

BOOK CLUB in a bag

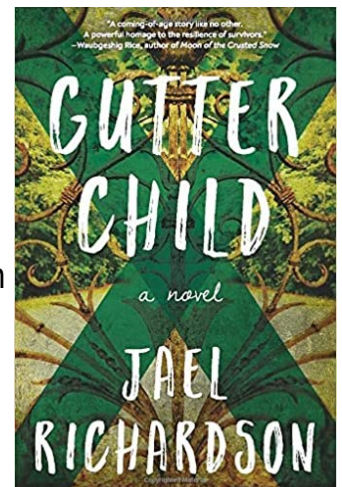


Gutter Child

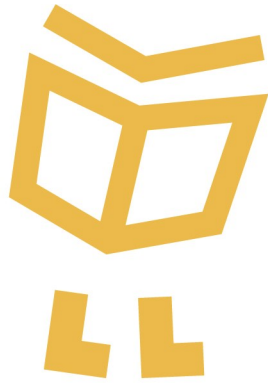
Jael Richardson

Discussion Questions

1. How does the author use imagery to place the audience directly in the shoes of Elimina? How might these senses help to amplify the emotions being experienced in this opening scene?
2. How would you respond to Josephine when she states, “We’re here to work. This is how it is for people like us” (pg. 19)? Why do you think Josephine believes this?
3. What is “gutter debt”? What events are related to the establishment of the debt system? Elimina learns that her debt is “negligible” or less than her peers. Why is this?
4. What does Violet mean when she says, “Whether Josephine wants to admit it or not, it’s different for us” (pg. 94)? Who is Violet referring to when she says “us”? What additional barriers exist for anyone who is in Violet’s position?
5. Rather than being concerned for Josephine’s safety, what two things are Mr. Gregors concerned about? What does his physical appearance along with his words and actions reveal about his character and position as headmaster of the academy?
6. What is the likely fate of Elimina’s child? Provide evidence from the text to support your position.
7. What are some examples of social justice in action that you see in the novel?
8. At the end of the novel, Lima says, “I climb into bed every night surrounded by a handful of my most prized possessions” (pg. 368). When leaving home to go to Livingstone, then Riverside and then the Gutter, what possessions did she take with her? What does this reveal about Lima’s growth and identity?
9. Were you satisfied with the way the novel ended? What additional questions or wonderings do you have?



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About the Author

Jael Richardson is the artistic director of the FOLD literary festival, the books columnist on CBC Radio's q and an outspoken advocate on issues of diversity. She is the author of *The Stone Thrower: A Daughter's Lesson, a Father's Life*, a memoir based on her relationship with her father, CFL quarterback Chuck Ealey. The memoir received a CBC Bookie Award, an Arts Acclaim Award and a My People Award. A children's edition was published by Groundwood Books. Her essay "Conception" is part of Room magazine's first Women of Colour edition, and excerpts from her first play, *my upside down black face*, appear in the anthology *T-Dot Griots: An Anthology of Toronto's Black Storytellers*. Jael Richardson received an MFA in creative writing from the University of Guelph. She lives in Brampton, Ontario

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