

Welcome to Braggsville Study Guide

Welcome to Braggsville by T. Geronimo Johnson

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Plot Summary

NOTE: The main character's name is spelled as both D'aron and Daron in the book. This study guide attempts to follow the author's change in spelling throughout the story.

In the novel "Welcome to Braggsville" by T. Geronimo Johnson, college student D'aron Davenport learned that things were never as they seemed. D'aron had grown up in the small southern town of Braggsville. He knew his town was backward but never dreamed how strange it was until he and his friends from college staged a pretend lynching at the town's annual Civil War reenactment.

When his friends learned that Daron's hometown hosted the reenactment of a Civil War battle each year, they decided to visit with hopes of making a statement about the injustice of the event. They planned an intervention where they would dress as slaves and masters and pretend to lynch an unruly slave. Unfortunately, things went terribly wrong and one of the students, Louis Chang, was asphyxiated in the pretend lynching. The death was ruled accidental. However, Candice Chelsea, the student who had been with Louis when he was killed, swore there was a conspiracy in the town to cover up what really happened. As Daron noticed the increasingly odd behavior toward him, he began to wonder if she wasn't right.

As his town was more and more under the spotlight of the media after Louis' death, Daron realized that things in his town were not as they seemed. A speech by the mayor of the Gully, the place where the black people lived, contained information that one of the sons of the man who had founded Braggsville was a deserter from the Civil War. That was the reason Braggsville was not chosen as Georgia's capital after Atlanta was burned in the war, he argued. Although the people of Braggsville had been openly proud of their Southern heritage, Daron noticed the traditional lawn jockeys disappeared in the town. Anything that could be considered racist was disposed of or hidden. To make matters worse, Daron was hounded by an FBI agent who believed there was a militia meeting in the Holler behind Daron's house. Daron finally decided to find out for himself if what the man was saying was true. He was both surprised and horrified by what he found.



Epigraph — Chapter Four

Summary

Opening the novel is an epigraph that indicates that the new world is not much different from the old world.

A quarter moon symbol marks the first section of the novel, a quote by Nanny Tag giving instruction on a sort of charm. She said the moon would tell, though the listener might not like what it had to say.

D'aron had been called a variety of names ranging from faggot and sissy to brainiac and Little Mays. It was not until he was in college that he became just plain Daron. In his speech as the valedictorian of his class he talked about the opportunities available to them to put Braggsville on the map.

In Chapter Two, after being the smartest kid in his class, Daron was surprised when he was not called on at all in his college classes, even during a lecture about the South. He was taught to be polite in his Southern raising and was one of the few students at Berkley who held doors for ladies or said "Thank You" and "Please." He felt he was the only student who didn't play a sport or instrument or have some unusual talent. He didn't study anything in college besides the half-Korean Kaya. His parents were unhappy when they received his mid-term grades in the mail. At Christmas break, he was irritated by his family. Since he had lost weight, they teased him about eating only grass or becoming a crack addict. When the holiday was over, he was ready to return to California. He felt more comfortable in the city his second semester and began exploring what the area had to offer.

In Chapter Three, D'aron was moved to a new dorm in his spring semester. His new roommate was Louis Chang. They got along well. Louis' irreverence and hilarity were a contrast to the groups who came to the school to call for nuclear disarmament and an end to cutting down trees. D'aron had hoped that Louis knew Kaya and could introduce the two, but that was not the case. When a dot party was scheduled in his old dorm Louis thought it would be a good chance to meet Kaya. Those who attended the party were supposed to wear a dot where they wanted to be touched.

In Chapter Four, D'aron and Louis wore dots on their foreheads. D'aron chose the forehead because it was symbolic of provoking thoughts. Others found the dots offensive. For this reason D'aron, Louis, and two others who'd chosen to put the dots on their foreheads found themselves alone together in a sunken courtyard. As Louis looked at them he gave them the nickname of the 4 Little Indians. They tried to go back to the party but were asked to leave unless they removed the dots from their foreheads.

Because of his low grades his first semester, D'aron's academic adviser requested a meeting. It was nearly spring break before he scheduled an appointment. By then, he



had begun to study more and work harder. Mrs. Brooks empathized with him because the change from his town to Berkley has been such a big one. She advised him to ask for help if he needed it and to stay on top of his work. He cried when Mrs. Brooks pinpointed his problem by telling him that he really did belong there if he'd been admitted. He missed his high school because he'd been on top there. He was afraid that if he failed at Berkley he wouldn't be able to go back home. Mrs. Brooks reassured him and suggested he find a group of like-minded friends.

Even though he had no sexual interaction with Candice, one of the 4 Little Indians, during his spring semester, he made it seem as if he had when he returned home for summer break. When Jo-Jo had asked Daron about Candice after he saw pictures of the four friends together, Daron didn't feel there was anything wrong in going along with his friend's suggestions that he and Candice were boyfriend and girlfriend. He thought there was no chance that Jo-Jo and Candice would ever meet. In retrospect, Daron regretted not having corrected Jo-Jo. Jo-Jo mentioned he didn't want to go to college because of the cost. He told Daron he'd been promised he could be foreman at the town's hot air factory in less than two years.

Analysis

The first thing that the reader notices about this novel is its unusual style. The author likes long sentences. The opening sentence about D'aron's many nicknames fills more than a page. Also, the name D'aron is also spelled as Daron in the story. In addition to the long sentences, the author also likes long paragraphs. There are only two paragraphs in Chapter Two of the novel, but these paragraphs are stuffed with information. Because the author does not use quotation marks and doesn't always separate quotes into different paragraphs, it is sometimes hard to tell the difference between when a character is speaking and when the narrator is summarizing a conversation. When the author does include quotes that appear to be part of a conversation the author rarely notates which character is doing the speaking, sometimes leaving the reader feeling a little out of touch. Notice also that the text is rich in slang terms. Although in some cases this heavy use of slang might indicate a person being unschooled, it seems to be used as a characteristic of Daron's age not his lack of intelligence. Partnered with the slang terms, for which the author has included a dictionary in the back, are an abundance of "college-level" words used to explain Daron's thoughts and emotions.

There are a couple of important things that happen in this section of the novel of which the reader should be aware. First, there is the meeting of the 4 Little Indians. They each went to a dot party with dots on their foreheads because they wanted intellectual conversation. Instead, they were thrown out of the party because people felt they were making fun of people from India. In that country the bindi, a dot, is worn by some followers of the Hindu religion. It was from this mistaken intention that Louis Chang, one of the group of four who became close friends, came up with the group name of the 4 Little Indians.



The second thing that happens in this section that will be important later on is Daron's act of allowing Jo-Jo to believe that he and Candice were boyfriend and girlfriend. Although Daron had never believed that Jo-Jo and Candice would ever meet or that his unwillingness to correct Jo-Jo's mistake would have life altering repercussions for all of them, it does turn out to directly affect the lives of five of the book's characters.

The ideas of race, racial issues and ethnicity make up an important theme in this novel. Look, for instance, at the 4 Little Indians. Daron is white and southern. Louis is Malaysian but often tells others he is Chinese. The people at the dot party believe that he is really Indian and for this reason don't criticize him for wearing a dot on his forehead. Charlie is the preppy black football player with girls falling all over themselves to get his attention. Candice is a white girl with blonde hair from Iowa who claimed to have Native American ancestry. There could not be four more racially and ethnically different friends put together to form this group.

While this story is about race and ethnicity it is also a coming of age story for Daron. He's lived all of his life in a small southern town where he knew everyone and everyone knew him. He's made waves in that town in the past because he is smart and excelled in academic achievement. He was valedictorian of his graduating class. Once in Berkley, however, Daron felt out of place. He was not longer the smartest kid. He couldn't make good grades without studying. By the time his second semester had rolled around, Daron was doing better in college but still worried he'd embarrass his family back home. One of his main concerns was that if he flunked out of college he wouldn't be able to go back home because of all the grief he would get.

This idea that Daron wouldn't be able to move back home if he flunked out of college because his family would give him such grief also touches on another theme in the novel. That of the importance of education. Daron is the first generation of his family to be able to attend college. His father tried to go on the G.I. Bill but since the closest school was too far away it didn't work out for him. There was a good deal of pressure on Daron to do well in school because he is the first to attend college. In addition, in his valedictorian speech he spoke to his fellow students about seizing opportunities and doing good in the world. Daron knew his ability to do good depended upon him having a good education.

The superstitious nature of the people who lived in Braggsville in the past is noted in what is assumed to be the first chapter of the book even though that chapter is not labeled as such. That chapter is denoted by the symbol of a quarter moon. Keep in mind this idea of superstition as it will become important later in the novel. Notice also Daron's interest in girls and his desire to date a pretty one as this will be a factor in the course of the novel.



Discussion Question 1

Notice the author opens his novel with a list of nicknames given to D'aron over the years. Why is this list of nicknames significant? What does it mean that when D'aron goes to college he tried to be just Daron?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the significance of the racial and ethnical differences in the 4 Little Indians.

Discussion Question 3

Talk about Daron's discussion with Mrs. Brooks. Why did he feel more comfortable with her because she was black? How did she make him feel better about being from a small town?

Vocabulary

venture, sociable, vegetarian, valedictorian, pontificated, vigorously, listlessly, aplomb, sidled, proffered, sagely, censure, obscure, lamentation, mundanity, carillon, monolith, migrating, mantra, phenomenon, irreverence, directives, mastication, surreptitiously, mercenary, pragmatic, physique, desiccated, pantomimed, interlocutors, umpteenth, concentric, breached, rebuffed, abysmal, rue, credenza, officious, sabotage, preternatural, roused, languorous, cockscomb, tactical, decriminalized, eponymous, parenthetical, preordained



Chapter Five — Chapter Seven

Summary

In Chapter Five, the 4 Little Indians took the class “American History X, Y and Z: Alternative Perspectives” to fulfill a core requirement. The professor hosted Salon de Chat on Fridays, a time of free conversation pertaining to a menu of conversation topics. A girl at Daron and Charlie’s table talked about a performative intervention, which is a type of film which she argued would be the next social protest movement. During the entree portion of their conversation talked turned to reenactments. Some students were surprised to hear reenactments of civil rights protests were still being held. The entire room of students was shocked when Daron told them his town still hosted a reenactment of a Civil War battle. Candice suggested it could be a capstone project for the course especially since it coincided with the school’s spring break.

Daron noticed Candice attached to the idea of recording the reenactment just as she had to Ishi, the last of the Yahi Indians who had been “institutionalized” in the Museum of Anthropology at the college after he’d been arrested for stealing meat. Because of the clamor in the classroom about the project Daron felt he couldn’t say no to his friends. However, he didn’t say yes either. He was disturbed when Candice suggested a staged lynching but still didn’t discourage the idea. He enjoyed the attention Candice gave him as she begged for details about Braggsville.

In Chapter Six, to the question of why, Daron admitted he agreed to Candice’s plans because he was attracted to her. She had asked him to ride the Medusa with her, then the other two Indians had texted him. He felt like he couldn’t back out. They tried to eat before the ride. They had trouble because there was a stack of memorial brochures Candice had doctored to represent Six Flags as a graveyard along with a box of ashes, which represented the remains of Ishi.

In Chapter Seven, despite Mrs. Brooks encouragement Daron still thought people believed Berkley had lowered its standards by letting him, with his Southern drawl, into the school. He knew, though, that he had earned it and had done it by himself. He believed his acceptance had also been based on his application letter. Even though his mother had helped him write a letter, he’d also written his own version. He worked on revising it for weeks. The letter his mother wrote described the family as being like “Romeo and Juliet” with hardworking blue collar members. Other facts pointed out in the letter were a reference to Daron being the first student in the family to go to college and his desire to change the world for the better. The accomplishment of which he was most proud was his decision not to hunt anymore. In his revised letter, Daron referred to the college admission board as a parole board and begged them to forgive him for being born in the backwoods area in which he was born and allow him out into the real world.

When Daron reread his letter shortly before his friends were to come to Braggsville he was embarrassed by how desperate he sounded in it. Before the visit he called his



mother with some requests. His first had been that Uncle Roy not use any derogatory words for blacks. He started to ask another favor but his mother read his mind and told him that they would move The Charlies, the two black lawn jockey statues passed down from Daron's grandfather, out of the front yard.

Analysis

Two ideas strike the 4 Little Indians in this section of the novel. This first is that reenactments of historical events, particularly those like civil rights protests and Civil War battles, are still taking place. The second is the idea of performative intervention. According to the girl who mentioned this technique of video and interview it would become the next form of social protest. Even though Daron didn't say yes to the idea of his friends going to Braggsville to protest the reenactment he didn't say no either. By the end of the day they'd come up with a plan to have one of them pose as slaves while the other was a master. A pretend lynching was even suggested even though Daron claimed no one had ever been lynched in his town. The students' professor approved of the project and even encouraged it. He allowed the four friends to complete the project and turn it in as their capstone assignment.

In the theme of coming of age the reader can feel Daron's struggle. He wants his classmates to like him and mentioned the reenactments because they allowed him to make a conversation point. He never expected Candice, the girl he liked, to catch hold of the idea. As she fluttered about him making plans and asking questions about his town, Daron couldn't find the strength in him to tell her he didn't think their performative intervention was a good idea. He was still at the point he was willing to do whatever it took to get attention from the girl he liked.

Touching on the themes of both coming of age and education, Daron rereads the college application letter he wrote in order to get accepted to Berkeley. He still held the idea that people perceived him as a hick because of his Southern accent. He thought they believed the school had lowered its standards by admitting people like him and that he did not truly have the intelligence required to attend that school. Hoping to remind himself of his qualifications to attend Berkeley, Daron reread the letter he'd sent the school with his application. Notice that his mother had helped him write one version of a letter. Daron indicated that this letter was filled with honors and activities of which he had no memory. Daron not remembering things his parents said he had done will be important later in the novel. Important here is that Daron rewrote his college application letter because he wanted to feel he'd been accepted to Berkeley on his own merits. When he reread this letter before his friends were to visit Braggsville Daron was struck by how desperate he sounded to get out of his hometown. He'd written the letter as if he were a prisoner asking his parole board to let him out of prison so he could prove to them he could be a productive member of the real world.

In the theme of education by itself notice that instead of all the humanitarian ventures Daron's mother had listed that he planned to study in college, Daron wrote that he was interested in meeting people from other races and ethnicities, and learning how food



can bring all different types of people together. This idea of Daron's will be echoed throughout the novel. Also note that because Daron was a first generation college student, his parents preached to him how he had to go to school. They couldn't tell him why he had to go to school, just that he had to go. Another aspect of education that Daron points out in this section of the novel is the differences in the way school was viewed in his college in Berkley and his hometown of Braggsville. In Berkley students went on hunger strikes to have classes added to the curriculum. Daron said that students in Braggsville might consider a hunger strike but only if it would get classes canceled. Also in his town students secretly referred to school as juvenile detention or jail. Real jail, however, was openly referred to as school. Daron spoke often of his cousin, Quint, doing a stint in vo-tech, which was really jail.

The author continues to demonstrate with styles in this section of the novel. Notice the change in style from Chapter Five to Chapter Six. In Chapter Six, the author has Daron narrating almost as if he is being interrogated about why he went along with a plan apparently cooked up by Candice. Through the course of the chapter Daron argued he'd gone along with this plan of Candice's because he was attracted to her. Notice also the author's style of description throughout the novel. "She strutted off, shorts nibbling cheeks, perfectly painted legs tucked into huge furry boots, like she was wearing the feet of a baby wooly mammoth" (p.35). The author paints vivid descriptions of his characters. In this chosen quote he not only uses simile in comparing the girl's boots to the feet of a wooly mammoth but also the image of her shorts nibbling her checks, indicating they were really short, and her legs were "perfectly painted" and "tucked" into her boots giving an image of smooth perfection.

