READING JOURNAL

Title: If I Grow Up

Group members: MO, CR, JL

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| Date: Dec. 10th  Pages: 1-35  Role:   * Research * Plot * Character * Style | The beginning of the story is an intro, not much happens. We learn who most of the characters are. Deshawn is the protagonist. His best friend is named Terrell. Terrell’s cousin Darnel was pushed off of the roof of their home, this was most likely done by the rival gang. I predict that later in the story the rival gangs will fight because of this incident. Marcus is one of the gang “leaders” and his nephew is Darnel. The nephew of someone high up in the gang getting murdered will most likely result in repercussions from the gang. I believe that because Deshawn lives near where all of this is occurring he will be involved somehow, most likely he will have to do something to the other gang to prove his worth to “his” gang. |
| Date: Dec. 15th  Pages: 35-61  Role:   * Research * Plot * Character * Style | After this section of the book, we learn a little more about Deshawns character, and what he is like. The beginning of the book was about the past, what happened to Darnel and the setting. During this section of the book it flashes foreward and we see how Deshawn has changed and what he is like now:   * Deshawn is an honest person, and does not want to end up in a gang, he goes to school and might get the chance to go to a better school that is out of his neighborhood. * He does not succumb to peer pressure, much like the others in his neighnorhood do. While his friend Terrell is trying to get him to join his gang, Deshawn refuses and stays in school. * Deshawn has changed a lot since the beginning of the story. Where before he was too scared to even think about the girl that was from Gentry, he is now dating her. * He dresses differently than before, now wearing baggy clothes and chains. * He is still a good person; Eg. Pg. 59, when the old man asks Deshawn’s help to get him food, instead of stealing from the man like his friends would Deshawn does exactly what was asked of him and gets the man food. * Where Terrell and Deshawn used to be inseparable they’re friendship has now changed, based on how they have each taken different paths in their lives. |
| Date: Dec. 16th  Pages: 61-87  Role:   * Research * Plot * Character * Style | This author writes action more than the thoughts of a character so when he does use figurative language it is easy to notice.   * Pg. 70 : He stood with his arms crossed and an impassive expression on his face. Like a judge.”   This is an example of a simile. Saying that the way the man was standing was similar to the regal way a judge would stand.   * Pg. 72: “My heart was racing, and I felt my lungs expanding and contracting as if I’d just sprinted a quarter mile.”   This is a hyperbole, he hadn’t actually sprinted a quarter mile, however when that gun got pulled in the alley and he was weaponless it felt as though his lungs were fresh off a quarter mile sprint.   * Pg. 73: “The merest movement of a finger could send pieces of lead ripping through my flesh”   This was great imagery. This phrase makes it so easy to visualize the panic in Deshawn’s eyes.   * Pg. 80: “A few days later I walked home from school with a black cloud over my head.”   Instead of just saying he was sad, the author took this opportunity to use more figurative language. |
| Date: Dec. 17th  Pages : 87-113  Role :   * Research * Plot * Character * Style | * http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=HN.607997834267855890&pid=1.7One of the characters is named Raydale Diggs, however they call him lightbulb because he is extremly smart. Like in a classic cartoon when someone gets and idea and a lightbulb appears over their head. * Dog named Snoop. Being in a gang neighborhood, Snoop Dog is most likely a well-known artist. Therefore when Lightbulb gets a dog he names him Snoop. * http://mickhartley.typepad.com/.a/6a00d83451ebab69e201157218bbe3970b-550wiWarhammer, the name of the card game that La Rue plays. It is ironic because it is a game typically played by people quite the opposite of La Rue. He is a gang member that spends several hours hand painting each of his characters. The author chose this game to show a contrast between the gang life and everyday life. * The grandmother of Deshawn is only 45. That is an age that we don’t think is that old, however in the book they, quite directly state, that people that are 45 are old and not capable of fun. * One of the gangs is called Gentry. The definition of gentry is people of good social position, specifically the class of people next below the nobility in position and birth. This is far different from what the gang actual is. They are far from the throne, however they, being a gang, have high social status. They are feared by many people and most are very rich.   http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=HN.608036158258351042&pid=1.7   * **Discussion Question:** Now that Nia has given birth to two children, do you think that she will end up like others in the projects? Addicted to drugs and becoming involved in bad things? |
| Date: Dec. 18th  Pages: 113-139  Role:   * Research * Plot * Character * Style | * Bulbz, Terrell, Jules and Deshawn were all playing a poker game together. Jules tries to cheat and Terrell brings out a gun to attempt to get his money back. Deshawn reasonably handles the situation with minimal injury. * They are called in by Marcus who has kidnapped Jules. Jules becomes a member of the Disciples, by Deshawn’s recommendation. Marcus starts to trust Deshawn more and they want Deshawn in the gang. * It once again skips ahead a year and Deshawn is now 15. * A pregnant lady is shot in their neighborhood, we also find out that Precious is now pregnant, possibly by Terrell. Terrell has also made another girl pregnant, her name is Imani. * La Rue has stopped answering the phone and has been gone all day on a drug deal. Marcus sends two people to go find him. * Deshawn and Terrell go out on their own in an attempt to find La Rue, despite being told not to by Marcus. * They find him on the ground tied up with his necklace broken and a bullet in his head. It was done by the Gentry gang. Deshawn seems very rattled by this and Marcus takes him away. * (I believe that Deshawn will get pulled into the gang to get revenge on the people that killed La Rue.) |
| Date: Jan. 5th  Pages: 139-165  Role:   * Research * Plot * Character * Style | * Terrell is driven by money, he wants to move up in the gang to gain more money, he breaks the rules of the gang by skimming drugs off of the ones he’s selling to make money. He uses it to impress girls and buy way more things than he needs. * We never get to see a deeper side of Terrell, however we often see how he can be sarcastic and rude. Eg. After Lightbulb is embarrassed at King Chicken he says, “Guess you could always get a job at King Chicken.” * Terrell does not care much about being a good person. He is the father of two separate girl’s children, while he is dating a third girl. * While he can be rude, unreasonable and frankly doesn’t have much depth, he can still help out friends when they need it. When Deshawn and his family had no food Terrell helps him out by purchasing dinner for his family. * Now that Deshawn has become an influential member of the gang, I believe that Terrell’s’ character will really be judged. He will either stand by his friend, or he will rebel and start a new branch in the gang that are opposed to Deshawn. |
| Date:  Pages: 165-191  Role:   * Research * Plot * Character * Style | * “Were we all nothing more than a brief flicker, as easily blown out as a candle?” This is the only metaphor that I was able to find in this section of the book, however it is a very good one. This metaphor is seen when Deshawn is thinking about Marcus’s death. He wonders, since he is a gangbanger, if he will end up the same way. * “This is on our blood oath.” I love how instead of taking several sentences to express how secret this was, the author simply states that it’s a blood oath, which is a well-known expression for a secret often held to the grave. * “Even homeless people wouldn’t sleep there.” This is said when Deshawn is under the bridge waiting for the police officer. The area under a bridge, typically, is not the nicest place. It is expected to be dirty and will probably have several kinds of creatures running around. However the author takes this description to another level, by saying that even people with nowhere to go would not sleep here. * “He took out a gun. Even in the dark I could tell that it was a Glock.” This sentence just adds to the feeling that this society truly has some problems, when a sixteen year old boy is able to identify the make of a gun from far away in the dark, something is wrong.   Discussion Question: Do you think that Deshawn should have risked Tanisha’s life like he did? Or do you think he should have found a different way to make a meeting with Rance? |
| Date:  Pages: 191-220  Role:   * Research * Plot * Character * Style |  |
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