



Crick Crack, Monkey

Merle Hodge

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A revealing novel of childhood about Tee who is being made socially acceptable by her Aunt Beatrice so that she can cope with the caste system of Trinidad.

Crick Crack, Monkey Details

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Author : Merle Hodge

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From Reader Review Crick Crack, Monkey for online ebook

Jade says

It was really interesting and though provoking. I've never read from this perspective before and thought it was quite unique.

Aj says

At first I didn't like this book. I couldn't get past chapter 2 as I couldn't understand the Trinidadian dialect or anything at all. But since this is a literature book for me, once my teacher explained some stuff I could understand.

The only reason I finished this book is because I have exams actually. Anyway once I went up to chapter 10 it became interesting and I read everything in about two days.

The ending of this book made me cry as Tee is now confused and doesn't want to identify with Tantie.

I probably won't read this again... Lol

Veronica Olivera says

Crick Crack Monkey is a really great book because uses words that appeal to your visual sense. It creates imagery flashing back to our childhood. I like the use of dialect and the words that I have never seen before. Not having the power to make a decision leads Tee accepts to live with her Aunt Beatrice when she wins a scholarship to keep studying. Tee's life is a tremendous change.

Jamie Gonzalez says

This book is by far one of the best books I have read. I feel a back story conning on but I will spare you from it. I first read this book in my second year of high school at Edward p Yorke.

Maria C says

I found this book to be surprisingly repeatable. Especially at the end. Many of the things Tee comes to realize and the decisions she makes about the two worlds she is part of are very similar to what I experienced when I moved to the US.

Crick Crack Monkey follows the story of young Cynthia or Tee during the years she spends without her parents. tuck living with extended family, Tee finds herself struggling to fit into Tantie's rural, carefree world and Aunt Beatrice's educated but still Caribbean world.

ide Thompson says

Really poignant at many points. Hodge really does an excellent job at revealing how class and culture divides in the Anglophone Caribbean can make "code Switching" almost impossible.

How in the Anglo-Caribbean a little girl's sense of self and community can be torn apart by cultural forces which should make those who live in the Anglophone Caribbean rethink their cultural norms.

Stephanie Folarin says

Tee is a child trapped between two worlds, the haves and the have nots. Her father emigrated to England and his sister Tantie remained behind to help raise Tee. Tee's mother is deceased and her sister, Aunt Beatrice, is left behind to aid in Tee's upbringing as well. Tantie cares for Tee when she is young and then Aunt Beatrice gains custody of Tee during her formative years. Tantie fills Tee's childhood with joy and simplicity. Tee is able to enjoy the world and the people around her without bias or judgment. She is able to live the life of an innocent child, free of prejudice and yearning for education. When guardianship changes from one aunt to the other Tee's worldview takes a big hit. Aunt Beatrice dedicates her time to polishing Tee; refining her appearance, behavior and outlook. Tee transitions from being a young free-spirited child into a judgmental, uppity young woman.

Crick Crack, Monkey explains the potential price of upward mobility not only in the Caribbean but in all societies around the world. There is always a price to be paid when someone either decides or is led into a different social class. In this case, Tee is fully aware of the explicit bias her Aunt Beatrice exhibits because it contradicts everything Tantie taught her. However, over time, Tee is indoctrinated into this new way of thinking and her transition and thus transformation is complete.

- Originally posted on my blog, The Educator's Expedition June 25, 2013

jen says

honestly I liked this book a lot, I felt like I could relate to tee and her struggle of being caught between western and nonwestern cultures. idk. this is a pretty easy book to read in terms of the text but the issues it confronts are a lot more difficult imo - like I finished it and I just felt sad for her and for tantie and in general the whole system, the idea of never belonging to either culture and wanting to escape but we as readers know she really can't

also this book did a really good job of showing how colorism/shadeism played out w aunt Beatrice, carol, Jessica, and tee, I really liked all the scenes when this was brought up idk

Aniadayahu says

this book is seriously a very good book. i love the use of creole in it... that is so different for what i am used to in a book. i really appreciate that. the story is so awesome and i can relate to the girl in so many ways. the drama with Tantie and Aunt Beatrice and the way how caribbean people try so hard to be american/english

in the way the live, speak etc. it highlights all of this foolishness. the book makes me proud to be who i am for some reason.

outside of this, the story itself is very interesting and i surely would read this book again

Ansana says

I loved this book so much.

