



# Hush

by Jacqueline Woodson

## Teacher's Guide

Written By Laurie Rozakis, Ph.D.



## CLASSROOM FAVORITES

A Perma-Bound Production

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## Synopsis

### Preface

The story flips back and forth between the present and the past. When the novel opens, the third-person narrator, a child, watches the mother make home-made biscuits. The narrator recalls her father, a police officer, coming home from work. The child's name is Toswiah; her older sister is Cameron. This is the narrator's world, and it is all gone.

### PART 1

#### Chapter 1

Toswiah Green has become Evie Thomas; her sister Cameron is now Anna; their parents Jonathan and Shirley are Mr. and Mrs. Thomas. Evie very much misses her best friend Lulu. The tough black teens in the new neighborhood harass her, calling her "Neckbone" because she is slender.

In a flashback, Evie recalls Cameron's tenth birthday, filled with singing and joy. Their life in Denver was idyllic.

#### Chapter 2

Previously happy and lighthearted, Mama has abruptly turned to religion, becoming a fervent Jehovah's Witness. At night, Evie hears her parents talking about how her father's fellow cops Mr. Dennis and Mr. Randall killed an unarmed black youth. Evie's new identity is that she grew up in San Francisco.

#### Chapter 3

Cops were their family, and now their "family" is all gone.

#### Chapter 4

In a flashback, Evie recalls in fifth grade when she had to write an essay about her best memory. She had described the day her father received a Medal for Bravery for rescuing a mother and her baby from a man

holding them hostage. Evie is very proud of her father. Evie recalls how the white cops told Evie's father that they thought the black kid had a gun. Evie's father knows that is impossible because the child was facing the officers and had his hands up.

#### Chapter 5

The family is getting threatening phone calls. To make matters worse, Toswiah's sister Cameron has a crush on Officer Randall's son Joseph, who also turns against the family. Six days after the shooting, Inspector Oliver Albert comes to the family's house to warn Toswiah's father how his life will change if he testifies. Her father explains that he must do what he knows is right.

#### Chapter 6

The small black population in Denver protests the shootings and holds rallies in support of Toswiah's father. Nonetheless, the family is still menaced. When shots are fired through their window, they decide to leave Denver.

#### Chapter 7

Toswiah's love for her father grows while Cameron becomes more resentful.

#### Chapter 8

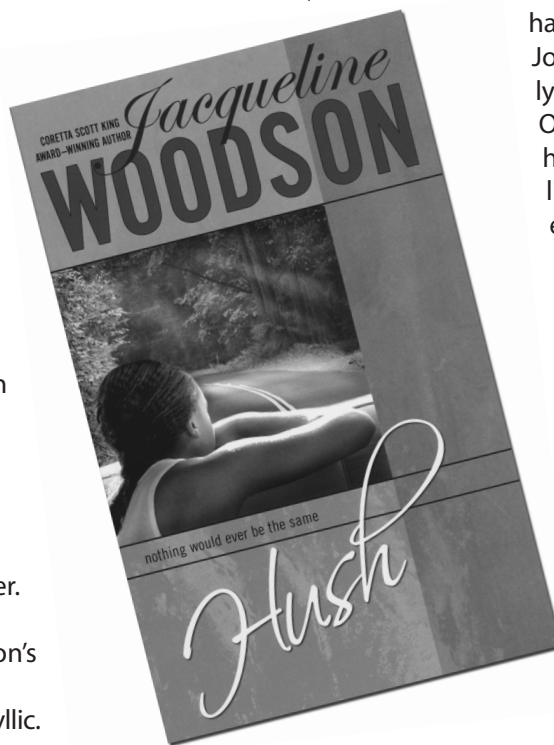
The entire family is upset about leaving their home, family, and friends. They are given a new last name, but they are allowed to choose their new first names.

#### Chapter 9

They stay in an old motel for three months while Toswiah's father completes his testimony. The motel is a poor substitute for their lovely home and the entire family is depressed.

#### Chapter 10

The girls pick their new names: Anna (Cameron) and Evie (Toswiah).



## PART 2

### Chapter 11

Months have passed. Anna is fifteen. Evie tells everyone that she is from San Francisco, but all they know of the city is Rice-a Roni. Evie is astonished to meet a girl with her old name - Toswiah. The girl, however, is hostile. In a flashback, Evie recalls a new girl in her fourth grade class. The girl has bumps where an extra finger had been removed from each hand. Evie tells her never to let anyone see her cry.

### Chapter 12

Fearing they will be discovered, Mama does not want her daughters to make friends. Mama, meanwhile, is obsessed with her church.

### Chapter 13

In the fifth grade, Toswiah sat behind a girl named Carla who had head lice. When Toswiah points this out, Carla becomes known as the "cootie-girl." In the present, Evie signs up for track. Her parents are fighting, which they rarely did before.

### Chapter 14

Mama taught school in Denver. Now, she can't teach because the paperwork hasn't come through. Two years have passed: Evie is now fourteen years old. It is her birthday, but there is no celebration because it is against her mother's new religion. Her parents keep fighting as her father sinks deeper into his depression.

