



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver

1. Who do you think the author is referring to with her book dedication "for the survivors?"
2. A common theme throughout the novel is how outsiders view Appalachia and the stereotypes surrounding the people who live there. Do you think the author was successful in educating the reader about the struggles facing many Appalachian Americans?
3. Demon said, "Foster is a cross between prison and dodgeball." Did you learn anything about the foster care system? What do you know of how well your local foster care system operates?
4. Were you familiar with the history of coal mining? Discuss how life choices were intentionally limited to the citizens. Where do you currently see individuals and groups working to change deficient and corrupt systems that limit choices?
5. Most of us have heard some of the derogatory terms used to describe the people who live in this region. Were you aware of the power they hold? Has hurtful language ever been directed at you or your loved ones?
6. Demon's friends come from different backgrounds but are all affected by the Opioid crisis. Do you think this was inevitable based on their socioeconomic conditions such as poor health, education, and poverty?
7. Discuss the significance of the artwork on the cover. Do any of the drawings transport you back to a significant event in the novel?
8. It has been suggested that Kingsolver tells this tale so well that it reads more like a memoir than literary fiction. Would you agree with this statement?

These questions were created by Clarington Library, Museums & Archives staff to enhance your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

Barbara Kingsolver is a Pulitzer Prize winning American novelist, essayist, and poet. Her widely known works include *The Poisonwood Bible*, the tale of a missionary family in the Congo, and *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, a non-fiction account of her family's attempts to eat locally. She is the first author to win the Women's Prize for Fiction twice – first in 2010 for *The Lacuna* and this year's prize was awarded for *Demon Copperhead*.

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