In the theme of race and ethnicity notice that before his friends visit Braggsville Daron called his mother to ask her to remove several items that he thought his friends would find disturbing. These included the black lawn jockeys they had displayed in their front yard. He also requested she try to discourage Uncle Roy from using a derogatory term for black people that he often used in conversation. Notice how Daron's mother played dumb and pretended at first not to know the word to which Daron was referring when he tried to hint at it without actually saying the word. It was as she were saying to him that he'd said the word plenty of times himself before he'd gone off to Berkley. Just because he was at a big school where people had different values than people in their town, she expected him to say plainly what he was trying to tell her.

Discussion Question 1

What do you the 4 Little Indians hoped to achieve with their performative intervention at the Civil Rights enactment?



Discussion Question 2

Consider Daron's application letter to Berkley. Do you think it sounded desperate? If you were a member of a college acceptance board, how would the letter affect you? Would you grant admission to Daron?

Discussion Question 3

What does Daron say about his town and the way his thoughts about his town have changed when he called his mother in advance of his friends visiting and asked her to move the lawn jockeys? If the town is still so rooted in the traditions of the South that they still have these jockeys in their yards, do you think simply moving the physical evidence of racism will erase the idea?

Vocabulary

monocle, capstones, philanthropist, riven, fatuity, blathered, litany, reenactments, euphemism, serendipity, benefactor, scourge, morphed, predacious, untoward, riotous, metaphorically, sardonic, extoll, aspirations, perusal, integrated, parsimonious, hygienic, debasing, dissemination, logorrhea, veracity, palpable



Chapter Eight — Chapter Nine

Summary

In Chapter Eight, Candice hoped that when they spread the ashes she argued were from Ishi in Vallejo that it would make a statement about Berkley's choice to make Ishi live in the museum like he was on display. She believed it would show that public schools were prisons and people would begin to ask questions. She planned to release these ashes that she'd deemed were Ishi's from the top of the Medusa, a ride at Six Flags in Vallejo. To sneak the ashes into the amusement park, she had hidden them in a box that she placed in an over-sized bra. Once inside, she took the box out of the bra. However, the ride attendant wouldn't let them take the cardboard box on a ride.

Their plan B was a ceremony at the fountain in the center of the park. Candice sat up for the ritual which she said would only take two minutes. They were told to hum. Candice kept starting her ritual over and over whenever some new kid dragged its parents up to see the powwow. It began to feel natural to Daron until the Tweety Bird came up. Charlie was distracted by the color of the bird's tongue and had to share with Daron. One of the twins knocked over the box of ashes. Daron dropped to his knee to cover the erection he was getting because of the suggestions Charlie was making about the Tweety Bird. As the ashes blew away, Candice commended Ishi to the wind. The people, who thought they'd seen a park sponsored performance, clapped.

In Chapter 9, before they left for Braggsville, Charlie asked if there was anything he needed to know about Daron's family. He referenced an incident in which they'd been fed fried chicken by a Southern couple after the Six Flags incident. When the plane landed in Atlanta Candice, Charlie, and Louis were most surprised by the number of black people they saw. Daron's mother picked them up at the airport. She greeted them warmly, giving each a kiss on the cheek. Once they entered Braggsville, they were greeted with advertisements about the Pride Week Patriot Days Festival. Confederate flags were hung on the watchtower. They stopped at Lou Davis's Cash'n'carry Bait Shop and Copy Center for cold cuts. Louis and Candice entertained themselves by reading and taking pictures of bumper stickers just as they had at the gas station at which they'd had to stop. The rest of the way home, it seemed everyone was on their front porches waving as they passed. Daron called out their names as they passed. Candice noticed all the people were white and asked where the black people lived. Daron explained they lived in a place called the Gully. She asked if they could walk there from his house and seemed to pout when he told her that nobody walked through the Holler.

Analysis

A good deal of this section of the novel deals with another performative intervention that Candice planned at Six Flags in Vallejo. She'd planned this one before they'd even known about performative interventions. She hoped to raise awareness about Ishi, an



American Indian who had been forced to live the rest of his days in a museum at the University of Berkley after he was caught shoplifting. She hoped her display would make people ask questions and that they would see that public schools were prisons. Her protest didn't go as planned and she was not able to take the box that contained what she called the ashes of Ishi onto the Medusa, the roller coaster from which she wanted to disperse the ashes. Instead she put together a ceremony near a fountain in the center of the park. Even though the ceremony attracted attention from children who believed they were watching a park sponsored powwow, no one asked any questions about what they were doing or why they were doing it.

When Daron and his friends first arrive in Atlanta an emphasis is placed on the number of black people in the town. Information in the novel indicates that while the population of Berkley was only about three percent black, those residents counted for about fifty percent of Atlanta's population. When they arrived in Braggsville, however, there were no black people to be seen with the exception of the lawn jockey statues. Even Louis noticed the discrepancy. When Candice asked where the black people lived, he jokingly said they apparently lived in the front yards. Even though they appear to be trying to put their best foot forward, Daron's town still appeared to be a relic of the Old South with confederate flags and bumper stickers with references to guns and racism. Candice was disturbed when Daron told her that the blacks lived in their own town across the Holler called the Gully. Candice, ironically, misunderstood him and believed he'd said they lived in the Gutter.

Discussion Question 1

Notice that the author blends sexual images into the description of Candice's ceremony to honor Ishi. These include both the image of her wearing an over-sized bra in which she could hide the ashes as well as the description of the Tweety Bird's tongue as being clitoris colored. In your opinion, what is the meaning of these sexual images?

Discussion Question 2

What first impression does Braggsville make? Do you think similar towns still exist?

Discussion Question 3

Consider Candice's attempt to draw attention to Ishi's cause at Six Flags. Do you think her plan was well thought out? Do you think she communicated her point?

Vocabulary

desecration, menagerie, amulet, conveyance, repatriated, etymology, cleave, objectify, abject, innately, emissary, truancy, prodigal, insurgency, proffered, feigning, flamboyant,



rambunctious, svelte, concourse, adorned, superimposed, regalia, chagrined, faux, debilitated, succumbed, reinstated, mandated, intoned, sentinel



Chapter Ten — Chapter Eleven

Summary

In Chapter Ten, most of Daron's family was already at his house in the backyard for a barbecue. As he introduced his friends to his family members, all of whom he believed were misfits, he worried because he hadn't told his friends they would be responsible for making their own conversation. He was surprised when they were all drawn into conversations easily. Quint even took up with Louis. Daron smelled the food cooking and realized there was no vegetarian friendly food in the coolers or the refrigerator. He found his mother in the kitchen. When he complained about there being no veggie burgers and then scolded her for flirting with Charlie, his mother slapped him on the face with the red plastic spatula she was holding. He went out to the front yard and looked at the spots where The Charlies had been. His mother followed him, telling him they moved them like he had asked. She also said there were veggie burgers she'd forgotten to take out of the freezer.

Back in the backyard, Candice was taking pictures of Daron's family members, Quint and Louis were thumb-wrestling and Charlie was talking to Daron's father. After hearing one of Louis' jokes, Quint told Louis he should be a comedian. A few minutes later he was calling for the attention of the group by banging two beer bottles together until one broke. He announced they were about to see the first performance by the California comic Lenny Bruce Lee. Louis' jokes included comparisons of Chinese and Blacks as well as Chinese and Southerners. Daron's family applauded in genuine appreciation when he finished. Afterward, Quint talked to Daron about Jo-Jo. Quint said he hadn't invited Jo-Jo because Quint was afraid Jo-Jo wouldn't fit in. Quint talked about his last conversation with Jo-Jo. When he was finished, Daron could think of nothing to say and wondered if school was causing him to forget how to talk. He hadn't let Jo-Jo know he was in town yet. He also felt ashamed because he'd let Jo-Jo think that Candice was his girl. He knew if he saw them together that he'd know that wasn't true.

At the end of the evening Daron's father whistled for him to come into the house. Once inside his father told him to call off whatever it was that he and his friends were planning. They had not mentioned the fake lynching to Daron's mother when she asked about their plans; so, he wondered how his father had found out about it. The idea was to keep it a secret until it actually happened. Daron considered following his father's advice. Instead, he told him it was a project for school. His father, however, continued to insist that the plans be stopped.

In Chapter Eleven, in Daron's bedroom Quint told the group he planned to have a cookout in their honor the following night. Daron didn't like the idea because he was afraid Quint's friends might do something to Louis. Quint had earlier suggested to Daron that he believed that Candice liked Daron. He thought Quint might have been setting him up; but, he also knew that sometimes Quint had a second sense about women. When Candice suggested they go for a walk in the woods Daron refused by telling her



people didn't walk in the woods after dark. The atmosphere in the room seemed to cool. Candice went to get ready for bed and Quint left. When they were alone, Daron asked the other boys who had told his father about their plans even though he'd asked earlier and they had denied having said anything. Once again, they denied saying anything. They suggested that maybe Candice had said something.

Candice was in the living room with Quint looking at a photo album. Even though Quint was drunk, Daron showed him to the door. He took the time alone as his opportunity to tell Candice he was sorry her tribute to Ishi at Six Flags didn't work out. He told her that he'd missed her because there had been a period of about three weeks where they'd seemed to be embarrassed for one another and hadn't spoken. She said that she had missed hanging out with him. She asked if he was nervous about the intervention they had planned for the following day. He said he wasn't. He considered telling her that his father had forbidden him from participating. He didn't and she asked if she could go to sleep. He left her alone on the couch. That night when he went to get a drink, Daron watched Candice sleeping on the couch and was awed that all of his friends were in his house.

Daron was awakened the next morning by Charlie telling Daron he didn't think he could play his part. They were sitting in the backyard talking when they heard Candice in the kitchen at 5:30 a.m. They decided to go to Waffle House for breakfast. After they ordered, Charlie told them he didn't think he could go through with their plans. They tried to guilt Charlie and Daron into participating by telling Daron that there wasn't a good reason for him not to participate. Charlie backed up Daron telling the others that Daron's father had asked him not to be part of any plan. He argued Daron could not go against his father's wishes. Candice turned to Charlie begging him to go through with the plan. Charlie only hung his head. Candice decided she and Louis would go while Daron and Charlie did the interviews downtown. Daron agreed to drive Charlie downtown. Louis made the point that if anyone saw Daron there, they would think what they were doing was a joke. On the way home from breakfast, Charlie suggested they only do the interviews. No one said anything. At the designated drop point Louis got his bag and walked away. Candice followed. Daron and Charlie were to go back to the Davenport home and wait until the sun was fully up before they began conducting interviews.

Analysis

The group's plan for its performative intervention began to fall apart soon after they arrived in Braggsville. Daron's father somehow caught wind the students had something planned even though none of them claimed they had mentioned their intentions to anyone. He ordered Daron to call it off. This was different from telling Daron not to participate, which is what Daron has decided to do. This will be important later in the novel.

On a more positive note, Daron's family seemed to accept his friends better than he had hoped. Notice, however, how the characters in the novel conform to stereotypes.



Daron's mother is the typical Southern lady as she stays in the kitchen cooking through the course of the party. Her kitchen is described as being operating room clean and neatly organized. She punished Daron by hitting him on the check with her spatula. Quint fulfilled the stereotype of the typical Southern, young adult male. He'd already spent time in jail. He was a hick who wore t-shirts with slogans on the front, and he liked to get drunk. He had a Confederate flag tattooed on both of his upper arms. When he decided Louis should do a stand up routine he got the crowd's attention by knocking together beer bottles until one broke.

Notice in this section that Candice seemed to get angry with Daron when he told her that they couldn't walk to the Gully at night because they had to go through the Holler. She seemed to scoff when he told her that no one walked through the Holler at night. Notice that he doesn't seem to have a really good reason why they shouldn't walk through the Holler other than that his grandmother almost got lost back there once. This idea that he should stay out of the Holler appears to be one that he has simply been taught since he was young without ever really knowing the reason.

Also in this section, Charlie backed out of his role in the intervention willingly. He explained to Daron his fear, that he just couldn't pretend to be a slave and pretend to be lynched. Daron understood Charlie's fear. He knew that asking Charlie to pretend to be a slave would be similar to having Daron dress like a grand dragon, a member of the Ku Klux Klan. When Charlie approached Daron about his fear, Daron hoped that his friends would decide that the intervention was not in their best interests and call it off entirely.

Notice that even though Daron believed the introduction of his friends to his family went well, his friends picked up on how deeply Southern the town was even though the Charlies had been moved out of the Davenports' front yard. Louis made the comment that the whole town was like a Confederate museum. Candice made the observation that everywhere they went they increased the diversity level.

The author continues to use colorful descriptions for his characters. For Quint, "He blew time like he had it to spare, like it grew on clocks instead of died there" (p. 74). A description of Quint's Uncle Roy and Aunt Chester states "the latter's blouse a tell-all, each button crashing at its downstairs neighbor's place" (p 97) when the two emerged from a room after having a sexual encounter.

Discussion Question 1

Do you think Daron and his friends should have called off their plans for the intervention like Daron's father asked? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the way the members of Daron's family fit their stereotypical roles. Why do you think the author gave certain characteristics to them? What point do you believe he is making?



Discussion Question 3

Why do you think that Candice was so caught up in and disgusted by the idea that no black people lived in Braggsville? Do you think she was making a legitimate point when she pushed Daron concerning his hesitancy to visit that town? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

cordoned, deleterious, misanthrope, pyromaniac, exhibitionist, nostalgia, analog, leering, scrutiny, belied, ethnography, rhetoric, expound, perennial, perfunctorily, proximity, gastronomical, salve, mnemonic



Chapter Twelve — Chapter Fifteen

Summary

Chapter Twelve begins with Daron being asked again why he went along with Candice's plans. He answered that he had done it because Candice put so much work into it. He had walked away after they'd been approached by a cop when Candice was burning the books needed to simulate Ishi's ashes. Charlie and Louis had gone with him when he walked out. Daron later went back because he knew the other two would and he couldn't let them go alone.

The next section is marked by a fuller quarter moon, and it includes a quote from John Collier, the commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The quote is about the sorry way the Americans had treated the Indians. Also included is a statement made four years later by the same man when he worked as the director of the Poston Japanese interment camp located on the Colorado River Indian Reservation. In this quote, he sang the praises of the joint community he had established with the Indians and Japanese.

Chapter 14 tells how John Oglethorpe founded Georgia, the last of the thirteen colonies. About 75 years later Raymond Bragg, an ancestor of Oglethorpe hoped to carry on the Georgia tradition. He'd hoped the land to which he laid claim would be the next capital of the state. His wife had died when they got lost in Pasco Holler, a deep gorge that bounded his land. Most people assumed the Holler was haunted. He buried his wife in what became the town center and had the watchtower built there. During the Civil War, Atlanta had been burned to the ground. However, Braggsville had survived because the men had taken apart the machinery in the mill, making the place look decrepit. After the war was over the mill was up and running again in two weeks. Bragg began hosting reenactments when he invited the legislators to tour the town in hopes it would be chosen as the new capitol. Instead, Terminus was chosen because the railroad tracks ended there. Eventually, Atlanta was reinstated as the capital. Bragg died in 1885 and the reenactments stopped soon after. In 1956 when segregated schools were deemed unconstitutional, the Confederate flag began flying over the capital and the reenactments began again.

Daron's mother told Charlie the history of Braggsville while they ate French toast. Daron's father drove to Old Man Donner's land. He was upset that Daron had let his friends go alone to carry through with their plans. After his father left, Daron remembered how he'd hoped Candice would be comfortable at his house, more comfortable even than she appeared to be when they visited Louis' family. He didn't expect her to get hurt, but she hobbled up to the back door an hour after she'd been dropped off with Louis. Her clothes were torn. Daron assumed she'd been raped. She wouldn't come in the house because she didn't want to get blood on the floor. She trembled. When they asked what happened she pointed to the Holler and said all of



them were after her. After being asked several times Candice told them they had taken Louis. Charlie called 911.

Daron backtracked the way Candice had come and saw that her footsteps came from the direction of the Holler and the Gully. He decided she'd gone to the Gully in her curiosity and had gotten raped. He thought Louis had probably been hurt trying to stop the attack. In his anger, Daron went inside for his gun. He called 911 to see how far away the ambulance was. He gave the details he believed he knew, that Candice had been raped. He went outside holding his gun. Charlie was there trying to comfort Candice. Daron pulled Charlie away and asked if he was "up for this" pointing at his gun. Charlie's expression said no. Daron decided he could handle it alone.

