

Book Club Discussion Guide



Butter Honey Pig Bread by Francesca Ekwuyasi, Page 1 (April 2022)

Butter Honey Pig Bread: a novel

By Francesca Ekwuyasi

About the author:

francesca ekwuyasi is a writer and multidisciplinary artist from Lagos, Nigeria. Her work explores themes of faith, family, queerness, consumption, loneliness, and belonging.

francesca's debut novel, *Butter Honey Pig Bread* was longlisted for the 2020 Giller Prize, was a finalist for CBC's 2021 Canada Reads competition, the 2021 Lambda Literary Award, the 2021 Governor General's Award, the 2021 Amazon Canada First Novel Award, and the 2021 ReLit Award. Most recently *Butter Honey Pig Bread* has been longlisted for the 2022 Dublin Literary Award.

Her writing has been published in *Winter Tangerine Review*, *Brittle Paper*, *Transition Magazine*, the *Malahat Review*, *Visual Art News*, Vol. 1 Brooklyn, *GUTS* magazine, the *Puritan*, *Canadian Art*, and elsewhere. Her story *Qrun is Heaven* was longlisted for the 2019 Journey Prize.

Supported through the National Film Board's (NFB) Film Maker's Assistance Program (FAP) and the Fabienne Colas Foundation, francesca's short documentary *Black + Belonging* has screened in festivals Halifax, Toronto, and Montreal.

Source: Author's website: (<https://www.ekwuyasi.com/>)

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About this book:

Butter Honey Pig Bread is a story of choices and their consequences, of motherhood, of the malleable line between the spirit and the mind, of finding new homes and mending old ones, of voracious appetites, of queer love, of friendship, faith, and above all, family.

Francesca Ekwuyasi's debut novel tells the interwoven stories of twin sisters, Kehinde and Taiye, and their mother, Kambirinachi. Kambirinachi feels she was born an Ogbanje, a spirit that plagues families with misfortune by dying in childhood to cause its mother misery. She believes that she has made the unnatural choice of staying alive to love her human family and now lives in fear of the consequences of that decision.

Some of Kambirinachi's worst fears come true when her daughter, Kehinde, experiences a devastating childhood trauma that causes the family to fracture in seemingly irreversible ways. As soon as she's of age, Kehinde moves away and cuts contact with her twin sister and mother. Alone in Montreal, she struggles to find ways to heal while building a life of her own. Meanwhile, Taiye, plagued by guilt for what happened to her sister, flees to London and attempts to numb the loss of the relationship with her twin through reckless hedonism.

Now, after more than a decade of living apart, Taiye and Kehinde have returned home to Lagos to visit their mother. It is here that the three women must face each other and address the wounds of the past if they are to reconcile and move forward.

Source: <https://arsenalpulp.com/>

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Discussion Questions:

1. How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"? How did you feel reading it—amused, sad, disturbed, confused, bored...?
2. Describe the main characters—personality traits, motivations, and inner qualities.
 - Why do characters do what they do?
 - Are their actions justified?
 - Describe the dynamics between characters (in a marriage, family, or friendship).
 - How has the past shaped their lives?
 - Do you admire or disapprove of them?
 - Do they remind you of people you know?
3. Are the main characters dynamic—changing or maturing by the end of the book? Do they learn about themselves, how the world works and their role in it?
4. Discuss the plot:
 - Is it engaging—do you find the story interesting?
 - Is this a plot-driven book—a fast-paced page-turner?
 - Does the plot unfold slowly with a focus on character?
 - Were you surprised by complications, twists & turns?
 - Did you find the plot predictable, even formulaic?
5. Talk about the book's structure.
 - Is it a continuous story...or interlocking short stories?
 - Does the time-line move forward chronologically?
 - Does time shift back & forth from past to present?
 - Is there a single viewpoint or shifting viewpoints?
 - Why might the author have chosen to tell the story the way he or she did?

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- What difference does the structure make in the way you read or understand the book?

6. What main ideas—themes—does the author explore? (Consider the title, often a clue to a theme.) Does the author use symbols to reinforce the main ideas? (See our free LitCourses on both Symbol and Theme.)

7. What passages strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps a bit of dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character? Maybe there's a particular comment that states the book's thematic concerns?

8. Is the ending satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it?

9. If you could ask the author a question, what would you ask? Have you read other books by the same author? If so how does this book compare. If not, does this book inspire you to read others?

10. Has this novel changed you—broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new or been exposed to different ideas about people or a certain part of the world?

Source: (<http://www.litlovers.com>)