



ABHM Book Club Discussion Guide
November 17th, 2022
***Death of Innocence* by Mamie Till-Mobley**

How to Use this Guide:

[America's Black Holocaust Museum](https://www.abhmuseum.org/) staff created this guide to assist in reading and discussion of *Death of innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime that Changed America* (2007). Please feel free to print a copy and keep it with your book as you lend to friends and others who are interested. Do not expect to get through all of the questions during the upcoming meeting nor in one sitting. Perhaps consider them as conversation starters or an invitation to reflect more deeply about this book.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. What role did the Great Migration play in the experiences of Mamie's life, specifically growing up in the community of Argo? What about the role of unwritten rules of traveling between North and South during the Jim Crow era? See pages 18, 36, 46, 105, 146.
2. Throughout her memoir, Mamie often discusses the definition of lynching and how it is different than other forms of violence and murder. What is the difference according to her? What do you think? See pages 19, 125, 145, 215
3. For those who are familiar with Dr. Cameron's life story, how does the lynching of Emmett Till compare to the one he survived in 1930?
4. What does this memoir help us understand about the role the Black press, the NAACP, and all Black towns like Mount Bayou and Argo serve in the pursuit of justice? What about within the Civil Rights movement as a whole? See pages 120, 159, 167, 183.
5. After reading her memoir, will you think differently about the significance of Black mothers and children in the history of the United States? What does Mamie tell us about mothers and their children in the history of the Civil Rights movement? See pages 209, 226, 236, 248, 274.

6. How did you feel about Mamie's overall conclusion that forgiveness and love are the way forward as opposed to hatred and anger? For those who read *A Time of Terror*, how does this compare to Dr. Cameron's own philosophy? See pages 262, 268.
7. What Influence did Mamie's decisions after the lynching of Emmett have on the Civil Rights Movement as a whole? Why do you think that is? See page 237.
8. This year, congress finally passed the Emmett Till Federal Anti-Lynching Bill, which was introduced while Mamie was still alive and something that Dr. Cameron also fought for his whole life. Why do you think it took so long to pass? How do you think Mamie and Dr. Cameron would feel today knowing it has finally passed? Has much changed since their time, and, if so, what has? See pages 191, 255.
9. For those of you who have had a chance to see the new film *Till*, how well did it align with Mamie's own telling of events? What differences stuck out to you? Why do you think the film made the choices it did when retelling the story of this lynching? See page 122.
10. How is Emmett Till remembered today? What do you think about his story as it is told in historical markers, at museums, in films and television series (i.e. *Lovecraft Country*), and in history books?

Additional resources:

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/emmett-till-mother-galvanized-civil-rights-movement-180980925/?utm_source=smithsoniandaily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20221013daily-responsive&spMailingID=47501685&spUserID=MTE1NDM2MjA3ODUyNQs2&spJobID=2324508489&spReportId=MjMyNDUwODQ4OQS2

<https://www.aam-us.org/2022/11/04/effective-exhibitions-should-provoke/>

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/55/text>