Nancy says

Book no. 5 in preparation for a class that begins in a few days - probably the weakest of the group. Great for atmosphere, dialect, coming-of-age experiences in the West Indies. Particularly strong in portraying conflict between country and city, lower class and middle class, color barriers and prejudices. A little disjointed. Dialect a little tough to follow.

Much anticipation of the comparisons between these books - certainly when contrasted with "A Mercy." Toni Morrison looms large over these writers from the British commonwealth islands - but I suspect much of her writing is informed by the experiences as recorded by these women. Eager to hear the discussion.

Saheeda says

I remember reading this book back in 2007. Being a person of the West Indian heritage,(Trinidad and Tobago) i could have empathized with the characters through out the novel. I really sympathized with the main protagonist Tee. Her life was really a challenging one. Merle Hodge really captured the Caribbean spirit in the writing of this book and the scenes are really true to typical Caribbean life, so for all readers who do not have a first hand experience/knowledge of Caribbean life, Merle Hodge has stayed true to the Caribbean sense. Although at this present time, in 2012, it is not as prominent that the book can be directly related to our modern lifestyles but it stays true to our past frame of mind. For all Caribbean people reading this book, it would be a reminder of the 'ole time days'.

Don Corcoran says

Crick Crack, Monkey follows a little girl in her struggle between the two matriarchs in her life. It revolves around the lives of post-colonial Trinidadian children, in this case a girl named Tee. Its a harsh but authentic critique of post-colonial education and a damning example of institutional racism and classism, pitting the identity of this little girl between indigenous culture and colonial culture. Hodge develops a narrative that is both accessible and sometimes difficult to read. A must read for anyone interested in understanding Caribbean culture.

Logan says

3.5 stars

Emma Deplores Goodreads Censorship says

Published in 1970, this novella from Trinidad is classic postcolonial writing, but also the enjoyable story of the life of a young girl. Cynthia, called Cyntie or Tee, and her younger brother are raised by extended family after their mother dies and their father goes abroad. She has childhood escapades and attends a couple of different schools and it's all vividly portrayed. But she also has a well-off aunt who prizes whiteness in all its forms – physical and cultural – and who makes Tee her project. And so it turns into a story about what in book-critic speech might be called the colonization of a person's mind: how Tee turns against her upbringing and the people who really love her, but without gaining anything of value to take their place.

There's a lot of postcolonial literature out there that follows children as they leave behind their traditional upbringings to attend school and encounter the white world – *The Dark Child*, *Nervous Conditions* and *Mema* all come to mind – but this one stands out for its exploration of how internalized racism works. It's also different for being set in Trinidad, where there isn't quite the "traditional" lifestyle that exists in Africa; the population is mostly descended from African slaves and South Asian indentured servants, a cultural mix that's clearly present in the book and gives it a unique color.

But this isn't only a political book, and I was a little surprised by how well the characters came to life, after seeing them discussed mostly for their ideological roles. Tee's Auntie Beatrice, for instance, the symbol of colonial thought, turned out to be a surprisingly vulnerable and complex character. She lacks power at home, where her daughters flout her authority and her husband refuses to engage with the family, and in trying to change Tee she seems largely motivated by a desire for the ideal family she's never had. Other characters likewise feel real and nuanced despite the brevity of the story.

Overall, this book was a pleasant surprise and one I would recommend; social justice oriented readers will particularly appreciate it, but in the complex characters, the vivid descriptions of Tee's childhood, the rhythms of local speech and the colors of island life, it is also simply a good book.