In Chapter Fifteen, Charlie and Daron went with Daron's father to the hospital while Daron's mother rode in the ambulance with Candice. At the emergency room Daron sat next to Charlie. Charlie had not spoken to him since he'd seen the gun. When he'd heard the sirens, Daron had gone back to Candice where he learned from his mother that there had been no rape. Charlie told him he was stupid and asked if he'd even considered that Candice was wearing her slave outfit. Daron begged Charlie not to tell Louis.

Daron's father could find no one with the last name of Chang who had been checked into the hospital. A deputy approached them and offered condolences for what had happened to their friend. He offered to take them downstairs to see him. They stopped in front of a door with the word "Coroner" on it. Daron looked at his father's face and realized it was no joke. His father told him he owed it to Louis to go in and identify the body. Charlie said he would go first as it could have been him. Daron went in next. Louis was wearing black makeup. The afro wig was cocked on his head. When the coroner asked, Daron explained they had been protesting the reenactment when Louis was killed. Both the coroner and the deputy asked Daron if he knew how to get in touch with Louis' parents. He and Charlie also were asked to go to see the Sheriff on their way home.

Analysis

If one could have forecasted a worst possible outcome for the performative intervention planned by the 4 Little Indians it would have been that someone would have been killed. The worst possible luck, however, came through and Louis died in the pretend lynching. Candice was badly scared and injured when she ran back to the Davenports' house.

Probably most significant in this section of the novel was Daron's jump to the conclusion, or jump to the confusion as he later said, that Candice had been raped. Even though he had grown up in Braggsville and claimed he was not racist, his first thought when he saw Candice shaking and bleeding was that she'd gone to the Gully and had gotten raped. He even called the ambulance service and reported Candice's injury as a rape. As fits the Southern stereotype, Daron grabbed his gun and was ready to go to the Gully and take care of the people who had hurt Candice.



Also significant is the scene where Daron and Charlie realized that Louis really was dead. They thought perhaps he'd only been injured but were stunned when they were taken to the morgue. Daron's first thought was that Louis had arranged a joke. It was not until his father told him, in the way Daron imagined he must have told fellow soldiers in the war, that Louis was indeed dead.

Notice that later in the hospital waiting room Charlie was justified in calling Daron an idiot. By using "slave speech" Charlie made the point to Daron that Daron had acted just as a racist white Southern would be expected to act. He had assumed Candice had been hurt by the black people. Charlie used his brain and realize Candice's clothes were torn because she was supposed to look like a slave, not because she had been raped.

In the theme of appearance, notice the look that the deputy gave Daron when they left the morgue. Daron interpreted his look as if the man were asking if Daron was really one of them. It seems this is the first hint that Daron will find himself at odds with his own hometown.

Included in this section of the novel is the history of Braggsville as told by Daron's mother. According to her, the reenactment was originally hosted by the town after the Civil War in hopes that Braggsville would be named as the new capital city of Georgia, especially after Atlanta had been burned to the ground. However, the men of Braggsville had been smart enough to dismantle and hide the main parts of their mill from the Union officers so they had their machinery back up and running two weeks after the Southern surrender. Interest in the reenactments had faded after awhile but had suddenly been rekindled when the government outlawed segregated schools. Residents of the town had also begun flying the Confederate flag again at this same time. Despite the questionable timing of the restart of these reenactments, Daron's mother claimed they were simply a matter of civic pride.

Regarding the author's style in this section, notice that Chapter Twelve returns to the interrogative style as if Daron is once again being asked about why he went along with Candice's plan to honor Ishi at Six Flags in Vallejo. Chapter Thirteen is not in sequence. Since this novel does touch on superstitions, it is significant that the thirteenth chapter, a number some believe is bad luck, is out of order. The number thirteen is mentioned again when the history of Braggsville according to Daron's mother is told. Georgia was the thirteenth colony. However in an ironic twist it is referred to as lucky thirteen, the opposite status as is usually given to anything numbered thirteen.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think the author included interrogation about the Ishi incident in the novel?



Discussion Question 2

Were you surprised by how badly awry the 4 Little Indians' performative intervention went?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Daron's jump to the decision that Candice had been raped. How did he arrive at this conclusion? Do you think his thought pattern was at all rational?

Vocabulary

tomes, surreptitiously, levee, ostensibly, liquidated, stalwart, fecund, quarantined, capricious, decrepit, rogue, zenith, averted, menagerie, urbane, triage, tenuous, bereavement, strident, anonymous, condolences, rivulets, surrealism, abate, macabre



Chapter Sixteen — Chapter Seventeen

Summary

In Chapter Sixteen, Candice, Charlie and Daron were interviewed. All three told the same story about the performative intervention. The sheriff honed in on Charlie as he noticed he was younger than the other students by two years. Charlie admitted he graduated early. The sheriff asked if he was that smart why it didn't occur to him that what they were doing was a bad idea. He accused Charlie of deserting Candice and then blaming her when Charlie said he couldn't change Candice's mind once she got it set. Candice was asked about the video footage she was supposed to be taking, but she said her video camera was off. Daron explained he hadn't gone with his friends because his father told him not to go. The sheriff told Daron that he didn't understand how performative intervention was supposed to work. Daron admitted he didn't understand either.

When Candice told the sheriff that Daron had mentioned the reenactment in their class, he asked if the idea for the intervention had been Daron's. It was mentioned that Daron had backed out at the Waffle House and the sheriff asked for details about what had happened at the Waffle House. Candice explained Daron had backed out so she and Louis had decided to do the reenactment alone. She explained how she'd helped Louis put on the black face even though she hadn't wanted him to wear it. She also described the harness and how it was supposed to work.

When the men doing the reenactment had come and seen them Candice had been scared and had tried to unhook the pulley cable from the harness so they could run. She said the man who was the captain was mad and asked her what was going on. Candice told the sheriff she thought they were doing what the captain had hoped every year that no one would do. Once they realized Louis wasn't black they began to relax and laugh. Someone took the whip from Candice's hand. A man with a cross tattooed on his hand began whipping Louis. They tried to lift Louis up; but, he just fell to the side. Candice said the men then cut Louis down. She remembered hearing a thud. The sheriff asked Candice when she called 911. She admitted she never called 911 but had run away because she was scared. He asked about the rape but Candice said she wasn't raped, that Daron had been mistaken.

In the end of this section Louis also was given a chance to address what the students intended to do and what happened. He said he had a feeling Daron would back out so he got up early to have Daron show him the knots. He told the same story Candice did about the blackface and harness. While he was hanging Louis said he could hear the men before he saw them. Candice got frightened. One of the men began hitting Louis with the whip. Louis tried to get away from the whip and figured he'd snapped the hook or that the harness had caught his neck.



In Chapter Seventeen, like he did when he was a child Daron feared being left behind on the trip from the hospital to the sheriff's department and then from the sheriff's department to his home. On the ride home everyone was in their front yards again but this time no one was waving. When they reached the house Candice got out of the car before it was hardly stopped. Charlie hurried to help her. Daron's parents turned to him telling how sorry they were. They told him he was fixing to be under fire and that he had to remember there was nothing he could have done to save Louis.

Inside Daron scrolled through pictures of Louis on his phone. He watched his mother and Charlie talking outside. His father soon went and joined them. Daron watched Candice where she was neatly folding Louis' things. When Charlie came inside Daron asked him to wait but Charlie said he was headed to the bathroom, not the bedroom. He tried to talk to Candice, but they argued. She said the soldiers who took Louis from the scene and the deputies who told her she couldn't see him were the same people. Daron felt she was blaming the deputies to keep from blaming Daron.

Candice told them the story of what happened three different times; but, each time she told the story it was different. The only constant was the man with the cross tattoo. She said the man with the cross tattoo had delight in his eyes when he whipped Louis. Candice continued to believe there was a conspiracy against her to explain why Daron and Charlie had gotten to see Louis but she hadn't. Charlie told Daron they should have gone with them as Louis might not have died if Daron had been there. He was unable to stop himself from saying that if they'd been there maybe they'd all feel as bad as Candice was because she was there but was unable to do anything to stop Louis' death. Charlie threatened to beat Daron and asked if he'd even seen a dead body. They both choked, Daron on his answer and Charlie on his apology.

Later, Charlie told them they needed to get serious. He hoped that Louis' parents didn't try to file a lawsuit. He worried also there would be retribution against Daron's parents. He said that students who went to a liberal college might understand they were joking, but no one else would understand. Candice argued they could ask the girls in the store if they needed verification. Then, Charlie yelled at her because they were white girls. They apologized to each other and then began to argue again.

Analysis

Although Louis' death is not funny, it is almost amusing as the students try to explain to the sheriff about the intent of their performative intervention when they aren't really sure what end result they'd hoped for in the first place. Even Daron admitted to the sheriff that he wasn't really sure what a performative intervention was or how it was supposed to work. Candice and Charlie, however, gave more substantial answers to the sheriff's questions. At the end of this section of interrogation, even Louis is given his own chance to respond to questions. It is one of two points in the novel where the viewpoint of the novel is one other than Daron's. Like Candice, he said that the man had actually made contact with his body with the whip. He figured he'd messed up the pulley or harness when he began to struggle trying to avoid the whip.



Regarding the theme of appearances, Daron saw a very different view of his town on the way home from the sheriff's department than he had seen on his way home from the airport when he and the other Indians had first come to town. Even though everyone was still on their front porches, they were not waving this time. As Daron looked at his parents' faces, he believed he saw a mixture of grief and an expression he thought was, perhaps, relief.

Remember that Candice was the only one, besides Louis, who actually saw what happened when the reenacting soldiers approached the lynching scene. She believed one of the soldiers had taken the whip away from her and had begun to whip Louis as he was hanging. Louis, who of course was dead and unable to testify, also indicated that one of the men was actively whipping him. Although Candice's stories about the hanging differed each time she told it, there was one point that remained the same. This point was that it was a man with a cross tattooed on his hand who had taken the whip from her. Notice that Candice described this man as having delight in his eyes. This detail will become significant later in the novel.

The theme of appearance is also addressed by Candice's belief that the men who were at the reenactment were conspiring against her. The first point she made in the favor of a conspiracy was that the men who had taken Louis away after he was hanged were the same men who told her that she couldn't see him in the morgue. Remember that Charlie and Daron had been allowed to see Louis but they wouldn't have noticed anything strange about the way that Louis looked because they hadn't seen what he looked like after he'd gotten into his costume. Candice was the only one who saw Louis in his costume and saw what had happened. It is likely that she would have noticed any differences in the way he looked.

The only one who seemed to grasp any reality in their situation was Charlie. He believed Candice would be accused of being too white and too blonde to help her friend or call 911. He worried that Daron's family would face retaliation because of the trouble they had caused for the city. Notice that Daron believed this would not happen. Charlie also warned that the Changs could file a lawsuit and take everything their families owned.

The issue of race emerges in this section of the novel when Charlie confronted Candice about her innocent belief that the clerks at Lou's store could back up their story. Since Charlie was black, he knew he couldn't count on other people to back up his story or take his side. He knew he had to keep his nose clean. Being a white woman, Candice was trusted. Charlie pointed out to her that she'd gone to a couple's RV and asked to use the bathroom. They'd let her into their home even though they didn't know her. Charlie's argument is that if Candice had been black, she would not have been allowed inside.

The style in Chapter Sixteen returns to that of an interrogation which makes sense because it is the sheriff who is interrogating Candice, Charlie, and Daron in turn about Louis' death. The sheriff's questions aren't always included in the dialogue, but the reader can generally guess the questions based on the answers. As the person



answering the questions changes throughout the course of the chapter and the author gives little indication of who is speaking, it is sometimes hard to keep up with whose answers are being quoted.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the author's choice of style for the interrogation portion of these chapters. Do you think this style works well? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Since Louis died during the performative intervention, why is it not in the favor of the 4 Little Indians that only Candice went to the site of the battle scene?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think Charlie and Daron were allowed to see Louis but Candice wasn't? What does that signify to you?

Vocabulary

provocative, fabricate, inherently, asymmetry, troubadour, transpired, ballistic, stoic, solidarity, honorifics, mullion, cacophonous, penitence, enigma, meticulous, culpability, malediction, incited, platitudes, venial, conspiracy, asphyxiate, brigade



Chapter Eighteen — Chapter Thirteen

Summary

In Chapter Eighteen, Adam Turing Hirschfield III heard about the incident in Braggsville and came to talk to Daron, Charlie, and Candice. He was to counsel them until they'd each gotten a lawyer individually. Charlie would be flying out with Hirschfield the following day. Hirschfield warned Daron he'd better figure out what a performative intervention was because he would be accused of being the master mind of what happened simply because he was the one who was from Braggsville. He advised Candice that as the only witness she didn't need to talk to anyone else but her lawyer.

When Candice insinuated that Louis had been murdered the lawyer scolded her for trying to analyze his words when she was the one who helped her friend hang himself. He told her that he believed if she hadn't been attending such a liberal school, they would never have gotten into trouble. He advised her to work on her descriptions of the man with the cross tattoo as well as the bearded man. He seemed concerned because so many of the public safety officials were involved in the reenactment which he called a dereliction of duty. He additionally told the three their Facebook pages, tweets, and emails could be subpoenaed as evidence. He added they would probably hear from the FBI as they would want to investigate it as a hate crime.

Candice called that evening's meal The Last Supper. They sat together in the back yard, but Daron couldn't talk. Charlie, meanwhile, told him the story of his belief that he was gay. Instead of coming out, Charlie had joined the members of his football team in taunting Tyler Ridges who was openly gay. The boy had hung himself, an act that Charlie considered lynching from a distance. Daron argued with Charlie, telling his friend that he was confused, not gay. Charlie admitted to Daron that just as he'd been just a little bit happy when Tyler Ridges had killed himself, he was also just a little bit happy it was Louis who was dead and not him. Daron didn't say so but he wished he had gone against his father's wishes and gone with his friends, especially after his father told him that was what he wished as well.

In Chapter Nineteen, the media lit up with the story of the hanging in Georgia. Before Hirschfield had warned the students about their electronic messages Candice had sent a tweet saying that Louis was murdered by Confederate pretenders. She added his body was paraded through town on a car hood. The men had put Louis on the car to get him to the ambulance faster, but the incident was interpreted by the media based on Candice's information. Worse, Candice's tweet had reached Louis' parents before they were notified by the sheriff of his death.

The Changs came to town, but they did not contact the Davenports. Daron knew as he listened to Charlie packing that he would miss the company. Candice's parents were coming to pick her up as well. Her father parked the car at the curb and refused to come any closer to the Davenport's house until he saw Candice on crutches struggling with



her suitcase. In the evening after Charlie and Candice left, mourners began holding vigils at the tree where Louis was killed. The media made the town sound as if it were divided by racism. Even Quint blamed Daron for the trouble that had been brought on the town.

Three days after Louis' death FBI agent Phillip Denver came to Braggsville. He only wanted to talk to Daron and he kept asking the same question, one that Daron couldn't answer. He wanted to know if there was any militia activity in the area or any congregations in the woods. Daron laughed and said the only congregation that met in the woods was his grandmother's church. It had since burned down. The agent also asked about the man with the cross tattoo and the rape. When the FBI man left, Daron's father wanted to know what he had asked. Daron said he'd asked about a militia. He had told the agent there was no militia. He had also told him that there was nothing in the woods but a burned down church. Daron's parents told him they were getting him a lawyer. His mother asks him not to talk to anyone about the old church anymore either. He finally asked his parents who told them about what they had planned. They said no one told them, but that his father suspected something was up.

