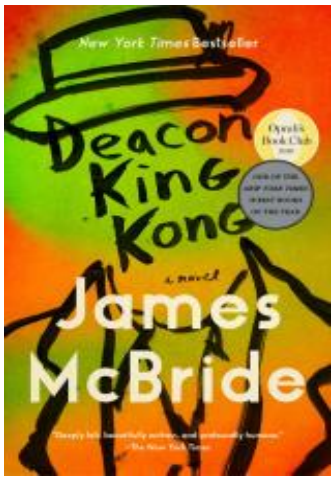
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

Deacon King Kong

by James McBride



About the Book

From the author of the National Book Award-winning THE GOOD LORD BIRD and the bestselling modern classic THE COLOR OF WATER comes one of the most celebrated novels of the year.

In September 1969, a fumbling, cranky old church deacon known as Sportcoat shuffles into the courtyard of the Cause Houses housing project in south Brooklyn, pulls a .38 from his pocket, and in front of everybody shoots the project's drug dealer at point-blank range.

The reasons for this desperate burst of violence and the consequences that spring from it lie at the heart of DEACON KING KONG, James McBride's funny, moving novel and his first since his National Book Award-winning THE GOOD LORD BIRD. McBride brings to vivid life the people affected by the shooting: the victim, the African-American and Latinx residents who witnessed it, the white neighbors, the local cops assigned to investigate, the members of the Five Ends Baptist Church where Sportcoat was deacon, the neighborhood's Italian mobsters, and Sportcoat himself.

As the story deepens, it becomes clear that the lives of the characters --- caught in the tumultuous swirl of 1960s New York --- overlap in unexpected ways. When the truth does emerge, McBride shows us that not all secrets are meant to be hidden, that the best way to grow is to face change without fear, and that the seeds of love lie in hope and compassion.

Bringing to these pages both his masterly storytelling skills and his abiding faith in humanity, James McBride has written a novel every bit as involving as THE GOOD LORD BIRD and as emotionally honest as THE COLOR OF WATER. Told with insight and wit, DEACON KING KONG demonstrates that love and faith live in all of us.

Discussion Guide

While no guide is available at this time, be sure to check out our historical fiction discussion questions, which may help

you in your group's discussion of the book.

Author Bio

James McBride is an accomplished musician and author of the National Book Award?winning THE GOOD LORD BIRD, the #1 bestselling American classic THE COLOR OF WATER, the runaway *New York Times* bestseller THE HEAVEN & EARTH GROCERY STORE, and the bestsellers SONG YET SUNG and MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA. He is also the author of KILL 'EM AND LEAVE, a James Brown biography. A recipient of the National Humanities Medal in 2016, McBride is a Distinguished Writer in Residence at New York University.

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