

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR **EVEN IN PARADISE**

1. In *Between the World and Me*, bestselling author Ta-Nehisi Coates takes on Nobel Laureate Saul Bellow's incendiary question: Where is the Tolstoy of the Zulus? Coates responds with Ralph Wiley's statement: Tolstoy is the Tolstoy of the Zulus. In this novel, Elizabeth Nunez appropriates Shakespeare's *King Lear*, seeming to imply that Shakespeare is the Shakespeare of Caribbean Writers. By what right can she make this assertion?
2. The two older sisters in *King Lear* gang up on their youngest sister. Are there hints in the first chapter of this novel that give you clues as to the possible cause of the conflict among the sisters?
3. The names of the characters in this novel approximate the names of the characters in *King Lear*. Can you find the matches? Do the characteristics of the characters in the novel match the characteristics of the characters in *King Lear*? Can you identify the differences?
4. At one point in *King Lear*, Lear cries out: "I am a man more sinned against than sinning." In what way has Peter Ducksworth been sinned against? In what way has he sinned? Would you say that Ducksworth is a man more sinned against than sinning?
5. What roles do the following secondary characters play in the novel: Henrietta, Alicia, Mr. Lee, Gopaul, and Glazal? Were they crucial for the plot of this novel?
6. What did each of the main characters want? Did they achieve their desires?
7. Do you think Albert was unfairly treated because of his ethnicity? Why were the Ducksworths, and Douglas, in particular, suspicious of Albert? Were they justified?
8. How would you describe the relationship between Émile and his father?
9. There is a diverse cast of characters from different ethnicities in this novel. Can you identify them? From reading the novel or other sources, can you trace the history of the arrival of these various ethnic groups to the Caribbean?
10. The novel touches on the challenges of immigration to the US. What route did Douglas's brother Ralph use to get a US green card? What challenges did he face?
11. The novel comments on the tourist industry in the Caribbean, particularly in Barbados. What are some of the views expressed by the characters in the novel?
12. What does the novel tell us about Dudus Coke and the problem of drugs in the Caribbean?
13. Émile seems somewhat uncomfortable with Corinne's hairstyle and clothes after she begins teaching at Tivoli Gardens. Is his reaction understandable?
14. A newspaper reporter says to Émile: "Journalists stick to the facts . . . We keep our personal opinions to ourselves. We have to be objective, not subjective, when we report the news." Do you agree with the reporter?
15. Did you find the ending of the novel satisfying? Why or why not?

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