In Chapter Twenty-0, the sheriff talked to Daron again about their visit to the Waffle House. The sheriff claimed the workers at the Waffle House had claimed that Daron and his friends had shown their asses while they were there. Daron couldn't understand the comments because he and his group had left a large tip and had been polite. According to the sheriff, the staff at Lou's said they took pictures and acted suspicious when they were in that store. When Daron laughed, the sheriff warned him that he was trying to help his family. He suggested that Daron make a trip to the Gully to set things straight with Otis, the mayor. The sheriff said that Francis Mohammed, the leader of the Nubian Fellowship had met with Otis and was now spreading his message on social media. The sheriff didn't want that man to be their spokesperson. He said he'd heard from participants at the reenactment that they had not seen anyone being beaten. They also said they cut Louis down and put him on the hood of their car on a makeshift gurney to meet the ambulance. He warned Daron he thought the FBI man might have a case with Daron saying he orchestrated a hate crime. He suggested the meeting with Otis might smooth things over. The sheriff took offense at the hashtag on some of the photos Louis had uploaded. Daron said he'd never seen the hashtag before and didn't know what it meant.

The sheriff also interrogated Daron about his act of reporting that Candice had been raped. He suggested there was something else on Daron's mind. He indicated he had heard that Daron and Louis were competing for Candice's attention. Later, Daron texted Charlie and Candice asking about the unusual hashtags. Charlie responded he knew nothing about them. Candice didn't respond at all.

Chapter Thirteen asks why with three reference numbers following. This first reference is "Por Que," which is Spanish for "why." The second is "mengapa," the Indonesian for the word why. The third is a reference to a variety of unrelated reasons ending in the fact that Daron was sexually attracted to Candice.



Analysis

In this section, it seems like there might be some sort of conspiracy going on regarding the investigation of Louis' death. The sheriff talked to Daron but seemed to be almost threatening him with what might happen in the case. He even suggests that the FBI might investigate Louis' death as a hate crime. When Daron was questioned by the FBI, the agent seemed most interested in whether or not there was some sort of militia operating in Braggsville. The question was completely different from anything Daron was expecting.

Regarding the theme of appearance, notice the way that the big city lawyer is portrayed in this section of the novel. He seemed to be more of an enemy than a friend to the three friends. However, he also showed not only the students but also Daron's parents who was in charge of what was happening.

Adding to the theme of appearance is the incident with the car hood. Because Candice sent out a tweet about this incident and it went viral, the incident was colored by what Candice had said in her tweet. She indicated in her tweet that the reenactors had done something that had resulted in Louis' death so she first accused them of being murderers. Next, she indicated his body had been put on the hood of a car in order to parade him around the town as if the men were showing off a trophy. The reenactors who had been at the scene and had put the body on the car said they did so in order to get Louis to medical help more quickly, not for any purpose of showing off his death.

Notice also the way education is portrayed in this section of the novel. For instance, lawyer Adam Turing Hirschfield III showed no sympathy for the students. He blankly told Candice that he believed if she and the others were not attending such a liberal school they would not have come up with such a plan.

The theme of coming of age is demonstrated as the lawyer's meeting with the students is described. The author points out that it was the same kitchen where Daron had made Halloween costumes and his grade school drawings were displayed on the refrigerator. Now it is the place where he meets with a lawyer. This description shows how much Daron's life had changed he has grown up from needing help to make a costume to needing help because a friend had been killed as the result of a college project.

The theme of appearance is again explored by Charlie's conversation with Daron about being gay. Charlie finally told Daron that he believed he (Charlie) was gay. Some of Daron's friends had suggested to Daron that they had picked up on vibes from Charlie before that point that he was gay. Daron had not really paid much attention to these suggestions. Since Charlie was a black athlete, he didn't fit the stereotype of a gay man. So, Daron told Charlie he thought he was mistaken about his admission.

The theme of race is exemplified as Louis' death brings the attention of the media to racial issues in Braggsville. Though he'd never thought his town was divided on the issue of race, the media dug out reports that the non-whites who worked at the mill didn't get raises or promotions. They also made an issue out of the fact that the



overwhelming majority of people who lived in Braggsville were white. Another report stated that the city fathers of Braggsville would not incorporate the Gully, the area where the blacks lived, because they didn't want to provide any services. It was most shocking when Daron indicated that he knew these things about his town weren't true. It seems that Daron had lived in his town so long that he'd grown blind to their behavior.

Discussion Question 1

Do you think it is right that the people blamed Daron for what had happened to Louis? Do you think in his case that citizenship equaled responsibility?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the tweet that Candice sent out about Louis' death. How did it affect the media's take on the circumstances?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the way the lawyer talked back not only to Candice, but also to Daron's parents. Do you think he was justified in the way he treated them? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

diminutive, impeccably, arcane, tutelage, vindicate, nebular, boudoir, conciliator, inevitable, rescinded, profusely, sojourn, interminable, quaint, verdigris, regiment, euphemism, perpetrated

Chapter Twenty-1 — Chapter Twenty-3

Summary

In Chapter Twenty-1, the inquest went as the sheriff had told Daron it would. The cause of death was ruled accidental. Daron was surprised by the questions the reporters asked him at the inquest. He was especially surprised when they asked what side he was on. He'd thought there was only one side to the story and wondered who was on the other side. Daron had asked to sit on the side of the courtroom with the Changs. But, he was told he couldn't because that was the defendants' side. The sheriff and other witnesses testified. No one had a cross tattoo or knew anyone who did. No one had a bushy beard. Both Blue and Gray testified to what they had seen and sympathized with Candice and Charlie. However, only Blue could testify to what had actually happened at the tree as they were the ones who walked up to the tree where Louis was hanged from the direction of the Donnor woods. They didn't remember seeing a whip. They were worried about cutting Louis down. Daron was happy that Jo-Jo wasn't among the witnesses. The Grays made themselves out to be heroes because they provided emergency assistance. The words reenactment, civil war, and lynching were not part of their testimony. The death was ruled accidental, although Daron felt as if he was seen as the reason why it had happened in the first place.

After the inquest was finished, Daron tried to approach the Changs. Mrs. Chang shushed him and pulled her sunglasses down. He tried to apologize and tell her that he didn't know why he hadn't stopped them, but Mrs. Chang said that she did know. She told him that it was Louis' wish that he not talk to her.

In Chapter Twenty-2, even though the inquest was finished, the media attention given to Braggsville continued to increase. The people who attended the vigils honoring Louis grew as the media attention grew. The hashtag #BraggsvilleDickSlap began to be used for any circumstance in which a minority was prosecuted.

In Chapter Twenty-3, the Davenports became prisoners in their own home. Mr. Davenport timed his leaving for work when the reporters changed guard. The reporters soon caught on and began working overlapping shifts. The Nubians sent a group as well. This caused Daron's father to insist that everyone carry a gun whenever they went outside. Also arriving were a group of Klansman as well as a brightly colored rainbow coalition. Daron was fascinated as he watched the people who had come to protest begin to fight among themselves with the Klan and the Nubians eventually ganging up together against the gays. During one of the skirmishes, Daron went to check the mail. A reporter got a picture of him carrying his gun. The picture was run with the caption "Vigilante."

After that, when Daron did go out, he felt invisible. The clerks at Lou's didn't even greet him. He'd gone to see Jo-Jo but he was never at home. The third time he went Jo-Jo's parents asked him not to come back. When Daron looked at Jo-Jo's Facebook page, he



saw the Jo-Jo had been reborn and also that he had a cross tattoo on his hand. He noted on Jo-Jo's page that since he had posted a picture of him in his grey uniform for the reenactment, there had been nothing posted since. Even though he'd seen the cross tattoo on Jo-Jo's hand, Daron still told the FBI agent the next time he saw him that he wasn't being threatened and he wasn't protecting anyone. He doubted Candice's story and believed that Jo-Jo would never whip anyone. When Daron tried to talk to his father about the possibility that Jo-Jo might have known who did whip Louis, his father advised him not to stir things up and asked if there was someone he was supposed to call.

The section marked with a full moon contains a quote by preacher George Whitfield lamenting that slaves were not allowed in Georgia earlier than they were.

Analysis

Notice the idea of sides in this section of the novel. Daron is confused when the reporters ask him what side he was on. Before this question Daron hadn't thought of the issue as being one that had sides. In the courtroom, however, Daron was told he couldn't sit on the same side of the courtroom as the Changs because that was the defendant's side. The idea of sides is brought up again in the testimony. The Blue side of those representing the Union soldiers were the ones who first came upon Candice and Louis. They all testified they saw no one with a cross tattoo and no one with a bushy beard as Candice had described. They testified that no one whipped Louis. Daron noticed that the people who portrayed the Union soldiers were all common people. They were the ones who worked on the floor in the mill or those who had not lived in Braggsville for the four generations it took to really be considered from there. The Union actors, however, were the people of position, including community leaders, paramedics, and office workers at the mill. They made themselves appear to be the heroes as they were the ones who cut Louis down and took him to meet the ambulance.

In the theme of appearances, notice how different the action in the two photos included in this section of the novel is from the way that action is described by the media. In the photo of the 4 Little Indians at the Waffle House, the media interpreted the meeting as being the time that they plotted what they were going to do. Daron remembered what they were doing because Louis had been counting the variety of different ways there were to have hash browns cooked. The other photo taken out of context by the media is that of Daron running to the mailbox carrying a gun. Daron was actually carrying the gun for his protection. His father had told him not to leave the house without it. In the photo caption, however, Daron was labeled as a vigilante.

Amusing in this section of the novel is the way the different groups that had come to protest in front of the Davenports' house couldn't get along with each other well enough to effectively protest. The Nubians and Klan members fought with each other. Ultimately, both groups ganged up against the members of the rainbow coalition.



Unusual in this section of the novel is Daron's sudden interest in Jo-Jo. He was glad that Jo-Jo wasn't among those called to the stand to testify. Later in this section of chapters Daron found Jo-Jo on Facebook. He noticed his friend had a cross tattoo on his hand just as Candice had described. At this point, Daron still believed he knew his friend well enough to believe that Jo-Jo would not have whipped Louis. In fact, Daron was quicker to believe that Candice had gotten mixed up in her details than to believe his longtime friend had been part of Louis' death.

Regarding the theme of appearances, Daron questioned whether he would have been attracted to Candice if she had looked on the first day he met her as she did in the courtroom. She was wearing a black dress that covered her from neck to toes.

Discussion Question 1

Do you think it is unusual that the inquest went just as the sheriff said it would? Is it unusual that none of the testimony aligned with the story Candice told?

Discussion Question 2

What is the significance of the inquest being held in the room where the after school program usually met?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think Daron's father told him not to stir up any more trouble when Daron asked him about Jo-Jo and the cross tattoo?

Vocabulary

corroborate, solace, profusely, sooth, circumspect, loam, notoriety, figuratively, atrocities, cacophony, disgorged, vestal, coalition, provenance, turpitude, effeminate, cahoots



Chapter Twenty-4 — Chapter Twenty-6

Summary

In Chapter Twenty-4, Otis Hunter and Daron meet face-to-face for NBS to record an interview. Daron believed he would be taking a step to show the nation that Braggsville was not a racist town. Otis surprised Daron by hugging him and kissing him on each cheek. He offered condolences on Louis' death. He said Daron and his friends had changed the future because they had done what others wanted to do, but never had the courage to do. Otis also read from a piece of paper that one of Bragg's own sons, who was said to have died valiantly in the Civil War, had been a deserter and had hidden out in the Gully for three months before he was found and returned to the battle. He said only that son, Bragg, and one general knew about the son's desertion. That general was on the committee that Bragg invited to see the town when he wanted it made the capital of Georgia. Otis argued that was why Braggsville was not made capital and why presently it couldn't even get the Special Olympics to choose their town as its host city. After the interview, Daron's parents were obviously angry. That night there was a fire in the Gully and a brick thrown through the Davenport's window. To curb the violence, an FBI agent was stationed across the street.

In Chapter Twenty-5, Daron was planning to escape from Braggsville for Louis' memorial service. The day before the service Daron got a phone call from Charlie. He had spoken to Mrs. Chang. They were not welcome to attend Louis' service. He learned Candice was being allowed to attend the memorial. He compared what he felt to the pain Candice had felt when she was not allowed to see Louis after the accident. Daron chose not to tell his parents so they wouldn't cancel the trip. When they did arrive in California, Daron was surprised his parents weren't angry when he told them he couldn't attend the memorial service. They began planning sightseeing outings.

That evening Daron went for a walk to campus. Candice was not in her room and had not been there since before her spring break trip her roommate said. The next morning Daron went to visit Mrs. Brooks. He first apologized to her for lying about the spelling of his name, but she explained a personal truth was not a lie. He had not only the right to be who he said he was, but he also had the responsibility. She encouraged him to talk to his professors even though he felt he'd missed too much coursework. She hugged him, and he wished she could convince his parents to let him stay. Daron's professors seemed to sympathize with him, but he was concerned because his history professor still wanted him to make the performative intervention into an honors thesis. Daron was pulled between his desire to stay at Berkley and his desire to go home with his parents.

In Chapter Twenty-6, when the Davenports returned home, all the protesters had moved to the city park. It was three weeks after Louis' death. During a conversation he and Charlie both felt Louis had been forgotten. Charlie apologized for not preventing Daron from trying to run to the Gully with a gun to take care of business because he thought



Candice had been raped. Daron was chilled when he thought what might have happened if he'd actually made it to the Gully with the gun.

When he and his family returned home from California, Daron was upset because the town had changed. The Charlies were gone from every front yard. Racial bumper stickers were replaced with Christian ones. The sign announcing the town's city limits had even been repainted with a heart. He remembered Candice's insistence that there had been a conspiracy to cover things up about the hanging. When he thought about his own actions when he asked his mother to hide all the things that might be offensive, he believed he had not been participating in a conspiracy, just practicing good manners. He did realize, however, that he and his friends had become what they needed to be for one another. He had learned from his experience that nothing was ever as it seemed. After he returned home, Daron received a letter from Berkley indicating he needed to attend a disciplinary hearing because he had broken some rule he'd agreed to follow by "virtue" of enrolling in the school. This letter and its use of the word "virtue" led him to believe that since they could be used in so many different ways, even words were meaningless.

When D'aron and his parents began looking at his college transcript in hopes of finding a job that would correspond to one of the classes he'd taken, D'aron realized how useless the education he had obtained so far in Berkley was in Braggsville. His father indicated he could have taught D'aron all of the things he was supposed to learn in his classes for a lot less money. His father commented that one syllabus looked like a list of angry speeches. He asked D'aron what he had to be angry about. Daron didn't tell him he was angry because the emails sent back and forth between himself and the university failed to clarify the need for him to meet with the student review board. He was also angry with Candice because he believed they would never be able to have a relationship.

He remembered Jo-Jo being asked by his Gully friend Jean to take his sister to the prom. Jo-Jo had said he had to work that night. On the night of prom Jean went to the store and came out eating an ice cream cone. Daron was happy the stress was over. The next year, however, Jo-Jo went to the black prom. Jo-Jo told Daron it wasn't as it seemed. Afterward, he was fired from his job and the high school coach benched him for a month. Jo-Jo laughed it off even though Daron knew Jo-Jo had done nothing to deserve the punishment.

Analysis

In this section of the novel, Daron learned that things were not as they seemed. His town had changed. He believed his friends had changed to be what he wanted them to be. He was even doubting the permanence of word meanings. To Daron, life had become a moving target that he wished he were able to pin down to get some perspective on his personal life.



One of the things that seemed to disturb him most was the way the people in his town had covered up every hint that indicated they might be racist. The Charlies were gone. The racially tinged bumper stickers were gone. The sign welcoming people to the town had even been repainted. All this work seemed to come as a reaction to Otis' speech on national television in which he accused one of Bragg's sons of being a deserter from the Civil War. Notice that even though Otis completely railroaded Daron in this interview, Daron had been encouraged to meet with Otis both by the sheriff and by his father.

Other things in this chapter that are described as not being as they seem are the town's mill. Even though it was called a mill by everyone, it was really a hot air factory. Even though Henry Lucian was called the "sheriff" by the residents, he was actually the chief of police and had no jurisdiction in the county beyond the city limits of Braggsville. A final instance in which Daron recalled in this section of the novel was Jo-Jo's punishment after he attended the black prom. After he'd gone, Jo-Jo had lost his job and had been benched by his coach for a month. At that time Jo-Jo had told Daron that his actions and punishments weren't what they appeared.

