

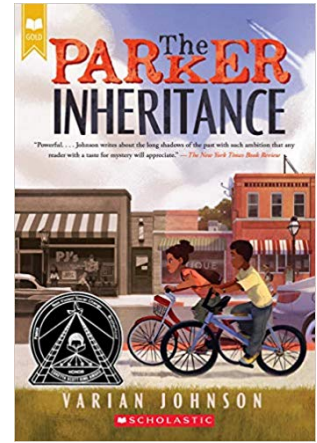


Kids Book Club Kit | Darien Library

The Parker Inheritance by Varian Johnson

Recommended for grades 4 to 6

Summary: When Candice finds a letter in an old attic in Lambert, South Carolina, she isn't sure she should read it. It's addressed to her grandmother, who left the town in shame. But the letter describes a young woman. An injustice that happened decades ago. A mystery enfolding its writer. And the fortune that awaits the person who solves the puzzle. With the help of Brandon, the quiet boy across the street, she begins to decipher the clues. The challenge will lead them deep into Lambert's history, full of ugly deeds, forgotten heroes, and one great love; and deeper into their own families, with their own unspoken secrets. Can they find the fortune and fulfill the letter's promise before the answers slip into the past yet again?



Discussion Questions:

1. *The Parker Inheritance* is considered a puzzle mystery. What makes a puzzle mystery different from other types of mysteries?
2. Parker's letter has many examples of word play. Revisit the letter (on page 29) and see if you can spot examples of word play (such as puns, spoonerisms, and double entendres). How did Parker play with the words? What effect does that word play have on the overall meaning of the letter and the events of the novel?
3. What do you think about the author's decision to switch back and forth between three different time periods (the 1950s, 2007, and the present)?
4. Both Siobhan and Leanne Washington make a clear distinction between what it means to seek justice and what it means to seek vengeance. What is the difference between the two? What does pursuing one versus the other entail? What are the likely outcomes of each?
5. The ending of the book centers on a pivotal tennis match. What did you think about the mystery culminating in this way?

Further Resources:

More on wordplay: <https://dar.to/2QE2ICP>

Interview with the author: <https://dar.to/2FrCnw3>

Activities

Play this word game:

1. Person 1 thinks of a word, for example, "caught."
2. Person 1 announces that they have thought of a word, and tells the group what it rhymes with. For example, they would say, "I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with 'hot'."
3. The group takes turns guessing the word, but instead of asking "Is the word 'caught'?" they ask "Is it what you did when someone threw you a ball?"
4. If the group has guessed the right word, then person 1 says, "Yes! The word is 'caught'!" Then someone else gets to choose the mystery word.
5. If the group guesses the wrong word, for example "Is it when a horse walks quickly?" person 1 has to guess which word the group is thinking of. If they say "No, it's not 'trot'" then the group has to try again to guess the word. They might say "Is it not a little, but a ___?" (lot) or "Is it something you cook in?" (pot) or so on.
6. If person 1 can't guess the word the group is thinking of, then person 1's turn is over and it's someone else's turn to think of a word.

Other rules: All words have to fully rhyme (no slant rhymes, for example 'bent' and 'rant') and they have to have the same number of syllables. For example, 'hotdog' does not rhyme with 'fog'.