



THE SILENCE OF OUR FRIENDS – READING GROUP GUIDE

Book Description:

The Silence of Our Friends is based on all-too-real events. In 1960s Texas, a white family from a notoriously racist neighborhood and a black family from the poorest ward cross Houston's color line, overcoming humiliation, degradation, and violence to win the freedom of five black college students unjustly charged with the murder of a policeman.

For Discussion:

The Silence of Our Friends is a graphic novel, a story told in words and pictures. How do you think this story would be told differently if it was a novel, with only words? How would it be different if it was a movie, with just pictures?

This book is based on a true story; the character of Mark is based on one of the authors, Mark Long. How do you think you would feel about the events that occur in this book if you were in his place?

The Silence of Our Friends is a black and white book. How would the experience of the book be different if this book was in color?

This book is set in the sixties. What was your hometown like in the sixties? Was there a similar amount of racial tension to Houston? Explain why things in your hometown were similar or different.

The characters in this book live in the shadow of the Vietnam War. What would it be like to think that you'll grow up to die in Vietnam like Mark does?

Jack's problems at work have to do with his boss and the company owner having very different ideas of how he should be handling his job. What would you do in this situation?

What do you think the children in this book will grow up to be?

This book contains a great deal of imitative play – kids pretending to be reporters, inheriting their parents' ideas, etc. What does this say about the influences in a kids life? Do you think this is accurate?

One of the reasons to make a book about a less well-known historical event is to promote attention and awareness about it. What other less-known historical events do you think should become books?

First Second Books