



Transcendent Kingdom



About the Author:

Born in Ghana and raised in Huntsville, Alabama, Gyasi is a graduate of the Iowa Writer's Workshop and lives in Berkeley, California.

She is the winner of the National Book Critics Circle John Leonard Prize, the PEN/Hemingway Award for Best First Novel, and was a finalist for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for Fiction and the PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize. *Homegoing* also was a winner at the 2017 Audie Awards.

Inside the kit:

(8) copies of the book
(1) book club guide

About the Book:

(from Goodreads)

Gifty is a fifth-year candidate in neuroscience at Stanford School of Medicine studying reward-seeking behavior in mice and the neural circuits of depression and addiction. Her brother, Nana, was a gifted high school athlete who died of a heroin overdose after a knee injury left him hooked on OxyContin. Her suicidal mother is living in her bed. Gifty is determined to discover the scientific basis for the suffering she sees all around her.

But even as she turns to the hard sciences to unlock the mystery of her family's loss, she finds herself hungering for her childhood faith and grappling with the evangelical church in which she was raised, whose promise of salvation remains as tantalizing as it is elusive. *Transcendent Kingdom* is a deeply moving portrait of a family of Ghanaian immigrants ravaged by depression and addiction and grief--a novel about faith, science, religion, love. Exquisitely written, emotionally searing, this is an exceptionally powerful follow-up to Gyasi's phenomenal debut.

Suggested Reads:

Red at the Bone by Jacqueline Woodson

Homeland Elegies by Ayad Akhtar

What We Lose by Zinzi Clemmons



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1. Transcendent Kingdom is a complex novel spanning many years. How does the author weave the past into the present of the novel? What role do flashbacks serve? Which is more prominent in the book--the past or the present?
2. How does Gifty approach the moral predicament of running her science experiments on mice? What elements of her faith are evident in how she treats the mice?
3. Consider the stigmas surrounding addiction, especially opioid addiction, the rates of which are exploding in today's society. What other stigmas and expectations was Nana responding to by not asking for help to deal with his addiction and others not doing more to help?
4. In what ways does Gifty take on the role of caretaker for those in her life? Who, if anyone, takes care of Gifty?
5. What messages do Gifty and Nana hear about the intersection of race and poverty in their youth church meetings? How do the siblings respond to the conflation of the two--and what does the assumption that African countries are impoverished or need saving by missionaries suggest about the colonial power dynamic ingrained in our society?
6. Gifty refers to her relationship with her mother as an "experiment." Are there similarities in the way Gifty approaches her work and her relationship with her mother? How did the separate events of losing the Chin Chin Man and Nana's death affect their relationship? Throughout the course of their lives, how does Gifty determine whether or not she and her mother are going to be okay?
7. Throughout the book, Gifty struggles to find a sense of community in places where people traditionally find it (school, work, family, church, etc.). What life experiences shape her understanding of community? In what ways does this affect her ability to build relationships with the people in her life?
8. Describe the difference between Gifty's connection to Ghana and her connection to Alabama. In what ways does she feel connected to her Ghanaian ancestry?
9. Despite being united in their support of Nana, Gift and her mother do not discuss their pain, and after his death, they blame themselves for not doing more to save him. Why did Nana's addiction become something Gifty's family couldn't talk about, even among themselves? How did their grief evolve throughout the book? How do Gifty and her mother's responses to grief and depression impact their relationship?