It is also in this section of the novel that Daron realizes that he wanted friends so badly in college that he changed to become what they wanted from him. He indicated that he "actively courted" his friends. It was because he wanted so badly to become a member of a group that he became "a mirror of their aspirations." Even though Daron believed that it would not be a good idea for his friends to stage any sort of performative intervention in his hometown, he did not stop them because he was afraid he would lose them as friends. Even up to the last moment, when his father ordered Daron to call off whatever was being planned, Daron still didn't man up and do as he was told.

In his favor, Daron was offended by his professor's suggestion that he use the performative intervention, though it could probably best be termed a terrible failure, as an honors thesis. Daron could not believe the audacity of his professor to believe that every circumstance, no matter how traumatic, was open to critical review by intellectuals. Daron believed it was his professor's encouragement that had gotten him into the situation where Louis had been killed. He didn't want to have any more to do with the project.

Words are important in this section as well. The first instance comes when Daron's father went on a rant about racism. He talked about the uselessness of outlawing the use of words describing black people that were considered derogatory. He explained his friend at work called black people "Mondays" because no one liked Mondays. He used it in the same way a person would use other derogatory terms. It was considered okay because few people knew what he was talking about. Daron's father argued that just because his friend didn't use a specific derogatory term didn't mean that he liked black people more than someone who did use the names. He thought the same of them, but he used different words to express his feelings.

Another instance in which a word took on a different meaning in the novel occurred when Daron got a letter from his university telling him he needed to attend a disciplinary hearing. The letter indicated he had agreed to a code of conduct by "virtue" of attending



the university. Daron had always thought the word “virtue” was a word referring to a positive thing. He didn’t realize until he read the letter that the word virtue could refer to either real or simulated.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the implications of Otis’ claim that one of Bragg’s sons was a Civil War deserter.

Discussion Question 2

Consider Daron’s new distress that even the meanings of words were not concrete. What in particular was it about the use of the word “virtue” in the letter he received from Berkley that disturbed Daron?

Discussion Question 3

Why is it significant that the people of Braggsville covered up the signs that they were racists?

Vocabulary

exactitude, conscripted, trepidation, forays, vertigo, despondency, caustic, reprisals, enunciation, colloquium, vitriol, diabolical, leverage, solicitude, palaver, spontaneity, subservience, demure, obsequious, mulled, astral, assiduous, retrospect, duress, triumvirate, taciturn, piquant, sensuous, chauvinistic, connotations, detonations, exhuming, proliferated, inarticulate



Chapter Twenty-7 — Chapter Thirty-1

Summary

In Chapter Twenty-7, FBI agent Denver tracked Daron down in a department store parking lot. The agent wanted to know why Daron had reported Candice's injuries as a rape. Inside the agent's car, he asked again about Daron's call. He played the recording of Daron's 911 call. He believed the call from Daron was a call for help. He asked if there was anyone who thought it was Daron who might have been the one hanging from the branch instead of Louis, someone who had it in for Daron. He wanted to know what was in the Holler. He then asked Daron about the Six Flags incident. The people at Six Flags told the agent that Daron was an agitator. As the agent badgered Daron to tell him what Six Flags was about, Daron felt his head was like the picture in the courthouse of the house with no chimney. He suddenly got the feeling he and his friends had stoked a fire in a house with no chimney.

In Chapter Twenty-8, Daron and the others had become familiar with Ishi when they'd gone to watch a play about him. Candice believed more people should know about what happened to him. He told the agent everything he could remember about what they'd done at Six Flags. They'd gotten off with only a warning.

In Chapter Twenty-9 Daron remembered the summer before his ninth grade year as being the best. That summer Quint had unlimited time to spend with him. The time after the Louis' death reminded Daron of that time. He even told Quint the review board had met without him and decided he could come back in the fall under provisional status. If he behaved he would be returned to normal status. Quint said it sounded like good news if Daron wanted to go back. They had been to the bowling alley and were sitting on Quint's porch. Quint's girlfriend, Maylene joined them for a short while. After she went inside Daron asked Quint if he'd seen Jo-Jo recently. He asked if Quint knew what church Jo-Jo went to and if the church in the Holler had been rebuilt. Quint said he didn't keep up with it.

Quint saw Daron eyeing the lights from the Gully and asked if Daron wanted to walk over there. He asked Quint if he knew anything about a militia because the FBI kept asking him about there being one in the Holler. Quint looked at him like a predator before asking again if he wanted to go to the Gully. They began to walk. At one house a large black woman called her children out to meet Daron. They told him what a fine thing he'd done for them. Other people began coming out of their houses. He heard Otis' voice telling the people to give Daron some room. They began to cook food and bring out drinks and tables, setting up for a party in Daron's honor. Things grew quiet when Daron asked about the fire he'd heard was set there but Quint livened things back up when he told a joke. Otis even apologized to Daron saying he hoped he hadn't caused his family any trouble. The trouble he suggested was short hours and late shifts at work. Daron claimed he hadn't. Daron and Quint stayed all night. As the sun was coming up, a girl gave Daron a bouquet and a locket telling him he was an honorary



citizen of the Gully. As he and Quint left, Daron was almost angry with those in the Gully as they partied and ate. He wondered how any of them ever kept a job. When Daron got home his father was angry with him for going to the Gully. He said the black people couldn't afford to party like that and Daron had made them feel like they had to honor him. He also said it looked like Daron was in cahoots with them. Daron passed it off as his father just being cranky because he'd been on the graveyard shift for several weeks.

In Chapter Thirty-0, when Daron finally got to talk to Candice again she told him the people of Braggsville were using them all. Candice told him she was wrong not to testify just as she had been wrong to back down at Six Flags.

The next portion of this chapter is a tongue in cheek paper that Daron has written titled "Residual Affect: Race, Micro-aggressions, Micro-inequities, BBQ in the Contemporary Southern Imagination at Six Flags." In the abstract, he explained how he would be arguing that "barbecue embodies both the non-gendered and the gendered performative aspects of ritualistic social intercourse" (p. 274). The paper referred to the incidents that happened after their ceremony for Ishi at Six Flags and at the campground after they'd been dismissed from the park. Candice had approached a Southern couple to use the bathroom of their mobile home. They agreed and even cooked the 4 Little Indians dinner. Daron used it to prove that people really could all get along.

In Chapter Thirty-1, Candice had started calling Daron during the fifteen minute drive each Friday on the way to the steakhouse where she and her family always ate. She claimed to be listening to music through her earbuds, but she was really listening to Daron. The first time he got the call, he asked if it was a butt dial and Candice responded with two coughs. To clarify he asked if two coughs meant yes. She coughed twice again. He told her about his life now, how he'd been unable to get a job. He told her Agent Denver had visited again and suggested that his father's switch to the night shift hadn't been voluntary.

He told her that he had found his mother's economics and finance textbooks in the garage. Now he knew that she was going to school online. When he'd asked her about the textbooks she had reminded him of a time when his father had set him up to work a summer at the mill. Daron had refused because he wanted a job that made him think. Daron didn't believe the incident his mother told him about had really happened. He believed more and more that many of the stories she'd had him put in his college application letters had never happened.

While he was in the garage with his mother, Daron realized the door to the loft was padlocked. He pretended to go to bed early and then waited until his parents left the house. When he went to look in the loft he found the things he'd asked his parents to put away prior to his friends' visit as well as the other things that could have been considered racist. He was shocked by what he saw and the conclusion to which he came. He didn't tell Candice about the conclusion he reached.



Analysis

Appearance continues to be a major topic in this section of the novel as the FBI agent interrogates Daron as to why he called in Candice's injury as a rape. Remember from that section of the novel that Daron had really thought that Candice had been raped when he saw that her clothes were torn. As his Nana had told him he had the habit of doing, he jumped to a "confusion," meaning a conclusion. Daron's "confusion" doesn't go away as quickly as he'd hoped when he told those involved he was mistaken about Candice's injuries. Now the FBI agent has gone so far as to over analyze Daron's 911 call and assume that Daron was trying to camouflage a call for help. The agent continued to insist that Daron knew something about a militia in Braggsville but that Daron was afraid to come forward with what he knew.

Notice also how the Ishi incident had gotten linked to the 4 Little Indians' performative intervention in Braggsville. Because of their protests the four, especially Daron, have earned the titles of aggressors. Notice that Daron compared the situation in which he found himself to the child's drawing that had been left posted on the wall of the makeshift courtroom. That picture depicted a house with smoke coming out of it with no chimney. Daron had the feeling that he and his friends had stirred up a fire in a house with no chimney poisoning themselves with the smoke that resulted. It seems the author is trying to make a point that protesting is not a thing to be done lightly. Even though Candice had gotten angry because of the way Ishi was treated, her plan to honor him and call attention to his cause was badly put together and didn't wind up conveying the message they had hoped to convey. Even though the protest in Braggsville had brought attention to racial issues there, Daron felt overwhelmed by the outcome of their badly thought out plan and the backlash that had resulted. One of his friends was dead, the others in various states of emotional breakdown because of his death and his own family being punished because of what they had done.

The only people who have praised Daron's actions have been the Blacks in the Gully. When Quint took Daron down to the area where only the black people lived, they treated him like a celebrity. Even though it was night, a feast was cooked in Daron's honor. Daron was given an honorary citizenship in the Gully. Daron's father chided him for going to the Gully as if he expected to be given a hero's welcome. He said it made it appear (once again the theme of appearances) as if Daron was in cahoots with the Blacks.

Even though Daron has come to reality with some of the things going on in his town, he remained blind to other injustices even when people tried to call his attention to them. For instance, several people mentioned to him that his family might be punished for what had happened in the city by being given fewer hours at work or by being forced to work later shifts. Daron denied it was happening even as he recognized that his father was cranky because he was having to work the night shift. The first person who mentioned to Daron his family might be punished because of what had happened was Charlie in an earlier section of the novel. In this section of the novel Otis made a point to ask Daron if his family was getting any bad treatment in retaliation for what had



happened. Daron told him no; but, later that day Daron passed off his father's short temper as being the result of having to work the late shift for the past several weeks.

Also important in this section of the novel is the paper that Daron wrote. The entire paper is included in the text of Chapter Thirty-0. Remember that when Daron wrote his own college application letter he indicated that he wanted to study how food brought people together. The paper that is included in this section of the novel was that kind of study. It dealt with an incident that happened on the same day as the memorial service at Six Flags. During the incident in question, the 4 Little Indians were invited to supper by a Southern couple who were complete strangers to them before Candice approached them asking if she could use the bathroom in their RV.

Discussion Question 1

What was Quint's purpose in taking Daron to the Gully? Do you think he anticipated the blacks would celebrate Daron the way they did?

Discussion Question 2

What do you think the author wants the reader to take away from the inclusion of Daron's paper about the fried chicken incident?

Discussion Question 3

To what conclusion do you think Daron came when he discovered where his parents had locked up their racially charged items in the loft of the garage?

Vocabulary

penchant, clandestine, cadence, serrated, embezzlement, chortling, queue, banality, mediocrity, imploring, provisional, gauche, copse, brandishing, riotous, carnivorous, toke, enigmatic, ontological, spontaneous, nomadic, bureaucracy, existential, deprivation, refrained, cryptic, augmentation, compatible, periphery, idiosyncratic, moot, condescension, proprietorship, innocuous, tedium, paltry, acolytes, blatant, divergent, sated, bedizened, amulets, trove



Chapter Thirty-2 — Chapter Thirty-5

Summary

Chapter Thirty-2 begins with a list of superstitious behaviors by Daron, his friends, and his family members. These were things he'd noticed but never really thought about why they were as they were. He asked his mother, but she'd only responded "Methuselah knows" (p. 285), a comment Daron didn't understand either.

In Chapter Thirty-3, when D'aron is eight years old, Nana takes him to the church in the Holler. The time he spends in the Gully church on this visit is as close as he's been to a religious experience. The preacher, Deacon Woodbridge, has walked in chained to an anchor. Men rise to help him, but he tells them that no one else can help him carry his burden. Once he reaches the pulpit the preacher points out that the anchor is also the image of a cross. He tells them the similarity is no coincidence. He dumps out a bag of "wicked" items including cigarettes, alcohol, and girly magazines and has one of the children place them in the corners of the church, out of the preacher's reach. He tries to walk toward each of the objects but is stopped by the chain.

He explains that both Cain and Abel live in each person. Abel is the anchor. He speaks for Jesus. He explains that on weeknights people want to cut the anchor loose. He compares this to the way that Cain cut out Abel. He tells them the Cain in people must die in order for them to live forever. There is a ceremony that Daron is not allowed to watch, but he hears the sounds of what seemed like the slaughter of an animal and Nana's voice. Daron could not sleep for three nights after his visit to the church. His Nana warned him not to go back there alone.

As his Nana grew closer to death she had olfactory hallucinations. She smelled things burning, grass, charred wood, and blood. Daron had a similar experience the day they were to do their performative intervention. He smelled smoke at dawn. He thought how his professors would tell him it was a trick of his mind trying to make up a story to make an incident that didn't make sense seem reasonable. Even though he thought all the rumors about the Holler were merely that, he still searched his mind for the right steps to take before entering the Holler.

In Chapter Thirty-4, Daron sat in an unfamiliar kitchen made familiar by all the people he knew who came in and out of it. He had been afraid he was going in circles until he found a dirt road in the Holler that didn't connect with the main highway. It had a gate and private drive sign at the far end. At the end of the drive was a hunting lodge and other farm buildings. It was the town's postmaster who asked Daron if they could talk. He'd led Daron to the kitchen and they sat to talk over a plate of cookies. Harry explained to Daron that all they wanted to do was be prepared for the way the world was changing. Whites were becoming a minority and it was believed that situation would not end well. He said Daron had been brainwashed at Berkley. He showed Daron a list of things the members of the collective never said. He described the collective as



being pro-self-sufficient followers of the Constitution. Even though Daron had known there was a hunting lodge which he couldn't become a member of until he was eighteen, he wondered how he had missed this about his town when even Candice and Denver had seen it. Daron was shown pictures of the town fathers in front of the hunting lodge. He also saw more recent pictures including ones of his parents at the lodge.

When Daron finished looking at the albums, Harry told him that he shouldn't walk home after dark. He also said that since he was there, they could have their trial. The trial was scheduled to begin the following morning. Daron was put in a bedroom. Before he'd left Harry he'd asked about the people in the Gully and had been told they had their own thing. Harry argued they had to take care of their own.

In Chapter Thirty-5 Daron was given plain oatmeal for breakfast the following morning. He was taken to the barn where leaders of the town and others Daron recognized were gathered. Jo-Jo stood with his back to the crowd. Daron wondered if they were still punishing him for going to the black prom. He doubted that Jo-Jo was the one who whipped Louis. Veiled judges entered the barn when the signal was given. Jo-Jo pleaded guilty to participating in violent behavior and other treasonous activities. The plea was accepted and Jo-Jo made a statement. Jo-Jo told his version of what had happened the morning of Louis' death. He thought it was a joke and that it was D'aron dressed up in a wig like they'd worn a couple of times in middle school. He said D'aron's girl was even there and was the one holding the whip. He remembered how Candice had said that the man who whipped Louis had delight in his eyes. He felt guilty because he hadn't corrected Jo-Jo and told him that Candice was not his girlfriend. He said he'd swung the whip only a few times before one of the other men recognized the man hanging was not D'aron. It was that man who began whipping Louis, Jo-Jo said.

Jo-Jo's sentence was whispered to him. He looked at Daron and nodded. Daron was called forward. Daron weakly told the men they wouldn't get away with what they were doing and that his father knew where he was. Even though Daron said he was guilty of nothing, Lou Davis told him he was guilty of trying to destroy the town. Because Daron would not make a statement, he was told he was charged with "treason, moral turpitude, and egregious actions against the state" (p. 308). Since Daron seemed contrite, he was sentenced to banishment from the town. He would only be allowed to return for holidays, funerals, and weddings. He was also to deliver Jo-Jo's punishment.