### Chapter 15

Toswiah comes over to talk to Evie and they forge a tentative friendship.

### Chapter 16

The parents' fight erupts into the open as they try to deal with their frustration and anger. Evie cannot forge her new identity without coming to terms with the loss of her old one.

## PART 3

### Chapter 17

Leigh, the track coach, is very encouraging, as are the rest of Evie's teammates. One of the runners, Mira, comments on her long legs, which pleases Evie very much.

### Chapter 18

Although she is too old for such comfort, Evie sits in her father's lap to comfort them both. Her team nicknames her Spider.

### Chapter 19

Mama is delighted that her teaching certificate has come through. She gets a job teaching fifth grade.

### Chapter 20

Mira and Evie talk casually. Evie is thrilled to hear someone call her new name.

### Chapter 21

Evie and Anna go out for tea. Anna, determined to escape from the family, has applied and been admitted to Simon Rock College, even though she is only fifteen. She has been given a two-thirds scholarship, too.

### Chapter 22

After church, Evie meets Toswiah and her developmentally-delayed sister Sheila. Their friendship is developing.

### Chapter 23

Evie's father tries to kill himself by slitting his wrist.

## PART 4

### Chapter 24

Evie has stopped attending track meets. She visits her father, who is recovering. She returns to track.

### Chapter 25

Evie does well at track practice and enjoys the friendship of the other girls.

### Chapter 26

Evie is beginning to feel comfortable in her new identity and new home.

### Chapter 27

Mama gives Anna permission to leave the family and go to college.

### Chapter 28

Evie visits her father at the hospital and it is clear that he is recovering. Coach Leigh says that Evie is an outstanding athlete who will no doubt break some records. Evie and her father smile at each other, happily.

## Author Sketch

Jacqueline Woodson was born in 1964, in Columbus, Ohio, but during her adolescent years, she moved back and forth between South Carolina and New York City, and “never quite felt a part of either place,” according to a *Ms.* article by Diane R. Paylor. From her childhood, Woodson felt drawn to a career as a writer. In elementary school, she was the literary editor of her school’s magazine. “I used to write on everything,” she commented for a Bantam Doubleday Dell Web site. “It was the thing I liked to do the most. I never thought I could have a career as a writer—I always thought it was something I would have to do on the side.”



Woodson’s seventh-grade teacher convinced her that she should pursue whatever career she felt would make her happiest. Woodson decided to follow the advice and write about communities that were familiar to her. She noted in an interview: “I wanted to write about communities of color. I wanted to write about girls. I wanted to write about friendship and all of these things that I felt like were missing in a lot of the books that I read as a child.”

She earned her BA from Adelphi University on Long Island, New York, in 1985. After a brief career teaching at various colleges including Eugene Lang College and Vermont College, Woodson turned to a career as a writer. She has been a freelance writer since 1997. “I feel compelled to write against stereotypes,” Woodson further remarked, “hoping people will see that some issues know no color, class, sexuality.” In her *Horn Book* article, Woodson grouped her books into two categories: her “good” books, which deal with relationships between family members and friends, and her more controversial books, which skirt the delicate problem of what is “appropriate” for children to read.

Woodson makes her home in Brooklyn, New York.

## Critic’s Corner

Woodson was awarded a MacDowell Colony fellowship, 1990 and 1994 and a Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA, 1991-92. She received the Kenyon Review Award for literary excellence in fiction, 1992 and 1995. The following year, *Granta* named her to their Fifty Best American Authors under 40 list. She won the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and the Coretta Scott King Award for *Hush*. Reviews were positive.

“Jacqueline Woodson...delves deep into the confused hearts of a family that has lost its identity,” Emilie Coulter wrote in her Amazon.com review. The *Publishers Weekly* critic said: “Readers facing their own identity crises will find familiar conflicts magnified and exponentially compounded here, yet instantly recognizable and optimistically addressed.” Sharon Grover, reviewing the novel for *School Library Journal*, concluded: “This multifaceted novel from the talented Woodson may be too introspective for some readers, but those sophisticated enough to manage the intricacies of the story will come away with images and characters who are impossible to forget.”

## Other Books by Jacqueline Woodson

*Martin Luther King, Jr. and His Birthday* (1990)  
*Last Summer with Maizon* (1990)  
*Maizon at Blue Hill* (1992)  
*Between Madison and Palmetto* (1993)  
*Book Chase* (1994)  
*I Hadn’t Meant to Tell You This* (1994)  
*From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun* (1995)  
*We Had a Picnic This Sunday Past* (1997)  
*The House You Pass on the Way* (1997)  
*If You Come Softly* (1998)  
*Lena* (1998)  
*Sweet, Sweet Memory* (2000)  
*The Other Side* (2001)  
*Our Gracie Aunt* (2002)  
*Visiting Day* (2002)  
*Locomotion* (2003)  
*Behind You* (2004)  
*Coming on Home Soon* (2004)  
*The Dear One* (2004)  
*Show Way* (2005)  
*Lena* (2006)

## Bibliography

*Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, Volume 21, Gale (Detroit, MI), 1997.  
*Children’s Literature Review*, Volume 49, Gale (Detroit, MI), 1998.  
*Kirkus Reviews*, November 15, 2000, review of *Hush*, p. 1704.  
*Ms.*, November-December, 1994, Diane R. Paylor, “Bold Type: Jacqueline Woodson’s ‘Girl Stories,’” p. 77; July, 1995, p. 75.  
*Publishers Weekly*, November 25, 2002, review of *Miracle’s Boys*, pp. 68-69.

