic of Fear" for the citizens of Iraq, causing people to migrate away from their ancestral homeland. Create a timeline, either on paper or digitally, that tracks Iraqi history from WWI through Saddam Hussein's reign. Should the Hanna family have emigrated earlier than 1981? What other countries are currently crumbling due to their military dictatorships? Resource for a variety of timeline templates: <https://www.common sense.org/education/top-picks/best-timeline-creators-and-templates>

Prologue: "How I Got My Name"

- Reread the quotation from Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax* on the page prior to the Contents. What does this quotation mean to you? Has Dr. Seuss' message ever applied to you?
- Research the meaning of your name. Does the meaning reflect who you are today? Does it reflect your ethnicity or culture? Explain.
- What does Dr. Mona's (Muna) name mean? Why is the meaning significant based on what you know about her thus far?
- Reread the paragraph on page 5 that begins with "The road behind my family disappeared too." What is the author's attitude about her homeland of Iraq? Why do you suppose she feels this way?
- What is the significance of the author using diction such as "fragile beauty" (6) to describe her mother's homeland and Baghdad?
- How did Dr. Mona learn of the concept of evil? What kind of impact did this knowledge have on her as a young child?
- Paraphrase Dr. Mona's thesis for this book (12–13). Are her statements in this paragraph an effective way to start her story? Why or why not?
- According to Dr. Mona, who or what are the "real villains"?

Chapter 1: "What the Eyes Don't See"

- How long have Flint residents been "complaining" about the water and the authorities "explaining"? Why does Dr. Mona call it "a loop of white noise"? (17).
- When asked about the water, how does Dr. Mona respond to Reeva and Nakala's mother, Grace?
- What does the quotation by Frederick Douglass (20) mean in reference to vulnerable babies?
- What actions did Dr. Mona take to improve the pediatric residence program? What do her actions reflect about her character?
- What is the purpose of Dr. Mona mentioning D.H. Lawrence's quotation, "The eyes don't see what the mind doesn't know"? (22).
- Of the many Flint demographics mentioned on pages 22–25, which is most shocking to you and why?
- What is an EM and why was an EM appointed to Detroit and Pontiac? In your opinion, was this political move helpful or hurtful to Flint?
- What was the "crucial mistake" Governor Snyder's EM made?



Chapter 2: “The Barbecue”

- Describe both of Dr. Mona’s daughters. How do their personalities juxtapose one another? Which child seems more like Mona at this point in the story?
- Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “If inequality has a favorite season, it’s summer”? (33). Provide reasons for your position.
- In what ways were Elliott and Dr. Mona’s wedding “unconventional”?
- Explain how Elin’s question—“What are you hearing about the Flint water?”—is a non sequitur.

Chapter 3: “The Valedictorian”

- Research the basic details of the DC water crisis. Then discuss why corrosion control is so important to the Flint situation.
- In what ways does Dr. Mona admit to being naïve? Are you as trusting as Dr. Mona is of your local government agencies that are put in place to keep residents safe? Explain your response.
- Based on what you know about Dr. Mona thus far, provide reasoning as to why she doesn’t walk away from the water crisis and ignore the information Elin has told her.
- Determine the type of figurative language used in the following statement and its effect on the reader: “A fog of unreality fell over the rest of the party” (47).

Chapter 4: “Haji”

- Dr. Mona refers to her grandfather, Haji, as an idealist or “somebody who believes the world can be better than it is now” (49). Do you know any idealists in your life? Who are they and what do they believe? If you do not know of anyone, look up a modern-day idealist and list what he/she believes.
- In a sentence or two, summarize how Haji lost his faith in God. What were the humanitarian lessons he taught his children and grandchildren?

