

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

Hush

Jacqueline Woodson

NOVEL UNITS[™]

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HUSH

by
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Teacher Guide

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Note

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Identifying attributes, pros/cons, research, evaluation, creative thinking

Comprehension

Evaluating decisions, sequence, analysis, cause/effect

Writing

Essay, article, letter, poetry, description, journal entry, summary

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral presentation, interviewing

Vocabulary

Parts of speech, context clues, definitions

Literary Elements

Conflict, tone, setting, characterization, point of view, theme, figurative language

Across the Curriculum

Art—collage; Health—track and field, depression/stress-management; Social Studies/Culture—religion (Jehovah’s Witnesses), racism

8. What happens when Evie encounters Toswiah in the park? Why does Toswiah smile as Evie runs away? (*Evie meets Toswiah’s sister, Sheila, who is mentally challenged. Evie is kind to her and treats her like a normal person. Toswiah is appreciative of Evie’s treatment of her sister. Evie realizes that everyone has their own difficulties in life, and she is beginning to realize how important it is to live in the present. Evie is beginning to accept her new life.*)
9. What happens to Evie’s father? How does the author present this information? Did you predict this event? If so, why? (*Evie’s father attempts suicide. The author presents the information very abruptly, right after Evie and Anna begin feeling a sense of belonging and identity. This abrupt change demonstrates how drastically different the realities of the Mr. Thomas and his daughters are experiencing. The suddenness of the event startles the reader, adding tension to the plot. Answers will vary. Some students may be completely shocked by the event, while others may say that Mr. Thomas’ depression was obviously deepening and had to reach a breaking point.*)
10. **Prediction:** Will Mr. Thomas survive?

Supplemental Activities

1. Figurative Language: Continue adding to your list. Examples: **Similes**—“sniffing the air like a dog” (p. 139); “Daddy...looking like some shell” (p. 149); **Metaphors**—reality of situation: quicksand (p. 132); Evie: spider (p. 133); **Personification**—“and the wind fighting me” (p. 140); “...the words were falling over themselves to get out of my mouth” (p. 145).
2. Health/Sports: Research what kinds of events are in high school track and field programs. Create a “Glossary of Track and Field Events” that lists each with a brief description.
3. Health/Depression: Conduct research to find out what resources are available in your school or community for people with depression. Create an informative brochure that describes the best available resources. Be sure to include the following: a definition of depression, symptoms of depression, and methods of treatment.

Chapters 24–28

The Thomas family comes to terms with the reality of Mr. Thomas’ suicide attempt. Evie, after a short break, returns to the track team, and Mrs. Thomas gives Anna permission to attend Simon’s Rock College. Evie begins to feel a sense of identity again. Mr. Thomas continues to help her and Anna to have emerged from his depression.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Mr. Thomas’ suicide attempt affect his family? (*Evie quits track, Anna rejoins track, Mrs. Thomas cries, and Anna counts the days until she leaves for Simon’s Rock College. Eventually, Evie’s past falls away and she begins to live in the present. She realizes she is thankful for the time she has with her father.*)
2. To what does Evie compare life in chapter 28? Describe her analogy. (*Evie compares life to a relay race. Life is one long race, but what counts are the smaller increments—the moments that make up a person’s life. As in a relay race where each split time counts, each moment in a life is important.*)

Vocabulary	
	apostles
	increments
	impact
	refrain
	forging
	inheritance
	solarium

3. What does Anna mean when she tells Evie that track can free her? Why does Evie disagree? How does Evie’s comment about a tree planted in a small space relate to the conversation? *(Answers will vary. Anna means that succeeding in track could provide Evie an escape from her current life, whether it is in the form of a scholarship or simply a personal achievement. Evie doesn’t see track as an escape but rather something she can call her own. Evie is like the tree planted in a small space—there seems little hope to give her life, but there is proof that the tree will survive because it is surrounded by older, taller trees. Track can help Evie grow into a “taller, older tree”—the person that she wants to be.)*

- How does Evie make peace with her identity? What factors are helping Evie in this process? *(She realizes that she still isn’t a normal girl who she is. She also realizes that she can be both Evie and Toswiah and that she can do anything she wants with her life. Evie’s search for identity is aided by the fact that she is making friends, such as Mira, Toswiah, and the classmate that gives her a chocolate kiss during class, joining track has also greatly helped Evie feel that she fits in.)*
- What is significant about the Polaroid on the back of the photo of Anna and Evie? *(Answers will vary. The Polaroid was taken by Anna. The girls’ faces are a bit blurry because the picture was taken too close. Though Anna thinks it is a bad picture, Evie thinks the picture perfectly expresses their identities—they are “[them]selves, but just a little different.” [p. 173]. The girls’ position in the picture may also be indicative of their personalities and the difference. Anna is looking out into the world, toward the camera, while Evie is looking directly at Anna and laughing. This could demonstrate that Anna is looking out into the world and the future with a serious gaze while Evie is still far away, content and content where she is.)*
- What is Mrs. Thomas’ reaction when Anna shows her the letter from Simon’s Rock College? Is her reaction what you expected? If so, how? *(Mrs. Thomas quietly reads the letter, agrees that Anna can go to Simon’s Rock, hugs her, and cries. Answers will vary. Some students may be surprised at Mrs. Thomas’ reaction since her religion does not approve of higher education. Others may not be surprised since Mrs. Thomas is a teacher first and obviously wants bright futures for her daughters.)*
- What does Evie ask her father when she visits him in the hospital? What else do they talk about, and what does their conversation indicate about the future? *(Evie asks her father if he is glad to be alive. They do have an honest conversation in which Mr. Thomas apologizes for making the family leave Denver and attempting suicide. Evie tells him that she understands he did what he thought was right from the beginning. Mr. Thomas assures Evie that he is getting back on his feet. Evie even sees his old smile return. The conversation indicates that Mr. Thomas and Evie are on their way to repairing their relationship and that Mr. Thomas finally wants to be a part of his new life. The future is bright and full of hope.)*

8. **Prediction:** What will life be like for the Thomas family from now on?

