

# BROWN GIRLS

DAPHNE PALASI ANDREADES



BOOK CLUB KIT

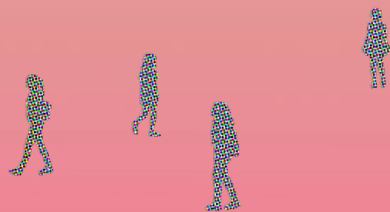


# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Brown Girls* is written in first-person plural. How did this affect your reading experience? What might have been different if the story was written from a different point of view?
2. Andreades writes, "It doesn't matter if we don't share a drop of blood with these people; we have been taught to call them family" How does the theme of family reoccur throughout the novel? Do you have people who you think of as family even though you're not technically related?
3. How do class, race, and gender impact the way the characters in *Brown Girls* interact with their surroundings and are perceived by others? What does this book say about the ways in which our identities shape our experiences?
4. What role does the setting play in the novel?
5. How do we see adolescence and ideals of womanhood play out? How do the characters explore their sexualities? What types of romances are seen as acceptable to their parents, and how do they navigate this?
6. How do the paths of the characters in the novel diverge? What factors cause them to grow apart?
7. As the girls move on to high school, there's a lot of tension between wanting to stay close to their families and wanting to leave the neighborhood. Is this something you've experienced? If so, describe it. Why might this tension be more acute for immigrant families? What do you think the author is saying about the meaning of home?
8. What generational divides are revealed throughout the book?
9. What struggles do the men and boys in this novel face? What does this say about how men and women of color experience the effects of racism differently?
10. Upon visiting each other during college, the girls reflect, "Only when we are around each other can we let our performances drop." What does "performances" mean in this context? How are the girls made to change aspects of themselves to fit into different settings? Describe a time when you've changed something about yourself to fit in somewhere, or with a certain group of people.
11. What does *Brown Girls* tell us about racism and the immigrant experience in America?



# PLAYLIST



## HEARTBREAKER

Mariah Carey

## ARE YOU THAT SOMEBODY?

Aaliyah

## SAY MY NAME

Destiny's Child

## WANNABE

Spice Girls

## GOLD DIGGER

Kanye West feat. Jamie Foxx

## CRAZY IN LOVE

Beyoncé feat. Jay Z

## DANCING QUEEN

ABBA

## EVERYONE FALLS IN LOVE SOMETIMES

Tanto Metro and Devonte

## KUCH KUCH HOTA HAI

Jatin-Lalit, Udit Narayan, and Alka Yagnik

## DROP IT LIKE IT'S HOT

Snoop Dogg feat. Pharrell Williams

## COMO LA FLOR

Selena

## I WANNA DANCE WITH SOMEBODY

Whitney Houston

## IN DA CLUB

50 Cent

## MY HEART WILL GO ON

Celine Dion

## DIAMONDS

Rihanna

## BODAK YELLOW

Cardi B

## TAKE CARE

Drake feat. Rihanna

## ... BABY ONE MORE TIME

Britney Spears



# A SNAPSHOT OF SOME OF MY FAVORITE PLACES

## IN QUEENS by Daphne Palasi Andreades

Here are some of my favorite places in Queens, New York, a few of which make cameos in my debut novel, *Brown Girls*. Many of these sites are beautiful reflections of the borough itself, where all kinds of people mingle and live. As any true New Yorker would recommend, it's best to experience each place on foot in order to observe the sights, sounds, smells, and especially tastes (!) of this vast and vibrant borough—my hometown. This list is by no means exhaustive.

### ROCKAWAY BEACH

I love the beach—and this one in particular is close to my heart. My dad would round my siblings and me up on slow summer days that would quickly stop being boring once we threw our towels down and jumped into the ocean. As a teen, I'd meet my friends here; we'd lounge in the sand, crack jokes, people-watch. In 2012, Hurricane Sandy devastated the region. It has since revitalized; small businesses, like the local independent bookstore Avoid the Day, have opened up, along with eateries such as The Cradle, which cooks up savory West African food, and Rockaway Beach Bakery. Another plus is that the beach is now accessible via the NYC Ferry.

### WOODSIDE

This neighborhood—along with the adjacent Jackson Heights and Elmhurst—is a foodie's mecca, with cuisine from almost any country in the world. Numerous immigrant-owned small businesses abound here, and it is a beautiful sight to see. Woodside is also dubbed "Little Manila" because of its large Filipino diasporic population, the fourth biggest immigrant population in New York City after the Chinese, Indian, and Korean diasporic communities. Ihawan, for example, specializes in Filipino barbecue, and the bakery Purple Dough makes amazing sweets that feature Filipino flavors like ube and coconut pandan. Incredible Thai restaurants line the neighborhood, too, like SriPraPhai—in addition to other delicious and affordable places I have yet to try!



## SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

In a city filled with skyscrapers and populated by 8.8 million people, some say green space is nonexistent in New York City—but that's not true. In Long Island City, Socrates Sculpture Park, which was once a landfill, was repurposed in the 1980s by artists and community members as a public park and outdoor sculpture garden. Contemporary art by established and emerging artists now inhabits the space. I love Socrates's mission to make art accessible to the public: admission to the park and its educational workshops are free. They also host an artist fellowship. Other nearby contemporary art organizations that are absolutely worth checking out include the Noguchi Museum and MoMA PS1.

## FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK

Head to this expansive green space to pay homage to the iconic Unisphere, a 160-foot-tall statue of Earth, originally created for the 1964 World's Fair (and see if you can spot the Unisphere on my U.S. cover!). Flushing Meadows is fantastic for strolls, bicycling, and picnics. The Queens Zoo and Queens Museum are located within this sprawling space, so there's tons to do. The U.S. Open Tennis Championships are held here each year and Citi Field, which hosts the New York Mets baseball team and concerts, is a walk away. After exploring Flushing Meadows, head to Main Street for incredible Chinese (Sichuan, Shanghainese, Cantonese, Taiwanese, to name a few) and Korean cuisine.

## FOREST HILLS STATION HOUSE

It might be unfair to list a place I've never been, but this pub is heartily endorsed by my loved ones who reside in Queens; they implored me to mention it here. I'm mad, though, because although they talk about it all the time, they have yet to take me! They praised Station House's vast selection of craft beers on tap, creative cocktails, yummy bar food, and warm atmosphere. I hope to visit soon and guilt my loved ones into buying me a drink for every time they referenced this place . . . Unless you, dear reader, go before me! Then you must give me the lowdown on this—and all of the places—listed here. Bon voyage!