Chapter 5: “Red Flags”

- What were the symptoms of LeeAnne Walter’s family due to lead in their water? What was the initial response after this case was reported to the Environmental Protection Agency?
- Why was Miguel Del Toral labeled as a “lone wolf and an alarmist”? (59). What did Del Toral feel obligated to do after this accusation?
- Who is Marc Edwards and why was he hired by the DC Water and Sewer Authority? What resulted from his investigation?
- Do you think the official’s decision in Washington DC to replace only part of the lead service lines was fair to the tax-paying citizens? Explain your response.
- What was Dr. Mona’s advice to herself regarding her next steps? Have you ever given yourself similar advice before starting a difficult task? Elaborate on the situation and the advice you gave yourself.

Chapter 6: “First Encounter”

- After reading the description of Dr. Mona’s mother (69–71), draw three symbols that would best represent her mother. Your symbols do not have to be stated in the text but can be a representation of what Dr. Mona’s mother means to the Hanna-Attisha family. Write a few sentences that discuss your symbolic depiction.
- Dr. Mona mentions that “We don’t think enough about what lies beneath the veneer of the places where we grew up” (72), and states that she is not afraid to dig deeper into the world in which she was raised. Now it is your turn to “dig deep” into the history of the place where you were raised. Look into former leaders (political and religious), historical events (large and minute), social movements, etc. Record at least three new pieces of historical information you have found about people/organizations in your local town or city, which can be both positive and/or negative. How can your generation use this information you discovered to change (or continue with) the course of history?
- Provide several examples as to how the American Dream came true for the Hanna family. Why do you suppose Dr. Mona bothers to mention her family’s dream in her story?
- What is the educational inequity mentioned in this chapter? Do you believe there are educational inequities in school systems across the country? Support your response with examples.



Chapter 7: “Miasma”

- Analyze what the author means when she states, “When I think about [John] Snow and his accomplishment, what has always grabbed me most—and impressed me—is the way he insinuated himself into the epidemic” (86). (For more information about John Snow’s research and accomplishments, go to: <https://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow/fatherofepidemiology.html>)
- What connection does Dr. Mona feel to her distant cousin, Dr. Paul Shekwana?
- The author references a quotation by Charles Dickens who was known as one of the greatest novelists of the Victorian Era. At an early age, Dickens had to withdraw from school and work in a warehouse, giving him a firsthand acquaintance with poverty and knowledge of the working class. Read the quotation from *Great Expectations* on page 90, and then locate and record another Dickens quotation that supports the injustices Dr. Mona and her team are uncovering through the Flint water crisis. Analyze the quotation’s connection to the text.
- What is the author’s purpose for referencing the title to her novel: “*What the eyes don’t see*” (98).
- Why did General Motors stop using Flint water at its engine plant in October 2014? Why is this significant?

Chapter 8: “No Response”

- Describe Dr. Mona’s emotions as she awaits a response from the county health authorities. What tone is established in the first several pages of the chapter?
- Although Dr. Mona disagrees with Elliott in regard to her being “the most stubborn person he knows” (103, 104), do you think he could be right? Has Dr. Mona shown her stubborn side thus far in the story? Provide reasoning for your response.
- Why does Dr. Mona describe the Tuesday morning after Labor Day weekend as the “end of three days in purgatory”? (109). What is gradually happening to Dr. Mona both mentally and physically?
- What changes Dr. Mona’s attitude near the end of the chapter? What is the new tone and why has it changed?

Chapter 9: “Sit Down”

- A photo from the construction site of AutoWorld billed the theme park as, “A place for people who dream, design and drive cars” (see website for 30 years of images). What is ironic about this motto for the amusement park? Watch the commercial for AutoWorld. Does it make the park seem appealing? Why or why not?
https://www.mlive.com/entertainment/flint/2014/07/autoworld_in_restrospect_30_ye.html
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO8jumZXZTg>
- Research treaties that forced Native Americans off their lands and pushed them into Canada. Why does Dr. Mona include examples of minorities being treated poorly by the government?
- State the author’s purpose and effect of juxtaposing several qualities about Flint (118).
- What restrictive racial covenants were legal in Flint and were encouraged by General Motors?

