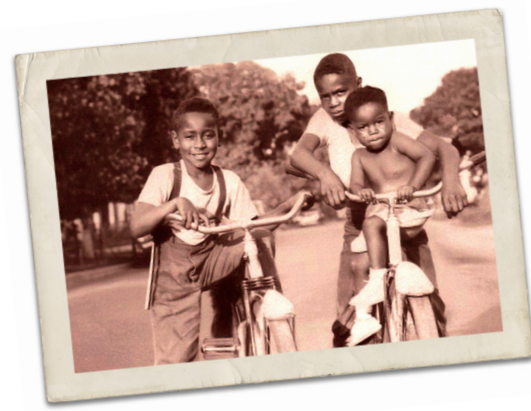


A Few Days Full of Trouble



Discussion Questions

1. First, a show of hands: Who among you already knew the story of Emmett Till before reading *A Few Days Full of Trouble*? How, if at all, did this book affect or alter your understanding of this dark chapter in American history?
2. Reverend Wheeler Parker was not only a family member of Emmett Till's; he was also his best friend. Did the events described in this book have a greater impact on you since they were told by someone who actually knew “Bobo” before his tragic death? And if so, how?
3. Take a moment to talk about how Reverend Parker’s point-of-view shaped your reading experience—did it deepen your sense of identification, compassion, or empathy with Parker and Till’s family? What stories about Bobo were most winning or troubling? Which characters or incidents in *A Few Days Full of Trouble* did you find to be the most memorable—or too devastating to forget?
4. Reverend Parker writes that “the story of Emmett Till is larger than Emmett Till himself . . . It is the story of power, and the way that power is used to put Black people in our place in society.” How is that power wielded in our world, even in the current era?
5. “The story of Emmett Till, today, is also about power over the story itself,” writes Reverend Parker. “The way the story is told and who gets to tell it.” What do you think the author is trying to convey about truth-telling and “alternative facts” in this book? What is your take on American journalism and the justice system—how does one inform and/or challenge the other? Who are the “influencers” in the court of public opinion? Whose job is it to set the record straight?
6. How can a book, such as *A Few Days Full of Trouble*, help elevate the voices of Black Americans? Do you believe that books, in general, have the power to change the world? Talk about books that have made history or have made an impact in people’s lives—even your own.
7. “To know Emmett Till is to know Trayvon Martin. And Breonna Taylor and George Floyd . . .” In *A Few Days Full of Trouble*, Parker makes the case that Emmett Till was the first Black Lives Matter story. How, in your opinion, have we come so far only to end up (in 2023, with the publication of this book) fighting for racial justice—on the streets, in the classroom, at the polls—in America all over again?
8. Reverend Parker spent most of his life grappling with the tragic events of August 28, 1955—both personally/psychologically and on behalf of Emmett Till’s whole family. *A Few Days Full of Trouble* is the culmination of sixty-seven years of the fight for, and the miscarriage of, justice. What lessons can be learned about Reverend Parker’s journey through grief and healing? Did his struggles, as well as his beliefs, resonate with you? What does it mean to seek peace in the midst of chaos, or keep the faith when all hope seems lost?
9. Having read *A Few Days Full of Trouble* do you feel more or less hopeful about the future for, as President Obama once put it—quoting the Preamble to the United States Constitution in his famous 2008 speech on racial justice—a “more perfect union” in America?
10. The search for justice is a theme driving this story. What does justice mean to you and what does it require in a case such as that of Emmett Till?
11. Talk about “white lies,” the small lies we are taught to believe are harmless, and “White Lies,” the big ones that do nothing short of support Whiteness, as an identity supposedly deserving of its place, privilege, and power in the socio-political hierarchy. What does Reverend Parker intend to illustrate about this misconception of these two terms? Do you believe there’s a difference between the two? Why or why not? And how can we do a better job of telling the whole truth, Black and White, for future generations?
12. In what ways has this story awakened or reawakened in you a sense of civic responsibility—to do something, anything, to make a difference?