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**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR RUCKER PARK SETUP**

- Mackey’s father died when he was very young. In what ways was Shane like a father to him? Did Mackey even try to show him the truth about him JR? Did he want to, why or why not?
- What does it mean to Mackey to get the nickname “The Hustler” from Acorn? Has anyone ever given you a nickname? What did it mean to you? How did having the nickname make you feel?
- “Money will never push us off our love for the game.” J.K. says. If Shane had made his offer to R.J. instead of Mackey, do you think R.J. would have taken the money? Why do you think Mackey took it?
- “I don’t know if I hate you or what,” Shane says, “I don’t blame you one bit.” Can you explain what he means about himself, either. Mackey replies. Do you think Shane will forgive Mackey? Should he? Will Mackey be able to forgive himself?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR RUBBER**

- What do you think the dog symbolizes? Why is it so important for Clay to leave the rubber? Does he mean for it to be the one? Why or why not?
- Why does Clay look up to Addison? Have you ever looked up to an older friend or relative? What did that person’s attention and opinion mean to you?
- The police said they shot Addison because they thought he pulled out a gun. Do you believe them? A neighbor of Addisons says, “I’ll tell you what they shot him — cause he was young and black, and they could.” What do you think about that statement?
- Clay’s father suggests that the money Addison was trying to collect from Coonce was drug money, even though it was money Addison had won playing. Do you agree or disagree? How do you think Coonce got the money he owed to Addison? Does it matter?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR BLACK AND WHITE**

- Why didn’t Marcus tell the police about Addisons involvement in the shooting? Do you think he did the right thing and implicating Eddie? Would Eddie do the same for Marcus?
- When Marcus is taken to Rikers Island, he makes the following observation: “It’s black people, wall to wall. There are some Spanish voices too. But everybody else is black.” Why do you think that is?
- Mackey thinks, “There was nothing between us now, except for the line that separates black and white. I didn’t know if it could get crossed, or if I could find a way around it.” Do you think the line between the races can get crossed? What changes in society would be necessary for that to happen?
- Given what happens to each of them at the end of the book, who do you think will fare better is the future? Marcus or Eddie?

**LEFT BEHIND IN THE SUPERDOME**

“We stepped out into the stadium, under the dome, and the noise hit me like a wave. There were people packing out loud, talking and shouting. Little kids were running through the stands, screaming after each other, and babies were trying their hearts off. Almost everyone of those voices belonged to black people…. and that wall is a rock in the pit of my stomach.”

— from Hurricane Song

“Kipnis writes the stories as he has come to understand them. Through the eyes and experiences of young adolescents struggling to make it…” in heart ‘Paul tall it is like hearing it straight from the kids themselves.”

— New York Review

**HOW TO START YOUR OWN BOOKCLUB**

Think it would be hard to start your own book club? Think again! All you need is a little bit of organization and some friends who are as excited about the books they read as you are.

Here are a few tips to get you started.

1. The best way to find people to be in your reading group is to ask your friends. Think of all the people you know who like to read, and ask them by e-mail. If you still don’t feel like you have enough people, ask each of your friends to bring someone else. You can usually get a good discussion going with 5-8 people, but any number is that is comfortable for you will work. If you’re having trouble finding enough cool people to turn your reading group, check with your school, local library, or bookstores to see if there’s a group that you can join.

2. Figure out when and where you want to meet. Some groups meet once a week, some meet every other month. You could get together at someone’s house, in a park, on the beach, in your school library. If it sounds too official and overwhelming to check all the “wheres” and “whens” right now, don’t worry. It’s YOUR group and you’ll get to make all the decisions. All you have to do is get together once, and you can work out the rest of the details later.

3. Decide how you will choose books, and how the discussions will be run. This is another one that sounds a little scary but totally isn’t. Maybe you have a favorite author that you and your friends would like to focus on. Or maybe you want to take turns picking your favorite book. Maybe one person likes to talk and would like to lead the discussion, or maybe you would rather just get together and talk about the books you are reading. If you get stuck, you can often find discussion questions online (by the publisher’s website) or at your local library or bookstore.

