

I'M NOT DYING WITH YOU TONIGHT

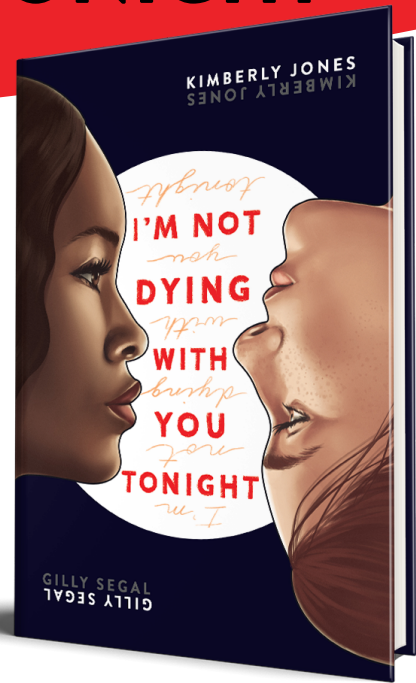
Discussion Guide

"An absolute page turner, *I'm Not Dying with You Tonight* is a compelling and powerful novel that is sure to make an impact."

—Angie Thomas, New York Times bestselling author of *The Hate U Give*

ABOUT THE BOOK

*An NAACP Image Award Nominee, *I'm Not Dying with You Tonight* follows two teen girls—one black, one white—who have to confront their own assumptions about racial inequality as they rely on each other to get through the violent race riot that has set their city on fire with civil unrest.*



Lena has her killer style, her awesome boyfriend, and a plan. She knows she's going to make it big. Campbell, on the other hand, is just trying to keep her head down and get through the year at her new school.

When both girls attend the Friday-night football game, what neither expects is for everything to descend into sudden mass chaos. Chaos born from violence and hate. Chaos that unexpectedly throws them together.

They aren't friends. They hardly understand the other's point of view. But none of that matters when the city is up in flames, and they only have each other to rely on if they're going to survive the night.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Kimberly Jones is the former manager of the bookstore Little Shop of Stories and currently works in the entertainment industry. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

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IT'S *not* ALWAYS BLACK *and* WHITE.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Lena's familiarity with the neighborhood drive her decisions when she realizes it is not safe to remain at school during the fight? How does she use her instincts to judge decisions?
2. How does Lena feel about the rivalry between her high school, McPherson, and Jonesville High? What does she think about the racist incidents that occur in the lead up to the football game?
3. How do the people close to Lena feel about her relationship with Black? Does Lena perceive Campbell as more supportive than others in her life? If so, does that impact her willingness to forgive Campbell when Campbell says offensive things?
4. How would you describe Lena's relationship with Pops? Why doesn't she want to call him when the fight breaks out at the high school? How do you think Pops's view of the world affects Lena's view of the world?
5. How would you characterize Mr. Wells's attitude toward Lena?
6. Lena demonstrates extreme loyalty to the people she cares about. For example, when Lena decides to follow Campbell back out into the riot, saying "But Campbell been goin' hard for me tonight, so Imma ride with her" (pg. 165). What other examples of Lena's loyalty can you find? Is her loyalty always a positive quality?
7. Do you think Lena's relationship with Black will survive after the riot? Why or why not?
8. How do you feel about Lena's view on the looting that takes place?
9. How would you characterize Campbell's relationship with her mother and her father? How does that impact her actions during the night of the riot?
10. How does Campbell perceive white people involved in the rioting versus Black people?
11. Does Campbell's attitude toward the police evolve over the course of the novel? If so, how?
12. Lena says Campbell hasn't tried to get to know the neighborhood and walks around like she doesn't live there (pg. 103 and 105). What do you think she means by that? What does Campbell realize about herself, if anything, in that conversation?
13. What's the difference between Campbell's reaction to rioter with the cone (pg. 153) and the rioter that approaches the sundries shop (pg. 160)?

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14. How would you characterize Campbell's connection to the events of the night before she realizes her father's store might be looted? Does that change at all over the course of the evening?
15. Is Campbell racist?
16. Do you feel that either or both Lena and Campbell begin with a “me vs. you” or “us vs. them” mentality? If so, does that change over the course of the night and why or why not? Do Lena and Campbell ever become an “us”?
17. How do the girls perceive each other upon first meeting? Do they idealize or stereotype one another?
18. What is the racial epithet that starts the fight at the high school? How do each of the characters perceive it?
19. Would the events of this night have transpired the same way if one or both of these characters had been male or male presenting? What might have changed?
20. What do you make of the scene when Lena and Campbell come upon the parking lot full of police? How might their life experiences leading up to that moment create their attitude?
21. How do you feel about Marcus’s decision to accompany the girls to Seventh Ave? How would you describe his relationship with Lena? Does Lena correctly interpret his attitude toward Campbell?
22. What caused the riot to break out?
23. How do you feel about Nicky Wells’s decision to leave the hardware store and go to his grandparents’ store? Were his actions right or wrong?
24. What do you think happens the day after the riot to Campbell and Lena? To the school? To the city?
25. If you could meet one of these characters in real life, what would you say to them?
26. What themes did you detect in this novel?
27. What is the significance of Black’s relationship with his friends? How do you react to the decision he makes during the final scene with them?
28. Can this community heal after the events of the night? If you were a member of the community or a student in the school, what next steps would you want to take?