

THE DOOR OF NO RETURN

KWAME ALEXANDER

BOOK CLUB GUIDE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *The Door of No Return* is a novel in verse. What did you find most interesting or exciting about the way this story was told? Do you have a favorite poem or chapter from the book?
2. Kwame Alexander notes that this “is a novel inspired by history, based on the real lives of the Asante people” (p. xi). How do the daily lives of Kofi and his friends and family compare to your own? What traditions did you discover while reading?
3. Starting with the opening refrain of “there was even a time,” many types of stories and storytelling are shown in *The Door of No Return* (p. 1). What role do stories play in Kofi’s life? Why do stories matter?
4. Throughout the book, chapters appear as conversations between Kofi and other characters. What do these conversations reveal to Kofi? What do you learn from talking with and listening to other people?
5. Kofi says that Mr. Goodluck Phillip claims “he is on a mission to widen the sea of our intellect and understanding,” while Kwasi counters that Mr. Phillip “is on a mission to capsize our culture” (p.28). What do you think of this discussion and others like it in the book? How do Kofi and his friends and family feel about learning English language and history?
6. Nana Mosi tells Kofi that “dreams are today’s answers for tomorrow’s questions” (p. 74). What do you think Kofi’s dreams mean? What do your own dreams tell you?
7. Kofi states that “we are each given first names for the day we came into this world, and extra ones for the spirit we brought along” (p. 104). Does your name have a special meaning? Why are names important? If you could choose a different name for yourself, what would it be?
8. How does the history of Upper and Lower Kwanta come to impact Kofi and his family? More generally, how does the past affect the present?
9. Nana Mosi remarks that “a history unknown will replay itself” (p. 171) and “until the lions tell their side of the story, the tale of the hunt will always celebrate the hunter” (p. 342). What do you think he means by these statements? Why are they important?
10. *The Door of No Return* ends on a cliffhanger. What do you think will happen next to Kofi? What is a door of no return?

