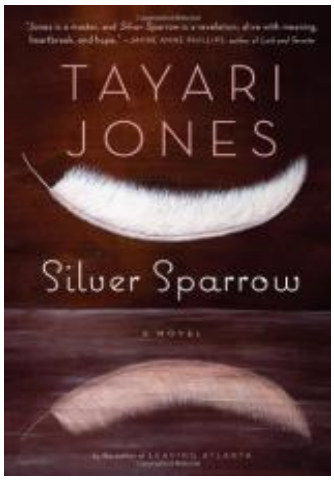
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

Silver Sparrow

by Tayari Jones



About the Book

With the opening line of **Silver Sparrow**, ?My father, James Witherspoon, is a bigamist,? author Tayari Jones unveils a breathtaking story about a man?s deception, a family?s complicity, and the two teenage girls caught in the middle.

Set in a middle-class neighborhood in Atlanta in the 1980s, the novel revolves around James Witherspoon?s two families --- the public one and the secret one. When the daughters from each family meet and form a friendship, only one of them knows they are sisters. It is a relationship destined to explode. This is the third stunning novel from an author deemed ?one of the most important writers of her generation? (the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*).

Discussion Guide

1. Gwen tells Dana that they have an advantage over Laverne and Chaurisse because they know the truth. Is this true?

2. Is it possible to have a healthy relationship that is not monoga-mous?

3. Should Gwen have married raleigh when she had the chance?

4. There is so much talk these days about fatherhood --- contrasting the deadbeat dad with the Bill Cosby-type father. How do you evaluate James Witherspoon, who is both?

5. Both Dana and Chaurisse have relationships with older boys who don?t necessarily treat them well. What do you think accounts for this?

6. Is Laverne?s life better or worse for having married James? What about Gwen? Does James love Laverne or Gwen?

7. Tayari Jones often writes about the way real people interact with history, for example, Gwen?s feelings about the death of Martin Luther King. How have you interacted with history? How did it affect your personal story?

8. Does Chaurisse have an obligation to be ?sisterly? toward Dana once she learns they are related? By that token, does Dana have any obligation to Chaurisse, as a friend or as a sister?

9. Why do you think raleigh is so loyal to James?

10. What is the role of economics in this story?

11. Much of the book is set in Laverne?s salon, the Pink Fox. How does hair figure into this story? Do you think your own hair has impacted your life? For better or for worse?

12. Was Gwen wrong to confront Laverne?

13. Which of the characters was your favorite? Which characters would you like to know more about?

14. Who do you think sent the mysterious postcard at the end of the book?

15. Could this story have had a happy ending?

Author Bio

Tayari Jones is the author of five novels, most recently KIN and AN AMERICAN MARRIAGE, which was an Oprah?s Book Club selection and also appeared on Barack Obama?s summer reading list and his year-end roundup. It won the Women?s Prize for Fiction, the Aspen Words Literary Prize, and an NAACP Image Award, and has been published in two dozen countries. Jones is the C.H. Candler Professor of English and Creative Writing at Emory University and lives in Atlanta.

Critical Praise

"An amazing, amazing read."? Jennifer Weiner on NBC?s ?The Today Show?

"A love story . . . full of perverse wisdom and proud joy."? *O, The Oprah Magazine*

"Immensely pleasurable . . . empathetic and provocative."? *MORE*

"Compelling."? *Vogue*

"Fascinating."? *Ebony*

"If your mom is a fan of emotionally charged morality tales (and whose mom isn?t?) she?s going to devour *Silver Sparrow*

in a single sitting."? *Essence*

"Absorbing . . . Jones writes dialogue that is realistic and sparkling, with an intuitive sense of how much to reveal and when."? *Washington Post*

"Astonishing . . . Impossible to put down."? *Los Angeles Times*

"Nakedly honest . . . dazzlingly charged."? *Atlanta Journal Constitution*

"A recipe for great book club discussions."? *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

"Tense, layered and evocative."? *Minneapolis Star Tribune*

"Beautifully written, **Silver Sparrow** will break your heart."? *Brooklyn Rail*

"Funny and sharp, haunting and heartbreaking."? *The Root*

"[Jones] is fast defining middle-class black Atlanta the way Cheever did **Westchester**."? *Village Voice*

"Jones beautifully evokes Atlanta in the 1980s while creating gritty imperfect characters whose pain lingers in the reader?s hearts."? *Kirkus*

"A graceful and shining work about finding the truth."? *Library Journal*, starred review

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Publication Date: May 24, 2011
Genres: Fiction
Hardcover: 352 pages
Publisher: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill
ISBN-10: 1565129903
ISBN-13: 9781565129900