After Jo-Jo was tied to a pole, he asked Daron only to be quick about it. He was to give Jo-Jo twenty lashes. If he didn't the other members of the lodge would give him fifty lashes and take away his rank. Daron dropped the whip when he was first given it. His first lash didn't even leave a welt. Daron hit again. He remembered Candice saying how Jo-Jo had delight in his eyes and continued hitting harder and harder. Jo-Jo had passed out by the time Daron had given him the ninth lash. The members of the coalition put him in a coffin filled with black snakes and river rocks. He could hear Jo-Jo's screams even as he was driven back to the gate.

At home Daron's mother fixed his favorite lunch. The family went out for dinner. As they drove through the neighborhood, everyone was on their front porches waving. His father



is more relaxed because he was no longer on the night shifts. When Daron's mother took Daron's father's cake, she told him he would thank her later. Daron remembered it was the last words that Quint ever said to him.

Analysis

This section of the novel is disturbing because it shows a dark side of Braggsville. When Daron saw the things that had racial tones hidden in his parents' loft, he realized what might be happening with Jo-Jo. He believed just like the people had hidden away the black lawn jockeys they had also hidden away Jo-Jo when he became an embarrassment to them. Had Jo-Jo been at the inquest someone would have seen that he had the same cross tattoo that Candice described and would have questioned him. As it were, it was the word of the men of Braggsville against Candice, an outsider and a woman. The sheriff had obviously gotten the men together to tell stories that matched. When Daron went to the hunting lodge and discovered that Jo-Jo was being held there waiting for Daron to show up for the hearing, he began to realize the truly dark side of the people in the town.

The postmaster claimed to Daron that the men wanted only to be self-sufficient and to follow the Constitution. He also told Daron that they judged people by their actions and not the color of their skin. Notice, however, there are no members of the collective who are black. Also notice that when the judges entered the courtroom, they were described as wearing white robes and hoods. The outfits are reminiscent of the stereotypical outfit of the Ku Klux Klan.

It is in this section Daron realizes how much harm there was in letting Jo-Jo believe that he and Candice were girlfriend and boyfriend. Remember that Jo-Jo didn't know Daron was in town for the reenactments. He didn't know other classmates had come with them. He recognized Candice from the photos that Daron had showed and concluded that it was Daron who was hanging from the tree. Believing he was going to mess with his old friend was the reason that Jo-Jo had delight in his eyes when he took the whip from Candice and began brandishing it at the man who was hanging. Jo-Jo wasn't looking happy because he enjoyed the idea of whipping a black person. Instead, it was because he thought Louis was really Daron.

The court hearing presided over by the collective did not have any basis under any law in the United States. It was a completely free acting system of judge and jury. At first, Daron believed it was a joke that the men of his town were being allowed to get away with their actions. Then, he was surprised by how long the men had been allowed to do as they had been doing. As the postmaster told Daron during his introduction to the collective, the group had been around as long as Braggsville had been. The group inflicted corporal punishment on Jo-Jo and forced Daron to be the one to deliver this corporal punishment. They also banished Daron from Braggsville, an action that could be a punishment or reward depending on how one viewed it.



Significant also in this section of the novel is Daron's memory of the church service he'd attended with his Nana. He'd noted that the majority of the members of the church were black. Nana was one of the few white people in attendance. After the sermon there was a ritual that Daron was not allowed to watch. He believed, however, that it sounded like an animal being slaughtered. The white people of the town often talked about the superstitious nature of the black people and the strange things they did in the church and the Holler. It is known that the black church burned at some point after the death of Daron's Nana. It was never rebuilt. The reader has to wonder if the destruction of this church was not done by members of the collective in order to send the members a message.

Note after Daron returned from his "hearing" with the collective the attitude of the entire town as well as his parents seemed to change. People waved at him again. The police had blocked the street on which the Davenports lived in order to keep the media from bothering them. Daron's father was taken off the night shift and returned to the day shift at the mill. Everything seemed right in Braggsville again.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think the author includes the information about the time that Daron visited his Nana's church? Why is this memory recorded in the present tense?

Discussion Question 2

Why did the people of Braggsville treat Daron and his family differently after Daron went to the hunting lodge and discovered the collective? Why did they change their attitudes toward them?

Discussion Question 3

After Daron's experience with the collective, what is your opinion of Braggsville now? Do you think the book mirrors reality? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

cogitated, fortuitous, feudal, wizened, interminable, cauterized, dais, olfactory, deranged, trivets, daguerreotypes, tribunal, propaganda, proselytize, fugue, feigned, liturgy, eminence, treasonous, tribunal, toothsome, irrevocably, corroded, autonomous, sovereign, turpitude, egregious, contrite, unanimously, flagellation, abyss



Chapter Next — Epilogue

Summary

In Chapter Next, Candice and Daron transferred to the University of New Orleans. Charlie came to visit them some weekends. Candice was happy to learn that Charlie was coming when his school went on spring break. He was bringing his new boyfriend. Daron was surprised to learn he liked Frederick. During the visit, Candice and Frederick had gone on an errand together leaving Daron and Charlie time alone. They talked about their old school and reminisced about Louis. Daron finally asked Charlie how people treated him now that he'd come out as being gay. After Daron asked, Charlie told him what sexual interactions with another man was like. When they left to go home, Candice and Daron accompanied them to the train station. Daron thought it was wonderful to have friends.

Later, Daron walked in on Candice in the bathroom. She seemed angry. She'd been acting strangely since Charlie had left. She had slammed her way out of the apartment saying she was going to the library to study. When she returned, she didn't watch television with Daron. Instead, she went to the bathroom where Daron thought he heard her crying. She only flushed in response. He woke that night and found Candice staring at him only a few inches from his face. She insinuated their relationship was serious. She admitted to him how scared she was because everything was so real, meaning that their relationship was real and Louis was really dead. They cried together.

Daron wondered if Candice's burden was that no one took her seriously and for that reason she had to take everything so seriously. Yet, she was denied direct experience because she looked like someone who needed to be protected. It was the reason Daron had said the performative intervention was his idea and the reason the sheriff had allowed her not to testify. Daron hadn't told Candice about the collective. He'd written a letter to Agent Denver but had ripped it up. He did tell Candice about the things he'd found in the garage loft.

In Chapter Latest, Candice, Charlie, and Daron are questioned again by Agent Denver. They tell the same story and insist that Daron was not in a militia, and that there was not militia in Braggsville. Charlie and Daron tell the agent they believed their protest had not been a good idea and did not plan to do it again. Candice preached on the inequalities and injustices that still existed for blacks but said that if she did perform such a protest again she would hang a dummy instead of a real person. Louis, whose statement wraps up the book told his interviewer that he would definitely protest again if given the opportunity. Even though he died, Louis still believed the protest was a good idea.



Analysis

These last two chapters of the novel wrap up the story. Daron never told anyone about the collective. He wrote a letter to the FBI agent but ripped it up. The final chapter returns to the style of Chapter Sixteen, a round robin interrogation of Candice, Charlie and Daron. This time the FBI agent is asking the questions. Charlie's and Daron's belief that the protest was not a good idea and their decision that they would not protest again because it changed nothing are significant. Candice, however, was still worked up by the injustices and inequalities suffered by the blacks. She believed she would stage another protest. However, she would do things differently. Louis, who has nothing left to lose, is the only one of the four who claimed he believed they'd done the right thing and that he would do it again if given the opportunity.

Significant in this chapter is Daron's decision to accept Charlie's sexual orientation. Interestingly he does stress over whether or not Charlie had a crush on him. Notice that when Candice and Daron accompany Charlie and his boyfriend Frederick to the train station there is a moment when Frederick looked so much like Louis that it caused Daron shock and a pang of sorrow.

A final note of interest is the scene with Candice and Daron in the bathroom. This scene makes a final statement on the theme of appearances. Before they started dating, Daron had an image in his mind of him and Candice taking care of intimate business in close proximity. In his real life experience, Candice was brushing her teeth just as she had been in his fantasy. In real life, however, Candice was angry with Daron. She later woke him to share with him how scared she was because things were so real. In that moment of reality Daron realized his life was never going to be like he imagined it. Together they accepted the reality of Louis' death.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think Daron chose not to tell anyone about the collective? What does that say about Daron? What does it say about the strength of the collective?

Discussion Question 2

How was Daron's fantasy of walking in on Candice brushing her teeth different from the reality once they began dating?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the differences in opinion among the 4 Little Indians concerning the likelihood they would stage another protest. Are the responses of the four as you would expect? Why or why not?



Vocabulary

query, erudition, congenital, prudence, feral, abated, paradox, acceded, essentializing, parapet, enigma, febrile, pontificated, dredged, asunder, carnal, cosseted, protocol, conflagration, disembarks, inherent, effigy



Characters

D'aron Little May Davenport

D'aron Davenport is one of the main characters in the novel. It is from D'aron's point of view that the story is told. D'aron, whose name is also spelled Daron throughout the novel, is a boy from the small Southern town of Braggsville. Hoping to escape the backward culture of his small town Daron applied to and was accepted to attend the University of Berkley in California. Once there he became friends with a group who called themselves the 4 Little Indians. They'd given themselves that nickname after they'd attended a dot party with dots on their foreheads. Several party goers were offended by the dots and demanded the four remove their dots or leave.

Because Daron had a crush on Candice Chelsea, one of the 4 Little Indians, he couldn't say no to her when she suggested they hold an intervention during the reenactment of a Civil War battle in Daron's hometown. When Daron's father caught wind that the four had something planned, he ordered Daron to call it off, but Daron still couldn't bring himself to do so. He did, however, refuse to take part in the intervention. In the intervention Louis, one of the 4 Little Indians, died when the pretend lynching went terribly wrong. Because the accident happened in Daron's hometown he was considered to be the mastermind of protest. Even though no formal charges were drawn against Daron or any of his friends, the collective in Daron's town banished him from Braggsville.

Through the course of the story Daron learned how dangerous an education with no grounding can be. He also learned that even though he'd lived in Braggsville all of his life, there was a good deal he'd chosen not to see about his small town. He matured in his realization that protests can be useful, but should not be taken lightly. One of the most important lessons that Daron indicated he learned through the course of the novel was the lesson that things aren't always as they seem.

Candice Marianne Chelsea

Candice could probably be considered the ringleader of the 4 Little Indians even though she least fit the description of an agitator. Daron described her as the type of woman that men felt like they needed to protect. He wondered how often she'd been denied having real experiences because people had felt the need to protect her from these experiences. Daron reasoned this could be why Candice felt the strong need to protest and make herself heard. Candice was one to get quickly angered by injustice and wanted to do something productive to send a message about the anger she felt. Candice's problem was that she did not always take the time to develop a proper plan that would ensure her protests would be understood.



After Louis was killed, Candice felt certain that there had been a conspiracy to cover up the reason he died. She was the only one who had been at the hanging and had been the only one of the Indians to have seen what happened. Even so, Candice chose not to testify in the inquest into the cause of Louis' death. At one point in the novel Daron indicated that he did not trust Candice's account of the incident because her story had changed each time she told it. Even though he discovered Jo-Jo had a cross tattooed on his hand, he thought Candice must have been mistaken that it was a man with a cross tattoo on his hand who had whipped Daron. Candice had been clear on this detail each time she told the story. Later, when Daron heard Jo-Jo testify in front of the collective, he realized that Candice had been right in her testimony. It had been Jo-Jo with his cross tattoo who had taken the whip from her and used it on Louis.

John-John “Jo-Jo” Kelly VI

Jo-Jo is a longtime friend of Daron's and a resident of Braggsville. During the summer break before Louis' death, Daron had not corrected Jo-Jo when he suggested that Candice was Daron's girlfriend. Later, during the reenactment when Jo-Jo saw Candice he assumed it was Daron who was the person hanging from the tree. For this reason he took the whip from Candice and cracked it in the air behind Louis. He claimed to have stopped when he saw that the boy was not Daron. He was the man that Candice claimed had a cross tattooed on his hand.

Jo-Jo's participation in Louis' death was never mentioned in the legal court proceedings; but, he went on trial before the collective of which he was a member. His punishment was to take twenty lashes delivered by Daron. Before he became a member of the collective Jo-Jo had gone to the black prom with a black girl. As retaliation, Jo-Jo had lost his job and had been benched by the coach of the sports team on which he played. Even though Daron knew Jo-Jo had done nothing to deserve the punishment he received, Jo-Jo passed it off and pretended as if the punishments were justified.

Louis Chang aka Loose Chang

Louis Chang was Daron's roommate for the last half of his freshman year in college and most of his sophomore year in college. Louis was Malaysian; but, sometimes he told people he was Chinese if he thought that would be easier for them to understand. Louis wanted to be the next Lenny Bruce Lee. Although Charlie was the person they'd chosen to be the slave in the faked lynching the group had planned during the reenactment of the Civil War battle, Louis took Charlie's spot when he backed out at the last minute. Although no one wanted Louis to put on black face, he insisted on doing it for the performance. He allowed Candice to help him strap himself up to a harness supporting his weight with a rope around his neck as if he were hanging from the tree. In one of only two sections of the novel written from a different point of view than Daron's, Louis told how he figured he'd snapped the hook supporting the harness when he tried to avoid the man who was hitting him with the whip.



Charles “Charlie” Roger Cole

Charlie was a member of the 4 Little Indians. The group was very diverse with all its members having some unique racial or ethnic aspect. Charlie was a highly intelligent black man from Chicago. He was also very large and played on Berkley’s football team. Despite his manliness, Charlie came out to his friends during the course of the novel that he was gay. Charlie was the student who was supposed to pose as the slave in Candice’s planned intervention, but he backed out at the last minute. He told Daron he couldn’t bring himself to pretend that he was a slave. Later, Charlie felt guilty because Louis had died after taking Charlie’s place. However, he also felt a little bit relieved that he had backed out and was still alive.

Adam Turing Hirschfield III

Adam Turing Hirschfield III was the big city lawyer sent to bring Charlie home to Chicago and to advise Daron and Candice until they could get their own lawyers. The lawyer had no problem showing the three college students how immature he believed they were and telling them he believed they were the victims of Berkley’s ultra liberal education system. He even showed Daron’s parents who was in charge of the discussion when he suggested that those paramedics and other public safety officials who had left their posts to take part in the reenactments were in danger of being charged with dereliction of duty. He also told Candice, Daron, and Charlie they needed to stop posting on social media sites as these posts could be subpoenaed and used against them.

FBI Agent Philip Denver

Philip Denver is the agent the Federal Bureau of Investigations sent to talk to Daron about Louis’ death. Interestingly, the agent wanted to talk only to Daron. He was not interested in talking to Charlie or Candice. Instead of telling Daron the FBI wanted to charge him with a hate crime, the agent only asked Daron if he knew anything about a militia in Braggsville or if he was protecting anyone. The agent even went so far as to suggest that Daron had reported Candice’s injury as a rape because he was calling for help and didn’t know any other way to enunciate his need. After Daron learned there was a collective operating in Braggsville, he wrote a letter to Denver. Later, he tore up the letter without sending it.

Quintillion “Quint” Lee Jackson

Quint is Daron’s cousin and also a longtime friend. Quint was the stereotypical redneck. He drank beer, had spent time in jail, worked at the local mill, and did not want to go to college because he wanted to make money. He also had Confederate flags tattooed on both of his upper arms. While Daron was visiting with Quint, Quint invited Daron to go with him to the Gully. While they were there, the residents of the Gully hosted an



impromptu party for Daron. Later, Quint was the one who drove Daron home from his sentencing by the collective at the hunting lodge. Quint told Daron he would thank him later for what he was doing. It was the last time Quint talked to Daron.

Otis Hunter

Otis Hunter was the mayor of the Gully. During an interview with Otis, Daron had been surprised when Otis made a long speech about how Daron had helped the cause of the black people in Braggsville. During that news conference Otis also read a version of Braggsville's history that was different from anything that Daron had ever heard. Otis said that one of Braggs' sons had not died a hero in the Civil War but instead had deserted the Confederate forces and had hidden out in the Gully until he was found by his father. Otis indicated the son's desertion was the reason that Braggsville was not named the capital of Georgia.

