

Black Ice Study Guide

Black Ice by Lorene Cary

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Plot Summary

Black Ice by Lorene Carey focuses on Lorene, a black high school student. She transfers from a school in a black suburb of Philadelphia to a prestigious, all-white prep school in New Hampshire. Lorene discusses how she maintains her black identity at St. Paul's and why she feels left out.

The book opens with a chapter entitled June 1989. Lorene Carey has graduated from St. Paul's School 15 years ago. She has also been a teacher at St. Paul's and is now ending her term as a trustee. She is at the graduation for the class of 1989 and watches the black and Hispanic kids graduate. She acknowledges it is a different experience for these kids than she had.

In the following chapters, Lorene goes back in time and discusses her experiences gaining admission and her two years at St. Paul's. Lorene hears that St. Paul's recruits black girl students. She applies and is accepted to the class of 1974. She is scared of leaving her familiar surroundings of black people, but she wants this experience, so she goes.

At St. Paul's School, she immediately befriends the other black students. They form a group called Afro-Am, which is later called the Third World Group. The black students tend to stick with one another. The school has strict rules, such as assigned seating at dinner, a mandatory sports requirement, and other formalities. Lorene holds onto her black identity via her black friends. When she interacts with the white girls, she finds them prejudiced, stupid and clones of one another.

She throws herself into school her senior year. She performs in choir and a play. She is vice president of the school. She receives excellent grades, except for one class, calculus, which she fails twice. She applies to Princeton and University of Pennsylvania. She even dates, but realizes she should not trust men.

At her graduation, Lorene realizes she has not loved St. Paul's enough. She cannot wait to graduate, but now that the day is here, she realizes she can never do her St. Paul's experience over again. She receives a Rector's Award, but is not satisfied with it because it is not the highest award. She feels it is a consolation prize. Her family is proud and says an experience like this does not happen in the black community. Lorene vows to do better next year at UPenn.

The book ends where it begins: with a chapter entitled June 1989. Lorene is married to a white man and has a young daughter. She wants to take her daughter out of black society where blacks are prejudiced against each other. She wants her children to skate on black ice, or have hope for the future.



June 1989

June 1989 Summary

Black Ice by Lorene Carey centers on Lorene, a black high school student from Philadelphia. She attends an all-white prep school called St. Paul's in New Hampshire in 1974. She discusses her experience as a black student among the rich, white students and how she feels left out.

In June 1989, the narrator, Lorene Carey, is at a graduation at the St. Paul's School in New Hampshire. She watches the black and Hispanic kids walk down the aisle and it reminds her of her time at St. Paul's as a black student. A black kid asks Lorene if she will send her daughter to St. Paul's and Lorene responds her daughter will have to decide for herself. Lorene had graduated from St. Paul's 15 years before. Nine years ago she started to teach there. Now she is ending her term as a trustee. She says her daughter will have a different experience than she had if she goes to St. Paul's. Lorene's parents did not know what they were getting into. At St. Paul's, Lorene found her adolescence and a host of emotions.

She cannot forget that the black kids think the school belongs to the white kids, when in fact, it is their school too. They must remember the same about American life. She remembers the first black teacher at St. Paul's. People had loved him and he had filled Lorene with hope. Lorene begins to write about her experiences at St. Paul's when she stops thinking of it as something different than black life in America. She wants to start a conversation about honestly growing up black in America.

June 1989 Analysis

Lorene represents the "every man" of black society. She is a black woman who immerses herself into white society. In doing so, she is a guinea pig for the black community as she delves into the world of educated, white people. This foreshadows that the reader will see her turmoil as a black woman in a white society. Lorene will either get swallowed up whole into white society or she will thrive and become successful.



Chapter One

Chapter One Summary

In Chapter One, Lorene is in high school in 1971. She works at a fast food restaurant. She has a neighbor named Mrs. Evans, who is married to a black man. He is the first black man to be on the staff at the Philadelphia Bulletin, a newspaper. Three years before, he had given Lorene her first typewriter. Mrs. Evans tells Lorene about St. Paul's School. It is in New Hampshire and it has gone coed. They are looking for black students, specifically black girl students. Mrs. Evans gives Lorene a number to call. She is nervous, but she calls and sets up a meeting.

Lorene, her mother and father drive to the rich white part of Philadelphia called Germantown. It is perfect and has cobblestone streets. Lorene's part of Philly is called Yeadon, which is full of black professionals. It is a black suburb. They go into a perfect house for the meet and greet. Another black student is there. Mr. Price is there. He is a black teacher. He does not seem to like the other student's mother, who seems lower class. They look at slides of the perfect school and New Hampshire in each of the seasons. Lorene's mother tells a story about how Lorene had entered a science fair and the teacher was going to disqualify Lorene for not bringing her science project in a box. The teacher had said Lorene did not follow directions, yet she made exceptions for the white students. Her mother challenged the teacher and won; Lorene placed in the science fair. Mom asks, who will do this for my daughter at St. Paul's? No one answers the question.

As they drive away, Mom says she is shocked that the host had given her baby a spoonful of peanut butter. Mom never gives her kids peanut butter. It is what poor white trash gives to their kids.

A week later, Mr. Price writes and says he has scheduled a visit for Lorene and her parents to the school. Mom and Dad say these people mean business.

Chapter One Analysis

Lorene is comfortable in Yeadon, the black suburb of Philly. Mr. Evans, a black writer, is her mentor and someone safe to whom she can look up. Yet she and her family transport themselves into the white world of Germantown. This foreshadows how Lorene will transport herself later to St. Paul's School. Lorene must leave her comfort zone in order to achieve in the white world. Her parents must do the same. Mom's science fair example shows her motivations to protect her daughter from racism at any cost. She will challenge a white teacher and not be afraid to do so. Yet she will not have this opportunity if Lorene is at St. Paul's.

This chapter symbolizes the idea of letting go. Lorene must start to let go of her comfortable, black world. Her parents must start to let go of their daughter and send her

into unfamiliar territory in the white world. This foreshadows that when Lorene finally goes off to St. Paul's, there will be many losses in the family unit and black structure of her normal, daily life.



Chapter Two

Chapter Two Summary

In Chapter Two, Lorene, Mom and Dad drive to New Hampshire. They go from Philly to the New Jersey Turnpike. The drive takes eight hours. They drive through New York City, past the projects in the South Bronx. They finally get to St. Paul's School and see a place called Scudder House. They go in and go to sleep. The next morning they wake up to a housekeeper. A few years later when Lorene graduates, the housekeeper gives her a graduation present: a card and \$5. When Lorene goes back to teach at St. Paul's, she sees how depressed the housekeeper is because she is a widow and has nothing to do when she is not working.