4. The most important thing to remember is that there’s no right or wrong way to have a reading group. Do what you’re comfortable with and always have fun, and your group will be a success.

For more discussion guides to get your group going, visit: www.penguin.com/teachersandlibrarians
ABOUT THE BOOK

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Paul Volponi's novel, Hurricane Song, explores the impact of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans. The story is told from the perspectives of several teenagers who find themselves trapped in the Superdome, a temporary shelter for those displaced by the hurricane.

**Stressful Situations**

- **Illegality**: The group finds themselves in a情况 where they must work together to avoid being caught.
- **Racism**: They encounter racism and discrimination, which affects their treatment by emergency personnel.
- **Injustice**: They experience injustice, as the main character, Iles, feels that justice is not being served for the events that led to Hurricane Katrina.
- **Violence**: The group witnesses violence, including attacks on individuals based on race.

**Characters**

- **Iles**: A young man who is passionate about football and his father.
- **Tim**: His best friend and a star athlete.
- **Marcus and Eddie**: Two other teenagers who are part of the group.
- **Tyrus**: A central character who faces challenges both inside and outside the Superdome.

**Themes**

- **Identity**: The characters struggle to find their identity in the chaos of the hurricane.
- **Relationships**: The story explores the relationships between the characters, both inside and outside the Superdome.
- **Power**: The power dynamics within the group and the community are examined.
- **Injustice**: The injustice that Iles and others faced is a central theme.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What do you know about Hurricane Katrina’s impact on New Orleans? How does this story compare and contrast with what you know about Hurricane Katrina?
2. Why do you think this is an important novel? What messages do you think Paul Volponi was trying to get across through this story?
3. If you had to take refuge in the Superdome like Iles does, what would you bring with you and why?
4. What are some of the factors that contribute to this situation becoming so terrible in the Superdome? Could anything have been done to make things better for the people inside?

**About the Author**

Paul Volponi is a writer, journalist, and teacher living in New York City. For six years he taught incarcerated teens on Rikers Island and wrote, for six years he taught teens in drug after-treatment centers. Volponi has also been an influential voice in the debate over gun control.

**Quick Pick**

Visit his website at www.paulvolponibooks.com.

**About the Book**

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Volponi was trying to get across through this story.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Describe the character of Iles and explain how he is affected by his experiences inside the Superdome. Why do you think Paul Volponi included Iles in the novel and why do you think he had to keep them there?
2. How does Iles’s relationship with his family change over the course of the novel? Do you think that the author has done this to Iles to help him understand his family better?
3. What is Iles’s relationship with his father? How does Iles and his father’s relationship change throughout the novel? Do you think their relationship changes as a result of the hurricane?
4. Each chapter begins with a line from the song. “When the Saints Go Marching In.” What relevance do these lines have for each chapter? Why do you think Paul Volponi chose to feature this song so prominently in the book?
5. What part or parts of the story are turning points for Iles? Describe the impact of these situations on him.
6. In the epilogue, Iles says that what happened was too important to give a free pass to anyone who helped cause it. Was he able to come to terms with what happened to Iles, his family, and the Superdome? If you were Iles today, what would you say to your father? Would you let him free to anyone who helped cause it? Were you Iles today, what would you say to your father? Would you let him free to anyone who helped cause it?
7. Picture Iles ten years after Hurricane Katrina. What is he doing? Where is he? What is important to him?
8. There are many instances of despair and many instances of hopelessness in the story. Which had the most meaningful for you?
9. What can drugs and violence mean in the Superdome? What role do wealth and class play?
10. What is the moral of this novel? How do you think it reflects on the human condition?
11. What defines a hero? Are there any heroes in this novel? Who would you say is a hero and what makes them heroes? Would you consider anyone you know to be a hero?

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