

Let's Talk About Race

Julius Lester

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Let's Talk About Race. The title pretty much explains the entire book and its content. Julius Lester starts off the book talking in the first person as he goes on to tell his story. Lester begins the first page by saying "I am a story". That one statement resonates throughout the entire book. One's story begins with simple details. For example, who are your parents? Do you have siblings? When and where were you born? What's your favorite color? Lester believes that all of these things are important bits of your story. But one of the first things somebody sees about you is the other big part of one's story: race. Each race has a story and a great history behind it. The truth is, everyone's story is equal. Those who say, "My race is better than yours", are telling a story that just is not true. Lester goes on to say that the reason people feel this way is because they are afraid. They are insecure and feel bad in their own skin. They are trying to change and fabricate their own story. Lester begins the book this way because this has the biggest impact on the reader. By using first person, Lester is able to connect with the reader on a different level. He asks the reader questions about whether certain stories are true or false. All of these aspects in just the beginning of the story lead to a deeper level of interest from the reader.

The second half of the book asks a different but just as deep question. It asks the reader to look past race. Lester further connects with the reader by asking them to engage in an activity while reading the book. The reader is to feel the bones under their skin as well as feel the bones under someone else's skin. Through this, Lester wants the reader to understand that underneath one's skin, everyone's the same. Everyone is made up of bones, and everyone has a skeleton. If everyone went out without skin and without hair, we would all look the same. Everyone would simply see the skeletons of one another. No one would look at anyone differently because we would all literally look the same. So Lester raises the question as to why the color of one's skin should be the differentiation factor. Lester wants his readers to look past someone's skin color, hair texture, and eye shape and to really ask about one's personal story. Because somebody's story is what makes them unique, not their race. If Lester had one goal or moral to spread through this book, it was to look past race. Of course, race is an important part of anyone's story, but it is not the only thing.

Throughout this book, the reader learns a lot even though there are only a few pages. The main takeaways are that one should look past race and define their own story. I think that those statements were the goals that Lester tried to enforce throughout. These goals were further reinforced by the beautiful illustrations on each and every page of the story. They really brought the words to life and made the reader connect on a deeper level. This book would truly be a good book for every age group. It's good for all age groups because it is reinforcing and even teaching an idea that everybody should know and accept. A lot of people to this day look at somebody and define them by their race. This book tells readers to do the complete opposite, so it is a good message for people of all races to hear and to be reminded of. After reading this book, I would suggest one should get it from the library because it is such a short and quick read. This book can easily be finished under 10 minutes, and though it is a good book with a great message, it is not something someone could read over and over again. I would recommend this book for teenagers from the ages 12-18 years old. It is a great book that puts race and social issues into perspective,

which is especially important for teenagers to understand. The one thing I really appreciated about this book was that it strengthened and reinforced a message that everyone should already be known. It reminded each and every reader that there's so much more to one's story than race.

Recommended Titles:

1. *Girl Called Genghis Khan- Michelle Lord*
2. *The Hate You-Angie Thomas*
3. *Just Mercy-Bryan Stevenson*