



The Catholic High School of Baltimore Summer Reading List

Teacher's Name: _____ Claire Barras _____

School Year: 2022- 2023 Grade Level: _____ 9 _____

Course No.: _____ 212 _____ Course Name: _____ World Civilization _____

Academic Level (Honors/AP/CP1/CP2/CPA): _____ CP _____

Reading: *The Bitter Side of Sweet* by Tara Sullivan.

ISBN-13: 978-0147515094

This book can be found in local libraries, and is available in paperback, hardback or e-book from Amazon or Barnes and Noble.

Assignment: *The Bitter Side of Sweet* Discussion Questions

The author, Tara Sullivan, wrote this novel using information from real life events that are happening today in the Ivory Coast in Africa. Similar examples of child labor and child slavery are happening throughout the world. The story is about two brothers who work for the cacao growers to try to help their impoverished family. They are never told how close they are to paying their debt or earning their freedom. The brothers are joined by a young girl in the labor camps. The three band together and plan an escape.

After reading the book, answer the following questions in complete sentences, preferably typed. It is worth 50 points. The discussion questions will be due your first week of classes. Come to school prepared to discuss the book and the author's efforts toward increasing human rights. (Note: There are more questions on the next page.)

1. Throughout the story, Amadou "counts the things that matter". What matters to Amadou at the start of the book? How does this behavior help him feel in control of the situation he and Seydou are in?
2. How did Amadou and Seydou end up in forced labor at the cacao farm? How did Khadija end up at the farm? Do they react differently to their situations because of how they got there?
3. Moussa and the bosses use punishment to motivate work and keep the children at the farm in line. Why do you think they use different punishments on different children?
4. "I was quiet at the farm a lot because quiet can be very scary, and being scary got people to do things if I needed them to," said Amadou on page 188. Keeping silent and being quiet are recurring themes in this story. How are quiet and silence used by different characters? Do you think it helps or hurts them?

A Quality Secondary Education in the Franciscan Tradition



5. For good reason, Amadou believes he can't trust anyone to help him and Seydou. Yet it's when he starts trusting people that he's able to escape the farm with his brother and Khadija. Who else helps our main characters and in what ways? Consider how trusting each other allows them to begin trusting other people.
6. All three of the main characters endure terrible violence while at the farm. What are the lasting effects of these experiences? How do they help each other heal and come to terms with those experiences?
7. After what happens to Khadija, Mrs. Kablan wants to leave the country but doing that won't allow her to finish researching her story. How do Amadou, Khadija, and Seydou help her complete her story? Why is it so important to them that she publishes her story?
8. At the end of the novel Amadou and Seydou choose to go to the fair trade cacao farm Mrs. Kablan told them about. What impact does working there have on each of them? What is "fair trade" and what is the impact it has on the workers' lives?
9. Over the course of the book we see a change in Amadou's definition of what matters. What inspires this change?
10. What is your reaction to what you have learned about the conditions of children who work to produce a common item like chocolate?