

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

9. The Freeman family's jar is described as a "reminder of how you children came to be Freemans." How does the jar's presence in different moments of the story influence the characters' sense of identity and family legacy? What do you think the heirloom symbolizes for Ebby, specifically?

10. The theme of heritage and legacy is important in the novel, from the family's historical ties to Refuge County to the jar that has been passed down for generations. How does the novel explore the concept of inheritance—both material and emotional?

11. Old Mo, the cherished family jar, ultimately becomes a beloved museum exhibit. How do you think this shift from a personal family heirloom to a public artifact affects the emotional connection the Freemans have to it? How does Old Mo's fate at the end of the novel mirror Ebby's own story?

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12. What do you think will happen to Ebby after the novel's conclusion? Do you believe she will finally find peace and closure, or do you think her past will continue to influence her future decisions and relationships? What path do you imagine for her moving forward?

13. True crime is a very popular trend across television, film, books, podcasts, and more. Did Ebby's story make you examine or reconsider how pop-culture consumes other people's stories and trauma?

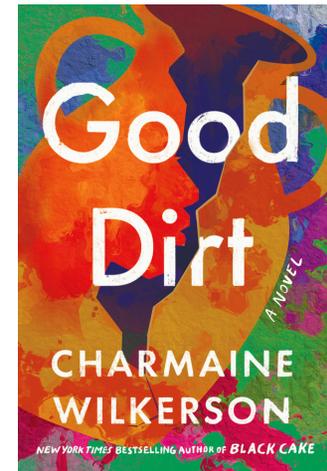
14. What did you think of the five words on the bottom of the jar? How did you feel when the words were revealed?

15. If Good Dirt became a movie or TV show, who would you cast as each character?



## WEST BABYLON LITERARY CLUB

### GOOD DIRT



### BY CHARMAINE WILKERSON

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## SUMMARY

Good Dirt follows Ebby Freeman, a woman escaping a public romantic humiliation and a childhood tragedy involving her brother's death and a shattered family heirloom. The multi-generational story weaves together Ebby's present-day journey to France with the history of her enslaved ancestor Moses, the creator of a symbolic stoneware jar passed down through generations.

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Charmaine Wilkerson is a New York Times bestselling author known for her novel *Black Cake*, a Hulu series adaptation. An American writer with roots in Jamaica and the Caribbean, she is a graduate of Barnard College and Stanford University.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. There was the moment before and there would be everything after.” Prior to the shooting, the flashbacks to Baz and Ebby’s childhood depict them as carefree siblings with a strong bond. How does this before-and-after mentality shape the way Ebby sees her life? How does Baz’s death haunt Ebby throughout her adult life?
2. What was your favorite part of the story? Favorite location and time period? The character who interested you the most?
3. Ebby’s decision to take refuge in a small French village after her wedding is called off is a pivotal moment. What do you think she was hoping to find in France, and how does this setting contrast with her life in the United States?
4. When Henry’s new partner, Avery, meets Ebby, she immediately knows who Ebby is: “Here, in the middle-of-nowhere France, is yet another person who has formed an image of Ebby before they’ve even met her.” How does the novel portray the way trauma, particularly public trauma, becomes a part of a person’s identity? How does Ebby react to being known more for her tragedy than for her personal achievements?

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5. Throughout the novel, Ebby’s physical appearance changes repeatedly as she experiments with hair color. How do you interpret these changes in the context of her emotional journey?
6. During a flashback to her childhood, Ebby feels uncomfortable with the attention the Freemans receive as a prominent Black family in Massachusetts. How does this discomfort evolve as Ebby grows older and gains more visibility in society? How does her family’s wealth and status complicate her feelings about race and belonging?
7. “Sometimes, not recognizing someone’s worth can be an advantage.” Do you find this statement to be true for the characters in the novel? Discuss.
8. The novel shifts between different time periods and perspectives. How do these shifts in time help to deepen your understanding of the characters and their motivations? How does learning about Ebby’s ancestry shed light on the Freeman family’s lives today?