*St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers*, 2nd edition, St. James Press (Detroit, MI), 1999.

*Twentieth-Century Children's Writers*, 4th edition, St. James Press (Detroit, MI), 1995.

*Writers for Young Adults*, Scribner (New York, NY), 2000.

## General Objectives

1. To analyze the family's difficult situation
2. To understand the novel's title
3. To recognize the importance of setting
4. To assess each character's personality
5. To recognize the novel's theme and the lessons that it teaches
6. To understand depression
7. To explore the loss of identity
8. To find examples of courage
9. To sympathize with each character's plight
10. To describe how each character comes to grips with the family's tragedy

## Specific Objectives

1. To explore how Mr. Green and his family feel about his being a police officer
2. To appreciate the family's idyllic life in Denver
3. To understand the crime that sets off the chain of events
4. To analyze why Mr. Green decided to testify against his fellow police officers
5. To evaluate Mr. Green's actions and their effect on the family
6. To probe what it must be like to lose your past
7. To understand why Mrs. Green turns to religion and Mr. Green sinks into depression
8. To compare and contrast Evie and Anna
9. To understand why Evie turns to track and how it helps her forge a new identity
10. To see how the family pulls together and makes a new life for themselves

## Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Jacqueline Woodson's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

**flashback:** a scene that breaks into the story to show an earlier part of the action. Flashbacks help fill in missing information, explain the characters' actions, and advance the plot. Significant portions of *Hush* are related

as a flashback, as the author takes readers from the present to the past to tell the story. The flashbacks include the shooting incident, the entire story of Officer Green testifying, and the family's relocation in the Witness Protection Program.

**point of view:** the position from which a story is told. In *Hush*, Woodson uses the first-person point of view. As a result, we see all events through Evie's eyes, which gives the events a personal and immediate slant. This has the advantage of giving the novel great immediacy and power. It helps readers identify with Evie's emotions and appreciate how she struggles to deal with her loss of identity and sorrow for her idyllic life in Denver.

**conflict in literature:** a struggle or fight. Conflict makes a story interesting because readers want to find out the outcome. There are two kinds of conflict. In an external conflict, characters struggle against a force outside themselves. In an internal conflict, characters battle a force within themselves. Novels often contain both external and internal conflicts to advance the plot. For example, Evie's father has an external conflict with those who do not agree with his decision to break the "blue wall." Some of these people call with threatening messages; one even shoots through the family's window. He has an internal conflict as well, as he struggles with his conscience. He knows that giving testimony is the moral action, yet he does not want to disrupt his life and uproot his family by doing so.

## The Importance of Setting

The flashback sequences are set in Denver, Colorado, before the family enters the Witness Protection Program. Evie considers her life in Denver to be idyllic, because the family is happy there. They are surrounded by family and close friends; her father is a recognized police hero; her mother enjoys her job as a school teacher. This makes the setting very important because it comes to symbolize Eden, the lost paradise.

The capital and largest city in Colorado, Denver is located on the plains just east of the Rocky Mountains. The central downtown district is on the east side of the South Platte River, near its confluence with Cherry Creek.

Approximately half a million people live in Denver, making it the 25th largest city in the U.S. Nicknamed "The Mile-High City" because its elevation, Denver has a semi-arid climate with four distinct seasons. While generally



mild compared to the mountains to the west and the plains further east, the climate can often be very unpredictable. Measurable amounts of snow have fallen in Denver as late as Memorial Day and as early as Labor Day, and trace amounts have been recorded in every month of the year. Evie misses Denver’s distinct seasons and the snow when she and her family are relocated to the unnamed city.

Only after the shooting does Toswiah realize that Denver has a relatively small African-American population. The official racial makeup of the city is 51.9% White, 11.1% African American, about 2.2% Native American, 2.81% Asian American, 0.12% Pacific Islander, 15.59% from other races, and 3.75% from two or more races. Slightly over 30% of the population is Hispanic or Latino of any race.