- What did Charles Stewart Mott, the largest GM shareholder, do for Flint’s public school system that was groundbreaking?
- This year marks the 82nd anniversary of a labor battle known as the “Battle of the Running Bulls” (123). It happened at GM’s Fisher Body Number Two in Flint in January 1937. The link below provides an iconic photograph of the children of Flint fighting for their fathers’ rights. After listening to the clip, answer the following questions (scroll down the digital page for the 7 min audio for “82 years ago, Flint GM strikers fought police and won a battle for labor rights”): What were the demands of the autoworkers? Why was the National Guard eventually called in? How was the strike resolved?
<https://www.michiganradio.org/post/stateside-mi-congressmen-border-wall-ghost-town-typeface-native-americans-protest-line-5>
- In 1974, Thurgood Marshall wrote the following of the Supreme Court’s decision that Michigan students could not be bussed across city lines: “Court’s refusal to remedy separate and unequal education leaves ‘little hope that our people will learn to live together and understand each other’” (127). Do Marshall’s sentiments still hold true in our society today? Is education in America unequal? Do blacks and whites currently live together and understand each other? Support your response.
- What other towns and cities across the U.S. have shown the “grit and resilience” (128) that the people of Flint have due to a crisis? What causes certain communities to crumble under similar circumstances and some to endure?

Chapter 10: “Jenny + the Data”

- What is the effect of the simile “...like a spider spinning a web”? (131).
- What news does Dr. Mona receive from Representative Kildee’s office? Why is it significant?
- Dr. Mona comments on her residents being “invigorated by the feeling that [they] were finally doing something” (138). How would you feel if you were hearing this data for the first time and being asked to get involved? Would it be exciting? Boring? Confusing? Explain your response.
- What are Jenny’s personal concerns? What rhetorical appeal is the author using by including Jenny’s story (i.e. ethos, pathos, logos), and is it effective?
- Why did Dr. Mona oblige Jenny’s suggestion of an institutional review board approval?
- Why is Brad Wurfel’s response to the crisis frustrating to Dr. Mona?



Chapter 11: “Public Health Enemy #1”

- What is Dr. Mona’s tone when she refers to Kettering as “Good ol’ Boss Kettering” and adds, “GM has tried to keep his flame alive”? (145). Why has she created this tone at this particular time in the story?
- Why didn’t the United States follow suit when the League of Nations banned lead paint in 1922?
- Why was Alice Hamilton one of Dr. Mona’s heroes? Are you surprised by the stipulations Harvard University presented to her? Why or why not? (To further investigate women’s rights in the US, go to: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_women%27s_legal_rights_in_the_United_States_\(other_than_voting\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_women%27s_legal_rights_in_the_United_States_(other_than_voting))).
- Analyze the Kehoe Rule: “Safe until proven dangerous” (152). What does it mean for those in Flint who were drinking lead in their water? What principle contradicts Kehoe’s Rule and why is it necessary?
- Historically, how have lead poisoning victims *remained* victims? In what other U.S. industries has this scenario for victims occurred? (Think beyond the tobacco industry that the author mentions.)
- Discuss reasons as to why modern lawmakers “look[ed] the other way and let convenience drive policy” rather than follow what history tells them (155).
- Conduct some research on lead paint laws in Maryland, more specifically rights and obligations for property owners and renters. Create a chart that compares laws regarding lead paint versus lead in drinking water. After you complete your research, write a paragraph about what you have discovered and what is most eye-opening to you. (Provide students with web links to get them started with research.)
<https://www.peoples-law.org/lead-paint-law-rights-and-obligations-renters-and-property-owners>
<https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/HH/documents/NLPPW%20Partner%20Information%20Kit.pdf>
<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/programs/md.htm>
<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/leadpoisoningfaqs.pdf>
- The author references the title of the book stating that “*The eyes don’t see what the mind doesn’t know*” (160), and prior to this, she states that lead in water, unlike lead in paint, is “colorless, odorless, and invisible—[is] meant for ingesting” (159). What is Dr. Mona implying here? What lesson should readers take from these statements?

