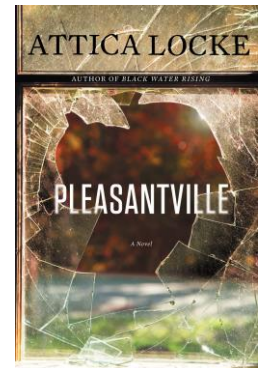


# Pleasantville

Harper

By Attica Locke

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## Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think about Jay's decision to stop practicing law? Why do you think he came to this conclusion?
2. What are the advantages of living in a tightknit community like Pleasantville? What are the drawbacks?
3. Why do you think Reese Parker chooses to base a smear campaign around the Buffalo Bayou Development? In what ways might this be a commentary on America's broader debate over urban revitalization/gentrification? Have you been personally impacted by a similar project?
4. Jay comes to Neal's aid *before* Sam Hathorne gets a chance to ask him for help. Why do you think Jay does this?
5. Most Pleasantville citizens have known the Hathorne family for a long time, but when Neal is accused of murder they don't know whether or not to believe his protests of innocence. How do you think you would react in the same situation? Have you ever known someone accused of a serious crime?
6. One of Pleasantville's oldest residents reasons that "when folks get scared, they act out, make bad choices." What examples of this can you find in the novel? How do the different characters cope with fear? Have you ever done something you later regretted because you were scared?
7. Sworn to secrecy, Jay's daughter Ellie compromises herself to help a friend in difficulty. Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation—or in the same situation as Jay? How well, or poorly, do you feel Jay handled the Lori and Ellie situation?
8. Have you ever been active in local politics (as a candidate, a staffer/volunteer, or a voter)? What matters to you when it comes to choosing a candidate to support?
9. Were you surprised to find out who killed Deanne, Tina, and Alicia? What clues point you toward the truth—or away from it?

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10. Pleasantville was founded in 1949, a time when most black families couldn't own homes in white neighborhoods. What do you think of the socio-political climate that created a place like Pleasantville? And how has integration changed neighborhoods like it across the country?