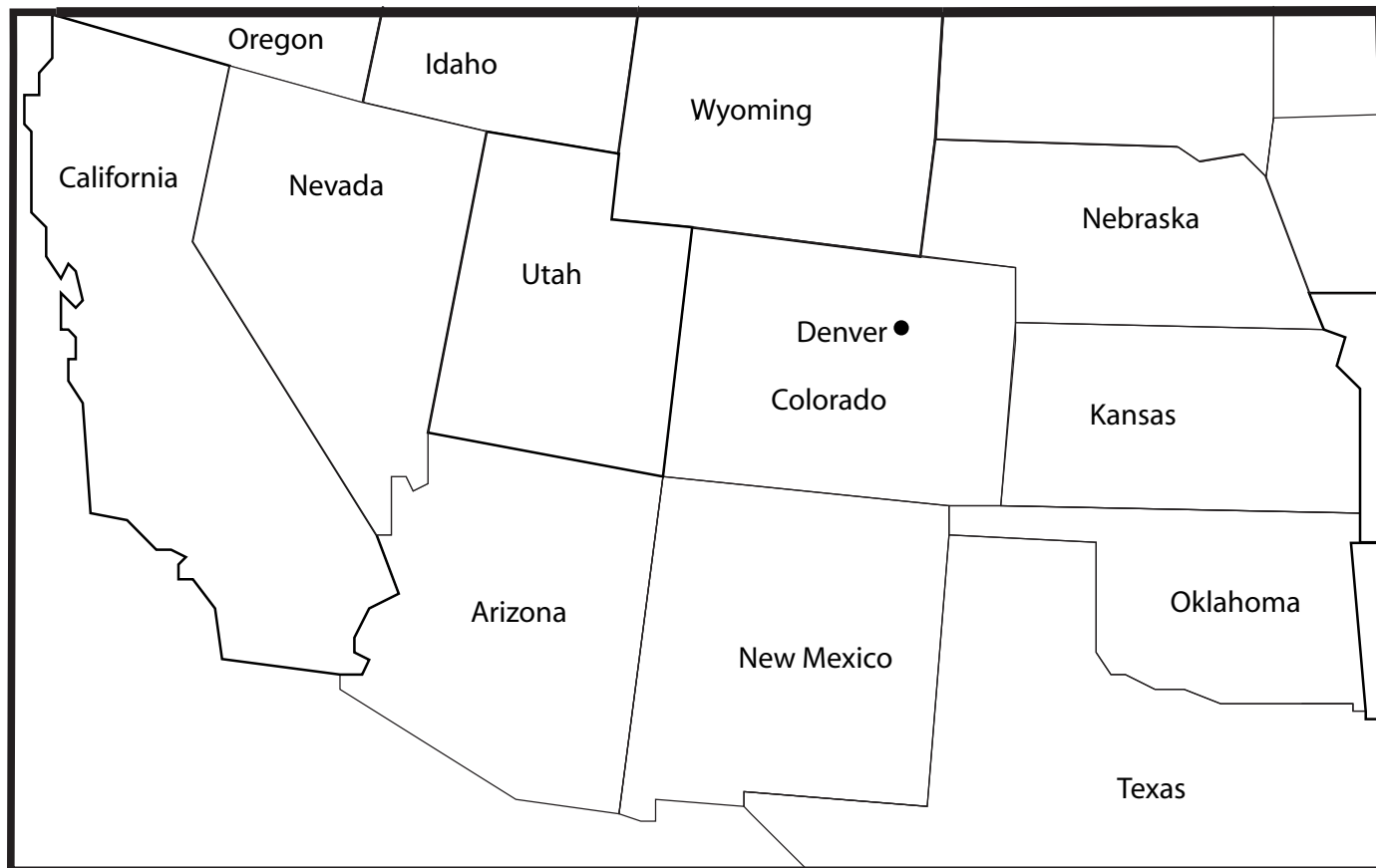
Denver is a culturally-rich city, as Toswiah mentions. The city has many colleges and universities as well as other cultural institutions. For example, Apollo Hall opened soon after the city’s founding in 1859 and staged many plays for eager settlers. In the 1880’s, Horace Tabor built Denver’s first Opera House. After the turn of the century, city leaders embarked on a city beautification program that created many of the city’s parks, parkways, muse-

ums, and the Municipal Auditorium, which was home to the 1908 Democratic Convention and is now known as the Ellie Caulkins Opera House. Denver and the metropolitan areas around it continued to support culture. In 1988, voters in the Denver-Aurora Metropolitan Area approved the Scientific and Cultural Facilities Tax (commonly known as SCFD), a .01 sales tax that contributes money to various cultural and scientific facilities and organizations throughout the Metro area. The tax has been renewed by voters every time it has come on the ballot. Denver is home to many nationally recognized museums, including a new wing for the Denver Art Museum by world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind, the second largest performing arts center in the nation after Lincoln Center in New York City, and bustling neighborhoods such as LoDo, filled with art galleries, restaurants, bars and clubs.

### Cross-Curricular Sources

**Fiction**

- William Armstrong, *Souder*
- Sharon Draper, *Tears of a Tiger* and *Forged by Fire*
- Christopher Paul Curtis, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* and *Bud, Not Buddy*
- Sharon G. Flake, *The Skin I’m In*



Jack Ezra Keats, *The Snowy Day*  
Robert Lipsyte, *The Contender*  
Jeanette Winter, *Follow the Drinking Gourd*

## Nonfiction

Chrisanne Beckner, *100 African Americans Who Shaped History*  
Louis Haber, *Black Pioneers of Science and Invention*  
Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*  
Cal Massey, *Famous African American Women*  
Diane Patrick, *The New York Public Library Amazing African American History: A Book of Answers for Kids*  
Nancy I. Sanders, *A Kid's Guide to African American History*  
Jeffrey Stewart, *1001 Things Kids Should Know About African American History*  
Otha Richard Sullivan, *African American Inventors*