Chapter 12: “What Field Are You On?”

- Briefly state the three time periods of interest that Marc Edwards suggests for Dr. Mona’s water study. Why are these time frames most significant?
- What is the general opinion about Marc Edwards? What does Dr. Mona think about how people perceive him thus far? In your response, also include examples from the text prior to Chapter 12.
- How does Dr. Mona feel about her interactions with her family? Why does she feel this way?
- Dr. Mona notes that her findings put her at risk for several reasons. Have you ever had information that could be helpful, but you knew exposing the truth would put your reputation at risk? Explain with an example, and if you haven’t experienced this, discuss a famous person who has been in a similar situation.

Chapter 13: “The Man in the Panda Tie”

- Analyze the effect of the following simile: “We’d worked all weekend and Monday nonstop, like two symbiotic organisms...” (173).
- What does Dr. Mona assume her mother “Bebe” will worry about if she tells her what is going on in Flint?
- Edwards mentions a corrosive water supply in Maryland that was similar to the supply in Flint (180). Conduct research on the water supply he mentions using some of the links provided. Are the Flint and Maryland crises similar? Is this crisis the state’s problem to solve, or is this a federal issue? What suggestions do you have for state and/or federal lawmakers to eliminate this issue permanently for Americans?
https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/blog/study_warns_of_potentially_corrosive_groundwater_in_watershed_states
<https://conduitstreet.mdcountries.org/2016/07/22/corrosive-groundwater-in-maryland-poses-potential-health-infrastructure-challenges/>
<https://www.baltimoresun.com/features/green/blog/bs-md-corrosive-water-20160713-story.html>
https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/Water_Supply/Pages/lead_and_water.aspx
<http://www.mgs.md.gov/wss/index.html>
- Analyze the purpose of Dr. Mona listing similarities and differences about her and Marc Edwards (181).
- What two uplifting statements were made to Dr. Mona that caused her to feel hopeful about her plight?
- Listen to the song “Everything is Awesome” from *The Lego Movie*, which is the hospital’s residency theme song. What is ironic about Dr. Mona mentioning this song at this point in the story? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPumfHxLOsg>

Chapter 14: “Environmental Injustice”

- State the effect of the following metaphors the author uses in this chapter: “a sea of red tape” (187) and “a road map of anxiety” (188). What similar tone do they both create?
- Dr. Mona mentions that she is pro-vaccination and that convincing parents to trust the science on vaccines is “one of the most important tasks facing pediatricians today” (190). Why do you suppose she adds this commentary into her story? How is her remark relevant today?
- Research the meaning of the allusion “the proverbial canaries in the coal mine” (191). How does this allusion support Dr. Mona’s point?
- What are Marc Edwards’ suggestions when Dr. Mona asks for advice on how to analyze children with multiple blood-lead levels? Is his expertise helpful to the study or not? Explain.
- What does Marc Edwards mean when he writes in an email that he is “ashamed” of his profession? (194).
- Define environmental injustice. List some examples of environmental injustices in Baltimore, MD, and the surrounding counties and explain how they fit the definition.

Chapter 15: “Poisoned by Policy”

- The author uses the word “fiercely” when mentioning how pediatricians protect children’s bodies (201). Why does she choose this specific word? Why is it effective?
- What similar passions do Dr. Mona and her brother, Mark, share in life?
- In a sentence or so, summarize Mark Hanna’s analysis of the politics behind the water crisis.
- What are Mark’s worries regarding Dr. Mona’s role in the crisis? What is Dr. Mona’s worst fear? Is her fear all that different from your fears in life? Explain your response.
- What is symbolic about the jigsaw puzzle on which the family is working?
- What is the bigger picture that Dr. Mona is finally beginning to realize about her difficult situation?

