

The Expat Book Club



'Homegoing'

Yaa Gyasi

Discussion Guide

Our Expat Book Club first question is always the same: Did you finish the book...and did you enjoy it?

What is the literal meaning of the title 'Homegoing'? And what about its symbolic associations in the novel?

Did you learn anything new from 'Homegoing'? How did reading this book make you feel?

Each chapter of the book is given to a different main character. How does this impact the reading of the novel? Do you think the structure is significant?

Why do you think the author chose the time and settings for each chapter? The time span of the novel is two centuries...what makes these particular times and places important?

What is the novel saying about the treatment of women? Of marriage and motherhood within different contexts?

In his history class, Yaw teaches his students, "So when you study history, you must always ask yourself, Whose story am I missing? Whose voice was suppressed so that this voice could come forth? Once you have figured that out, you must find that story too." Whose stories and whose voices is the novel attempting to recover?

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What is the significance of naming in the book? Some characters have to give up their names, other are given nicknames. What does this ultimately say about the power of language and naming?

Have the issues surrounding colonialism, imperialism, freedom, and human rights featured in the book been resolved today or do they linger? If they remain, does the book ultimately offer any suggestions or advice as to how this might be remedied?

In the final chapter, the two familial lines descended from Maame unite in the characters of Marjorie and Marcus. What happens in their visit to Ghana? Why does that visit involve admitting their fears to one another—Marjorie's fear of fire inherited from her family, and Marcus's fear of water? Can each one overcome the fear, and how?