



### **Themes in Mother's on Normal Street**

1. Marriage & Infidelity
2. Forgiveness
3. Family Dysfunction
4. Gender Roles
5. Womanism
6. Domestic Violence
7. Societal ills
8. Systematic Oppression
9. Race & Culture
10. Dreams Differed

# Story 1 - Unequally Yoked Vows

## Understanding & Comprehending the story

1. What is the main idea?
2. What are three supporting details?
3. What is the theme?
4. What is the setting?
5. What is the tone?

## Analysis

Unequally Yoked Vows is a third-person account about the emotional torment and situational scars that create dysfunction in the home of a woman that lives on Normal street. The author creatively dictates the deterioration of a family and the trauma that spews over into the lives of the children. The story creates an emotional tug of war when the victim becomes a predator and the predator is also prey.

## Guided Reading Reflections

### Level 1 - Evaluating & Creating (Respond to 3 out of 5)

1. Which do you think is more of a catalyst for conjugal imprisonment; poverty, or dependency on an elevated social class, explain your answer?
2. A rolling stone gathers no moss is a proverb for which the Temptations sang "Papa was a rolling stone", what similarities or parallels can you create using Bessie Lee's analogy of a rolling oblong?
3. Dickson thought he was a good husband based on the provisions he set before Lilly and her children, write an argument for or against him.
4. Do you think Lilly would choose love and poverty or provisions and infidelity?
5. What aspects of Lilly's life can you relate to? Why?

### Level 2 - Application & Analyzing (Respond to 5)

6. What particular aspects of Bessie Lee's personal account coincides with your own life experiences?
7. How does a man's personal relationship and treatment affect a woman's relationship and treatment of her children?

8. What disadvantages could have driven Lilly to continually subject herself and her womb to further hosting of Dickson's abuse?
9. How do you feel Da'Tins name contributed to his behavior as an adult?
10. Do you think the era in which this story takes place contributed to Lilly's fidelity to a "rolling oblong"?
11. Do you think infidelity on Lilly's part could help solve some of her emotional conflicts?
12. Do you think her infidelity would cause other issues either emotionally or physically?
13. Lilly's children are a product of dysfunction. Do you think if they were placed under the state's care they would have had a better chance of breaking generational curses?
14. Explain which you believe to be true generational curses are hereditary or socially formed.

Level 3 Remembering & Comprehending (Respond to #15 and two others)

15. Write a brief summary of the story in 5-7 sentences.
16. If love is based on a person's ability, does Dickson love Lilly, explain?
17. How does Dickson's infidelity make you view him as a person?
18. Who is the victim Dickson, Da'Tin, or Lilly, explain?
19. Based on the information gathered from the story what can you conclude will be Da'Tin's fate?
20. Does the author do a good job of concluding the story? Why or why not?
21. What swelling emotions did you experience while reading this story?

## Story 2 - Sundown to Sundown

Understanding & Comprehending the story

1. What is the main idea?
2. What are three supporting details?
3. What is the theme?
4. What is the setting?
5. What is the tone?

Analysis

It's important to feel grounded and find resolve for the tribulations you have experienced throughout your life. Sometimes finding that happy place will take you down roads and on trips, you would have never imagined. This story is about one woman who survived abandonment and living on Normal Street, yet somehow came out a winner.

Guided Reading Reflections

### Level 1 - Evaluating & Creating

1. Why is the theme of judgment important to the story? The church is generally considered to be a judgment-free zone. How would you react if you were ostracized by those within your religious circle who are supposed to love you?

### Level 2 - Application & Analyzing (Respond to two out of three)

2. Why are concepts of judging others important specific characters in the story?
3. Have you ever been in a situation where you were judged based on your past life choices? Explain how that experience shapes you today?
4. How does Normal Street compare to any street on which you have ever lived? Use specific examples and details in your comparison.

### Level 3 Remembering & Comprehending

1. Write a brief summary of the story in 5-7 sentences. (Must respond)

2. How is this pertinent in the story? (Select one)

- a. What does a simplistic life without modern amenities offer that a fast-paced society cannot?
- b. Why do you think people take offense when others break traditions unrelated to their life?
- c. Which kinds of traditions contribute to generational curses?
- d. How do you think one person can find so much resolve to not live bitterly after experiencing a rough and lonely life?

## Story 3 - Kings/Blossoming Love

### Understanding & Comprehending the story

1. What is the main idea?
2. What are three supporting details?
3. What is the theme?
4. What is the setting?
5. What is the tone?

### Analysis

Our children are never children in the eyes of a racist and oppressive system. How do you protect what's yours when you yourself are unprotected? How do you sympathize and peacefully coexist in a community that is left in chaos as a result of police brutality? Can you find love? Can you participate yet stay emotionally stable? Follow Cali and KeKe as they rise above the abnormal realities of Normal Street, to find their place in a world full of hate.

### Guided Reading Reflections (Respond to all questions for this story)

Level 1 - Evaluating & Creating What is civil disobedience? How does it shape the foundation of the country? How do people's perspectives change when they find themselves are inconvenienced by political unrest such as protest?

### Level 2 - Application & Analyzing

1. What do you think happened to the cop who shot Moses? How did you arrive at that conclusion?
2. How is community outreach addressed in the plot of Kings? Do you agree you can be as effective in community outreach when you do not live within the community you serve? why or why not?

### Level 3 Remembering & Comprehending

1. Write a brief summary of the story in 5-7 sentences.
2. Why do you think Aminah's husband asked her to not address men in such a reproachful way?

### Mechanics

Be sure your reflections and essay are relatively free of grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. It should be clear that the final effort has been revised and polished to the best of your

abilities. After you have proofread your own paper at least twice, have a tutor in the writing center read it for feedback before you upload it to Brightspace. Put your best foot forward. Note, I will not read an essay riddled with errors.