Chapter 16: “Shortwave Radio Crackling”

- Research the background of the Nestorian Church, or the “Church of the East” (211). How was this sect established? Where do these Christians still practice?
- Dr. Mona mentions that ISIS destroyed thousands of invaluable artifacts, religious books, and manuscripts in Mosul to “weaken the soul of the Iraqi people” (212). Historically speaking, what other cultural or religious groups have been terrorized to “culturally cleanse” the soul of the people?
- Who was Nuri “Anwar” Rufail Koutani? How are Nuri and Dr. Mona similar in nature?
- Does the description of Iraq when Dr. Mona’s father was a boy seem like the Iraq we see and hear about today? What are the similarities and differences from the 1950s to modern-day Iraq? (Look up images from both time periods for reference if necessary.)

- Why was Saddam Hussein’s Iraq considered an ally to the United States in the ‘80s? Why was this U.S. support significant to the Hanna family?
- Why do you suppose Dr. Mona included the details surrounding the genocide in Halabja as part of her story?

Chapter 17: “Meeting the Mayor”

- What does it mean to be an “eternal optimist”? (221). Support Dr. Mona’s trait of eternal optimism with examples from the text thus far.
- Dr. Mona begins her PowerPoint presentation with the image of a little girl from Flint, MI, who looks “normal” but has elevated lead levels in her blood (224–225). What rhetorical appeal is used and how is it effective?
- Analyze what the following statistic proves about children with lead poisoning: “For childhood lead poisoning, it was \$50.9 billion in lost economic productivity resulting from reduced cognitive potential” (227).
- How does Mayor Dayne Walling deflect the issues of lead poisoning in the water after Dr. Mona’s presentation?
- Why is Dr. Mona so appalled by Mayor Walling’s non sequitur at the end of the meeting?
- Why is it shocking to Dr. Mona that Marc Edwards is a Republican? If necessary, look up traditional beliefs of political parties to assist with your response.
- What is one physician’s insensitive concern regarding Flint residents? Do you think this physician’s point of view constitutes the majority or minority of the people surrounding the water crisis? Support your response.

Chapter 18: “Aeb”

- Dr. Mona mentions “aeb,” or “the idea that you were never acting independently of your family or larger community. You always had a connection to a larger group, and there were always repercussions” (241). What other cultures or religions have a concept or belief similar to “aeb”? Have you ever felt if you strayed from the norm that you would bring shame upon yourself and your family? Explain with examples.
- What was gradually happening to Dr. Mona’s father that could be seen in his family Christmas letters? How do her father’s feelings about his homeland affect her?
- Write a holiday letter about your family (or just about you) that reflects accomplishments throughout the year. You may also choose to write a holiday letter about the year’s accomplishments of your favorite character in a movie or novel. Use your imagination!
- Why does the author juxtapose the mournful tone of her father’s stoicism with the joyful tone of Christmas? What is the effect on the reader?
- What are possible motives that gave Dr. Mona her sense of commitment and inner purpose to the people of Flint? What drives your sense of commitment and inner purpose?

Chapter 19: “The Press Conference”

- Why does Aron Sousa tell Dr. Mona that “The [Michigan State] university supports you as a member of the faculty, but it cannot support your research”? (252). What does Sousa’s reaction and all the other public officials’ reactions infer about the political impact of Dr. Mona’s research?
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “The world shouldn’t be comprised of people in boxes, minding their own business. It should be full of people raising their voices, using their power and presence, standing up for what’s right. Minding one another’s business” (252–253). Support your reasoning.
- How does the water in the baby bottle that Dr. Mona used during her presentation support her comment (and the title): “The point was what our eyes couldn’t see”? (254).
- Who is LeeAnne Walters and what are some of her character traits mentioned in the text? Read over the articles below and create a list of actions Walters took to expose the crisis.
<https://www.newsweek.com/who-leeanne-walters-activist-who-helped-expose-flint-water-crisis-wins-top-897326>
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/whistleblowers-marc-edwards-and-leeanne-walters-winner-smithsonians-social-progress-ingenuity-award-180961125/>
<https://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/leeanne-walters/>
- Analyze Dr. Mona’s statement at the end of the chapter: “But deep inside it seemed that I had been preparing for that moment my whole life” (258). Keep in mind her background, stories of her ancestors, and other factors before writing your analysis.