Henry "Sheriff" Frank Lucian

Henry Lucian was called the sheriff, but he was actually the police chief of Braggsville and had no authority over the entire county. He also served as the captain of the Confederate soldiers during the reenactments. It was the sheriff who conducted interviews with Candice, Daron, and Charlie after Louis was killed. During a session with Daron, the sheriff told him how he believed the inquest would go. Ironically, the inquest went just as the sheriff predicted.

Mr. Davenport

Mr. Davenport is Daron's father. He was the stereotypical strict Southern father. He worked at the mill in town. It was understood that if he gave a directive to his family the directive was to be carried out. Daron's father told him to call off whatever he and his friends had planned at the reenactment. This was the reason why Daron did not participate in the intervention. Daron's father was given the night shift at the mill as punishment for his son's participation in the intervention.

Janice Davenport

Janice Davenport is Daron's mother. She was the typical Southern mother. During Daron's welcome home party she was busy in the kitchen. Her kitchen was described as being surgically clean and meticulously organized. She loved her son fiercely, but she was even more dedicated to her husband.



Harry Jones

Harry Jones was Braggsville's postmaster and the man who talked to Daron about the purpose of the collective and the rules followed by the men who were part of that collective.

Lou Davis

Lou Davis is the resident of Braggsville who owns Lou Davis' Cash 'n' Carry Bait Shop and Copy Center. He was also the sergeant at arms of the town's collective that met at the hunting lodge. He was the one who called to order and presided over the hearings for both Jo-Jo and Daron.

Frederick

Frederick is Charlie's boyfriend. When Charlie came to visit Candice and Daron in New Orleans during their spring break, Charlie brought Frederick along. Daron was shocked at one point because Frederick looked so much like Louis.



Symbols and Symbolism

Dots

Daron and his roommate met Candice and Charlie at a dot party. The four were all wearing dots on their foreheads because they wanted to engage in intelligent conversation. The dots, however, were taken offensively by the students who hosted the party because they were reminiscent of the bindi worn by Indians. It was because of these dots and the banishment that resulted from them that the four met. It was also from this act that Louis deemed them the 4 Little Indians.

Daron's Application Letter

Daron's application letter was at first a source of pride for him because he wrote it on his own and believed it was what had gotten him into Berkley. Later, he read the letter and believed it made him sound desperate. The letter and Daron's attitude toward it demonstrate his changing attitude about himself .

The Green Egg

Daron described the Green Egg as a combination of a smoker and a grill. It was the central object in the Southern barbecue.

The Charlies

The people in Braggsville called the pairs of lawn jockeys they had displayed in their yards "the Charlies." The statues looked like black servants, and they were a symbol of slavery.

Confederate Flag

The Confederate Flag is interpreted by people not from the South as a symbol of racism. Ironically, Southerners claim the flag represents heritage and civic pride.

Waffles

At one point in the novel Daron compared the human ego to a waffle. He said that just like a waffle, the ego had places that could be filled with "toppings" such as defense mechanisms and neuroses.



An Afro Wig

When Jo-Jo saw Louis wearing an Afro wig, similar to the one that Daron had worn, Jo-Jo assumed the man who was hanging from the tree was Daron. To Jo-Jo, the Afro wig symbolized Daron.

The Nature of Culture and Ishi in Two Worlds

Candice believed that books captured the essence of the soul so she believed that if she burned these books, which were about Ishi, she would wind up with ashes that were representative of what Ishi had been. She used the ashes from these books to represent Ishi's ashes in her Six Flags incident.

The Anchor

On the day that Daron visited his Nana's church, the preacher used an anchor as a symbol in his sermon. The anchor represented Jesus and the word of God.

The Whip

The whip is a symbol of corporal punishment. It appears at two different times in the novel. The first is during the intervention where Candice carried a whip that she did not intend to use on Louis. One of the men, presumably Jo-Jo, took it away from her and used it on Louis. Later, when Jo-Jo was found guilty of taking this whip from Candice and pretending to hit Louis with it, his punishment was twenty lashes with a whip.



Settings

Berkley

The University of Berkley is the school that Daron attended for nearly four semesters before he decided to withdraw because of Louis' death during spring break of his fourth semester. It was at this university that the 4 Little Indians met. Daron and his parents later returned to Berkley to get Daron's things. Daron had wanted to go to Louis' memorial service while he was in Berkley, but he learned at the last moment that he was not welcome at the service.

Six Flags in Vallejo

Six Flags in Vallejo is the place that Candice chose to have her memorial service for Ishi even though neither the park nor the city really had any connection to the Indian.

Old Man Donner's Grounds

The people of Braggsville reenacted a Civil War battle each year on Old Man Donner's grounds. It was near an oak tree located on Old Man Donner's grounds that Candice and the others planned their intervention. This tree from which Louis was hung had been planted by Bragg to commemorate a 1865 speech about freedom.

Braggsville, Georgia

Braggsville, Georgia is the name of the small Southern town where Daron grew up. This town received national news coverage after Louis was killed when a pretend lynching, intended to call attention to the injustices represented by Civil War reenactments, went wrong.

Lou Davis's Cash'n'Carry Bait Shop and Copy Center

It was in the new addition of this store that NBS created a temporary studio to film an interview between Otis Quint, the mayor of the Gully, and Daron.

The Holler

The Holler lay between Braggsville and the Gully. Daron had an unexplained fear of going into the Holler, especially at night. When he finally entered the Holler near the end of the story, Daron learned there was a hunting lodge there where a group of men from his city met. The group judged a man by his actions, not his skin. These men had



created for themselves laws as well as a governing body and court system to ensure the rules of the collective were followed and that those who didn't follow the rules were punished.

The Gully

The Gully was the name for the place where the black people of the Braggsville area lived. Candice referred to the place as "the gutter." After Louis was killed, Quint took Daron to the Gully where Daron was treated as a hero because he had drawn attention to the injustice of slavery, one of the precedents the Confederate soldiers had been fighting to keep.

Morgue at County General

It was when they were taken to the morgue at the county's hospital that Daron and Charlie came to the realization that Louis had died because of their attempt to make a statement about the racial injustices of Civil War reenactments.

Old Church

This old church that used to be located in the Holler was the church that Daron's Nana had attended before her death. Daron had attended church with her once. The service had included a sermon, baptism, and another ceremony that Daron was not allowed to watch but sounded to him to be some sort of sacrifice with sounds of a slaughter.

Gearheart Lane

Gearheart Lane was the street on which Daron and his parents lived. Daron's friends — Candice, Charlie, and Louis — came to visit Daron at his childhood home during the week of spring break, the same week the city hosted a Civil War reenactment. After Louis' death, protest groups and reporters set up along this road in front of the Davenport home.

The Hunting Lodge

Although Daron knew this hunting lodge existed, he never really thought about it until he began to put together all the unusual behavior he began to notice in his town when he started looking. It turned out this hunting lodge was the headquarters for the "militia" that FBI agent Philip Denver believed was active in Braggsville. It was at this hunting lodge that Daron was told his punishment for his crimes in helping with the intervention was banishment from Braggsville.

New Orleans

New Orleans is the city to which Daron and Candice moved when they went back to school after Louis' death. Charlie and his new boyfriend visited them one weekend in their apartment in this city.



Themes and Motifs

Race / Ethnicity

For all the strides the people in America have made to rid the country of racism, segregation, and judgements based on ethnicity, the clash of different cultures and races is still a significant one. This novel focuses on one small, fictional Southern town whose residents refuse to give up their Southern roots and traditions.

Even though Daron knew some things about his town could be considered offensive to outsiders, like the black lawn jockey statues displayed in almost every yard, even he didn't understand how truly backward they were. His friends who visited his town with him as well as the media who came there after Louis' death pointed out the injustices done to blacks. Blacks had their own section of the county in which they lived. It was rumored the city fathers would not incorporate the black neighborhood into Braggsville because they didn't want to have to provide any services there. Additionally, the town had a secret collective. Though it claimed not to be racist, there were no black members.

The issue of race and ethnicity even came into play in the story of how Daron and his friends met. They all attended a dot party for which they were supposed to put a dot where they wanted to be touched. Daron, Louis, Candice, and Charlie all put dots on their foreheads indicating they wanted intelligent conversation. Those who hosted the party, however, thought the four were making fun of people from India who wore bindi dots on their foreheads, as part of their religion. It was at this party that the four first met and that they were all banished. Louis deemed them the 4 Little Indians.

For their American History project the four had hoped to have a performative intervention in Daron's home town of Braggsville. They planned to try to make a statement about the way that slavery was a part of the Civil War. It was impossible to reenact the Civil War without including the aspect of slavery. Unfortunately, the performance went badly awry and Louis died accidentally. The blacks were appreciative of Daron's attempt to bring attention to their cause. Notice the differing opinions between Louis and the other three concerning whether or not they would have another performative intervention. While Daron and Charlie both stated that intervention had changed nothing and that they wouldn't do it again, Louis, who has nothing to lose, says he would protest again if he had the opportunity. Candice seems split. However, she argues that blacks aren't as educated and don't have the same medical treatments as whites. They are also more likely to be incarcerated and are more likely to live below the poverty level than whites. She says that if she ever chooses to protest in that way again she would use a dummy person instead of a real person.



Appearance

One of the most important lessons that Daron believed he learned during the protest in his town was that things were never as they seemed. These deceptive appearances ranged from harmless misnomers to the presence of a collective secretly ruling the town of Braggsville. Daron realized through his experience that even his friends had made adaptations to fit what he expected of them.

One of the points that Daron made in the theme of appearances had to do with the town's miscalling of the sheriff. Although the man was referred to as the sheriff by every one in the town he was in reality Braggsville's chief of police. He actually had no countywide jurisdiction. Daron was aware of this misnomer but had never really thought anything about it until he noticed other strange things happening in his town.

Although the town appeared to be just a small Southern town of people who thought alike, there was actually a collective working behind the scenes to ensure that things in Braggsville appeared as the members of the collective wanted them to appear. The collective had its own judge and jury to mete out punishment on those who caused trouble from Braggsville. Those who dared to go against the collective were punished just as Jo-Jo had been when he went to the black prom. Jo-Jo lost his job and was benched by the coach of his athletics team. At that time Jo-Jo had told Daron that things were not as they appeared. Daron still had not idea just how strange things really were.

Through his experience, Daron learned that even friends can take on an appearance different from reality. He realized he'd become what his friends wanted him to be just because he wanted so badly to be accepted by a group. Likewise, his friends had also made adjustments in their appearance to make themselves more appealing to him. Note in this use "appearance" doesn't mean necessarily the physical features of a person but the likes and dislikes they harbor as well as their aspirations.

Coming of Age

Coming of age is an important theme in the novel as Daron came to realize how different the world really was from the experiences he'd had in Braggsville. He learned the monumental consequences even the smallest decisions can have as his college roommate was killed in an ill thought out protest. Daron also learned that one must take responsibility for one's actions.

Daron had a bad case of culture shock when he first moved from Braggsville to study at the University of Berkley. He'd been at the top of his class in Braggsville but felt substandard at Berkley. He wanted so badly to find a group with which he could fit in that was willing to do whatever it took to keep them as friends.

Back home in Braggsville Daron had let his friend Jo-Jo believe that Candice was his girlfriend. Even though he didn't really lie, Daron did let Jo-Jo believe an untruth. This untruth led Jo-Jo to believe he was messing around with a friend when he came upon



Candice and Louis at the tree where they'd set up the pretend lynching. Jo-Jo got in serious trouble with the collective for brandishing the whip at Louis as he was hanging from the tree. In reality, Jo-Jo had believed he was playing along with a prank being pulled by his old friend.

Another instance where Daron learned from his mistakes took place when he refused to stand up to Candice and keep her from staging the protest in his town even though he thought it wasn't a good idea. Although Daron might have lost Candice as a friend had he kept her from planning the protest, they would all have not been subjected to the pain of losing a friend to a death they had caused. Even after Daron's father told him to call off whatever he and his friends were planning Daron still didn't stand up to Candice. He hoped Candice would change her mind but didn't do anything proactive to change it.

Even though Daron wasn't really involved in the planning of the protest he was blamed as the mastermind behind Louis' death simply because it happened in his hometown. He had told his friends about the reenactment, a bit of information that piqued their interest. While he didn't encourage the protest he didn't discourage it either. Still, Daron was punished and had to take responsibility for his actions. Even though he wasn't charged in court, he was charged in the court of public opinion. The collective in Braggsville also found Daron guilty of the trouble that had come to their town and banished him as a result.

Performative Intervention

Performative intervention is the name given to the form of protest the 4 Little Indians had planned for the Civil War reenactors in Braggsville. By dressing as slaves and faking a lynching they hoped to open a channel of conversation with the people about the meaning of the reenactments and their connection to slavery. Unfortunately because Louis was killed during the intervention, the protest did go as planned. Note however that for the few minutes Candice said she talked to the captain of the Confederate soldiers before she'd gotten scared and run away she got the feeling that she and Louis were doing exactly what the reenactors had hoped no one would ever do. An aspect that might have been interesting for the author to add would have been whether or not the Civil War reenactments continued in Braggsville following the one in which Louis was killed.

The idea of performative intervention becomes even more important as the sheriff of the backwoods Braggstown tried to understand the point of that form of protest. Candice and Charlie both gave him intellectual definitions of the protest but neither was able to explain it in a way that the sheriff could understand. When Daron was questioned about the meaning of performative intervention he admitted that he didn't know exactly what they had been trying to do or prove.

The groups' protest in Braggsville had not been the first time they'd been involved in performative intervention though they did not call it such. They unintentionally got thrown out of a party because they arrived wearing dots on their foreheads. People



believed they were making fun of people from India and asked them to leave. It was through the unintended intervention that the four met. After that Candice had encouraged the group to help her with a ceremony at Six Flags memorializing the Indian Ishi. Although no one was killed, this intervention went just about as badly as the one in Braggsville. No one who watched the ceremony really came away with the idea Candice had been trying to convey to them.

Education

Education is explored as a theme in the novel. Daron was known as a nerd in his hometown and often called derogatory names because of his intelligence. He was valedictorian of his class. He thought he was really smart and well educated until he went to college in Berkley. At Berkley, Daron felt he was judged as a Southerner and deemed incapable of achieving intellectually. For a short while, Daron let public opinion rule his opinion of himself. He thought he was substandard and his grades reflected his belief.

When Daron met Charlie, his attitude toward education began to change. Charlie taught Daron how to study and how to achieve in college. Just as Daron felt he was substandard because he was Southern, Charlie had grown up being told that people would treat him as if he were substandard because he was black. As a result Charlie had gotten into the habit of working harder than his white counterparts to achieve. He shared these work ethics with Daron.

After Daron was at Berkley for a while he was forced to move back home to Braggsville. Just as he'd thought his Braggsville education was useless in Berkley, Daron learned the classes he took at Berkley were useless in helping him find a job in Braggsville. Even though he had nearly two years of college under his belt Daron had learned nothing practical and was good for nothing besides checking groceries or pumping gas.

A final, interesting aspect of education is Daron's education in relation to that of his parents. Daron was a first generation college student. He talked in the novel about how his parents had told him he had to go to college. They didn't say why he had to go, just that he had to. It turned out that both Daron's mother and father had wanted college educations. When he returned home from the war Daron's father had considered going to school on the G.I. Bill but decided against it because the only school he could attend was so far away from his home. When he was at home after Louis' death, Daron learned that his mother was going to school. She was studying finance and economics. Daron seemed shocked his mother would care about going to school; but, his mother told him that she wanted to learn, just like he did.

Styles

Point of View

This novel is told from the point of view of a third person narrator. It is told almost entirely from the point of view of D'aron Davenport. There are two places in which the author diverges from this third person point of view narration. The first of these divergences is at the end of Chapter Sixteen. After Candice, Charlie and Daron have been questioned by the sheriff about their parts in Louis' death there is a section where Louis spoke for himself. This short section is told from the first person point of view of Louis. Louis also has the final say in the conclusion of the novel. The end of the final chapter Latest also features the first person point of view of Louis.

