

QUESTIONS ABOUT
THE STORIED LIFE OF A. J. FIKRY
Part 2

This book is about a bookseller named A. J. Fikry and how his life changes when he adopts a toddler named Maya. A. J. had been a lonely old grouch for some time before Maya entered his life. Then, after the oddball representative of a book wholesaler whose name was Amelia finds her way into his heart, things are never the same.

The questions below concern the chapters pages 79 to 128. Each chapter begins with A. J.'s review of a real short story. The whole book is full of literary references, and those who recognize these references are at a distinct advantage.

***What Feels Like the World* by Richard Bausch** (Professor Bausch runs the writing program at Chapman University in Orange, California. He has an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and is the author of twelve novels as well as the co-editor of the 6th edition of the *Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*.)

1. What does Maya believe to be the best place in the whole world?
2. On p. 85 a customer comments that A. J. and Maya are "not the same kind of black." What kind of black is each? Why did A. J. take offense?
3. Why does Maya feel sorry for her dead mother?
4. What is Maya's middle name? What is the significance of this name?

***A good Man is Hard to Find* by Flannery O'Conner** (Ms. O'Conner is considered one of the best short story authors ever. Her stories often have religious themes and take place in the south of the United States. She also studied at the University of Iowa. She died of lupus when only 39.)

5. According to A. J., what question tells you everything you need to know about a person?
6. Why does A. J. finally read *The Late Bloomer*? What is his reaction?
7. When A. J. and Amelia meet for lunch. What is she wearing?
8. Why does Amelia like *The Late Bloomer*? Why does A. J. like it?

NOTE: This sheet is double-sided.

9. We learn on p. 100 that Amelia has a fiancé. With whom does she have more in common, her fiancé or A. J.?
10. Why does A. J. begin taking out women? Name the two women he meets and tell something about each. Does he like either one of them? Do you?
11. Why does A. J. enroll Maya in dance class?
12. What tasks does A. J. perform for the dance instructor?
13. What does Maya discover about A. J.'s ear?
14. How does A. J. learn that Amelia broke her ankle?
15. Since Amelia can't travel with the broken ankle, how do she and A. J. communicate? Name something new that he learns about her.
16. What does A. J. learn about the relationship between Amelia and her fiancé Brett Brewer?
17. What is A. J.'s excuse for visiting Amelia at her home in Providence?
18. What do A. J. and Maya find when they try to visit the Green Animals Topiary Garden? What is a topiary garden? Where do they go instead?
19. Who takes care of Maya while A. J. visits Amelia?
20. What does the note say that A. J. leaves Amelia as he leaves her home?