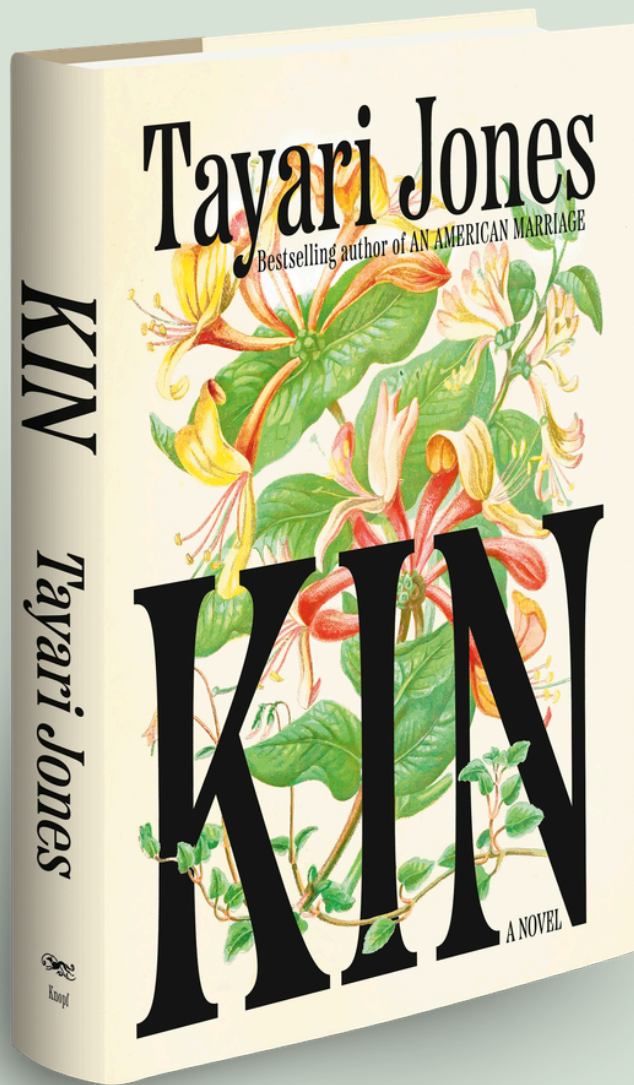


BOOK CLUB KIT



1. We are all born into stories that are already underway. Do you think Annie and Vernice's trajectories were ordained by the mothers they never knew? How much were their paths paved by their own decisions? What was the role of chance?

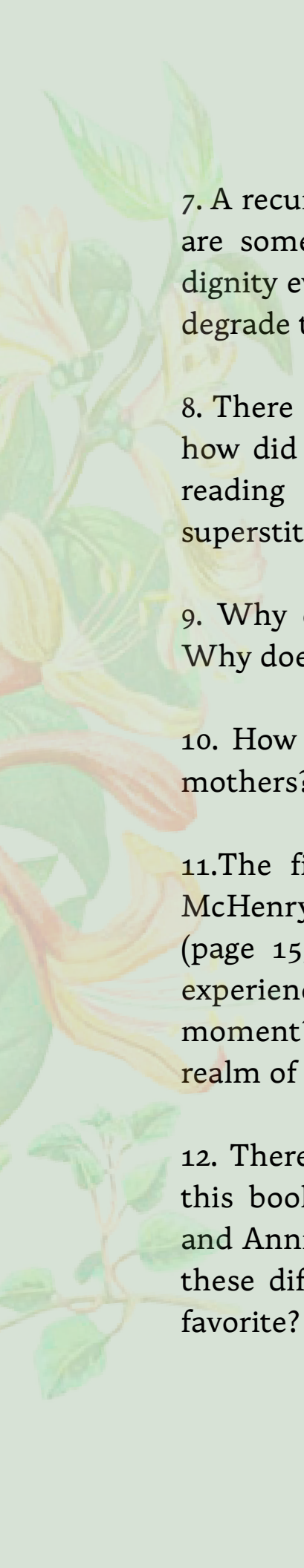
2. Annie and Vernice are both motherless, but their circumstances are different. Vernice knows that she will never see her mother again, but Annie harbors hope for a reunion. Which of them is in a better position?

3. On page 52 there is a moment where Babydoll is attempting to demonstrate she has Annie all figured out. She called her a shy princess. Annie thinks to herself "...nobody would for one second think to call me shy if I stood next to Niocy..." - in what ways do Niocy and Annie need each other to define each other?

4. Why was it so hard for Irene to tell Vernice she loved her?

5. Issues such as domestic violence, LGBT rights, and reproductive justice play a significant role in this story, which is set decades before these topics were talked about publicly. How have things changed since then, and how are they similar?

6. On the way to Spelman, Vernice is kicked off the bus for accidentally sitting in the white section. A Black man comes to her 'rescue' and slaps her - he claims for protection- but Vernice senses something more menacing. What do you believe is his motivation? Is this violence different from that she receives from Irene in a similar situation in her childhood?



7. A recurring theme in KIN is the question of dignity. What are some different ways that the characters seek to have dignity even though they live in a world that is determined to degrade them?

8. There are light sprinkles of magical realism in this book - how did mentions of ghosts and superstition enhance your reading experience? What is the difference between superstition, spirituality and religion?

9. Why do you think Spelman was a “hellhole” to Joette? Why doesn’t Vernice feel the same way?

10. How are Lulabelle and Mrs. McHenry similar as found mothers?

11. The first time Vernice and Mrs. McHenry meet, Mrs. McHenry’s intense interest in her almost overwhelms her (page 157). Why do you think it was such a memorable experience to have someone's undivided attention at that moment? Can there be “love at first sight” outside of the realm of romance?

12. There were so many different interpretations of love in this book; Joette and Vernice, Vernice and Franklin, Bobo and Annie, Babydoll and Clyde, Annie and Vernice - how did these different relationships explore love? Which was your favorite?

13. Was Bobo justified in leaving Annie?

14. On page 198 Babydoll gives a biting review of Lulabelle. “She’s a pimp...a pimp will always give you what you need to stay alive. What’s a pimp going to do with a dead whore?” Do you agree? Did Lulabelle care about anyone more than profit? Does her affection for Annie excuse her other actions?

15. When Vernice and Franklin are courting Franklin comes across a case involving orphaned children and he gets emotional thinking of Vernice. As he cries Vernice asks him, “could you cry for Annie too?” What was the significance of this request?

16. Explore the concept of ‘contagious humiliation’ regarding the young girl who needed to use the bathroom at the bus station where there were no toilets for Black people. Pages 244-245

17. At the wedding, was Joette miserable because of her love for Vernice, or was her unhappiness due to something larger?

18. When Vernice seeks help for Annie, Mrs. McHenry gives warns to turn away and “...build a moat between you and the mess...” What did you think of that advice?

19. Were you surprised by the ending? Why or why not?

20. Use your imagination to project five years past the last page. What do you think the characters are up to?