Lorene, Mom and Dad go to the beautiful chapel. They visit the schoolhouse to have an interview with Mr. Dick, the admissions officer. Lorene is surprised because her parents attend the interview as well. They all play the part and say St. Paul's is a dream come true and they want Lorene to be accepted for admission. Mom and Dad are an ambitious, black couple in their 30s. Mr. Dick asks Mom and Dad to leave. He asks Lorene what most attracts her to St. Paul's. She says it is a place where students want to learn. She lies because her regular high school has high achieving kids. But she makes her school sound like the ghetto. Mr. Dick asks if she likes school and she says most of the time, she does. She lies and he knows it. She talks about how much she likes to read.

They walk through campus and she meets a couple of black kids. They are very Africanized-looking and they do not seem to like it there. They go to the dining hall and she sees the poorest white kids she has ever seen. They are mentally challenged; the students call them "wombats." They serve food to the students. Mr. Dick says Lorene must be prepared to do three hours or more of homework a night.

They drive back to Philly and she realizes she will be leaving her home soon. In February she completes her application and essays. She thinks her leaving will pull her family apart, but she wants to go.

Chapter Two Analysis

The wombats, or mentally challenged white kids serving food, are in parallel to the black students. The white kids are poor and mentally challenged. They are outcasts in white society. The black students suffer the same fate, even though they are mentally gifted. Thus, white society is a box. Either you fit in it or you do not. Both the black students and wombats are outsiders and will never fit in no matter how hard they try. Lorene looks at the wombats with pity, yet she does not realize this is how she will be perceived. This foreshadows that Lorene will be an outcast at St. Paul's and how her outcast experiences will define her.



The black students she meets are very Africanized-looking. In other words, they have frizzy hair and Afros. Their features display blackness. These students' motivations are to hold onto their black identity in this white world. One way to do so is by appearance. They make themselves look Africanized, instead of toning down their look by straightening their hair. This foreshadows that Lorene must make the decision to be true to her black identity at St. Paul's or try to blend in. It will depend on her motivations to stay black or fit into the mold of the white world.



Chapter Three

Chapter Three Summary

In Chapter Three, St. Paul's accepts Lorene into the class of 1974 in March. Lorene has until September until she has to go. She feels like she betrays her two girl friends and other black kids in the neighborhood. They should have this opportunity as well. Why is it she who is chosen? She feels guilty. Instead of withdrawing from school life, she throws herself into it. She performs in the choir and school play and she is a majorette. The family starts to learn the new world of St. Paul's. The school suggests that Lorene open a checking account. Mom says she did not have a checking account until she was married with a baby.

Lorene loves her grandmother Nana Hamilton very much. Going to St. Paul's will make her deceased grandmother proud. Lorene works in Woolworth's in the summer. Mom has a talk with her and says she goes to St. Paul's for an education, not for sex. Mom says if she does make a mistake, to come to her, she has money saved for emergencies. She alludes to abortion.

The next morning they leave early for St. Paul's. It is an eight hour drive. Lorene will miss her baton because St. Paul's does not have majorettes. She feels like she may be making a huge mistake. They go to the Rectory, which is beautiful. They meet the Rector. Lorene is really nervous. They meet Lee Bouton, one of the first of 19 girls to arrive at St. Paul's in 1971. She has come all by herself with no help from her family.

Lorene, Mom, Dad and little sister Carole go to the dormitory. Her room is plain and dusty. Mom starts to nag about where to put things. Lorene gets annoyed. They go to chapel and after chapel, they depart. Carole is hysterical that Lorene stays there. Lorene does not know how to say goodbye. She hugs them and says she will miss them and loves them. Her family leaves. Lorene is now all alone at St. Paul's School.

Chapter Three Analysis

The idea of opportunity represents a source of guilt for Lorene. She is a talented, black student, but there are more kids in her neighborhood who are smarter and more talented. She struggles with the fact she must leave behind her black brothers and sisters. They deserve this opportunity as well. Opportunity represents success. To be accepted into the white world, and the highest education in the white world, is the ultimate success. Lorene is chosen to have this success. She wishes this opportunity for success could be extended to all talented blacks, but she knows this is not possible. She must be the trailblazer.

Mom's sex discussion foreshadows that Lorene may become sexually active. Right now, she is an innocent, young girl. But she will start to experience new things at St. Paul's. Her mother's motivations are to protect Lorene not only from racism, but also from any

other dangers, such as getting pregnant. Lorene understands the conversation. This foreshadows that Lorene may start to develop her sexuality at St. Paul's. She is black, but she will come to terms with her sexuality in the white world, which may change her view of herself and sex in general.



Chapter Four

Chapter Four Summary

In Chapter Four, Lorene runs into her dorm room to cry. She is overwhelmed by this new experience. Later, she meets Jimmy Hill, a black student from Brooklyn. He is one of the skinniest boys Lorene has ever seen. She meets Annette Frazier, who is also black. They engage in black bonding. They become fast friends.

Jimmy says they will "turn out" St. Paul's. The idea of "turning out" is to stand up against the white regime. Lorene remembers when Mom went to a department store to return a faulty item. The manager of the store did not listen to her because she is black. Mom used her strong will and demanded a return or refund and eventually received it. It is a strategy for black people: to turn out white society.

Lorene introduces herself to the other girls in her dorm. Lorene really scrubs her room. Pam Hudson is her roommate. She has a stereo and guitar. Lorene and Pam have separate rooms that are adjoined by a door. The next morning, Lorene takes a shower and goes to chapel. She meets all her teachers. She has her first religion class, but she resents it. She feels she has had enough introduction to Christianity because of the African Methodist church she attends back home. She tells the reverend this earlier. The reverend says to the class that one person says this class will be a complete waste of time. Lorene is mortified, even though the reverend does not say her name. The first assignment is philosophical.

Every student must pick a sport. Lorene picks soccer, but she is not athletic. Her friend Fumiko from Japan chooses basketball and she is really good. Lorene assumes she is bad and then realizes she prejudices Fumiko. Lorene tries to run in soccer practice, but she is slow and behind everyone. She has asthma.