## DVDs/Videos about Race Relations

*African Americans* (1993)  
*Big* (1988)  
*Dealing with Racism and Hate* (2002)  
*Images & Realities: African-American Children* (1996)  
*The Journey of the African-American Athlete* (1997)  
*Landmarks of Faith: The Heritage of African-American Worship* (1999)  
*A Legacy of Patriotism and Valor: African Americans in WW II* (1998)  
*O* (2001)  
*Story of a People: Black Youth* (1998)  
*Story of a People: Roots of Racism* (1998)

## Videos/Films about the Witness Protection Program

*Goodfellas* (1990)  
*My Blue Heaven* (1990)  
*The Client* (1994)  
*Pretend You Don't See Her* (1995)  
*Eraser* (1996)  
*Donnie Brasco* (1997)  
*See Spot Run* (2001)  
*Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle* (2003)  
*Mobsters and Mormons* (2005)

## Audio

*Hush* (Audiofile)

## Internet

Official Jacqueline Woodson Web site  
<http://www.jacquelinewoodson.com/>  
Bantam Doubleday Dell, "Jacqueline Woodson."  
<http://www.bdd.com/>  
BookPage, Heidi Henneman, "Poetry in Motion."  
<http://www.bookpage.com/>

## Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Jacqueline Woodson's *Hush* should include these aspects:

### Themes

- depression
- dislocation
- family love
- names
- race relations
- religion
- sacrifice
- survival
- track
- tragedy

### Motifs

- having meaningful work and a close, loving family
- witnessing a crime
- making an ethical and moral choice
- losing your name, your past, and your identity
- seeking solace in religious fanaticism
- seeking a new identity in track
- seeing your family fall apart
- escaping from your family by leaving early for college
- suffering a deep depression and
- attempting suicide
- learning how to survive in a difficult situation

## Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. That night, my father had sat down at the dinner table and told us he was going to testify. *It might mean us leaving here*, he said. *Changing our lives, our names.* (Chapter 1, p. 15)  
*(Evie's father is a decorated police officer. He saw two of his fellow officers shoot an unarmed youth and feels compelled to testify about the truth. He prepares the family by explaining that if he does testify, they will have to leave their old lives behind. At this stage, of course, no one in the family can imagine how wrenching this change will be – least of all Evie's father.)*
2. Because if you did, it would kill my father. (Chapter 1, p. 17)

*(Even though she is only twelve years old, Evie realizes that telling anyone in their new setting about their past would kill her father because friends of the jailed police officers would come after him. Living with such terrifying responsibility puts a heavy burden on Evie's young shoulders.)*

3. Even though the cops had said they thought the boy had reached for a gun, my father knew it was n't true. (Chapter 4, p. 35)  
*(The guilty cops lie to protect themselves. The youth was black and Evie's family is black. She identifies with the child, as does her entire family. The incident, then, takes on racial overtones.)*
4. "I'm going to stand by that no matter what because the way I see it ... blood's the same color no matter who it's flowing through." (Chapter 5, p. 50)  
*(Toswiah's father says this to the Inspector to explain why he is going to testify against the white cops. He believes that the young black child's life was as important as anyone else's life.)*
5. Sometimes I'm so afraid of this place. Last night, we had Fruity Pebbles for dinner with only a little bit of milk.(Chapter 14, p. 94)  
*(In the beginning of the novel, Mama made elaborate meals, including vegetable lasagna and homemade biscuits. Now, in contrast, she rarely cooks at all, being totally disengaged from the family's daily life. This shows how the family is falling apart and spiraling downward.)*
6. And for a minute, or maybe a hundred minutes—it was the most beautiful name in the world. (Chapter 20, p. 138)  
*(Mira, a girl on Evie's track team, calls Evie by her new name. Evie is delighted because for the first time, she feels as though she is making friends and fitting in. She is starting to rebuild her life.)*
7. When I saw SIMON'S ROCK COLLEGE written on it, my hands started shaking so bad, I could barely pull the letter from it. (Chapter 21, p. 143)  
*(Evie's older sister Anna has applied to Simon Rock College for very early admission – she is only fifteen years old—and has been admitted. While Evie is happy for her sister on one level, she is also terrified about being left behind in the disintegrating family.)*
8. This morning my father slammed his bowl against the floor, picked up a shard of it and jammed it into his wrist, saying that he was ready to die now. (Chapter 23, p. 157)

*(Evie's father attempts to kill himself. He does slice some veins, but the doctors save his life and place him on anti-depressants, which lift his mood. This is the lowest point in the family's life, as Officer Green, the rock, falls totally apart.)*

9. I am no longer who I was in Denver, but at least and at most- I am. (Chapter 26, p. 171)  
*(Seven months have passed since the family left Denver in the middle of the night. Evie has reached a place of peace. She is able to deal with her loss of identity and the family's traumatic relocation. Readers know at this point that she will survive.)*
10. For the quickest moment, his face crumbles, but he catches it and nods. "I'm so glad I'm alive, Evie. So glad we all are." (Chapter 28, p. 177)  
*(Evie's father is slowly recovering from his depression. He will no doubt still suffer some setbacks, but as this exchange shows, he is over the worst of his depression. The family will be all right.)*

## Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

### Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. What is unusual about the narrative form of this novel?  
*(The story is told in a series of flashbacks that intertwine with the present.)*
2. Why is the family in the Witness Protection Program?  
*(Evie's father, a black police officer, saw two white officers shoot an unarmed black youth. He testified against the officers and they were sent to jail.)*
3. How does Mama cope with the family's changed life?  
*(She becomes a fanatical Jehovah's Witness.)*
4. What happens to Papa after the family enters the Witness Protection Program?  
*(He sinks into a deep depression and tries to kill himself.)*
5. Why does Anna, Evie's sister, enter college early?  
*(She needs to escape from the family's disintegration.)*

## Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. What does the title mean? Explain its symbolism. *(No one in the Green family can reveal the secret of their past life. They must not let anyone know that they are in the Witness Protection Program. In addition, they “hush” about the family’s disintegration and try to pretend that everything will be fine.)*
7. What does Denver represent in the novel? *(It represents Eden, an idyllic paradise. With the knowledge of evil—that two white officers would shoot an unarmed black youth and then try to cover up the crime—the Green family is expelled from paradise.)*
8. Why is Evie so upset about having to change her name? *(A person’s name is that person’s identity. It represents your reputation and your image of yourself. In Arthur Miller’s The Crucible, for instance, the climax occurs when John Proctor refuses to give his name as a witch. He cries: “How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!” (Act IV). Even though she is young, Evie realizes the symbolism and importance of a name.)*

## Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. Did you like the form of the novel? Why or why not? *(Readers who like the unusual format might say that it increases the suspense. In addition, the flashbacks help fill in missing information.)*
10. Did you find the changes in the family realistic? Explain your answer. *(It seems likely that the father would have a breakdown because his entire identity was tied up with being a police officer. The mother would be likely to embrace religion because she is portrayed as a moral person. Further, the family is denied the support of their family and friends because they cannot contact any of them.)*

## Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)

11. Write a newspaper article about the incident that Officer Green witnesses.
12. Role-play a scene between Toswiah and Lulu in which they are reunited 10 years in the future.

## Across the Curriculum

### Drama/Speech

1. Should Officer Green have told the truth? Debate this issue with a group of classmates.
2. Anna decides to attend college early and leave her family. In a speech, argue that she did or did not make the correct decision. Consider the long-term effects as well as the short-term ones.
3. Working with some classmates, write and perform the scene where Officer Green gives his testimony.
4. Role-play a scene five years in the future. Show what has happened to each of the four main characters in this novel.
5. Give a speech in which you explain what you learned about identity from this novel.

### Art/Music

1. Explain the reference that opens the novel: “Hush, little baby, don’t say a word...” Then sing the entire nursery rhyme for a small group of classmates.
2. Create a medal and a citation to honor Officer Green for his courage in telling the truth.
3. Create a three-dimensional diorama of the family’s new apartment.
4. Divide a sheet of paper in half. On the left, create a collage of the family’s former life in Denver. On the right, create a collage of their new life, after their father gives testimony.
5. Evie tells everyone that she is from San Francisco, but all they know of the city is Rice-a Roni. Sing that product’s jingle and three other jingles. Why do these songs stay in your head?
6. Create a collage of newspaper headlines about the shooting.

### Language Arts

1. Write a poem celebrating this family for their ability to survive and stay together.
2. Anna likes her new name only because it is a palindrome: it can be read the same forward and



backward. Find at least two more palindromes and then write one of your own.

3. Choose a new name for yourself. Be ready to explain how it suits your personality.
4. How you know who you are when your past has been taken away? Answer this question in an essay.
5. Every month, Grandma sends a letter to her family. It must be general, however, so as not to endanger the family. Write one of these letters from Grandma to her daughter.

**History/Social Studies**

1. The Witness Protection Program (also known as WITSEC) was established by the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970. Imagine that you are federal agents and it is 1970. Hold a news conference to introduce the Witness Protection Program and describe how it functions.
2. Anna has been admitted to Simon Rock College. Find out more about this college by visiting their web site. What can you infer about Anna’s goals and achievements from the fact that she was admitted to Simon Rock?
3. Report on violence in your area. What type of violence is most prevalent? Are there incidents such as the one described in the novel?
4. Evie tells everyone that she is from San Francisco, but she knows next to nothing about the city. Report on the history of San Francisco.
5. Choose any three names in the novel and explain their history and meaning.

**Math/Science**

1. After he gives testimony and is relocated, Officer Green falls into a deep depression. Research the causes, effects, and treatment of depression.
2. Create a chart showing how many people commit suicide each year.
3. In the fifth grade, Evie sat behind a girl named Carla who had head lice. When Evie points this out, Carla becomes known as the “cootie-girl.” Explain how lice are transmitted and how an infected person can get rid of them.

4. Sheila is retarded. Explain how intellectual achievement is measured by an IQ test. What scores classify a person as “retarded”?
5. Some runners claim to experience a feeling of euphoria after they have run for a while. Research this “runner’s high” to find out whether it can be verified.

