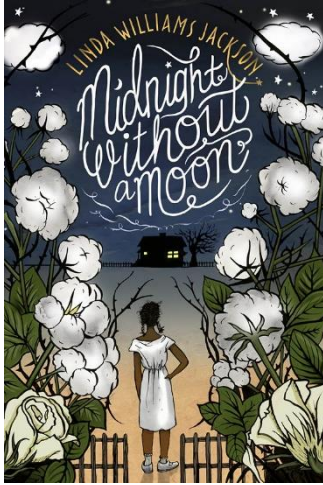


# MIDNIGHT WITHOUT A MOON

## A Discussion and Activity Guide (CCSS Aligned)



### ABOUT THE BOOK

It's Mississippi in the summer of 1955, and Rose Lee Carter can't wait to move north. But for now, she's living with her sharecropper grandparents on a white man's cotton plantation.

Then, one town over, an African American boy, Emmett Till, is killed for allegedly whistling at a white woman. When Till's murderers are unjustly acquitted, Rose realizes that the South needs a change . . . and that she should be part of the movement.

Linda Jackson's moving debut seamlessly blends a fictional portrait of an African American family and factual events from a famous trial that provoked change in race relations in the United States.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born and raised in the Mississippi Delta in the teeny-tiny town of Rosedale, Linda Williams Jackson likes to spin stories about everyday people in small-town settings. Though she has lived in a few other states (Alabama, Missouri, and Kansas), Linda currently makes her home in a not-so-small city in Mississippi with her husband and three children. Visit her website at [www.jacksonbooks.com](http://www.jacksonbooks.com).

“Bravo to Jackson, for a magnificent piece of writing!” ~Sharon G. Flake, Coretta Scott-King Award winning author of *The Skin I'm In*

“Rose shines bright in the darkness.” ~Caroline Starr Rose, Award winning author of *May B*.

“A powerful story.” ~Kirkus

“An authentic work of historical fiction.” ~Horn Book

“Especially good for classroom use.” ~Booklist

“An incredibly well written, important story that was hard to put down.” ~Amazon Vine Reviewer

1. *Midnight Without a Moon* opens with the main character Rose Lee Carter stating that her grandfather says she has a memory like an elephant's. Rose then shares with the reader a memory from the time she was only a year and a half old. Why do you think it is important that the author opens the story by letting the reader know that Rose has a good memory? Cite specific examples from other chapters in the story to support your answer.
  - a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1  
Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
  - b. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2  
Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
  - c. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6  
Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
2. In the first chapter Rose is chased off the road by Ricky Turner, a young white man who is known for running black people off the road just to give them a good scare in order to keep them in their place. Cite examples of how this notion of "keeping people in their place" is repeated throughout the rest of the novel and discuss how they affect Rose.
  - a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3  
Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
3. The setting of *Midnight Without a Moon* is a cotton plantation in Mississippi. Describe how each of the following characters respond to that environment: Rose, Papa, Ma Pearl, Mr. Pete
  - a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.3  
Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
  - b. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.6  
Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.
4. Rose's grandmother, Ma Pearl, described Rose's skin color as darker than midnight without a moon. How does this theme of darkness play out in the rest of the story? Near the story's end, how does Rose turn what was meant as a negative slight against her into something positive?
  - a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including

figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

- b. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6**  
Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
5. A nine-year-old boy named Obadiah Malone is mentioned throughout the novel. List the times he is mentioned and state how his character contributes to the plot.
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5**  
Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
6. The biblical king, David, wrote in his 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm: “He leads me beside still waters....” to signify a peaceful place. Based on some of the events that happen throughout the novel, describe how the name of the fictional town, Stillwater, is a contradiction as it relates to this line of poetry?
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.9**  
Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.
7. In his book, *Vernon Can Read!*, Civil Rights Activist Vernon Jordan states the following regarding his coming-of-age before the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950’s: “We were living our own version of the American dream....Ours was not a world of complaint....We didn’t let segregation, bad as it was, interfere with enjoying our lives.” Cite specific examples to compare and contrast Mr. Jordan’s statements with the way each of the following characters felt about segregation in the 1950’s: Papa, Ma Pearl, Rose, Mr. Pete, Reverend Jenkins, Hallelujah.
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.6**  
Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.
8. When Rose says, “That sun beat down on me like I owed it money from six years back,” it is an example of which literary device? Alliteration, Metaphor, Personification, Onomatopoeia
  - a. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4**  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

