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# Brown Girl Dreaming Discussion Guide

By Jacqueline Woodson

## Book Summary

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights Movement. Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child's soul as she searches for her place in the world. Woodson's poetry also reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child. Her love of stories inspired her and stayed with her, creating the first sparks of the gifted writer she was to become.

## Themes

Memory, Racism, Activism, Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, Language & Storytelling, Religion and Spiritualism, Self-discovery

## Reader Discussion Questions

1. Jacqueline's mother tells her children that they will experience a "moment when you walk into a room and/no one there is like you". Have you experienced this? What might it feel like?
2. While growing up, Jacqueline lived in the American North and South at different seasons of her life. How was her life shaped by the differences in these locations?
3. An important theme in the book is family. What does it mean to Jacqueline? What does it mean to you?
4. *Brown Girl Dreaming* is written in what is called "verse" (in a series of poems, rather than a narrative like a traditional novel). Why do you think Jacqueline Woodson chose this format?
5. Why do you think the book is called *Brown Girl Dreaming*?
6. Jacqueline loves writing because it allows her to create the world she imagines. What world did she create through her story? Is there an end to her story?

7. What is Jacqueline's attitude towards God and Religion? How does she seem conflicted?
8. Do you think it's important for people who don't necessarily identify with Jacqueline's specific experience to read this book? Why or why not?
9. How do you think this book is relevant today? Is it still relatable? If so, which themes from the book connect the most with you?
10. Will you read more books by this author, if yes why, if no why not? Will you recommend this to others to read? Would you reread it?

### [JCLS Discussion of \*Brown Girl Dreaming\*](#)

***Brown Girl Dreaming* Book Discussion** Thursday, February 11 | 4 PM

**Author Talk with Jaqueline Woodson** Sunday, February 21 | 4 PM

### [More Rogue Reads \*Brown Girl Dreaming\* Programs](#)

These programs delve deeper into certain themes or topics in *Brown Girl Dreaming*

**Take & Make: Family Tree** Medford Library | Starting Sunday, December 6

**Take & Make: Compose Your Story** Medford Library | Starting Sunday, December 13

**Compose Your Story: Kids' Open Mic Night** Monday, February 22 | 4 PM