

# BOOK CLUB in a bag

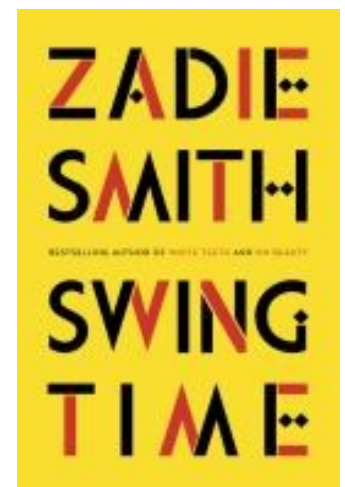


# Swing Time

Zadie Smith

## Discussion Questions

1. At what point in *Swing Time* did you realize the narrator's name hadn't been revealed? She is nameless throughout. Why do you think the author did this?
2. Similarly, what does this story gain from being told in first person, despite the narrator's name never being revealed? What's lost?
3. This book focuses heavily on female friendship. Why do you think Tracey and the narrator had such lasting effects on each other, even after they grew apart?
4. What is the significance of the title, *Swing Time*?
5. The narrator's mother and father are very different from Tracey's parents. What do you think Smith is trying to explore with these many different models of motherhood and fatherhood?
6. Aimee is a favorite popstar of Tracey and the narrator's as they are growing up. When we meet her years later, she is still performing, but also working to open a school in Africa. Why do think Aimee plays such an important role in both the narrator's childhood and adulthood, and what is Smith trying to get at through her character's words and actions?
7. The book has a very powerful line: "You want to believe there are limits to what money can make happen, lines it can't cross." What is the significance behind each characters' very different relationship to money?
8. Describe the epilogue. Based on what you've learned about each of the characters, what do you believe happens after the narrator sees Tracey dancing with her children?



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## About the Author

Zadie Smith was born in north-west London in 1975. She is the author of the novels *White Teeth*, *The Autograph Man*, *On Beauty* and *NW*, as well as *The Embassy of Cambodia* and a collection of essays, *Changing My Mind*. She is also the editor of *The Book of Other People*. Zadie was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2002, and was listed as one of Granta's 20 Best Young British Novelists in 2003 and again in 2013. *White Teeth* won multiple literary awards including the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, the Whitbread First Novel Award and the Guardian First Book Award. *On Beauty* was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and won the Orange Prize for Fiction 2006, and *NW* was shortlisted for the Baileys Prize for Fiction 2013. Zadie Smith is currently a tenured professor of fiction at New York University and lives in London and New York with her husband and two children.

Via Penguin Random House (<https://www.penguin.co.uk/authors/zadie-smith/26607/>)

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