book discussion kits

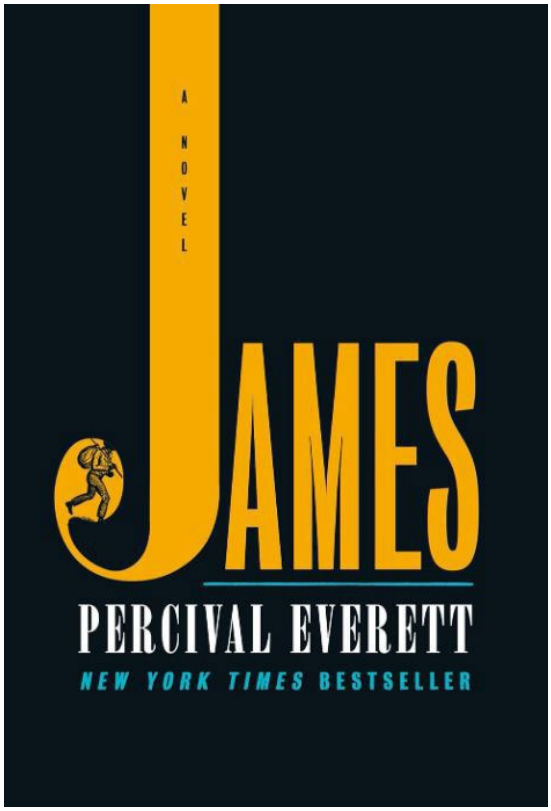
James
by Percival Everett

Martin County Library System Book Discussion Kit:

James by Percival Everett

Included in the Kit:

- Book summary
- Author biography
- Discussion questions
- Recipe suggestions



Book summary

A brilliant reimagining of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*—both harrowing and ferociously funny—told from the enslaved Jim's point of view.

When the enslaved Jim overhears that he is about to be sold to a man in New Orleans, separated from his wife and daughter forever, he decides to hide on nearby Jackson Island until he can formulate a plan. Meanwhile, Huck Finn has faked his own death to escape his violent father, recently returned to town. As all readers of American literature know, thus begins the dangerous and transcendent journey by raft down the Mississippi River toward the elusive and too-often-unreliable promise of the Free States and beyond.

While many narrative set pieces of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* remain in place (floods and storms, stumbling across both unexpected death and unexpected treasure in the myriad stopping points along the river's banks, encountering the scam artists posing as the Duke and Dauphin…), Jim's agency, intelligence and compassion are shown in a radically new light.

also available to download from Libby

book discussion kits

James
by Percival Everett

Source: https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/738749/james-by-percival-everett/

Meet the Author



Percival L. Everett (born 1956) is an American writer and Distinguished Professor of English at the University of Southern California.

Everett, who teaches courses in creative writing, American studies and critical theory, says he writes about what interests him, which explains his prolific output and the range of subjects he has tackled. He also describes himself as a demanding teacher who learns from his students as much as they learn from him.

Everett's writing has earned him the PEN USA 2006 Literary Award (for his 2005 novel, *Wounded*), the Academy Award for Literature of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award (for his 2001 novel, *Erasure*), the PEN/Oakland-Josephine Miles Award for Excellence in Literature (for his 1996 story collection, *Big Picture*) and the New American Writing Award (for his 1990 novel, *Zulus*). He has served as a judge for, among others, the 1997 National Book Award for fiction and the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction in 1991.

Source: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/31723.Percival_Everett

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Discussion Questions

1. James is a retelling of Mark Twain's 1885 novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which is widely regarded as a classic work of American literature. Have you read Adventures of Huckleberry Finn before? How does Everett subvert Twain's original text? Did this reimagination change your perspective on the original novel?
2. Twain is well-known for his satirical writing. Where does Everett use humor and satire in *James*? What social and cultural conditions does the novel's satire mock or critique?
3. Reflect on Jim's narration. Why does he switch between vernacular and standardized English? How did this code-switching affect your reading experience?
4. James depicts the brutalities of slavery, particularly the violence inflicted upon enslaved women and girls, through the stories of Sadie, Lizzie, Sammy, and Katie. What are the unique threats that these characters must navigate? How does Jim react to the gendered violence that he encounters?
5. Return to Jim's travels with the minstrel group. What does the novel say about the performance of race? How do blackface minstrelsy and racial passing complicate or undermine racial classification? Can all the characters be seen as performers of race?
6. Jim's quest for freedom parallels his quest for literacy. Discuss the key moments on his journey to writing his story. What are the texts that he studies? Who are the characters who give him the tools and encouragement to write?
7. The Mississippi River is central to the landscape of the novel. What is the role of the river? How did it shape the political landscape of the region and the events of the novel?

Source: https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/738749/james-by-percival-everett/9780385550369/readers-guide/

Recipes

Corn Dodgers



Ingredients:

- 1 small yellow onion
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups cornmeal
- tsp baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked hot paprika
- 4 teaspoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons freshly cracked pepper
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 3 tablespoons soft butter
- 1 14 oz can of creamed corn
- 2 cups fresh corn kernels (2 cobs should give you this)
- corn oil for frying

Directions:

Finely dice onion and sauté ½ of it in 1 tablespoon of butter until soft and translucent (leave the other half raw). Add all of your dry ingredients together in the bowl of a mixer fitted with a paddle. Add buttermilk, egg, honey, remaining 2 tablespoons of butter creamed corn, fresh corn, sautéed and raw onion and beat until well incorporated. Heat corn oil in a heavy-bottomed pan or Dutch oven until small bubbles start to form and the oil is making crackling noises. Using a small scoop or spoon, scoop the batter and carefully drop the balls into the oil. Fry until golden brown on all sides and drain on paper towels. These are best eaten right away while still hot and crispy and gooey inside. Serve with hot sauce or sour cream.

Recipes Continuation

Smoky, Spicy Collard Greens

Ingredients:

- ½ cup hot sauce
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 cup salt
- ½ cup black pepper
- 1 smoked ham hock (bacon or any other smoked meat will work fine)
- 1 bunch collards

Directions:

Put all of your ingredients, minus the collard greens, into a large soup pot with about 6 quarts of water and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. While the mixture is coming to a boil, thoroughly wash your collard greens. De-stem them by holding the stem firmly with one hand and pulling upward with the other hand. Discard the stems and stack the leaves on top of each other. Roll the bunch tightly into a cigar-shape and cut into long, even ribbons. Add the ribbons to boiling liquid and let the collards cook for 45 minutes to an hour, or until they are soft and the meat is falling off your ham hock.

Source: https://yummybooks.wordpress.com/2012/08/13/huckleberry-finn-corn-dodgers-and-collard-greens/

Recipes Continuation

Wild Huckleberry Mint Mohito Mocktail

Ingredients:



- 1/2 cup fresh huckleberries plus more for garnish or blueberries
- 1/2 cup freshly squeezed lime juice
- 2 tablespoon sugar (or less according to sweetness of berries)
- 8 - 10 leaves fresh mint
- 1 cup ice
- 1/2 cup sparkling water

Directions:

Put berries, lime juice and sugar in a blender and process until smooth. Add mint leaves and muddle slightly, just until the leaves are lightly bruised. Fill glass half full with ice. Add the berry mixture. Top with sparkling water, a sprig of mint and some fresh berries. Stir and serve.

Source: https://www.flavourandsavour.com/wild-huckleberry-mint-mohito-mocktail-or-cocktail/