



2011 Required Reading

*The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

*We encourage you to take your own notes on your responses to these questions. While you are not “required” to hand any work into your teacher on the first day of school, your teacher will assess your reading through discussions, essays and/or tests. Having notes to guide you through class discussions will thus be a valuable way for you to make meaning of the book for yourself and for you to contribute something insightful to class discussion.*

1. What are some major themes of this story?
2. Were you able to find any similarities between your life and any of the characters? Explain.  
*(Prompt taken from <http://www.thebookers.blog.com/2010/06/21/discussion-questions>)*
3. The author emphasizes that the point of this book is not to depict a “good” Wes Moore and a “bad” Wes Moore. He says he wanted to illustrate not the differences between their lives but the similarities. What are the differences between them? What are the similarities?
4. Why was the author haunted by the story of his namesake? What was the reason he insisted on meeting him in prison? Talk about the awkwardness of the two Weses’ first meeting and their gradual openness and sharing with one another.  
*(Prompt taken from <http://www.litlovers/reading-guides/14-non-fiction/722-other-wes-moore-moore?start=3>)*
5. The author Wes asked the prisoner Wes, “when did you first know you were a man?” Talk about the significance of that question...and how each man responded.  
*(Prompt taken from <http://www.litlovers/reading-guides/14-non-fiction/722-other-wes-moore-moore?start=3>)*
6. The incarcerated Wes Moore says that instead of products of our environments, maybe we are “products of our expectations” and possibly those of others. What do you think he means by this? Do you agree? Why or why not?  
*(Prompt taken from <http://www.multcolib.org/reads/discussionquestions.html>)*

7. This book has been criticized for sensationalizing the crime and reopening old wounds. Others have praised it for encouraging discussion about important issues of race and equality. What do you think?  
*(Prompt taken from <http://www.multicolib.org/reads/discussionquestions.html>)*
  
8. The author Wes Moore encourages us to “elevate” not only ourselves, but those around us. What do you think he means by this? Are there barriers to raising up ourselves and others? What are they and how might they be confronted?  
*(Prompt taken from <http://www.multicolib.org/reads/discussionquestions.html>)*
  
9. How would you respond to the following quote by author Wes Moore: “How did this happen, where you had two kids, who came up in similar neighborhoods, who were around the same age, who both came up in single-parent households, who both had trouble with school and trouble with the law growing up? How did it happen that we end up on two completely different paths?”  
*(Prompt taken from [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/video/blog/2010/05/author\\_wes\\_moore\\_explores\\_wher.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/video/blog/2010/05/author_wes_moore_explores_wher.html))*
  
10. Respond to this quote. “I think the thing that can give people hope is, when they are able to see these stories, they’re able to see just how blurry at times that line is between the people that we will look to and admire, and the people who we admonish and push off to the side.”  
*(Prompt taken from [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/video/blog/2010/05/author\\_wes\\_moore\\_explores\\_wher.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/video/blog/2010/05/author_wes_moore_explores_wher.html))*
  
11. At the end of his Introduction, Moore writes that ‘this book is meant to show how, for those of us who live in the most precarious places in this country, our destinies can be determined by a single stumble down the wrong path, or a tentative step down the right one... This is our story’(xiv). Explain what Moore means in your own words. Also, how Moore’s story “our” story? What does it illustrate about our human condition?