Chapter 20: “Splice and Dice”

- How did state officials try to discredit Dr. Mona’s research? Clarify what you believe Wurfel’s “unfortunate researcher” statement means (260).
- Describe how Dr. Mona’s husband and children are feeling during her countless hours of research. How has Dr. Mona reacted to their emotions?
- Dr. Mona mentions that she feels the false accusations about her research are “like a public stoning” (261). Look up what public stoning is and why some cultures used it over others. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoning>
- The author uses a rhetorical device called anaphora near the end of the chapter, which is the repetition of a word(s) or expression(s) at the beginning of successive phrases for rhetorical effect. Record the page number and lines where anaphora is used, and then discuss the effect of the repetition on the reader.
- What is the tone at the end of the chapter? What specific imagery and diction does the author use to create this tone?

Chapter 21: “Numbers War”

- What was Bebe’s response after Dr. Mona’s press conference? Did you predict a different response just as Dr. Mona did? Explain your answer.
- How did the state counter Dr. Mona’s data? From the details provided thus far, how was their data flawed?

- How did Kristi Tanner and Nancy Kaffer’s article in the *Free Press* confirm Dr. Mona’s research?
- Dr. Mona lists all the terrible side effects Flint residents are facing and includes that all of these damaging effects are “entirely preventable, literally man-made” (272). What other environmental disasters have been caused by man? What has “man” done about these disasters that are hurting humans and the environment?
- Why was being “near-hysteria” (273) a compliment rather than an insult to Dr. Mona?

Chapter 22: “Demonstration of Proof”

- Of the four various emotions Dr. Mona describes feeling (276), which emotion do you think you would feel most at this point? Explain your choice and what it tells about who you are.
- Dr. Mona lists several things our society believes without concrete proof, such as “global warming is a hoax,” “tobacco is good for you,” etc. (278). What are some other falsehoods people believe without any proof and in spite of plenty of data and research that proves the theories wrong?
- There are two allusions in this chapter that the author uses to strengthen her points she is making. Find those two allusions, write the definition of each allusion, and then analyze how each one reinforces her points.
- Even though Dr. Mona faces difficult challenges, including her own feelings of “aeb,” what does she seem to believe innately about human beings?
- What happened at the press conference that frustrated the team working to fix the crisis?
- What is the denouement of the water crisis?

Chapter 23: “All the Things We Found Out Later”

- Of the long list of “things [Dr. Mona] found out later,” what was most shocking to you and why?
- Prior to her death on April 22, 2019 (update from publication of Oct 2018 article), Jassmine McBride discussed her bout with Legionnaires’ disease which she contracted from exposure to lead in her water in Flint, MI. McBride stated “It hurts. It really does hurt that you have people with that much power not even seem like they care....You can still smell the water. It’s still affecting people. We still bathe or brush our teeth with bottled water. It’s just hard, it really is, to have none of those people come around and say they are sorry.” Should the people of Flint trust their current state government officials to protect them and their children from diseases such as this? Explain your response. (Students should read the full article below before responding.) <https://rewire.news/article/2018/10/15/flint-legionnaires-disease-survivors-speak-out-every-day-is-a-challenge/>
- Dr. Mona refers to the excuses given regarding the pipeline as “paper tigers” (287). What is the origin of the idiom and what does it mean in context? For reference: <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/a+paper+tiger>, <https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/277650.html>

