

July, 2023: Discussion Questions for West with Giraffes

1. Woody went through a lot of injustices early in his life, how do you think his childhood shaped him into the person he became?
2. We know this is based on a true story, do you think there was a good balance between historical fact and fiction throughout the read?
3. Woodrow had never met a Black person before his journey across the country, how did his internalized racism change after the trip?
4. How does the power of storytelling play into this novel? Did you like that Woody was writing his own story? And how did you respond when learning about the “you” that he was writing it for?
5. “Time heals all wounds they say. I’m here to tell you that time can wound you all on its own.” What do you think he means by this statement?
6. How did Woody mature under the Old Man’s guidance? What factors contributed to their bond?
7. “It is a foolish man who thinks stories do not matter—when in the end, they may be all that matters and all the forever we’ll ever know.” Are there any moments and stories in your life that have mattered so much that you recall them often?
8. Red has quite a bucket list—meet Margaret Bourke-White, Amelia Earhart, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Belle Benchley, touch a giraffe; see Africa, speak French, learn to drive, have a daughter, etc.

How did that list shape her as a character. Do you have a bucket list?

9. Red is known for stealing, do you think your tolerance of lying and stealing would change in desperate times?
10. What can we learn from Woody’s relationship with the giraffes and our own treatment of animals? San Diego Zoo is known as a world-renowned zoo, but many people don’t like zoos. What is your position on them?

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