**Alternate Assessment**

1. Create a poster for Denver, highlighting its attractions.
2. Working with a small group, role-play the scene in which Inspector Albert Oliver tries to talk Officer Green out of testifying.
3. In your own words, state the novel’s theme or message.
4. Write a critical review of the novel for the school newspaper.
5. The place the family is relocated to is never identified in the novel. Choose a likely location and justify your choice in an essay. Use details from the novel to convince your readers that you are correct.

## Vocabulary

Complete the chart by writing synonyms and antonyms for these words from *Hush*. Write as many synonyms and antonyms as you can.

Vocabulary Word	Synonym	Antonym
1. disgust	_____	_____
2. anonymous	_____	_____
3. tragic	_____	_____
4. testify	_____	_____
5. disdain	_____	_____
6. unison	_____	_____
7. protest	_____	_____
8. weird	_____	_____
9. regret	_____	_____
10. justice	_____	_____

## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each and explain why it is important in Hush.

1. copper pennies
2. Rice-a-Roni
3. track
4. Jehovah's Witnesses
5. names

### Part II: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- |                               |           |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| A. Evie                       | F. Leigh  |
| B. Mr. Dennis and Mr. Randall | G. Anna   |
| C. Lulu                       | H. Mira   |
| D. Jonathan Green             | I. Sheila |
| E. Carla                      | J. Spider |

- \_\_\_\_ 1. the officer who gives testimony in a murder case
- \_\_\_\_ 2. a retarded girl
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Evie's older sister
- \_\_\_\_ 4. she is called "cootie girl" because she has lice
- \_\_\_\_ 5. the girl who was given the name Toswiah Green at birth
- \_\_\_\_ 6. the nickname Evie gets when she starts running track
- \_\_\_\_ 7. one of Evie's friends from track
- \_\_\_\_ 8. the officers who shot the child
- \_\_\_\_ 9. the track coach
- \_\_\_\_ 10. Toswiah's best friend from Denver

## Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

### Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements T if they are true or F if they are false.

- \_\_\_ 1. The family has left their home in San Francisco and now live in an unnamed place.
- \_\_\_ 2. Jonathan Green worked as a police officer.
- \_\_\_ 3. His wife was a physician specializing in emergency care.
- \_\_\_ 4. The tough black teens in the new neighborhood harass Evie, calling her "Neckbone" because she is slender.
- \_\_\_ 5. Previously happy and lighthearted, Mama abruptly becomes clinically depressed and even attempts suicide.
- \_\_\_ 6. Evie's best memory is the day her father finished his college degree, first in his class.
- \_\_\_ 7. The family decides to enter the Witness Protection Program when shots are fired through their window.
- \_\_\_ 8. The family is elated when their grandparents are allowed to come for a long visit.
- \_\_\_ 9. In a flashback, Evie recalls a new girl in her fourth grade class. The girl had a bump on each hand where an extra finger had been removed. Evie tells her never to let anyone see her cry.
- \_\_\_ 10. Anna has applied and been admitted to Simon Rock College, even though she is only fifteen.

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Explain why Officer Green is heroic. What traits make him admirable? Why?
- 2. Analyze the title. What does it mean? How does it relate to the novel's theme?
- 3. Argue that the family did not have to enter the Witness Protection Program.
- 4. Compare and contrast Evie's parents. Explain how they are similar and different.



## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Circle the term or phrase to complete each of the following statements.

1. In the beginning of the novel, Mama always makes home-made (**biscuits, ice cream**).
2. The family has left their beautiful home in (**San Francisco, Denver**) and now live in an unnamed place.
3. Jonathan Green worked as a (**police officer, track coach**) in their former home.
4. The tough black teens in the new neighborhood harass Evie, calling her (**Neckbone, Chicken**) because she is slender.
5. Previously happy and lighthearted, Mama abruptly turns to religion, becoming a deeply-observant (**Methodist, Jehovah's Witness**).
6. The family decides to enter the Witness Protection Program when (**the tires on their car are slashed, shots are fired through their window**).
7. Anna, determined to escape from the family, has applied and been admitted to (**Harvard, Simon Rock College**).
8. When she is admitted to college, Anna is (**fifteen, eighteen**) years old.
9. Evie's father tries to kill himself by (**shooting himself, slitting his wrist**). He is hospitalized for a month.
10. Evie gets the nickname (**Spider, Spike**) for her athletic ability.

### Part II: Matching (20 points)

Match the following descriptions with names of speakers from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- |                            |                                       |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ___ 1. Taylor              | A. Evie's father                      |
| ___ 2. Albert Oliver       | B. Toswiah's former best friend       |
| ___ 3. Cameron             | C. the child shot by the two officers |
| ___ 4. Toswiah             | D. Evie's mother                      |
| ___ 5. Shirley             | E. the author                         |
| ___ 6. Jonathan            | F. the coach                          |
| ___ 7. Leigh               | G. the police inspector               |
| ___ 8. Mira                | H. the name Evie was given at birth   |
| ___ 9. Lulu                | I. one of Evie's teammates            |
| ___ 10. Jacqueline Woodson | J. the name Anna was given at birth   |

## Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

### Part III: Quote Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each quote and explain why it is important in the story.

