



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

The Death of Vivek Oji by Akwaeke Emezi

1. "They burned down the market on the day Vivek Oji died." The novel begins in the aftermath of Vivek Oji's death, despite his being the titular character. How did knowing that Vivek has already died shape your reading experience?
2. In the second chapter, the narrator tells us that this story could be told through a stack of photographs. Near the end of the book, Osita and the girls visit Kavita with a stack of photographs to tell Vivek's story. How are these stacks of photographs connected? Did you draw any meaning from the use of photographs, as opposed to words or physical mementos?
3. When the boys are in school, Osita does not comprehend Vivek's fugue states, and these ultimately lead to the cousins' falling-out. How did you interpret Vivek's fugues?
4. After Vivek's death, Kavita is very concerned with finding his Ganesh necklace, and at the end of the book, it is the one item of Vivek's that Osita keeps. What does the necklace represent about Vivek's identity and ancestry?
5. How does the Nigerwives' shared identity as outsiders bring them together despite their individual differences?
6. After Vivek's death, Osita, Kavita, Chika, and Juju all cope with their grief differently. How do these varied responses pull them apart, and how are they ultimately able to push past these tensions?
7. After meeting with the "children," Kavita decides that Vivek's gravestone should display the other name he was going by, Nnemdi. Does this prove Kavita's acceptance of Vivek, even if it comes too late?
8. At the end of the book, we learn that Vivek died after fighting with Osita, not at the hands of rioting strangers. Were you surprised by this final reveal? Do you agree with Osita that Vivek would have stayed safe and alive if only he had kept his dresses within the "bubble" of Juju's room?

The above questions were taken from
<https://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/fiction/11819-death-of-vivek-oji-emezi?start=3>
for your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

Akwaeke Emezi (they/them) is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Death of Vivek Oji*, which was shortlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize; *Pet*, a finalist for the National Book Award for Young People's Literature; and *Freshwater*, which was named a *New York Times* Notable Book and shortlisted for the PEN/Hemingway Award, the New York Public Library Young Lions Fiction Award, the Lambda Literary Award, and the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize. Selected as a 5 Under 35 honoree by the National Book Foundation, they are based in liminal spaces.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/2179360/akwaeke-emezi/>

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