



### Discussion Questions: *Black Cake*

“Words, Words, Words” Book Club—December 2022

1. What are your first impressions of the novel? If asked, what would you say this novel is about?
2. Again and again we see how black cake provides an emotional core to the Bennetts. What recipes/foods are important to your family? Are there stories you tell about their origins and connections?
3. Who did you think was responsible for Little Man’s death? Were you surprised when the truth was revealed?
4. Why do you think Eleanor chose not to share her history until after her death? What might have been different about her relationships with her children if she had told them the truth earlier?
5. What was your favorite part of the story? Favorite location and time period? The character who interested you the most?
6. Swimming is such an important part of Covey and Bunny’s stories. What do you think it says about their characters? How does it tie into other themes of the novel?
7. Wilkerson writes “The three of them sit silently for a moment, thinking of small but profound inheritances. Of how untold stories shape people’s lives, both when they are withheld and when they are revealed.” (331) What are some of the inheritances you see in this novel?
8. Time and time again characters are faced with hard choices, some of which then lead to a struggle for forgiveness. Are there choices you would have made differently? Are there actions in this novel you consider unforgivable?
9. Marble’s work considers the origins of food and how ingredients and dishes move and adapt between cultures. In what ways does her work connect to Eleanor’s story? How does black cake lend itself to these explorations?
10. Eleanor lived in many places throughout her life, and as many different people. When do you think she felt most herself? Where was home? And how is home defined for you?