Supplementary Activities

- Figurative Language: Continue adding to your chart. Examples: **Similes**—“buildings here go on like mountains” (p. 164); “morning feels like springtime” (p. 176); **Metaphors**—people: trees (p. 165); the Thomases’ lives: a poem (p. 170)
- Creative Thinking/Writing: At the end of Chapter 27, Evie describes who she is. In prose or poetry, create a similar description of yourself.

Character Web

Directions: Choose a character from the novel, and complete the chart below. Cite evidence from the story as you fill in information.

A central box labeled "Name" is connected by lines to six surrounding boxes. The boxes are arranged in two rows of three. The top row boxes are labeled "His/Her Statements", "His/Her Behavior", and "His/Her Fears". The bottom row boxes are labeled "His/Her Thoughts", "How He/She Looks", and "Other Actions Toward Him/Her".

His/Her Statements

His/Her Behavior

His/Her Fears

Name

His/Her Thoughts

How He/She Looks

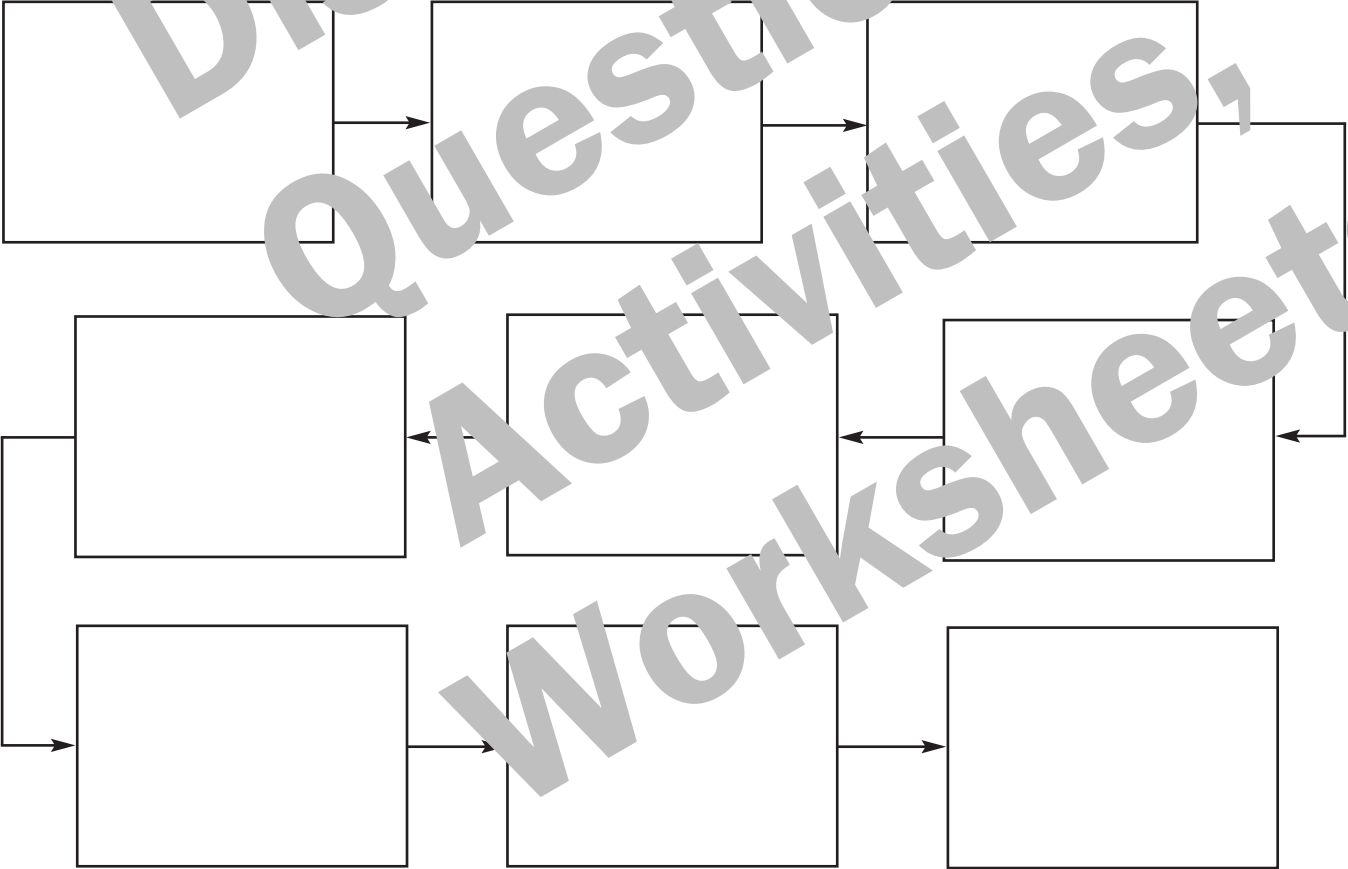
Other Actions Toward Him/Her

Story Map

Title

Setting, Characters, Problem, Solution

Series



Vocabulary, Discussion, Questions, Activities, Worksheets