

# BOOK CLUB in a bag

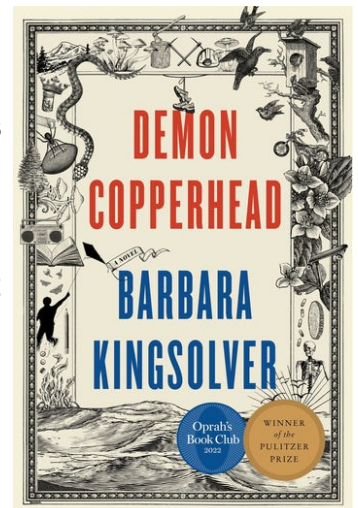


## Demon Copperhead

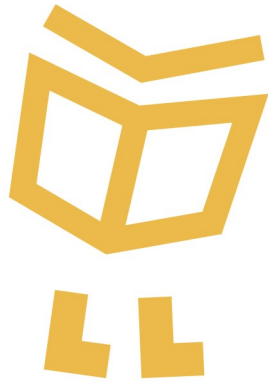
Barbara Kingsolver

### Discussion Questions

1. Consider the epigraph from Charles Dickens' DAVID COPPERFIELD that begins the novel: "It's in vain to recall the past, unless it works some influence upon the present." What do you understand this to mean? How is this idea relevant to the novel?
2. What might Demon mean when he claims that "the born of this world are marked from the get-out, win or lose"? To what extent is this true? What is a destiny? What's the relationship between social or economic privilege and destiny?
3. What might explain Demon's attraction to superheroes, and in particular the "superhero rescue"? In what ways can such a fantasy be helpful? How might such stories be limiting or even harmful to people who are suffering?
4. In what ways are Demon and his boyhood friend Maggot similar or different? What might explain their strong friendship? Why does it change over time? What powerful difficulties different from Demon will Maggot encounter as he gets older?
5. What is important about drawing for Demon? What does this skill afford him at different stages of his life? What does it mean to be creative? How might this be an important part of any life, even if one is not an artist?
6. In what ways is Demon's mother troubled? What might explain what Demon calls her "bad choices," and how does he navigate his love and anger with her? Does the reader's sympathy for her shift as we learn about her history in the foster care system?
7. Why is the city so shocking and difficult for Demon? What might it mean that "there was no outside anywhere"? Despite its problems and poverty, what did the rural environment of Lee County offer Demon and others that was valuable? What might it mean that spending time in the woods "can set you back on your haunches, in a good way"? What's the difference between "country poor" and "city poor"?
8. 8. In what ways are various social workers helpful or not for Demon? What is Miss Barks able to offer him? What are the limitations of even well-intentioned case workers? In what ways are the flaws systemic?



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## About the Author

Barbara Kingsolver's books of fiction, poetry and creative nonfiction are widely translated and have won numerous literary awards, including the Women's Prize for Fiction, awarded to *The Lacuna*; *Flight Behaviour* was also shortlisted. She is the founder of the PEN/Bellwether Prize, and in 2000 she was awarded the National Humanities Medal, her country's highest honour for service through the arts. Prior to her writing career, she studied and worked as a biologist. She lives with her husband on a farm in southern Appalachia.

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