

CELESTE'S HARLEM RENAISSANCE



By Eleanora E. Tate

Thematic & Curriculum connections

- ❖ Harlem Renaissance
- ❖ Community
- ❖ Responsibility
- ❖ Moving

Ages 8 – 12

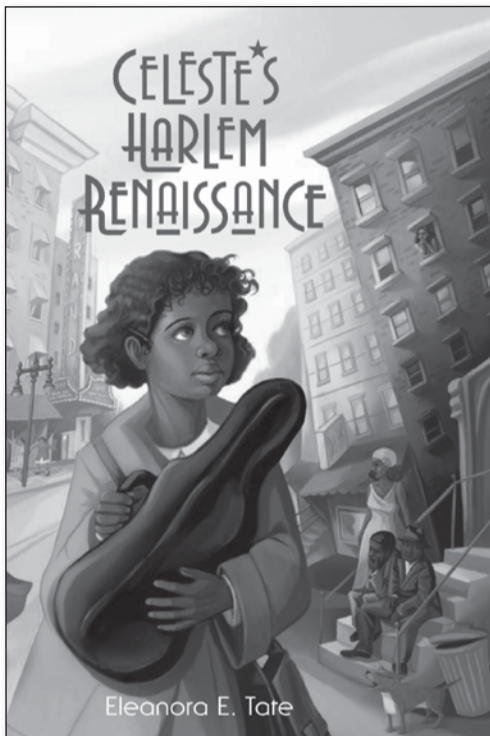
A coming-of-age tale set in The Harlem Renaissance.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the Harlem Renaissance? When did it occur? Who were some of the important people involved in the Harlem Renaissance?
 2. Why is Aunt Society so hateful and mean to Celeste? Does Celeste do anything to provoke Aunt Society's anger toward her?
 3. Why do Celeste and her father have such a close relationship? How does their relationship help Celeste?
 4. On the train trip to New York, Celeste meets several unique individuals. What does she learn from each passenger she meets? How is she affected by the man who steals her valise?
 5. When Celeste arrives in New York, the horror stories Aunt Society has told her about Aunt Valentina all seem to be true. How does Celeste handle the terrible experiences of her first few weeks with her Aunt in New York?
 6. Aunt Valentina is finally honest with Celeste, explaining what happened to her job and why her situation has changed. How does this revelation change the situation and the relationship between Aunt Valentina and Celeste?
 7. Auntie Val takes the path of least resistance by cutting her hair for the play. In what ways does Celeste take the path of least resistance?
 8. When Auntie Val returns from her road trip with pain in her back, why is she so upset to hear that Celeste has been playing her violin at the Café Noir Le Grande?
 9. Aunt Society's stroke is Celeste's ticket back to Raleigh, the ticket she has wanted since she arrived in New York. Why is Celeste so reluctant to leave Harlem? What are her fears about taking care of Aunt Society?
 10. Celeste proves her doctoring skills when she helps Gertie get well and her performance skills when she performs at the Café. Which brings her more joy? Why?
 11. Why is Miss D willing to make the sacrifice to take Celeste to Raleigh when Auntie Val is unwilling to do so? What does this say about the character of these two women?
 12. As Aunt Society begins to lose her memory, and Celeste is confined more and more to her house, Celeste begins to learn about Aunt Society's true feelings about her. What does she learn? How does this new information change Celeste's attitude toward Aunt Society?
 13. Why do the ladies in town and Aunt Society's church change their minds and decide to help Celeste take care of Aunt Society so that Celeste can go to school?
 14. Celeste is considering moving to New York with Auntie Val and leaving Aunt Society and her Poppa behind in Raleigh. Why does she change her mind? Is she content with her decision?
 15. Is Celeste satisfied with being a rock? Would she rather be a butterfly? Is there a way she can be the best of both?
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CELESTE'S HARLEM RENAISSANCE

about the book



When Celeste Lassiter Massey is forced to live with her actress Aunt Valentina in Harlem, she is not thrilled to trade her friends and comfortable North Carolina for big-city life. While Celeste absorbs the excitement of the Harlem Renaissance in full swing, she sees as much grit as she does glamour. A passionate writer, talented violinist, and aspiring doctor, she eventually faces a choice between ambition and loyalty, roots and horizons. The decision will change her forever.

Celeste's Harlem Renaissance
By Eleanora E. Tate

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praise for *Celeste's Harlem Renaissance*:

“A **moving portrait** of growing up black and female in 1920s America.” —*Booklist*

about the author



Photo by Zack E. Hamlett III

Eleanora E. Tate is a children's book author, folklorist, and creative writing teacher (to name just a few jobs). She was named a 1999 Zora Neale Hurston Award winner, the highest honor given by the National Association of Black Storytellers, Inc. She currently teaches children's literature at North Carolina Central University and is an instructor with the Institute of Children's Literature in West Redding, CT. Her stories, books, and articles celebrate neighborhoods, communities, and the families who live there. To learn more about Ms. Tate, visit her web site at www.eleanoraetate.com.

Winner of
the **2007 AAUW North Carolina Book Award**
for Juvenile Literature

A **2008 IRA Teacher's Choice Title**