



Book Club in a Bag Discussion Questions

“The Illegal” by Lawrence Hill

1. Zantoroland and Freedom State are fictional places that Hill has created in juxtaposition to real countries. What impact does this have for the reader? What social commentary is Hill making about immigration through the creation of these fictional countries?
2. What is the significance of the title?
3. In the novel many people do things that are illegal for different purposes. In your opinion, are all illegal acts always unethical? Discuss examples of illegal acts that the characters committed for what they believed to be good reasons.
4. Running is referred to as a symbol of privilege. Do you think Keita comes from privilege? What is the symbolism of the main character being a marathon runner?
5. Hill has created very complex secondary characters whose lives intertwine with Keita's. What is the importance of these characters? Did you find any of the secondary characters inspirational?
6. Discuss one aspect of the novel that you thought was inspirational.
7. Discuss one aspect of the novel that you thought was shocking.
8. What is the significance of singing? How does it empower Keita?
9. At the end of the book, Keita gains legal documentation. Do you think this will solve all the problems Keita faced in the novel?
10. Discuss how Hill's fictional portrayal of the characters' struggles is a commentary on society.

These questions were created by Clarington Public Library staff to enhance your discussion of the book.

Book Club in a Bag

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