

1. When was The Jazz Age? Do you have any favorite musicians from the period?
2. Oscar Micheaux was one of several black filmmakers who produced “race films.” These films starred black actors and actresses who portrayed characters that weren’t featured in Hollywood’s racist stereotypes. How do you think the race films of the 1920’s – 1940’s may have set the stage for the Blaxploitation films of the 1970s? (Coffey, Shaft, Cleopatra Jones, Superfly).
3. The music of the Jazz Age is thought to be the soundtrack of the Roaring Twenties. What music forms do you think have defined other generations?
4. Was Honoree Dalcour a “New Negro” or naturally resourceful and stubborn about what she valued about her life in Chicago?
5. How did you feel about Honoree taking in the homeless Bessie Palmer? Was it an act of kindness or frustration with the other chorus girls at Miss Hattie’s Garden Cafe? Toward the end of the novel, did Honoree feel genuine affection for Bessie or more of an obligation to her pregnant roommate?
6. In 2015, Sawyer’s depression was a complicated response to the loss of his sister and his estranged relationship with his father. Why do you think he is so haunted by his sister? Would he be better able to deal with his grief and guilt with a more supportive family?
7. Oscar Micheaux made more than 40 films, though many were lost. One of Micheaux’s films, “Within Our Gates,” was released in 1920 and called by some a response to D.W. Griffith’s “Birth of A Nation,” a film cited as heightening the visibility (and acceptance) of the Klu Klux Klan while promoting a negative image of African Americans. What film(s) would you credit as impacting public opinion about an individual/group or political issue? (Think about the 1936 film “Reefer Madness” or propaganda films of World War II, for example).
8. What was your overall feeling towards the book? Do you think there were things that could have been changed or added to make it a more engaging or better read? What would you rate this book 1-5?

