

HOLIDAY HOUSE | READING GROUP GUIDE



SEE NO *Color* by Shannon Gibney

PB: 9780823445684 • Ages 12 & Up

About the Book

Black daughter, white father, white mother. Race, adoption, and identity collide in this award-winning #OwnVoices debut about a teen challenging the life she's always known.

Author Shannon Gibney draws from her own experiences as a transracial adoptee to deliver this honest coming-of-age novel about a girl who doesn't know where she wants to fit in.

Reading Group Discussion Questions

- Alex has always known that she was adopted. Why have her parents never spoken of the details of her adoption? Define “malady.” What makes Alex wonder if she has a malady that her parents haven’t revealed to her? At what point does she discover what that malady is? How does this make Alex feel like a “product”?
- Explain the term “transracial adoptee.” Debate whether this term makes Alex feel any different about being a biracial child adopted by white parents. Discuss Alex’s experience in the beauty salon. What does this reveal about acceptance and identity?
- Discuss Alex’s relationship with Kit, her younger sister. How does their relationship change when Kit begins probing into the circumstances of Alex’s adoption? Debate whether Kit is really considering Alex’s feelings when she questions Alex’s ethnicity. Alex’s mom says, “We are all one in this family, okay? We don’t even see color” (p. 27). Cite incidents in the novel that support the idea that her mom’s statement is both true and false.
- Kit grows bolder and brasher throughout the novel. Alex tells her sister, “I just don’t understand why you felt the need to get involved in something that doesn’t concern you” (p. 54). Why does Kit continue to meddle in the facts surrounding Alex’s adoption? Explain why Kit is determined to find



out what it feels like to be biracial in a white family. Alex’s dad senses that Kit is getting to Alex. He says, “I just wish there were things I knew how to talk about with you” (p. 57). When are Alex’s parents planning to share details of her adoption with her? Debate whether it’s her parents or Alex who can’t handle the truth?

- Discuss what Kit means when she says to Alex, “You’re uncomfortable being uncomfortable” (p. 141). Cite scenes in the novel when Alex appears the most “uncomfortable.” How does Kit contribute to this “discomfort”? Explain Alex’s “discomfort” with Reggie, her boyfriend. Explain what Kit references when she says, “I’m comfortable being uncomfortable. Maybe that’s the difference” (p. 141).
- Alex’s mother is angry when she finds that Alex has read the folder marked “Alex’s Adoption.” Why does she refer to Alex’s biological father as “that man”? Jason is Alex’s younger brother. How does he react to Alex reading the folder? Why does Alex believe that she and Jason will never be as close as they had been in the past?
- Alex calls her biological father and visits him in Detroit. What did she expect from the reunion? What does she find? Alex calls Reggie to tell him about meeting her biological father. Explain Reggie’s reaction to her. Discuss what Alex means when she says, “I was a child of my birth father, but maybe not his daughter” (pp. 181–82). How does this statement suggest that she understands the real meaning of family?
- Alex is a star player on her father’s baseball team at West High. Explain how the following statement reveals what Alex’s father values the most: “When you don’t play your best, you don’t just hurt yourself. You hurt me” (p. 4). How does her father react when Alex intentionally misses a catch in the quarterfinals? At the end of the novel, she mentions that she has been brought to a “place of danger and possibility” (p. 182). What is the danger? What is the possibility?
- Explain the image on the cover of the book. What is the symbolism of the baseball? How does it reveal Alex’s journey?

Guide prepared by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina

About the Author

Photo Credit: Kristine Heykants



Shannon Gibney is a writer, professor, and activist. Her debut novel *See No Color*, which draws on her experience of being adopted into a white family as a child, received a Minnesota Book Award and two starred reviews. She is also the author of *Dream Country*, which received five starred reviews and a Minnesota Book Award. Her critical and creative writing regularly appear in a variety of publications. She lives in Minneapolis with her children



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