Students have an eighth period class at 5:15 p.m. They have assigned tables four days a week in the dining hall. One housemaster and six to seven students sit at each table. Lorene describes the groups of students. All the white kids are skinny and dress nicely. All the black kids have a meeting called the Afro-Am. Last year, it had been led by Bernard Cash. He is a legend. He is intense and has power and charisma. Lorene gets sick of hearing about Cash. White people listen to Cash and to the group. Years later, she finds out Cash had felt alone. Cash had been a black nerd whose mother sent him peanut butter and bread to comfort him when he awoke in the middle of the night.

Lorene keeps hearing the same things over and over, such as blacks do not take care of their people. They will not succeed. They do not learn or apply themselves. They cannot do anything right. Lorene hears a small poem that goes like this: "Niggers and flies I do despise;/The more I see niggers,/The more I like flies" (Chapter Four, p. 79).



Chapter Four Analysis

The idea of "turning out" symbolizes the strong will of a black person. The black person must stand up to white society. When whites do not listen, blacks must stand their ground. In other words, they turn out their white enemies. This is strength of character, which Mom has. Jimmy comments that the black students should turn out St. Paul's. It is a silent revolution in which blacks express their power against the white regime. Turning out foreshadows that Lorene may find this strong will inside herself and stand up to her white counterparts when necessary.

Lorene hears how blacks are worthless and cannot do anything. Hearing these things becomes part of her daily life, especially from the black students at Afro-Am. This idea is ironic because the black students are at St. Paul's to succeed. Yet through their black identity, they see how the black community still struggles. Even though they are now part of white society, their motivations are to have all blacks succeed. Blacks must take care of blacks. Lorene takes this to heart, since she goes back to St. Paul's after graduating and teaches and mentors the black and Hispanic kids there. Her motivation turns into helping these minorities safely immerse into white society.



Chapter Five

Chapter Five Summary

In Chapter Five, Lorene begins to dream old dreams in first term at St. Paul's. She dreams of teddy bears dancing around her. The dream warns her to beware of making friends with the white girls. Girls come and go in her room. She finds them hard to relate to. They say stupid things. Lorene gets mad when they say it does not matter if someone is black, white, green or purple. She also gets mad when one white girl says she wonders what it is like to be with a black boy. The other girls giggle. The white girl says this is why they do not say anything because Lorene gets mad.

In the middle of the term, pre-grades come out. They show a student how s/he is doing. Lorene only gets two Honors and three High Passes. She wants all High Honors, which are the equivalent of A+. Her housemaster says she does great and teachers often give lower pre-grades, so the students do not rest on their laurels and to ensure hard work. Lorene believes the teachers do not expect much out of the black students.

Her parents come to Parents Day. Little things change. Her mother smokes a different cigarette brand. Lorene pretends she fits in for her parents. It is November. Lorene gets bored of the students. They crack the same jokes. The work is never ending. In a soccer game, the boys play the girls. Lorene falls and trips a boy. He gets injured and is on crutches. She works really hard to get better grades.

Lorene's religion exam asks who Jesus is. She feels unprepared for the question and it releases emotions. She feels white people control the Earth and it is not fair. They are ruled by the white representation of Jesus.

She discusses how she loves ice. Her grandmother drinks alcohol with ice. She wanted everything: more alcohol, more men, more love. Lorene thinks her grandmother's life is sad because she is an alcoholic.

It is school break and Fumiko comes home with Lorene. She gives Lorene's family charming, little gifts. She meets a guy from another prep school. He is Puerto Rican. He comes over. Mom is furious. She says the boy smells. Finally, Mom goes into the room where Fumiko and the boy are and opens a window to let in the winter air.

Lorene visits with her old friends, but it is not the same. They live different lives. It makes Lorene sad because she feels like she belongs nowhere.

Chapter Five Analysis

The discussion between Lorene and the white girls represents a discussion between blacks and whites. Often, whites cannot express their full opinions or ask honest questions of blacks due to the danger of being considered a racist. Thus, many whites



stay quiet. And blacks and whites cannot engage in an honest discussion about their differences. Lorene makes social commentary here because her reaction to the white girls is a reflection of society: blacks and whites try to have an open discussion and someone gets angry. It is a hindrance to cultural understanding.

Lorene gets angry when she realizes that Jesus here is white Jesus. She thinks she has been taught enough about religion at her African church. But now she must construe a different take, a white take on religion. This infuriates her because her motivation is keep her black identity in a religious sense. If this is taken away from her, it is another representation of her black identity that will be removed. To Lorene, she views Jesus and religion through black eyes, and she thinks Jesus is a black representation. To think of Jesus as a white man is not acceptable for her.

Lorene fits in nowhere. This symbolizes the struggle of the black man in white society. When a black man achieves success in white society, he fits in nowhere. The black community shuns him and so does the white community. So where does the black man belong now? Where does Lorene belong now? This foreshadows that Lorene must find a place to belong at St. Paul's and at home.



Chapter Six

Chapter Six Summary

In Chapter Six, Lorene returns to St. Paul's that winter with definite goals. She gets elected to student council and she takes biology and calculus. She has a pen pal from New York named Ricky Lockhart. He is a beautiful black boy. She is friends with Annette, who is black, and Grace, a Chinese-American. Lorene's black group is now called the Third World Group. Lorene and Grace room together. Lorene is really into astronomy. She loves looking at the stars and constellations.

Ricky comes for the weekend. He is supposed to come on Saturday night, but surprises her and comes on Friday night. This presents a problem because she has arranged for permission for him to stay at the boys' dorm on Saturday night only. She has to sneak him in to her dorm. Grace sleeps somewhere else. He sleeps in Lorene's bed and Lorene sleeps in Grace's bed. In the middle of the night, Lorene moves into her bed with Ricky. She wakes up to find Ricky inside of her. He has sex with her. She starts to cry. He does not know it is her first time. She is terrified of pregnancy. She takes a shower and tries to wash the sperm out of her.

Later on, she makes friends with Janie Saunders, who is a white rebel. She hates her white classmates too and makes fun of them. They go around the dorms at odd hours. Lorene touches the rich white kids' stuff and steals a pair of earrings.

Lorene is still terrified of a possible pregnancy.

Chapter Six Analysis

Lorene's love of astronomy symbolizes the idea of reaching beyond what exists. She is a trailblazer, leaving the black community behind, and immersing herself into this educated, white world. She can achieve anything, even things of which she never dreamed. She can reach beyond her goals and limits, such as when she looks at the night sky. She sees beyond the Earth and sky to see into the distance, into another world of hope. She can achieve what is beyond her means.

