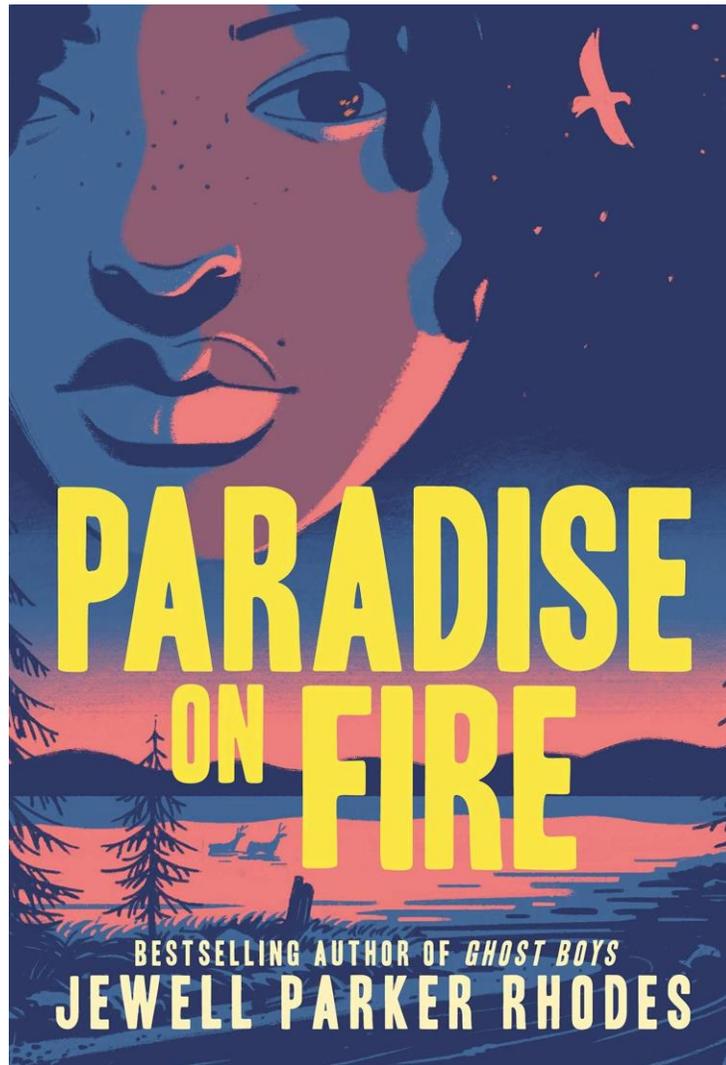


Paradise on Fire Discussion Guide



Paradise On Fire

Author: Jewell Parker Rhodes

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CU Children's Book Festival

Age Level:

Recommended for grades 5 -9 by [Cream & Amber](#)

About the Book:

Paradise on Fire is the story of Adaugo, better known as Addie. Addie loves reading and making maps: she always has a way to escape. This young girl travels from New York to California to participate in a summer wilderness program. At home, she lives with her grandmother, Bibi, after she tragically lost her parents in a fire. Throughout the book, Addie can hear Bibi guiding her throughout her adventure. In California at Wilderness Adventures, Addie and five other Black city kids, all with their own struggles, come to love nature. They go on hikes every day with their guide Leo and his dog Ryder. By the end of the week, Addie is longing for more. She loves nature more than she could have imagined.

This is all until fire strikes. A nearby campfire creates a spark that destroys the forest around her. It is up to Addie to help her friends and lead them to safety. Except this time, it feels as though there is no escape. Addie and her friends have to overcome many obstacles along the way with the help of Addie's map knowledge to get to safety.

About the Author:

Dr. Jewell Parker Rhodes is a 67 year old author from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She is the author of *Paradise on Fire* along with many other books for youth. She has written *New York Times* bestselling books such as *Ghost Boys* and *Black Brother, Black Brother* which have also received over 30 more awards. She has seven books for youth, six adult novels and three non-fiction writing guides. She published her first youth novel in 2010 and her latest book, *Paradise on Fire*, was released in September of 2021. Jewell grew up loving reading and attended college first as a drama major, but quickly switched to writing when she discovered African-American Literature. Jewell has spoken at many colleges and conferences and has received awards such as The American Book Award, The Parents' Choice Foundation Gold Award, The E.B. White Read Aloud Award, and many, many more. To learn more, visit Dr. Parker Rhodes' website <http://jewellparkerrhodes.com/children/>

Questions:

- How does Addy's traumatic past impact her interactions with her fellow campers and with the staff at the camp? How did she deal with her constant need to know how to "escape"?
- Do you think author Jewell Parker Rhodes' choice to make the camp counselors white and the attendees black was a deliberate choice? If so, why might the author have made this choice?
- How can the theme of climate change be seen throughout the book?
- On page 39, Leo says, "Most folks think the environment they were born into is the only way to live." How is the theme of change evident in this book? Is change always positive, always negative, or a mixture?
- Is there a character in this book that you identify with? Why?
- How do Addy and her fellow campers apply their newfound knowledge of climate change to their old city lives?
- How does the author use foreshadowing (e.g., signs of things to come in the future) to warn of the impending Camp Fire?
- How has Addy's character developed from the time she arrived at the camp to when the Camp Fire starts? What characters or events led to Addie's development?
- Throughout the book, eagles are mentioned as metaphors. What do the eagles represent and why?

Activities:

- Option 1: Addy does determined and creative maze/escape work. Create your own escape room proposal! Draw a floorplan of your room and decide what puzzle ideas you want to include. You could suggest messages and clues with invisible ink, you could hide a clue in a hollowed out book, or write instructions in a secret language. There are endless ideas that one could create in accordance with a storyline in order to create a personalized escape room, be creative!
- Option 2: Inspired by the book's theme around climate change, research and create a poster advertising your favorite national park and how we can better protect our earth. You can make a collage or single piece of artwork. This could be done through digital art or with cutouts of magazines, printed photos, and with handmade artwork. Try to present how our ecosystems function with the detrimental effects of rising CO2 levels. This artwork activity is dynamic and innovative, so have fun!
- Option 3: Explore and learn about the effects of climate change on this website <https://www.fireweatheravalanche.org/fire/> that displays where wildfires are currently active here in the U.S..

Works Cited

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