



A Barefoot
Discussion
Guide

Kwesi and Nana Ruby Learn to Swim

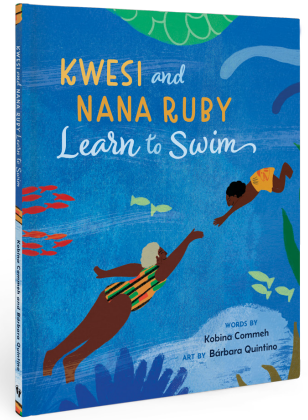
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before reading

- 1) How does it make you feel to see Kwesi and Nana Ruby reaching for each other on the front cover of the book?
- 2) Can you see a hint of the mythical sea beauty on the cover of the book?
- 3) Are you afraid of the water or swimming? If so, would you want to try learning to swim? What thoughts or memories or melodies can help calm your mind as you learn to swim?
- 4) If you're a new swimmer, what are you excited about? Do you have any fears? How do you manage them?
- 5) If you are already a great swimmer, how can you encourage those in your life who cannot swim? What do you love about the water? Do you still get nervous in different types of water like a lagoon, river or the ocean?

During reading

- 1) Looking at the opening scene, what body language do you see? What do you think Kwesi is feeling?
- 2) What would you do to help a friend who is feeling the way Kwesi is?
- 3) What food sends you straight to the kitchen? What texture does it have? What fond memories come up? What words describe your most loved food?
- 4) Is there a board game that you love to play? Have you played Oware or Mancala? Who do you like playing games with?
- 5) Why do you think Kwesi doesn't tell his mom what happened, but he tells his grandma? Who do you prefer to talk to when you feel mad or sad?



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Written by Kobina Commeh
Illustrated by Barbara Quintino

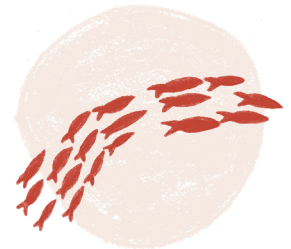


Illustration © Barbara Quintino
from *Kwesi and Nana Ruby Learn to Swim*



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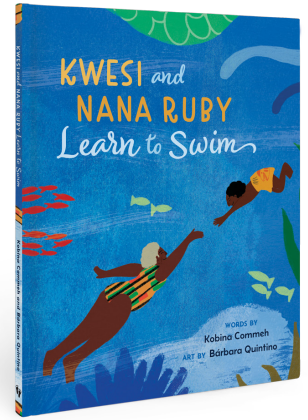


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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, *continued*

After reading

- 1) Kwesi was surprised that his grandmother was afraid of the water. Have you ever found out something about a grown-up that surprised you because they were a grown-up? (Only share with the group if you're sure the grown-up wouldn't mind.)
- 2) Have you ever been afraid of something — or simply thought you couldn't do something—and then learned how to do it? What or who helped you to keep trying? How did it feel when you finally could do it?
- 3) The story of segregation—keeping people separate based on race—that Nana Ruby shares happened years before Kwesi was born, but it lasted for a long time. How did something that seems so long ago still affect Kwesi's life? Can you think of other rules or customs from before you were born that affect your life?
- 4) To be safe, it is important to have a buddy or group with you to play or swim in the water. Who do you, or who would you love to, share this experience with? What activities would you like to do in the water?



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