Language and Meaning

Language is an important feature in this novel as the author explores the importance of words and word usage along with a variety of other issues. In the theme of racism, one of the themes in the novel is the use of derogatory words to refer to black people. At one point Daron's father argues that just because people are encouraged not to use a particular word and might even refrain from using this word, it didn't mean they'd changed how they felt about black people. Another example of this importance of word use can be seen when Daron received his letter from the college telling him he needed to attend a disciplinary hearing. They use the word "virtue" in a way that Daron believed went against what he believes was the fundamental meaning of that word. After receiving this letter, Daron lost faith even in the meanings of words.

Other aspects to notice about the way language is used in this novel is the heavy use of slang. Some of the slang terms are so unusual that the author even includes an appendix of definitions for some of these terms. The characters are also differentiated by their speech patterns. This differentiation is seen most clearly in the speech of characters like Quint and Daron as they use the Southern "ain't" the use of "woulda" instead of "would've". Otis' speech is also characterized by speech patterns typical of Southern blacks. He uses the archaic word "sooth" for the word truth. He uses "we's" in place of "we're."

Despite the heavy use of slang and the author's habit of identifying his characters by their speech patterns the author puts together a book that some may find difficult to read not only because of the unfamiliar slang but also because of the rich vocabulary. At one point in the novel Quint's girlfriend tried to talk to Daron about dinosaurs. Because her word choice was so vague, Daron indicated it was hard to follow what she was saying. Daron thought about the advice of one of his professors: "Be a word herder. The powerful intellect leashed by an impoverished vocabulary is a myth. Without a vocabulary, a language, the intellect cannot develop" (p. 262). This novels shows



evidence of an author who is a word herder and who knows how to construct just the picture he's looking for by using his words to their fullest.

Structure

This novel seems much longer than its 345 pages because it is so densely written. It is composed of thirty-eight chapters. There is no technical Chapter One. Chapter Thirteen is misplaced. It appears between Chapters Twenty-0 and Twenty-1. All of the Chapters Chapter Twenty and above are titled in the style of Twenty-0 or Thirty-5 instead of Twenty and Thirty-Five. The last two chapters don't have numbers. The next to the last chapter is Chapter Next while the final chapter is Chapter Latest. The story is told in a basically linear fashion but there are a good deal of flashbacks especially when it comes to the Ishi incident.

The author uses a variety of styles in the novel. These styles include a tongue-in-check paper about the social nature of barbecue as well as a round robin interrogation of Candice, Charlie and Daron. The author uses long sentences and long paragraphs. He rarely divides paragraphs based on quotes and never distinguishes quotes with quotation marks. It is sometimes hard to determine what character is doing the speaking in some of the quotes.



Quotes

Wasn't he essentially Southern? Wasn't that the core of his being, his essence, as it were? At least that was how he felt now that he was in California."

-- Narrator (Chapter Two paragraph 1)

Importance: After Daron began attending college in California, he felt that his entire essence was defined by the fact he was a Southerner.

D'aron was just glad to be close to her, and to have friends who were also uncertain about their place at Berkeley, and who were nerds, not that anyone could be a nerd at Berkeley."

-- Narrator (Chapter Four paragraph 26)

Importance: D'aron described how happy he was to finally have like minded friends who were similarly outcast as he was when he met the other 3 members of the Little Indians. This desire to be friends with someone, as well as his attraction to Candice, helped to set up the disaster that was to follow.

Yeah, Daron repeated, nodding, certain that it couldn't matter because Berzerkeley and Braggsville were two worlds always on opposite sides of the sun."

-- Narrator (Chapter Four paragraph 112)

Importance: Because he believed that his worlds at Berkley and in Braggsville would never cross Daron didn't think there was any harm in letting Jo-Jo think that he and Candice were boyfriend and girlfriend. It was this unwillingness to tell his friend the truth about Candice that led to some of the confusion during the preventative intervention.

And she was not the only one. The table was shocked. The entire class in fact. They'd heard tell of Civil War reenactments, but they were still occurring?"

-- Narrator (Chapter Five paragraph 23)

Importance: The members of Daron's class were shocked to learn that his city still hosted reenactments of a Civil War battle. It was his admission that his city still hosted these reenactments that got Candice interested in having a performative intervention there.

It is not a college admission board who I write at this late hour, long after the parental units have retired because I need to write this on my own, it is to a parole board that I write."

-- Narrator (Chapter Seven paragraph 27)

Importance: Even though his mother had helped him write a college admission letter Daron decided to write his own version of the letter. Even though he thought at the time it was his letter that had gotten him into college he later read it and believed it sounded desperate.



D'aron, I don't want to keep you from your friends or have a big discussion about this. Whatever you was planning, call it off."

-- Mr. Davenport (Chapter Ten paragraph 100)

Importance: Although no one had told D'aron's father about the plans for the performative intervention he sensed that D'aron and his friends had something planned. He told his son to call off whatever it was they had planned.

This is damn near the only house without a Confederate battle flag and those creepy statues in the front yards. He elbowed Daron, and added, You know what I mean, the ones that look like Charlie."

-- Louis (Chapter Eleven paragraph 69)

Importance: Louis pointed out the obvious signs that the people in Daron's hometown were racists. He'd noticed that the Davenports were one of the few families who did not have a Confederate flag flying from their house and did not have the black lawn jockeys in their yard. His statement was ironic because there had been similar statues in the yard before Daron had asked his parents to move them because he believed his friends would be offended by them.

In the backyard with the door safely shut, Charlie asked, Are you sure about this? I don't remember ever being this frightened before. I can't do it. I can't. I can't pretend . . . not this. I can't pretend this."

-- Narrator (Chapter Eleven paragraph 112)

Importance: The morning of the reenactment, Charlie realized he didn't have the courage to go through with Candice's plans. Daron hoped that Charlie's fear would spread to the others and they would decide to call off their plans.

Yeah. Candice's voice was both low and sharp. Remember. Make a difference. We'll have better luck in the real world, where people actually listen, not an amusement park."

-- Candice (Chapter Eleven paragraph 132)

Importance: When the 4 Little Indians met at the Waffle House to discuss Charlie's decision not to be part of the intervention, Candice reminded him that they had hoped they'd be able to make a difference with their actions. Her words, however, did not have any affect on Charlie's decision.

We're raising the diversity level by one thousand percent everywhere we show up. You don't even know how to get to that black neighborhood, the Gutter."

-- Candice (Chapter Eleven paragraph 142)

Importance: Candice argued with Daron when he made the excuse that he couldn't participate in the intervention because he lived in Braggsville. She told him how badly antiquated the attitudes and beliefs of his town really were. She used hyperbole, exaggeration, to make her point that the town was filled with only white people with black people sequestered to their own section of the county.



They started once more, unfortunately, when Georgia again raised the Confederate battle flag in 1956, the same year the state legislature passed bills rejecting *Brown v. Board of Education*. But they have nothing to do with slavery, secession, or segregation. It's only civic pride."

-- Narrator (Chapter Fourteen paragraph 9)

Importance: According to Daron's mother the people of Braggville had stopped reenacting their Civil War battle at one point but that the annual celebration was begun again when the government outlawed segregated schools. She claimed the timing of the reinstatement of the reenactments was not connected to the desegregation of the schools, even though they were started again at the same time that segregation was outlawed. She argued the reenactments were just a matter of civic pride.

Son, I would have preferred you defy me than abandon your friends, which no man should do."

-- Mr. Davenport (Chapter Fourteen paragraph 11)

Importance: Daron's father chided his son for letting his friends go through with their plans alone. He had asked Daron to call off the plans. Instead of standing up to the girl he liked and telling her their plan was not a good idea, Daron indicated his father forbade him from participating. In reality, Daron's father told him that he would rather Daron had gone with his friends instead of letting them go alone.

What he had not anticipated was that Candice might hobble up to the back door about an hour after he'd dropped her and Louis off at Old Man Donner's, shaking, arms clawed by thorn and bramble, rooted to the back patio, shivering, refusing to come in because, Don't want to get blood on the floor."

-- Narrator (Chapter Fourteen paragraph 13)

Importance: Daron was surprised when a terrified and bleeding Candice ran up to the back of the house telling them that everyone was after her the morning of their planned intervention.

What troubled him, though, was a moment of faint suspicion, too faint, tenuous even in hindsight, when he had doubted Charlie, when he wondered if Charlie's reluctance to enter the Holler was a twisted allegiance to his race."

-- Narrator (Chapter Fifteen paragraph 16)

Importance: Though he didn't think himself a racist, Daron had a time when he believed that Charlie had refused to go to the Gully with him because he had some sort of allegiance to the people of his race and didn't want to cause problems among them. In reality, Charlie wouldn't go with Daron because he knew the people in the Gully had nothing to do with Candice's injuries.

Daron. Charlie. Mr. Davenport. All three stood facing the door. As if trying to make out the meaning of the letters etched in the glass. C-O-R-O-N-E-R. Certainly a misunderstanding, a case of mistaken identity. Certainly. No one died in Braggville



unexpectedly. Not because of a joke. Unless it was a sick joke on Louis's part. Daron'd heard the deputy, heard his father, heard the coroner, but Daron knew it was a mistake — certainly — until his father turned so that he was between Daron and Charlie and the door, turned with a certain determination, as if to shield them, turned with the resolution of the sentenced, faced Daron and Charlie, palmed their necks, squeezed once, swallowed, nodded as if he had rehearsed this speech, as if he knew beforehand what to expect, and Daron rolled his shoulder back and pulled away from his father, away from the unwelcome awareness that his father had rehearsed this speech, performed this speech in Iraq, oh how many times, Daron didn't know, but often enough to have an expression on his face that Daron had never before seen but knew with certainty meant this is no mistake, that meant, Son, your friend is dead. That much is certain."

-- Narrator (Chapter Fifteen paragraph 26)

Importance: In this long sentence, it is told how Daron went from the belief that Louis' death was just a sick joke to his realization that his friend was really dead.

Y'all stirred up a mess for Braggsville. Real Wile E. Coyote move, pissing on your own shoes there."

-- The Coroner (Chapter Fifteen paragraph 48)

Importance: The coroner forecasted to Daron how much trouble the four college students caused for Braggsville. He compared what they had done to the shenanigans of the bumbling cartoon character Wile E. Coyote who set traps for his enemy but always wound up getting caught in his own snares.

Today's change agents perform instead of picket, Sir, though a picket line is itself a performance, as any scholar will tell you."

-- Daron (Chapter Sixteen paragraph 52)

Importance: Although none of the quotes in this section that corresponds with the sheriff's interrogation of the three college students are notated as to who was saying them, it is assumed this quote can be attributed to Daron according to the pattern established in the beginning of the interrogation. Answers are given first by Candice, then Charlie followed by Daron. In this quote Daron tried to explain to the sheriff what a performative intervention was.

Daron, you better well figure out what this performative intervention is because whether you were there or not, you're the mastermind based on the sole fact that this is your hometown."

-- Adam Turing Hirschfield III (Chapter Eighteen paragraph 7)

Importance: When this big city lawyer visited Daron and his friends he not only warned Daron that he'd better come up with a better way to explain the intent of a performative intervention but that he'd also be given the title of the mastermind of the plan just because it had happened in his hometown.



This is not Berkeley, everyone does not have a voice, and in my informed opinion, you wouldn't be in trouble if you'd attended a school with a more traditional political climate, instead of a university that prides itself on being a hotbed of liberal activity and the center of free speech and progressive values, when, in actuality, their minority recruitment is abysmal as of late — excepting athletes — and what they have mostly given the world is an abundance of advancements in the sciences, most of which have been used for weapons.”

-- Adam Turing Hirschfield III (Chapter Eighteen paragraph 16)

Importance: After Candice talked back to the lawyer that had been sent to Braggsville to advise them he told her that she did not have the right to voice her opinion, especially since she had just caused the death of one of her friends. He told her he believed it was because she was going to a school that encouraged radical behavior that had gotten her and her friends into the trouble they were in.

Excuses abounded, but one fact remained consistent in every newsflash: Someone had laid Louis across the hood and driven him into town for medical help. The news outlets didn't interpret it as quick thinking. Guided by Candice's tweet, they were enraged that someone had savagely paraded the poor young man through town on a car hood, a heinous and vicious act outdone only by the insurgents who had dragged dead U.S. contractors, naked, through the streets of Iraq.”

-- Narrator (Chapter Nineteen paragraph 3)

Importance: Because Candice had sent out a tweet indicating that the people of Braggsville had paraded around with Louis' dead body on the hood of car after they murdered him their actions were interpreted as malicious by the news media. It was later argued by the people of Braggsville that Louis had been put on the car hood to get him to the ambulance faster.

It appears to the United States federal government, and it would to me, if I didn't know you so well, but I remember when you wasn't but yea high — he held his hand out at desk level for emphasis — but it appears to the United States federal government that you orchestrated a hate crime.”

-- Sheriff (Chapter Twenty-0 paragraph 29)

Importance: The sheriff warned Daron that there was the possibility that he could be charged by the Federal Bureau of Investigations with orchestrating a hate crime. The sheriff seemed to be using this threat as a way to manipulate Daron.

In several recent photos, he held a Bible, and in others his fingers intersected like crosses, and in one Daron could clearly see a cross tattoo at the base of his thumb.”

-- Narrator (Chapter Twenty-3 paragraph 23)

Importance: When Daron visited Jo-Jo's Facebook page he noticed that his friend had a cross tattoo on his hand just where Candice said that man who had whipped Louis had a tattoo. Daron couldn't imagine, however, that Jo-Jo would have whipped Louis.



But could he stay after he talked to the monocled history professor? After that professor suggested making his class project into an honors thesis? No. A repulsive suggestion. It was precisely the perverse type of academic thinking that caused the mess in the first place.”

-- Narrator (Chapter Twenty-5 paragraph 73)

Importance: Even though Daron had considered returning to Berkley because he felt more comfortable there than at home, he knew he couldn't stay after his professor continued to suggest that Daron could use the performative intervention as a class project even though Louis had been killed during it. He got the feeling his professor didn't really care about Louis or what had happened because he just seemed interested in learning something from the experiment.

The transformation felt a conspiracy, and almost sparked him to reconsider Candice's account of the Incident, until he remembered that he'd asked his mom to hide everything offensive, and that made him guilty of nothing but discretion.”

-- Narrator (Chapter Twenty-6 paragraph 2)

Importance: Even though Daron noticed the changes that took place in his town, like the removal of all of the Charlie statues, and believed at first they seemed like the people were trying to hide something when he held these actions up to the mirror of his own behavior when he asked his mother to remove their lawn jockeys, that they didn't seem so much like a conspiracy.

He didn't understand how different his education had been, how profound his deficit, until arriving at Berkeley, where he learned that being valedictorian in a small segregated high school was about as honored as Confederate dollars. Likewise, what he learned in Berkeley was a grossly inflated currency with zulu value at home, as his parents unintentionally demonstrated when they reviewed his transcripts during a brainstorming session, as his mother termed family meetings.”

-- Narrator (Chapter Twenty-6 paragraph 14)

Importance: When he was in Berkley, Daron believed the education he'd received in Braggsville was substandard. When he came back to his hometown to try to get a job, however, Daron realized what he'd learned in Berkley was not practical. It was when his parents looked through the list of the classes he had taken in college so far, they stressed to him how they thought those classes were a waste of money and had no practical use in the real world.

D'aron Little May Davenport is charged with treason, moral turpitude, and egregious actions against the state.”

-- Lou Davis (Chapter Thirty-5 paragraph 56)

Importance: The owner of the general store in Braggsville read the charges for which the collective was holding Daron responsible. For these crimes, Daron was banished from the town. He was allowed to return only for holidays, funerals and weddings. Daron

was flabbergasted that the group, which had not legal authority, felt it had the right to charge and sentence him in this way.