

The Blossoming Universe of Violet Diamond

AUTHOR: Brenda Woods

PUBLISHER: Penguin Group

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GENRE: Realistic Fiction

LEXILE: 670L

SUMMARY:

This realistic fiction novel is about Violet, who struggles to fit in. Her mom and sister are white, her father, who died before she was born was black, so Violet is biracial. She is frustrated with the way people in her school and community treat her. When she finds out her grandmother on her Dad's side is putting on an art show nearby, Violet persuades her mom to attend the show and let her meet her grandmother, who has estranged herself from Violet's family. After an awkward first meeting, Violet and Mimi (her grandmother) soon form a relationship and she begins to understand and enjoy her African American heritage. She finally is putting the pieces of her identity together and likes the Violet Diamond she is becoming.

BOOKTALK:

"Did you ever have a dream that's so good, you wish you could save it forever instead of having it go back to that place in your mind where dreams become quieter than whispers, quiet like snowflakes falling? And it's such an awesome dream that makes you so happy that right after you wake up, you rush to write it down because you can't just let it evaporate into nothing? Did you ever have a dream like that? Last night, I did." This is how *The Blossoming Universe of Violet Diamond* begins. Do you believe dreams are trying to tell you something? Join Violet as she begin a journey to help her understand more about herself.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Author's Name: Brenda Woods

Author's Website: <http://www.brendawoods.net>

Other books written by the author

St. Louis Armstrong Beach

The Red Rose Box (Coretta Scott King Honor winner)

Emako Blue (VOYA Top Shelf Fiction)

My Name is Sally Little Song

CHALLENGING WORDS

counterfeit (7)-fake; insincere

penchant (10) liking

entomologist (11) a person who studies insects

conglomeration(17) a number of things that are put together
biracial (17) of or relating to two races
serendipity (20) getting what you want by what seems like chance
Bohemian(49) living an unconventional life
bewildered (74) confused by multiple objects or considerations
convoluted(84) to twist; make difficult to follow
frivolous lack of seriousness
reconcile (95) to restore the friendship of
skedaddling(119) run away; scam
wanderlust (128) strong longing for or impulse toward traveling
vamoose (146) to depart quickly
tenacious not easily pulled apart; persistent

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. On page 18 Violet says, "I feel like a single fallen brown leaf atop a blanket of white snow". What does she mean by this?
2. After Violet lets Athena lighten her hair and it turns out badly, Daisy tells Violet that she should always, "Listen to your inner voice." Has there ever been a time in your life when you didn't listen to your "inner voice"? What were the consequences? (Ch. 8)
3. When Violet's mother takes Violet to see Roxanne, they agree to make a plan in case something goes wrong. Violet has a plan of her own and rehearses what she is going to say to Roxanne in case she gets nervous. Have you ever had to meet someone new and rehearsed what you would say? (Ch.16)
4. Several times Violet refers to a "stung by a bee look" that her mom, Gramps, and Mimi get on their face. What do you suppose that looks like? Can you describe, show or draw it?
5. Mimi says, "My Diamond's not missing anymore." Violet knew she was talking about her. What did she mean?
6. The Diamond Sunday Family Feast is one of the family traditions Violet learns about when visiting her grandmother. What are some of your family traditions? Where do they come from?
7. Violet believes that wishes play an important part of her life. Can you recall some of the wishes Violet made and if they came true? Do you believe in wishes? Can you recall a time when a wish of yours came true?
8. Violet is trying to find how she fits in because she is the only biracial person in her school and community. How does Violet's character change throughout the story? Do you think she will be comfortable with herself in her surroundings now?

ACTIVITIES with COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Social Studies:

- There are several famous African American names mentioned in the story. Choose one and research who they are. Write a short summary of their accomplishments. (Elizabeth Coleman, Martin Luther King, Thurgood Marshall, Tuskegee Airmen)
 - 4.W.5** Conduct short research on a topic.
 - 5.W.5** Conduct short research assignments and tasks on a topic.
 - 6.W.5** Conduct short research assignments and tasks to build knowledge about the research process and the topic under study.
 - 6-8.LST.4.1:** Integrate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text with a version of that information expressed visually (e.g., in a flowchart, diagram, model, graph, or table).
- Violet makes several references to how she is like the flower Violet. Research violets and find out more about how/why she thinks they are alike.
 - 4.W.5** Conduct short research on a topic.
 - 5.W.5** Conduct short research assignments and tasks on a topic.
 - 6.W.5** Conduct short research assignments and tasks to build knowledge about the research process and the topic under study.
 - 6-8.LST.4.1:** Integrate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text with a version of that information expressed visually (e.g., in a flowchart, diagram, model, graph, or table).

LIFE SKILLS:

Courage
Friendship
Curiosity
Pride

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Time for Kids: Black History Month

<http://www.timeforkids.com/minisite/black-history-month>

Grand Activities for Grandparents' Day

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/grandparents_day.shtml

Family History Activities for Children

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Family_History_Activities_for_Children:3-11

ACTIVITY SHEET CREATED BY:

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