



ABHM Book Club Discussion

August 23rd, 2022

***Finding Me* by Viola Davis (2022)**

How to Use this Guide:

[America's Black Holocaust Museum](#) staff created this guide to assist in reading and discussion of *Finding Me* (2022). 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 the questions during the upcoming meeting nor in one sitting. Perhaps consider them as conversation starters or an invitation to reflect more deeply about Viola's memoir.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. Throughout her memoir, Viola discusses the erasure, invisibility, and shame that are a result of "the one-two punch that is Blackness and poverty..." What impact did racism and (immense) poverty have on her life, both early on and throughout her career? Was there anything about her experience that was particularly shocking and/or familiar to you? (See pages 33, 44, 47, 85, 104, 127)
2. A central thread throughout Viola's memoir is her relationship with her family. What was her relationship like with her sisters, her mother, and her father? How did her relationships with various members of her family evolve throughout her lifetime? (See pages 19, 76, 87, 122, 179, 199, 230, 226, 249)
3. The title of Viola's memoir suggests the focus of her adult life has been to reconnect with and heal her younger self, to confront the impact that violence, sexual abuse, poverty, and racism had on her growing up. What role did acting play in this process? What other ways was she able to pursue this path of honesty and healing? (See pages 8, 101, 139, 149, 204, 286, 291)
4. Viola is now extremely cognizant of the history of race and racism after being denied this education early in her life. How does she use this country's past to contextualize her own experiences? What role did teachers and other adults and mentors have in this learning process? (See pages 91, 113, 271)
5. What influence did the playwright August Wilson have on Viola's life and career? How does she describe his importance to the lives and careers of Black actors and Black people across the country? How did you feel after seeing one of his plays or movie adaptations? (See pages 142, 190, 196, 210, 224, 268, 284, 287)

6. In addition to the racism she faced from white people in her career, Viola also had to confront the challenge of colorism in the industry. How did her darker skin tone affect her in school and in casting? Relatedly, why is the role of Annalise Keating in *How to Get Away with Murder* so important to her and to the industry overall? (See pages 162, 165, 175, 184, 239, 274-275)
7. Viola discusses praying, asking for what you want, and manifesting the things you want in your life, while also being honest about your past, the things you have been through, and who you are. How did this resonate with you as a reader?
8. In the Netflix special *Oprah + Viola*, Oprah says that with this memoir, Viola has “revealed a part of herself that is part of us all.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Did you see yourself reflected in her experiences? What about this story might inspire us all to own our stories and truths?
9. What do you think of Viola’s next project, *The Woman King*? What else do you think is next for her? What is your favorite movie, show, and/or character of hers to date?