Janie Saunders represents the white girl on the outside. It seems like every school has an outsider, even if s/he looks the same. Janie is this outsider, this person who does not fit into her own group. However, unlike Lorene, she does not have to assimilate. She can remain an outsider and still have all the benefits of a white person.



Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven Summary

In Chapter Seven, Lorene plays the caterpillar in Alice in Wonderland in the school play. She pretends to smoke weed, but it is really tobacco. A male classmate approaches her and invites her to a discreet party in the woods. She gets high on marijuana and hates it. She is mad because she feels she betrays her family. She goes back to the dorm. The girls realize she is high. She goes to bed angry at herself.

All the students clean up their rooms before going home for spring break. Everyone says Lorene has a good solid start to St. Paul's, but she does not think so. She says she wants skills it takes years to learn and experiences she never has had. Lorene sees the skis of the white girls. She does not have money to go on skiing trips. This depresses her.

Lorene starts to discuss black ice. She goes out on the ice and waits for the cold to blow through her. She is about to take a seven hour train ride back to Philly. But first she must go out on the black ice, so she is not disturbed. She thinks about her father and all the lessons he has taught her. He tells her little anecdotes with morals. He tells one particular story where a father tells a daughter to jump. She jumps, but the father does not catch her. She asks why he let her fall. He says to trust no man. Lorene decides, while on the black ice, to never trust men. She realizes that she probably is not sitting on black ice. She will learn about black ice later.

Chapter Seven Analysis

Lorene has an obsession or strong love for black ice. In layman's terms, black ice is simply a layer of ice covering the pavement of a road. But for Lorene, black ice symbolizes something different. Black ice symbolizes a slippery situation, or a situation of warning. She must go out on the black ice to be warned of future, dangerous situations. This represents her coming of age into adulthood. She must think like a woman now, not like a child. She must learn the ways of men and learn how to protect herself. Lorene enters the adolescent phase of her life on the black ice. Her innocence is lost and she is a full-fledged adult, whether she likes it or not.



Chapter Eight

Chapter Eight Summary

In Chapter Eight, Lorene goes home for spring break. Her grades arrive. Lorene fails calculus and she needs extensive help. She wants to drop it altogether, but Mom and Dad say she must give it a go next term. She does very well in all her other courses. She has a High Honors in English and four other Honors. The students return for spring at St. Paul's. She continues to flail about in calculus, and she gets a tutor instead of going to class. But the tutor cannot help her. She chooses crew for a spring sport. She has trouble getting the rhythm of rowing, but she does not hate it. She likes watching the scenery.

Ricky writes her and invites her to his school. She goes. They walk around and meet his friends. She refuses to sleep with him. She is still too worried she is pregnant. She goes back to St. Paul's. She wonders about Jimmy Hill and why they are not together. She cries to a teacher about calculus and says she cannot do it. The teacher says if she fails, she fails. It is not a big deal. She will still wake up and be the same person. She says for Lorene to get over it and get used to the fact life goes on.

Lorene is nauseous and feels sick. Her period is late. She thinks she must be pregnant. She finally feels the grumbling in her abdomen and she has her period. She feels great.

She runs for student president, but she does not get elected. She gets mad because she runs with Janie, but Janie quits the election and throws her support to Lorene. Lorene feels terrible because she feels Janie does not help the situation. Everyone thinks Janie's forfeit is Lorene's idea. Lorene gets elected to vice president. She is worried students talk about her, but her friends say who cares. She will make a great vice president.

For the next year, room requests come. She will room with Alma Howard, who is a loyal and relaxed person. Her classmates are excited because they will be in the Sixth Form, or senior year, and they will have independent study projects. She sees the Sixth Formers above her graduate. She sees Lee Bouton, a black girl, receive her diploma. She is the first black girl to do so. Lorene cries. When the spring term ends, Lorene fails calculus. She wants to be a normal, American kid. She wants to make money over the summer and learn to drive.

Chapter Eight Analysis

Lorene's failure of calculus symbolizes a challenge she cannot overcome. As a black woman in a white world, she will have these types of challenges. She may not be able to overcome a few of them. And this is okay. Lorene must learn to accept failure as well as success. It is simply part of growing up. Lorene's biggest challenge in life is to be equal to whites. Whites will always look at her with judgmental eyes. It is a challenge for



Lorene to have whites see her talent and intelligence, instead of her skin color. However, this is a challenge Lorene may not overcome as well. She must accept this fact, such as she accepts the fact of failing calculus.

When Lee Bouton graduates, this represents the success of the black woman in white society. Lorene cries because she sees this success. She realizes this success will be hers next year. Graduating is a challenge she can overcome if she tries hard enough. Lorene sees Lee have this taste of success and she wants it as well. She wants to be the black woman who succeeds.



Chapter Nine

Chapter Nine Summary

In Chapter Nine, Lorene is a waitress at a diner during the summer. The black people work in the kitchen. She is the only black waitress. The diner did have another black waitress, but she hadn't worked out. She hadn't been good. Lorene gets along with a cook named Booker. The cooks amuse themselves by playing pranks. Everyone gets along. Lorene tries to save up a lot of money.

There is a cook of whom everyone is afraid. Lorene asks him for more butter. He says that is not his job and tells her to go to the freezer. She does and he follows her in there. He molests her. He touches her all over her body and lets her go. Lorene tells the manager the next day, who tells Lorene to watch herself. He wants to keep Lorene there. He says the other black waitress had not been good, but the staff likes Lorene. She tells the owner, who fires the cook. Booker is mad at her and so is the other staff. No one talks with her. The other waitresses ask what happened. Lorene answers honestly, but briefly. Booker asks Lorene why she got the other cook fired. Now he has to do double the work. Lorene says the man fired himself with his inappropriate behavior. Booker understands and agrees.

Lorene visits Ricky that summer in New York. He proposes with a necklace with a small diamond. She says yes. She realizes what she has done. She does not want to be with Ricky anymore. She wants to break up with him, but now she is engaged.

She works at the diner one day. Booker is uncharacteristically quiet. He asks her out and she says yes. They go out to a bar in Philly. She has a bit of alcohol, but he shows off and has shots and other drinks. They go home in a cab. The cab has to pull over and he pukes on the sidewalk. He is really drunk and embarrassed. She goes home. They see each other their next shift and agree their schedules do not match to go out again. They have seen enough of each other.

Lorene drives her sister, Carole, around now that she has her license. Carole misbehaves one day and Lorene hits her. Carole is stunned. It changes their relationship. Lorene is not a playmate anymore. She is an adult.

