



## WEST SUBURBAN MILWAUKEE READS

**Small Great Things** by Jodi Picoult

Discussion Questions and Author Bio

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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The story is told from three first person perspectives: Ruth, Turk, and Kennedy. How did this enhance/detract from the storytelling?
2. How and why did you connect with the 3 main characters, Ruth, Turk, and Kennedy?
3. Which of the minor characters: Ruth's sister Adisa, Ruth's son Edison, Turk's family, Kennedy's family, Televangelist Wallace Mercer, or others made an impression on you and why?
4. Kennedy insisted that Ruth's case was not about race and that racial politics have no place in the court room. How did this line of thinking affect Ruth, and how did it change through the course of the book?
5. Biases and beliefs, belonging, love and hate, and privilege are all themes in this book. Discuss.
6. Kennedy states that Ruth needs equity, not equality on p. 427. What is meant by that? Do you think Ruth gets equity from the trial?
7. In the Author's Note, on p. 460, Jodi writes that while she and her readers often learn a lot from her novels, "This time, though, I was learning about myself. I was exploring my past, my upbringing, my biases, and I was discovering that I was not as blameless and progressive as I had imagined." What have you learned about yourself from reading this book? Was your perspective on racism or privilege changed by reading this book? Is there anything you now see differently?
8. The book's title is a reference to a quote often attributed to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way." Why do you think Jodi chose this title? Which characters accomplish small great things?
9. How has reading *Small Great Things* affected your thoughts on Black Lives Matter?
10. All of the characters change over the course of the novel, but Turk's transformation is perhaps the most extreme. What do you think contributed to that change?
11. Were you satisfied with the book's ending? Why or why not? Did you envision a different ending?