1. We left Denver in the middle of the night with some clothes and some family pictures, toothbrushes and combs, all in plastic bags since our suitcases were all monogrammed.
2. Cops murdering. Cops murdering a black kid.
3. Last night, we had Fruity Pebbles for dinner with only a little bit of milk.
4. This morning my father slammed his bowl against the floor, picked up a shard of it and jammed it into his wrist, saying that he was ready to die now.
5. For the quickest moment, his face crumbles, but he catches it and nods. "I'm so glad I'm alive, Evie. So glad we all are."

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Evie's father says: "I'm going to stand by that no matter what because the way I see it—blood's the same color no matter who it's flowing through." Explain what he means by this statement.
2. Argue that Officer Green did or did not do the right thing in testifying against his two fellow officers.
3. Describe the novel's setting and explain its importance to the story.
4. Trace the novel's plot. Including the exposition, rising action, climax, and resolution.

## Answer Key

### VOCABULARY

Possible answers:

<b>Vocabulary Word</b>		<b>Synonym</b>	<b>Antonym</b>
1. disgust	loathing, abhorrence		delight, love, desire
2. anonymous	publicized		nameless, unnamed
3. tragic	calamitous, fatal, catastrophic	healthful, salubrious	
4. testify	affirm, attest, swear	lie, prevaricate, withhold	
5. disdain	contempt, ridicule	regard, affection, reverence	
6. unison	all together	apart, individual	
7. protest	complain, fuss, gripe	accede, assent, agree	
8. weird	strange, odd	normal	
9. regret	remorse, grief	joy, contentment, satisfaction	
10. justice	fairness, equity	inequity, unfairness	

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Identification (20 points)

- Jonathan Green calls his two daughters his “cop-per pennies” because of their color and their brightness. It is an affectionate name the daughters adore.
- Rice-a-Roni is all anyone seems to know about San Francisco, the place Evie has been told to use as her former home. It annoys her that no one knows anything about the place because it further robs her of her identity.
- Evie seeks her new identity on the track team. She finds it, too, as she becomes a standout runner and makes new friends.
- Mama becomes a fervent Jehovah’s Witnesses after the family enters the Witness Protection Program. The girls are upset because people mock Mama for proselytizing. They are sad because they no longer have Christmas, birthday parties, and other celebrations, as these are against the practices of the Witnesses.
- Names represent your identity. When they family is forced to take new names, they lose their sense of continuity with the past. Officer Green, in particular, has a difficult time holding on to the present and his sanity.

#### Part II: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. J  |
| 2. I | 7. H  |
| 3. G | 8. B  |
| 4. E | 9. F  |
| 5. A | 10. C |

#### Part III: True/False (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. F  |
| 2. T | 7. T  |
| 3. F | 8. F  |
| 4. T | 9. T  |
| 5. F | 10. T |

#### Part IV: Essay (40 Points)

Answers will vary.

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 1. biscuits          | 6. shots are fired through their window |
| 2. Denver            | 7. Simon Rock College                   |
| 3. police officer    | 8. fifteen                              |
| 4. Neckbone          | 9. slitting his wrist                   |
| 5. Jehovah’s Witness | 10. Spider                              |

#### Part II: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. A  |
| 2. G | 7. F  |
| 3. J | 8. I  |
| 4. H | 9. B  |
| 5. D | 10. E |

#### Part III. Quote Identification (20 points)

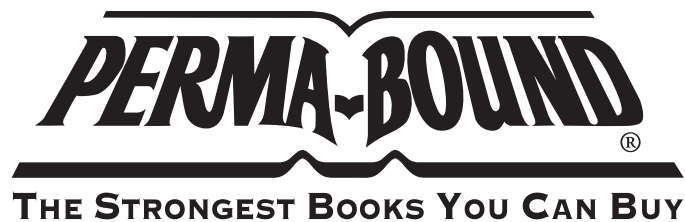
- Evie’s father is a decorated police officer. He saw two of his fellow officers shoot an unarmed youth and feels compelled to testify about the truth. When he decides to testify, the family has to leave their old lives behind and enter the Witness Protection Program.
- The guilty cops lie to protect themselves. The youth was black and Evie’s family is black. She identifies with the child, as does her entire family. The incident, then, takes on racial overtones.
- In the beginning of the novel, Mama made elaborate meals, including vegetable lasagna and homemade biscuits. Now, in contrast, she rarely cooks at all, being totally disengaged from the family’s daily life. This shows how the family is falling apart and spiraling downward.
- Evie’s father attempts to kill himself. He does slice some veins, but the doctors save his life and place

him on anti-depressants, which lift his mood. This is the lowest point in the family's life, as Officer Green, the rock, falls totally apart.

5. Evie's father is slowly recovering from his depression. He will no doubt still suffer some setbacks, but as this exchange shows, he is over the worst of his depression. The family will be all right.

**Part IV: Essay (40 Points)**

Answers will vary.



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