Mom's relatives move into a house in Wilmington from the inner city of Philly. They are the last of her family to move out of the inner city. Lorene feels very much in the real world and she is ready to go back to St. Paul's School.

Chapter Nine Analysis

Lorene suffers another harsh reality of adolescence when she gets molested by the cook. She has a total loss of innocence now. She has been touched by two men: Ricky and the cook. She must learn the ways of men and being viewed as a sexual object in

society. She must be careful now, as her father warns and as the black ice warns her from the previous chapters. Lorene represents the adolescent black woman who must be wary of the world, even if the world is a black world. Lorene also shows what a strong woman she is in this chapter. She does not give up until the cook gets fired. She is a strong woman who fights for what she believes.

Lorene's date with Booker represents a date with a normal, black man. She dates Ricky as well, but he is like her. He goes to a prep school and immerses himself into the white world. Booker represents the average black man. He is uneducated and he speaks in a grammatically imperfect way. The only way he knows how to impress Lorene is to drink a lot. However, this does not impress her. They realize they are from two different worlds. She is too high class for him. Thus, Lorene cannot relate to her fellow black man anymore. She is at the higher end of black society.



Chapter Ten

Chapter Ten Summary

In Chapter Ten, Lorene is in the Sixth Form or senior year. She feels the rituals are very normal this year. She greets friends and greets the new black and Hispanic students. She is okay with this. She and Alma settle into North Upper, their nice dormitory and dorm room. Alma is light-hearted and they choreograph dances. Alma tells Lorene years later that Lorene had made a project of Alma. Lorene fixes her collar, instructs her on dance, and other personal matters. Lorene is very focused and studies a lot.

As part of her job as vice president of student council, she sits on the Discipline Committee. Her place on student council helps with her teachers. They are less wary of her and back off from watching her in class. Lorene starts to abide by the honor code because she feels guilty that she punishes others for not abiding by it. She had never thought she would react this way.

She develops a crush on Anthony Wade. He seems to be white. They talk a lot and study. They are good friends. It could have turned into a romance, but it does not. On Parents Day, Lorene gets worried because Mom is very sick and cannot come. Mom is her other half. Lorene feels like she cannot do her dance or speech without her mother. But she gets through both. She messes up the dance a lot, but her family does not care. They are proud of her.

In November, all the seniors apply to colleges. She thinks about going out west to Berkley or other California colleges. The school can arrange a trip for her to visit, but she says no. She will not go out to California even if she gets in because of her mother's illness. She applies to Princeton and University of Pennsylvania in Philly. She always sees UPenn on the bus. It is a school with Ivy and no one can get admitted. She applies to UPenn just to see the courtyard.

Mom's illness worsens. Lorene stops doing homework. The Rector suggests a long weekend home for Lorene when she tells him Mom is sick. The school pays for her transportation. Mom is at the hospital and is not doing well. Mom will not tell her what the illness is. She just says it has to do with feminine problems. Lorene says that is how it is in the black community. Black women are not allowed to talk about their problems. They are pillars of strength.

She returns to school and serves on the Discipline Committee. It is a new style of discipline for Lorene. She says she looks forward to forgiveness.

Chapter Ten Analysis

Lorene struggles with the idea of discipline. She has not had to discipline others. This is a form of adulthood that is new to her. For example, in the previous chapter, Lorene



struggles with disciplining her little sister Carole. Now she struggles with disciplining other students, especially since she violates the rules from time to time i.e. she smokes cigarettes, she had sneaked Ricky into her dorm, she has smoked marijuana, and has done other punishable things. This struggle with discipline represents an awakening in Lorene. She is now an adult and must act like an adult. She conforms to the rules of white society and she actually condemns those who do not conform as well. Thus, her guilt not only comes from her violation of the rules, but also comes from the fact that she must make others abide by these rules of a white regime.

Mom's illness represents a weakness in the black woman. She is usually a strong female. But she cannot overcome this illness. It is a mystery to the reader and Lorene what this illness is. The reader guesses it might be some type of female cancer such as ovarian or uterine cancer. The illness strikes the very thing Mom holds sacred: being a strong, black woman. This illness affects Lorene as well because her pillar of strength is broken down. Black women are usually strong forces, especially Mom, and Lorene finally sees what physical ailment can do to the core of a black woman. It is unnerving to Lorene that Mom struggles in fighting this battle. Like Lorene's struggle with calculus, Mom must learn to accept hardship and work on letting the image of a strong black woman go.



Chapter Eleven

Chapter Eleven Summary

In Chapter Eleven, Lorene starts to tutor younger black students. It is frustrating for Lorene because they do not bring in drafts. They bring in final papers and expect the tutors to put in big words. There is a new Spanish teacher, Miss Clinton, who is black. She is energetic and fun. Lorene takes her courage from Miss Clinton.

Lorene gets involved in a lot of racial debates. She gets frustrated because the white kids say they should not be held responsible for slavery. They say if their great grandparents had slaves, why are they responsible. Lorene feels this is not fair. She meets India, a new friend. They can relate to each other. Lorene talks to her about things she never talks about with the other kids, like her grandmother. India is white. Lorene feels this is the one friendship where love triumphs over race.

Lorene dines with Mr. Archibald Cox, a St. Paul's alumnus. He is the U.S. Special Prosecutor who revealed the Watergate break-in and cover-up. Lorene could care less about Nixon and Watergate because she thinks it is rich white, powerful people who trick other rich white, powerful people. It has nothing to do with her. She keeps quiet during the meal because she cannot talk about Watergate. She tells Mr. Cox that at St. Paul's, she is reminded every day that she is black, more than she is a girl. Black concerns are not addressed. Mr. Cox says Nixon hates "our kind of people" worst of all (Chapter Eleven, p. 201). Lorene gets angry, assuming he tries to sound black. She asks what kind of people are those? He says educated people from the Northeast.

Lorene meets Mr. Vernon Jordan, president of the National Urban League. She has nothing to say to him. She thinks blacks have to fight. Otherwise, they will implode.

Valentine's Day arrives. Anthony puts a card in Lorene's mailbox. Jimmy's roommate comes looking for her and says Jimmy has to speak with her. Jimmy is upset. He had tried to steal a carton of cigarettes from a convenience store, but he has been caught. He had begged the manager to let him go. The manager had called St. Paul's and Mr. Price, a black teacher, had come and freaked out on Jimmy. Jimmy says Mr. Price has been waiting for the chance for him to mess up.