- Analyze the effect of the following simile in context: “His words blew over me like a rush of hot air” (288).
- In October 2015, it was announced that “toxic levels of lead had been found in the water in three Flint schools” (288). During that press conference, Eden Wells, Michigan’s state chief medical executive, discussed the usual sources of lead (paint, paint dust, etc.) rather than addressing the poisonous lead in the water. Years later in August 2018, attorneys for Wells said she should not face a jury trial for involuntary manslaughter during the Flint water crisis, in part because she had no duty to warn the public about Legionnaires’ disease outbreaks. Do you agree or disagree that it was not Wells’ duty to warn the public about the diseases found in their drinking water? Students should read the article before responding: https://www.mlive.com/news/flint/2018/09/state_medical_exec_says.html
- What did Senator Stabenow do to assist in protecting the children of Flint? Why are her actions so significant?

Chapter 24: “Fire Ant”

- What does Dr. Mona mean when she states Marc Edwards made the contribution of “infectious paranoia”? (294).
- Why do you suppose Dr. Mona wanted the nickname “Fire Ant”? (294). If you had to use a nickname when privately communicating with friends, what would it be and why?
- Why was Dr. Mona excited to have her study on lead levels in children published?
- What does Dr. Mona mean when she states, “I was a trophy—and captive”? (297).
- What are the catalysts that caused the fraudulent number of children exposed to lead to be corrected?
- What did Dr. Mona want to provide to the people of Flint through media exposure?
- Using the following link, create a list of actions that have been taken since President Obama issued an emergency declaration in Flint, MI, in January 2016. After creating the list, discuss whether you believe enough has been done by the federal government.
<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/05/03/fact-sheet-federal-support-flint-water-crisis-response-and-recovery>

Chapter 25: “Truth and Reconciliation”

- Watch the clip of the Unexpected Party in the beginning of *The Hobbit*. How does this allusion used in the chapter (304) add meaning to the text? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1iOUfAju_0 (4:38 min)
- What is the “racial crime” discussed in this chapter? What is Reverend Jesse Jackson’s view on the crisis?
- Why is the Five Guys’ report in March 2016 considered “historic”? (308).
- Why was meeting Miguel Del Toral so special for Mona? How does Miguel’s wife’s attention-getting behavior tell a larger story about those involved in solving the water crisis?

- Research the background of the “legendary water warrior,” Erin Brockovich, noting the tagline to a film biography of her: “She brought a small town to its feet and a huge corporation to its knees.” How does it connect to this story? What does it mean to you?
- What difference in leadership did Marc Edwards reveal when complimenting Dr. Mona? (315). What significant gesture does he make?
- What is meant by the phrase: “Then the house of cards fell”? (318). Why is the phrase appropriate to use in this instance?

Chapter 26: “Prescription for Hope”

- Why are the residents of Flint, including Grace, having community-wide PTSD?
- According to Dr. Mona, how has the American Dream changed? Do you believe this is true across America, or is Dr. Mona’s opinion somewhat tainted? Support your response.
- Dr. Mona mentions that “Too many kids are growing up in situations stacked with insurmountable toxic stresses and every barrier imaginable. Too many kids are growing up in a nation that does not value their future—or even try to offer them a better one” (324). Do you agree with her sentiments? Why or why not?
- According to Dr. Mona, her most important medication is “hope.” What other professions should follow in her footsteps and why?

Epilogue: “Haji and the Birds”

- What is the theme of the family fable “Haji and the Birds”?
- Why is it important for families to pass down stories of their ancestors from generation to generation?
- With the previous question in mind, how can stories become altered from their original version? Does it matter if they are somewhat altered or not?

