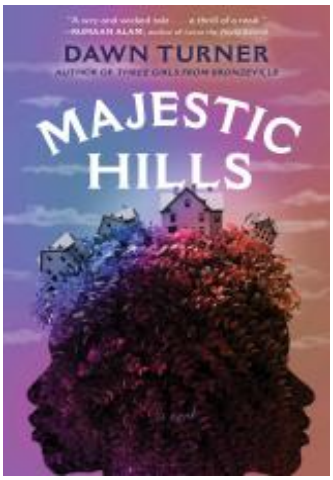
ReadingGroupGuides
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Majestic Hills

by Dawn Turner



About the Book

A Black couple leaves their downtown Chicago condo for a new suburban subdivision, only to find themselves at the center of a maelstrom, in this gripping page-turner from the award-winning author of THREE GIRLS FROM BRONZEVILLE.

Tired of the daily drama in his emergency room, Dr. Langdon Blaque is in search of a place where he can leave the world behind. He loves his job, and has no delusions about the suburbs being perfect, but he wants peace and quiet. His wife Josephine, a lawyer, grew up listening to her father?s stories about the Jim Crow South and sundown towns. She prefers the city. Still, she agrees to move with the caveat that they stay for a year and reassess.

The tight-knit, predominantly white group of neighbors in Majestic Hills initially welcomes them with open arms. But beneath the veneer of privileged harmony, tensions simmer. When a horrifying crime rocks the community, the illusion of safety is shattered, and Josephine and Langdon find themselves at the heart of a brewing storm that pits neighbor against neighbor, exposes deeply ingrained prejudices, and threatens to implode into violence.

As their experiment in suburban living ticks toward the one-year mark, the Blaques are pushed to a breaking point. Can they find a way to make a home in Majestic Hills? Or has the move put their future, their marriage and even their safety in jeopardy?

Discussion Guide

1. Langdon?s desire to move to Majestic Hills is at odds with his wife?s desire to stay in the city. Do you think their compromise is fair? How does compromise show up in other ways in their marriage throughout the novel?

2. What were your first impressions of Majestic Hills and its inhabitants, and how did those views change over time?

3. Why do you think the author chose to give her protagonists the last name Blaque?

4. Do you think it?s possible to build a community truly free from conflict, or are tensions between neighbors like the ones the Blaques experience in some way inevitable?

5. Discuss Josephine?s relationship with Lonnie. How does Lonnie affect Josephine?s view of Majestic Hills? In what ways do you think the two women are similar, and how are they different?

6. What are some things the Blaques experience in Majestic Hills that would be red flags for you in a new neighborhood? Was there a point at which you would have decided to leave if you were them?

7. Compare Langdon?s childhood to Wade?s, and discuss their mirrored uses of the phrase ?troubled youth.? Did you see Wade as a troubled youth? Why or why not?

8. Why do you think Wade took the fall for Benny? Was he right to do so?

9. Recall this quote from the trial: ?One of our greatest deficiencies is that far too few of us can relate to or understand a person whose life has delivered him to a moment when he believes his only recourse is to wreak devastation.? Do you agree or disagree? How does this play out between the characters in the novel?

10. Do you think Josephine was justified in trying to keep the shooting a secret from her husband?

11. What do you think the Blaques decide to do at the end of the novel? What would you do in their place?

Author Bio

Dawn Turner is an award-winning journalist and novelist. A former columnist and reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, Turner spent a decade and a half writing about race, politics and people whose stories are often dismissed and ignored.

Turner, who served as a 2017 and 2018 juror for the Pulitzer Prize in commentary, has written commentary for *The Washington Post*, "PBS NewsHour," "CBS Sunday Morning News" show, NPR?s "Morning Edition" show, the "Chicago Tonight" show and elsewhere. She has covered national presidential conventions, as well as Barack Obama?s 2008 presidential election and inauguration.

Turner has been a regular commentator for several national and international news programs, and has reported from around the world in countries such as Australia, China, France and Ghana. She spent the 2014?2015 school year as a Nieman Journalism fellow at Harvard University. In 2018, she served as a fellow and journalist-in-residence at the University of Chicago Institute of Politics.

Turner is the author of the novels ONLY TWICE I'VE WISHED FOR HEAVEN, AN EIGHTH OF AUGUST and

MAJESTC HILLS. In 2018, she established the Dawn M. Turner and Kim D. Turner Endowed Scholarship in Media at her alma mater, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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