Lorene must sit in on Jimmy's trial at the Discipline Committee. She sticks up for him. He is suspended for a few days, not expelled. He must make up his almost theft to the community. He plans a day of dancing and music. He and Lorene practice. At first, Jimmy is scared, but by spring, the old, but more cautious, Jimmy returns. He has come too close to leaving St. Paul's. He and Lorene are both shaken.



Chapter Eleven Analysis

In this chapter, it is revealed that Lorene may separate herself intentionally from whites. Her motivations are to keep her black identity and be a strong black female. But she seems to separate herself too much. She refuses to learn about Watergate, a major event in American history. She has nothing to say about Watergate with Mr. Cox. He calls her an educated person from the Northeast. She is stunned that he puts her in this category. All along, Lorene thinks of herself as just black. But she learns she is much more than that.

She forms a friendship with India, which is colorblind. This symbolizes that Lorene has grown into a woman who starts to look at herself not just as black, but as a person. It is not all about being black and white. It is about the person within.

When Jimmy gets in trouble, Lorene's motivation is to help him. She has the power on the Discipline Committee to help him. This represents a shift in power as the blacks help each other. Jimmy only gets suspended for a few days. At St. Paul's, Lorene has political power. She utilizes that power to help a friend, much like whites do in politics. Thus, this chapter symbolizes a shift in thinking. It is not always a black and white divide. Many times, blacks and whites have a lot in common.



Chapter Twelve

Chapter Twelve Summary

In Chapter Twelve, Lorene only applies to UPenn and Princeton. She receives a phone call from a former St. Paul's student who works in the admissions office at Princeton. He tells her she will get in, but not to go. He says Princeton is like St. Paul's minus all the good things about St. Paul's. Lorene takes this advice to heart. She will go to UPenn. Anthony will go to UPenn as well. They are friends, but there is something more there.

The weekend of graduation, her family comes, including her parents, sister, grandparents, aunt, cousin, and family friends. Five carloads of her family come to see her graduate. It is a crazy weekend. She has dance, choir and speech performances, the alumni parade, and more. Lorene must run around and introduce friends and family. Lorene feels she is sick of St. Paul's School. She has done everything. She does not feel like going to the last chapel. It is a really long haul for her. She is not in the mood to celebrate.

The day of graduation comes. She goes to the last chapel. She feels resentment because she feels that when they talk about God, black people are left out. She cries because the music is so beautiful. At the graduation, there is a brass band for the procession. The Rector announces awards. One recipient writes for *The Pelican* and joins the astronomy club—it is she. Lorene receives her award, but is not happy because it is not the most prestigious award. She does not graduate with Honors either. Lorene gets teary-eyed when she says goodbye to the teachers. She realizes she has not loved St. Paul's enough. She can never do it over. This is it. Her family is very impressed. In the black community, this is not possible.

Mrs. Burrows, the housekeeper, gives Lorene a card and \$5. She has never given a student a graduation present before. Lorene keeps them in her pocket for a long time. She says she has the future to do better.

Chapter Twelve Analysis

Lorene takes another step into adulthood when she realizes she must savor every experience. At St. Paul's, her motivations are to look at the negative side of things. She feels blacks are treated unfairly and she concentrates on that feeling for her entire St. Paul's experience. She then realizes she has not loved the school enough. This represents an inner growth for Lorene because she starts to drop some of the anger and understand the great opportunity given to her. When she does not receive the highest award, she focuses on the negative again. Her motivation is to come up with excuses and be down on herself. But her family helps her understand what a feat her graduation is for the black community. Lorene's motivations now change to making her future better. She looks forward to her time at UPenn. Perhaps this foreshadows that

she will focus on the positive experiences at university, not on the divide between black and white.



June 1989

June 1989 Summary

In June 1989, the book goes back to where it started: at Lorene's 15th reunion at St. Paul's. She still has ties to St. Paul's because she taught essay writing there. Two years later, the trustees asked her to serve with them on the Board.

Her classmates show up. Alma is a lawyer in Watts. Jimmy is a New York restaurant manager. Anthony is a program officer in a private foundation. They are all successful.

Lorene is married to a white man and has a daughter. She feels blacks are still prejudiced against each other. She wants to take her daughter out of this mindset. She says to Anthony, it is hardest to write about family and it is easy to write about St. Paul's because it is just the setting. She says St. Paul's kept her in her black skin. The stories show her a way out. She says she has never skated on black ice, but her kids will. They will know what black ice is when it appears.

June 1989 Analysis

Black ice seems to change its meaning. In previous chapters, black ice symbolizes a warning. Here, black ice symbolizes a hope of some kind or a smooth transition into white society. Lorene says she has never skated on black ice, but as the school diversifies its student body, her children may have a chance to do so. St. Paul's in 1989 is a far cry from St. Paul's in 1974. The school has progressed with the times and black students can make an easier transition into the white world. Lorene is a trailblazer who has made this happen for the black students of St. Paul's of 1989 and today.



Characters

Lorene Carey

Lorene Carey is the narrator. She is a black, high school student. She lives in the black suburb of Philadelphia called Yeadon. She attends the all-white, prestigious St. Paul's School in New Hampshire. She is afraid to attend St. Paul's, but Lorene is a brave girl. She faces adversity, but she is strong in character and keeps her head held high. Lorene is very ambitious as well. She strives for the highest grades and studies all the time. When she does not achieve them, she gets upset and frustrated. She does not handle failure well. For example, she fails calculus twice and she bursts out crying due to this failure. Lorene also has strength of character back in Yeadon. She gets a cook fired because he molests her. She does not stop with telling the manager, she even tells the diner owner. Lorene makes sure to press hard for everything she wants until she achieves her desired result.

Lorene desperately holds onto her black identity at St. Paul's. Being black and proud is very important to her. She befriends the other black students and rarely befriends the white ones. She joins Afro-Am, the black group on campus. She stands up for civil rights in racial debates. Lorene is a leader and has power at St. Paul's. She uses this and her ambition to gain acceptance into University of Pennsylvania, where she attends college.

Mom

Mom is Lorene's mother. She is black and proud. She is an attractive, ambitious black woman. She raises her children to be classy and respectful. She only wants the best for her children and she makes sure to give them the best. She is heartbroken to send Lorene to St. Paul's School, but she knows this is the opportunity of a lifetime. Mom takes the protective role when she asks a teacher at St. Paul's who will fight for her daughter when there is prejudice. Mom also believes in "turning out" or using her strong will to stand up to white people. For example, if a white person does not listen to her, she will demand what she is entitled to until she receives it. Lorene learns from Mom's example and does this in her own life. Mom also strives to protect Lorene from sexual misconduct. She gives Lorene a lecture on sex and says she has emergency money for an abortion. Mom is strict, saying Lorene should not have sex, but pragmatic when she tells Lorene about the emergency abortion money.