- b. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.5.a  
Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
- 9. When Rose says, “I was as black as a cup of Maxwell House without a hint of milk,” it is an example of which literary device? Alliteration, Metaphor, Personification, Onomatopoeia
  - a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone
  - b. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.5.a  
Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
- 10. When dreaming about her future, Rose tells the reader: “Those were my plans. Chicago. College. And caring for my family.” The latter part of her statement (Chicago, college, caring) is an example of which literary device? Alliteration, Metaphor, Personification, Onomatopoeia
  - a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone
  - b. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.5.a  
Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
- 11. Rose describes herself as “Tall. Brown. Skinny. Like a bear who forgot to wake from hibernation and starved through three winters.” This is an example of which literary device? Simile, Irony, Satire, Allegory
  - a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone
  - b. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.5.a  
Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
- 12. The word *Whap* is used multiple times throughout the novel. Its use is an example of which literary device? Alliteration, Metaphor, Personification, Onomatopoeia
  - a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

- b. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.5.a  
Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
13. In the opening chapter Rose mentions that Ricky Turner, with his pickup, chased nine-year-old Obadiah Malone all the way to Stillwater Lake. Near the end of the book, Obadiah is leading his fellow baptismal candidates to be baptized in Stillwater Lake. This is an example of which literary device? Simile, Irony, Imagery, Allegory
- a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.5.a  
Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
14. Two traditional children’s stories are mentioned in *Midnight Without a Moon*—one when Rose is describing her dark complexion, and the other when she is reflecting upon the grocery store incident between Emmett Till and Carolyn Bryant. List the two stories and state how they relate to the situation in which they are mentioned.
- a. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.9  
Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

#### MORE QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Rose’s mother calls Rose “Sister” and Fred Lee “Brother.” She also has her stepchildren Sugar and Li’Man call them “Aunt Rose” and “Uncle Fred.” Why do you think she does this?
2. In her collection of essays, *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens*, author Alice Walker writes in her essay, “The Black Writer and the Southern Experience,” “...the Southern black sharecropper and poor farmer clung to his own kind and to a religion that had been given to pacify him as a slave but which soon transformed into an antidote against bitterness.” What is that religion of which Alice Walker writes, and what evidence of her claim that it was transformed into an antidote against bitterness is seen in *Midnight Without a Moon*? Cite specific examples.
3. Three different denominations among African-American churches are mentioned in the novel. List them, then do a bit of research to compare and contrast the three.
4. Even though slavery had been long abolished before the setting of this novel, cite evidence of its effects on African Americans that were still present in 1955. What effects do you believe are still present today?
5. A doppelganger is defined as someone who looks like someone else. Cite two instances in *Midnight Without a Moon* that might lead the reader to conclude that Hallelujah Jenkins was Emmett Till’s doppelganger.

6. Compare and contrast how thirteen-year-old Rose spent her summers to the way teens might spend their summers today.
7. Rose tried to use skin bleaching creams to lighten her complexion. Compare and contrast this drastic step that Rose took to make herself more appealing to others to how teens react to social pressure regarding their appearance today.
8. The main historical figure in this novel, Emmett Till, had just turned fourteen when he lost his life in Mississippi. The number fourteen is used multiple times throughout the novel. Use the Internet to research the significance of the number fourteen, then tie that significance to each incident in the novel.
9. Rose admired Aunt Belle because she possessed what Papa described as “grit.” Cite an example in the novel where Rose was not so happy that her aunt possessed this quality.
10. During the baptism scene, Rose and the other children sing, “Wade in the water.... God’s gonna trouble the water.” Cite another incident in the novel where one could imply that the water was “troubled.”
11. Put yourself in Rose’s shoes. Would you have left Mississippi when you had the chance, or would you have stayed? Give reasons for the choice you would have made.