AFTER READING QUESTIONS

- What do you believe you can do to make the world a better and safer place, starting with actions in your school, community, or city?
- What is the ethical value of this work? Does it highlight a lack of something in our laws and agencies at the state and federal levels? Explain.
- Predict what a Flint child’s medical report will look like in 20 years due to his or her toxic stresses, including lead in the water for more than five years. How would hardships like racism, poverty, and violence impact that child’s development? Are you exposed to any toxic stresses in your current, everyday environment? If so, what can you do to offset them?
- How can you use examples from history to help promote change in the future?
- Is it the responsibility of the United States government to warn its citizens about crises such as this? Who should be held accountable for our national water pollution crisis: the federal, state, or local governments? Explain your response.

AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: Return to Chapter 1 and reread the poem Dr. Mona included in the text that she gives to her Community Pediatrics residents. The 1938 poem by Bertolt Brecht is titled “A Worker’s Speech to a Doctor” (24). Choose a current event or environmental issue that directly affects children and future generations. Using the poem as a model, write a poem that shows your chosen problem through imagery, rather than tells the reader about it.

ACTIVITY 2: Research at least five environmental projects happening in your community or county, similar to Dr. Mona and Elin’s Madison Heights incinerator project they worked on in high school (45). Which projects interest you? Which would you be willing to get involved with or initiate to better your community and its surrounding environment?

ACTIVITY 3: Research the water quality of Baltimore City Public Schools and the surrounding county schools’ water quality. Do you believe that ensuring the well-being of students and staff members includes providing safe, clean water? Do you think politicians are focused on the well-being of their students?

<https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/water-quality>

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/health/bs-md-lead-report-card-20190321-story.html>

<https://www.wmar2news.com/news/working-for-the-future/high-levels-of-lead-found-in-drinking-water-at-several-baltimore-county-elementary-schools>

<https://wtop.com/maryland/2019/03/elevated-lead-levels-at-thousands-of-schools-prompts-bill-to-lower-standard/>

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/health/bs-md-lead-report-card-20190321-story.html#share=email~story>

ACTIVITY 4: Read Dr. Mona’s *New York Times* opinion piece, “Will We Lose the Doctor Who Would Stop the Next Flint?” What is your reaction to this article? What talking points do you see in this article that are similar to her messages in the book? Why does Dr. Mona argue that “the sanctuary our nation provides benefits all of us”?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/11/opinion/sunday/will-we-lose-the-doctor-who-would-stop-the-next-flint.html>

ACTIVITY 5: Watch Dr. Mona’s TEDMED talk about the Flint water crisis (16:06 min). Then answer the following questions: What was the Grand Bargain and how did it help the workers of Flint? What are the “two Americas” that Dr. Mona discusses? How did Flint children make beauty out of tragedy? What is Dr. Mona’s hopeful message? <https://www.tedmed.com/talks/show?id=627338>

ACTIVITY 6: Learn more about what recent developments have occurred in Flint since this book was published in 2018. What organizations are now assisting Flint residents? Has the state or federal government done anything to support the Flint community? Some helpful websites to start with are:

<https://www.mlive.com/flint/> and <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/25/717104335/5-years-after-flints-crisis-began-is-the-water-safe>

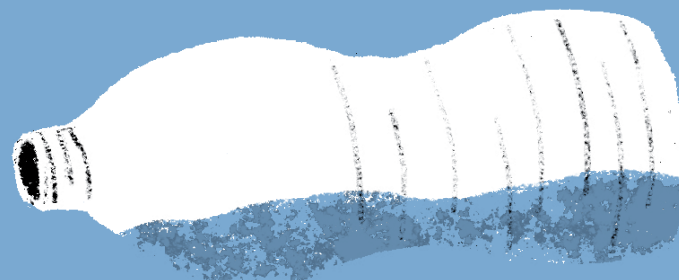
https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/is-water-in-flint-safe-to-drink-its-not-just-a-question-of-chemistry/2019/04/25/01f6ffe2-66a6-11e9-8985-4cf30147bdca_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ae07c4e4e14b

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