Mom develops a mysterious illness halfway through the book. Neither the reader nor Lorene knows what the illness is. Mom only says it has to do with female issues. Mom takes on the role of the strong, black woman who does not share her problems with anyone. She keeps her pain quiet and remains the stronghold of her black family unit. Mom's illness hurts Lorene because Mom gives Lorene her strength. Lorene even says Mom is her other half. Mom's nature is to be a nurturer to her children. When she



cannot attend Parents Day due to her illness, it hurts her deeply. Mom must come to terms with her illness at this point and admit she is very sick.

Mrs. Evans

Mrs. Evans is Lorene's neighbor who tells her that St. Paul's recruits black girl students. She gives Lorene the number to call for more information.

Mr. Dick

Mr. Dick is the admissions officer at St. Paul's. He interviews Lorene and her parents.

Lee Bouton

Lee Bouton is the first black girl to graduate from St. Paul's.

Pam Hudson

Pam Hudson is Lorene's first roommate. She plays guitar and has a stereo.

Jimmy Hill

Jimmy Hill is Lorene's black male friend. He is very skinny and from Brooklyn. He gets in trouble at school and Lorene helps him out of it.

Fumiko

Fumiko is a student from Japan. She is a good basketball player. She stays with Lorene's family during a break.

Ricky Lockhart

Ricky Lockhart is Lorene's boyfriend. He goes to prep school in New York. He is a beautiful, black boy. He and Lorene have unprotected sex.

Grace

Grace is Lorene's Chinese-American friend. She joins the Third World Group with the other minority students. She and Lorene room together during Lorene's junior year.



Janie Saunders

Janie Saunders is a white girl at St. Paul's. She is an outsider because she does not like the other white girls. She and Lorene roam the dorms and touch the white girls' stuff and make fun of them.

Alma

Alma is Lorene's friend and roommate Lorene's senior year. Alma is loyal and relaxed.



Objects/Places

St. Paul's School

St. Paul's School is a mostly all-white prep school in New Hampshire. It has a beautiful campus, strict rules and high achieving standards.

Yeadon

Yeadon is a suburb of Philadelphia where black professionals live.

Wombats

Wombats are the mentally challenged white kids who serve food in the cafeteria.

Rectory

Rectory is a series of three beautiful, brick buildings at St. Paul's. The chapel is part of the Rectory.

Turn out

To turn out means when a black person uses their strong will to stand up against a white person who is not listening to her/him.

Afro-Am

Afro-Am is the black students' group at St. Paul's.

Simpson

Simpson is Lorene's dormitory during her junior year.

Third World Group

Third World Group is the minority student group at St. Paul's.



Match

Match is the Spanish teacher's match that he uses to light cigarettes. When students party in the woods, they watch for his match. He roams the woods to catch students partying and when they see his match, they hide.

Upper

Upper is Lorene's dormitory during her senior year.



Themes

Strong, black female

One major theme of the book is the strong, black female. Lorene begins the book as a girl who is scared to go to St. Paul's School. It is an unfamiliar world of white people. Yet, she wants to go. Once there, she holds onto her black identity and shows herself to be a strong, black woman. When the white girls make prejudiced comments, she stands up to them. She makes herself heard, even if her answers are not popular. She gives herself a voice when she runs for student council and wins the vice presidency. She gains political power at the school, even helping her black friend Jimmy get out of serious trouble. Her voice is heard on student council and in the choir and school plays. Lorene does not shy away from the challenge; instead she finds her strong, black female voice from within and makes herself known.

Lorene's mother is also a strong, black female. She raises her children to have class and respect. She is the matriarch of the family and calls the shots. It is she who gives Lorene rules and discipline. She also "turns out" white people. In other words, when whites do not listen to her, she uses her strong will to make them listen and achieve her end goal. Lorene learns from Mom and does the same thing. When Mom is sick, she keeps the details of the illness to herself. She remains the strong, black female throughout her illness, not worrying the other family members. Her strength carries the family through this difficult time.

Coming of Age

One major theme of the book is coming of age. Coming of age is a typical theme in which the reader follows the growth and development of a child through the transition from childhood to adulthood. In *Black Ice*, the plot follows Lorene, a black teenage girl, from adolescence into her late teens. Lorene begins her journey as a scared young girl. She is afraid to leave the comfort of her black neighborhood to go to St. Paul's School, an all-white prep school. She goes and experiences life among whites. While she is there, she holds true to her black identity. She learns about herself as a black woman and as a woman in general. She experiences sex for the first time and has a pregnancy scare. She comes to terms with trusting no man. During her summer vacation, a cook molests her at her diner job. She acts as an adult and reports the cook. He is fired.

Lorene experiences the world of men and it is not a safe world. Thus, she learns to protect herself as a woman. As a black woman, she learns that she separates herself too much from her white classmates. She is constantly on edge and thinks every white person is racist. By the end of the book, she learns that race is not everything. And that not every white person is racist. She learns she is more than just black; she is an educated and talented young woman. Lorene comes full circle when she realizes she



will do better at UPenn. She will live her college experience to the fullest, and as an adult, she will not prejudge her white classmates at university.

Turning Out

One major theme of the book is turning out. As Lorene explains, turning out is when a black person uses her/his strong will to stand up to a white person who is not listening to her/him. Lorene's mother does this in a department store when a white manager ignores her complaints. She continues to fight and eventually wins the argument. Turning out is a strategy the black students use at St. Paul's. For example, they have a group called Afro-Am. The group wants to wield power and have a voice over the white students in the school. Yet they are not organized enough to do so. Only one student has been successful in the past and his name is Bernard Cash. He has turned out white students in his own way with charisma and a powerful voice.

