LAST SUMMER ON STATE STREET
by Toya Wolfe
Discussion Questions

1. How did the arrivals of both the Buchanan family and Tonya in Fe Fe's building disrupt her life?

2. What are some common problems Fe Fe, Precious, Stacia, and Tonya all face in Last Summer on State Street?

3. All four girls have unique challenges in their respective households. What are some ways in which the girls alleviate the pressures they are facing? How do they differ and how are they similar?

4. The girls are deciding who they want to become as they grow into young women. What do you think each of them desires for their next phase of life?

5. Fe Fe has a recurring nightmare about several characters from her neighborhood. What is the significance of those nightmares?

6. There are several models of mother/daughter relationships in this story. Many characters behave like mothers in the narrative. How did these relationships shift your expectations of what motherhood looks like? Speak to the different forms of mother/child relationships.

7. Both Fe Fe and Stacia have strong bonds with their brothers. What are some lessons they learn from their brothers? What do the girls wish for them?

8. Fe Fe attempts to save several characters in the novel. Discuss her attempts, then discuss the attempts other characters make to try to save her.

9. Over the course of the novel, the characters lose their home, community, and selves for a time. When we see the youths as adults at the end, what do you think are the lasting effects of the pivotal summer at the heart of the book?

10. What moments in the book made you think about your own experiences as a young person? Was there a specific character in the book that you related to the most?

11. At the end of the novel Fe Fe writes, "Mama Pearl told me that they Chicago Landmarks. I'm wrting this letter mostly because I wanna tell you that YOU a landmark too." Where in the book can you find people and places who could be considered a landmark? Do you have people or places in your own life that you consider a landmark?