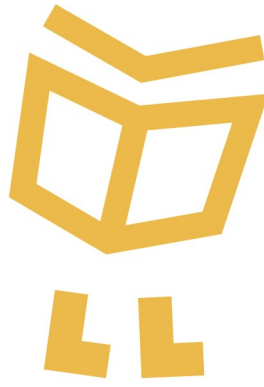


BOOK CLUB in a bag



Chain-Gang All Stars

Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah

Discussion Questions

1. *Chain-Gang All-Stars* is a work of speculative fiction that immerses readers in the United States of the near future, a technologically advanced society that is still troubled and defined by the laws, institutions, and social issues that we see today. Reflect on this setting. Why do you think Adjei-Brenyah chose to set the story against this backdrop?

2. Who are the Chain-Gang All-Stars and what is the CAPE program? How did the characters end up in this program and what made them join?

3. When we first meet Loretta Thurwar in the prologue, she is a new Link going up against Melancholia Bishop, a renowned fighter approaching High Freed status. When the novel continues, three years have passed and Thurwar is now in Bishop's position as a Grand Colossal. What was the significance of her first fight, and how has her character changed since then? What keeps her fighting?

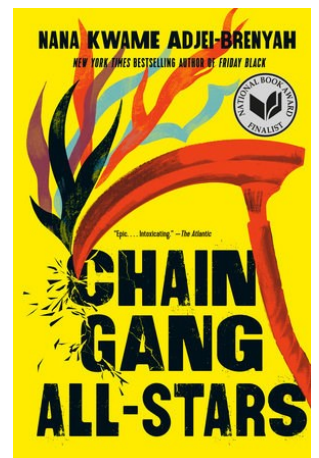
4. Chapter by chapter, *Chain-Gang All-Stars* brings readers into the stories of different stakeholders in the CAPE program, from Links and executives to fans and family members. Whose perspective were you most curious about and why? How did the multiple points of view reveal the many facets of the conflicts that are central to the story?

5. The lives of hard-action-sports fans are revealed through the point of view of Wil and Emily, a couple that watch the BattleGrounds and reality series LinkLyfe together. A reluctant fan, Emily's interest in hard-action-sports teeters between horror and fascination. Why do audiences watch the matches, and how do they cope with the realization that they are complicit in these acts of violence? How is the reader also implicated in this?

6. On page 36, Thurwar explains that "The culture of Chain-Gang was death." Describe the dynamic between the Links on the Angola-Hammond chain as well as the other chains in the circuit. How do the culture of death and the constant feelings of distrust and fear impact the chains? What do Thurwar and Staxxx attempt in order to gain trust and build comradery within Angola-Hammond?

7. Who is Tracy Lasser and what is her connection to the Angola-Hammond chain? How does her act of protest on live TV echo the antiracist movements in media, particularly sports media, that we've seen in recent years?

8. In the novel, Hendrix Young is one of the few characters that gets to speak in the first person. Why do you think the author chose to reveal Hendrix's story from his own perspective?



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About the Author

NANA KWAME ADJEI-BRENYAH is the *New York Times*-bestselling author of *Friday Black*. His work has appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *Esquire*, *The Paris Review*, and elsewhere. He was a National Book Foundation's "5 Under 35" honoree, the winner of the PEN/Jean Stein Book Award and the Saroyan Prize, and a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle's John Leonard Award for Best First Book, along with many other honors. Raised in Spring Valley, New York, he now lives in the Bronx.

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