Lorene turns out white people when she stands up for herself at her summer job. A cook molests her. She goes to the white manager and white owner to report the incident. She will not give up until the cook is fired. They fire him. At school, Lorene tries to turn out Mr. Cox, an alumnus who is involved with Watergate. But he catches her off guard and calls her an educated person from the Northeast. Lorene also turns out her white girl classmates when they make prejudiced comments. Though her answers are not popular, she stands up for her race. During her senior year, Lorene turns out her white classmates in racial debates and makes sure the black voice is heard loud and clear.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of *Black Ice* is first person. The point of view is reliable, proven by the fact that the narrator is also the author. The first person point of view works well for this book because it is a memoir. Lorene Carey, the narrator and author, reports on the actions and events of her own life story at St. Paul's prep school in New Hampshire. She tells the reader about her deepest and most personal inner feelings. For example, during her pregnancy scare, the reader receives an insider's view into her thoughts and her deepest fears of being pregnant. The first person point of view is important to the book because it shows the emotional growth of the main character. There would not be the dramatic impact of this growth and development if not for the reader's insider view into the thoughts and emotions of Lorene Carey.

The story is told mostly through exposition and some dialogue. This strategy is most likely used in order to keep the reader focused closely on the narrator, Lorene. Lorene spends most of the book in her own head. She struggles to keep her black identity and understand the world of white people. During these struggles, the reader would be lost if s/he could not read Lorene's thoughts. The events of the book are seen through Lorene's eyes from adolescence to adulthood. As she matures as a woman and a member of black society, the reader sees her full scope of development in the way she processes information. For example, Lorene does not trust white people in the beginning, but by the end, she realizes she must not prejudge anyone. The reader sees the lesson Lorene learns via this first person point of view.

Setting

Black Ice is set in the world of St. Paul's School. This is a world that is made up of mostly rich, white students. St. Paul's School is located in New Hampshire. It is a prestigious prep school. It has a beautiful campus with cobblestones, ivy and a chapel. In the world of St. Paul's, the rules are strict. Students keep to their own cliques. The black students mostly hang out with one another. The dorms are dusty and plain for the underclassmen. But the seniors receive nice dorm rooms with hardwood floors and armoires. The cafeteria has mentally challenged white kids called wombats who serve food to the students. The school has activities such as crew, soccer and track. The students have illegal parties in the woods. The setting of St. Paul's boasts of white wealth and the beauty of a New England prep school.

Another setting of this book is Yeadon. This is a suburb of Philadelphia where black professionals live. Lorene grows up here. It is a nice neighborhood. Her parents own a huge house, which causes them to budget too much. Lorene finds comfort in this setting because of all the black people surrounding her. Lorene also travels into Philadelphia



and sees many black people. She sees the ivy covered walls of University of Pennsylvania and applies there just to get a look inside the courtyard.

Language and Meaning

The language of this book is formal. Lorene, the narrator, writes in complex sentences and constructs complex thoughts, especially for an adolescent narrator. The sentences are constructed in a manner that is common in the formal language of educated, white people, even though Lorene is black. The language adds depth to the book because it allows the reader a glimpse into the world of rich, white society in a New Hampshire prep school. The language makes the book believable, since it is used by the narrator and her teachers and classmates. The main language is that of Lorene, but when the black students speak, the reader can see their informal slang. The black students still sound educated, but sometimes they speak to each other in their own bits of slang. This reminds the reader that the black students keep true to their black identity through language.

The language of the novel keeps to the complex rules of grammar. Sentences are written in a grammatically perfect way. There are long passages of exposition in the book, since the reader gets into Lorene's head this way. The ideas can be complex as Lorene shows her excellent education and writing talents. The narration can be simple, but it can also have obscure and complex passages. The overall effect of the language is occasionally difficult to understand, but it is effective in describing Lorene's most inner thoughts and giving the reader necessary details to understand her story as a black girl at a rich white school.

Structure

This book is comprised of 14 chapters, each approximately 16 pages long. Each chapter has a number, with the exception of the first and last chapters, which are both named June 1989. The book begins and ends with Lorene's class reunion 15 years after graduating from St. Paul's School. The chapters tend to be long and have some descriptive passages. The time line ranges from long periods of time to an hour or a few hours later. The book follows the most important events to Lorene.

The plot of *Black Ice* is fairly simple without subplots. The book is about Lorene Carey, a black student from Philadelphia. She goes to St. Paul's School, an all-white prep school in New Hampshire. She must learn to keep her black identity while trying to fit in with the white student body.

The book's pace can be slow at times due to the author's use of complex, descriptive passages rather than dialogue. However, the novel is a moderate read and the plot engrosses the reader once s/he is immersed into the world of St. Paul's. The story line starts with Lorene at her class reunion. She then switches to remembering her days at St. Paul's. The story line ends where it begins, with Lorene back at her class reunion.

The story line does have flashbacks and some sections of back story, but both are easily understandable. The novel is a moderate read and entertaining as a whole.



Quotes

"Once you've made the journey, you can't pretend it didn't happen." June 1989, p. 4

"Those people do not play." Chapter One, p. 18

"No matter what, I wanted to go." Chapter Two, p. 34

"How was it that I should have this opportunity and they should not?" Chapter Three, p. 45

"Don't you go running to those people." Chapter Three, p. 40

"I, too, would emerge young, gifted, and black for all to admire." Chapter Three, p. 45

"What is wrong with us? Can you tell me what is wrong with my people?" Chapter Four, p. 79

"I felt as if I no longer belonged anywhere." Chapter Five, p. 100

"Trust no man." Chapter Ten, p. 192

"It was for me the first triumph of love over race." Chapter Eleven, p. 199

"I could never do it again, never make it right. I had not loved enough." Chapter Twelve, p. 219

"Would you send your daughter to St. Paul's School?" June 1989, p. 229



Topics for Discussion

How does Lorene secure her black identity at St. Paul's? How does she separate herself from the white students? What tactics does she use? What tactics do the other black students use?

Does Lorene separate herself too much from the white students? If so, how does she do this? Could Lorene have found a way to integrate better with her white classmates?

What are the characteristics of a strong, black woman? What makes her strong? Does she have any weaknesses? If so, what are they?

Black people "turn out" white people who do not listen to them. What do you think of "turning out"? Does this strategy help the black community or hurt them? How would you feel as a white person if you were "turned out"? Would you "turn out" whites if you were black? Explain your answers.

Lorene enters her adolescence. What does she learn about sex and her sexuality? What does she learn about men? What do men represent in this novel, especially if they are viewed as flawed characters? What does Lorene's father represent?

Political power comes to the forefront at the end of the book. What does Mr. Cox's visit represent? What does Mr. Jordan's visit represent? How do these two leaders influence Lorene? Does Lorene gain political power at St. Paul's? If so, how does she?

Black ice is symbolic. To Lorene, it means warning, then hope. What does the metaphor of black ice mean to you? How is black ice an important part of this book? Has Lorene found black ice by the book's end? Have you?