

Book Club Discussion Guide



The Only Black Girls in Town by Brandy Colbert, Page 1 (May 2022)

The Only Black Girls in Town

By Brandy Colbert

About the author:

Brandy Colbert is the award-winning author of several books for children and teens, including *Black Birds in the Sky: The Story and Legacy of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre*, which was a finalist for the American Library Association's Excellence in Young Adult Nonfiction Award; Stonewall Book Award winner *Little & Lion*; and *The Only Black Girls in Town*. Her books have been chosen as Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selections, and have been named to many best of lists, including the ALA's Best Fiction for Young Adults and Notable Children's Books. Her writing has been published in the *New York Times*, and her short stories and essays have appeared in several critically acclaimed anthologies for young people. She is on faculty at Hamline University's MFA program in writing for children, and lives in Los Angeles.

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

About this book:

Beach-loving surfer Alberta has been the only black girl in town for years. Alberta's best friend, Laramie, is the closest thing she has to a sister, but there are some things even Laramie can't understand. When the bed and breakfast across the street

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finds new owners, Alberta is ecstatic to learn the family is black-and they have a 12-year-old daughter just like her.

Alberta is positive she and the new girl, Edie, will be fast friends. But while Alberta loves being a California girl, Edie misses her native Brooklyn and finds it hard to adapt to small-town living.

When the girls discover a box of old journals in Edie's attic, they team up to figure out exactly who's behind them and why they got left behind. Soon they discover shocking and painful secrets of the past and learn that nothing is quite what it seems.

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

Discussion Questions:

1. What's a time or a moment in your life where your happiness was tarnished by someone else's words or actions? How did you reclaim that happiness? [p. 9]
2. Have you ever had someone hurt you, but when you told someone else about it, they dismissed you? Have you ever been the one to dismiss somebody else's hurt? [p. 19]
3. What does a microaggression look like? [p. 20]
3. "Skin folk ain't kinfolk" — what does it take to be someone's friend, family, or found family? [p. 31]
4. Do you think our outward aesthetic choices (clothes, hair, body modifications) let people know stuff about us? How do stereotypes help or hinder this? [p. 44]

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5. “Racist?” She says it so plainly, it startles me. Sometimes that seems like a bad word. Like people are more afraid of being associated with it then actually not being it. — What does it take to not be racist? [p. 75]
9. What does it feel like when separate friend groups interact, especially the first time? [p. 90]
10. What stories are told when we think of “history”? What does it mean to have a history that isn’t taught? [p. 103]
11. What books are we usually assigned to read in school? What do they have in common? Different? [p. 135]
12. Have you ever had a friendship change or sour? Are they the only ones who have changed? [p. 181]
13. We sit with that for a few moments. As hard as it is to be black in a town where not very many people look like me or understand what it is to be me, I can’t imagine pretending to be white. — Why would someone pretend to be something they aren’t? What lengths would you go to to protect yourself? [p. 201]
14. Most people these days think if it doesn’t exist on the internet, it didn’t happen. — How do we view history when it isn’t accessible? Do we lose it? [p. 206]

Source: *The Little Witch Book* (<https://thelittlebookwitch.wordpress.com/>)