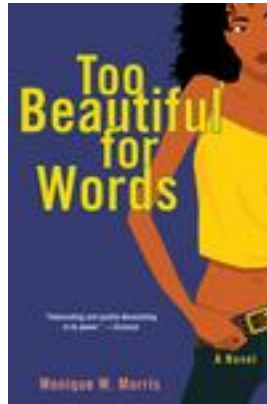


TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR WORDS

By Monique W. Morris

Readers' Guide



Questions for Discussion

1. What does Jesus the Pimp represent to Peaches?
2. Why does Peaches become a prostitute? What does this lifestyle offer that she did not have growing up? Has it made her more powerful or powerless?
3. How does Peaches reconcile her religious beliefs with her life as a prostitute? Does her sexual power conflict with her spiritual power? Which one wins?
4. How does each character in the novel resolve and respond to being abandoned by his/her parent(s) and/or friend?
5. The book opens with Langston Hughes's poem, "black misery." In which characters does this theme resonate most? Why?
6. What does Jesus see as the true value of being a pimp? How would his life be different if pimping was harder for him?
7. How does Jesus respond to fatherhood? How does that differ from Jason's response?
8. Does Jesus really care about Jason and/or Peaches? Is Jesus capable of loving? Why or why not?
9. How does Jesus' pimping philosophy reflect modern-day capitalist philosophy? What challenges does Jesus' "game" present to the advancement of his community?
10. What challenges does Chinaka's socialist philosophy pose to the advancement of her community?

11. What physical and intellectual characteristics does Peaches associate with engaging in revolutionary activity? Does she have them and refuse to see them or is she really a “lost cause” by the time she meets Chinaka?
12. In Chinaka’s opening paragraph, she speaks of a “selective amnesia.” To what does this phrase represent/refer? How can this affect the development of a people?
13. Peaches’s final words in Part One are laced with the Lord’s Prayer. Is she delivered from evil in her death, or was she “saved a long time ago” like she claims earlier in the novel?
14. What is the Revolution? What is it to Chinaka? What is it to Peaches? What is it to Jason? What is it to Jesus?
15. How is Jason affected by Peaches’ death? Does Jason think that he has been affected?
16. What draws Chinaka to Jason?
17. What makes Jason receptive to Chinaka?
18. What is Chinaka’s message? What does she describe as the ultimate casualty of pimping (on the small scale) and capitalism (on the larger scale)?
19. What does Chinaka offer as a counter argument to those who praise pimping and “gaming” their way through life?
20. What does pimping symbolize to Jason? How does this mirror or differ from Jesus’ perception of it?
21. Who “saves” Jason? How?
22. Discuss each character’s self-perception. How does it differ from how other characters view them?
23. How does each character support/represent their own value and contribution (or lack thereof) to society?
24. If you could talk to any character in the book, who would it be? Why?
25. How do you think Jason will develop into manhood on his “road to recovery”?