



NANCY: A beautifully written book of sadness and triumph with unexpected twists, weaving an overture of beauty from the intelligence and imagination of the back waters of the Marsh Girl's shack. Owens wraps this mysterious, haunting story of an abandoned young girl around her own knowledge of the living things in this southern climate. As the girl paints and documents her environment, we get an inside look not only at the marsh, but at the inner life of the girl as she becomes a woman, thriving in her environment, beating the odds, finding love and a future.



KATHARINE: This book reminds me that it is so important to speak up for children living in poverty and give each one a chance to develop their intelligence. Wasn't the character of Kya quite amazing? Every now and then a student comes along with so much potential. All they need is encouragement and some direction. A good reminder to me.



ABIGAIL: What a story. I felt so bad for Kya, but slowly became amazed with how well she was able to turn her life into something good. When it looked like all hope was lost she found the natural world to be her home and the marsh creatures as companions. To me, this story speaks about how the Earth is our home, if we will only pay attention and let it teach us, our lives will unfold like Kya's.



MOLLY: Well, there you have it. Once again the African-Americans are the good Samaritans and the white Christians the least loving as they discriminated against this young girl. And in the end you sort of say YES!. Justice was served for a change. I don't condone this and yet, it seemed right. So often, marginalized people are not able to find justice.



PRISCILLA: Bless her heart! What a sad story. I agree with Molly on this. We Christians should do better. "White trash?" No, we shouldn't be calling them names but speaking up for the poor like Jesus did.



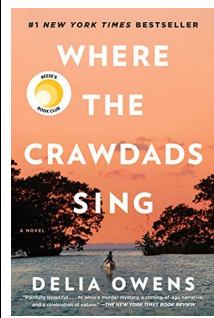
JANE: What an entrepreneur. Who says we need welfare? If a little girl can start a small business, who can't? Kya survived. When push comes to shove, we all can, unless we make people dependent on the government bailing them out. I think this is a good story to stop government intervention in people's lives. Kya evaded the authorities and it seemed that kept her better off. Hear! Hear!



SALLIE: Really, Jane? This story makes me cry. How can we let this happen? Can you imagine that usually the State step, but not here in the back waters. No child should be left behind like this. I don't care if they survive or not, it's not right. Makes you wonder how often something like this happens? Not often, these days, I think, but you never know. Still a good book and for me, like Katharine, it reminds me that brilliance is often lurking in unexpected places. Good for teachers to read.



Discussion Guide



About the Book

Book Title: Where the Crawdads Sing

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Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. What do you think of the marsh? What is your experience of marsh? Can you imagine living in the marsh? The marsh is also home to marginalized people. Why do they live there?
3. “Wildlife is a church,” Delia Owens said. What is the sacred element of the marsh that we might miss worrying about mosquitoes? Delia’s mother used to tell her, “If you go far enough into nature, you will hear the crawdads sing.” a PhD in animal behavior. What is your experience of listening to nature?
4. Owens wrote in part to explore isolation and also animal behavior. How do these themes connect and weave the story?
5. Consider the characters of the book. Who did you relate with and why? Who bothered you?
6. This book had a surprising conclusion? What did you think of Kya’s actions?
7. What was the message in this book for you? Read Nancy’s letter to the reader again if necessary to remind yourself of the themes of this book.
8. Read over the MAMs comments on the book. Which of them do you most agree with and why?
9. In what ways, if any, will this change your life or perspective?

Listen to Delia on YouTube at:

Delia Owens on the inspiration for “Where the Crawdads Sing” (CBS Sunday Morning) 1:42

“Where the Crawdads Sing” author Delia Owens (CBS Sunday Morning) 7:42

Inside the Book: Delia Owens (Where the Crawdads Sing) 2:39