

QUESTIONS ABOUT
THE STORIED LIFE OF A. J. FIKRY
Part 3

A bookseller named A. J. Fikry adopts a toddler named Maya. Then, the oddball representative of a book wholesaler finds her way into his heart. Part 3 consists of the pages 170 to the end. Each chapter begins with A. J.'s review of a real short story.

***A Conversation with My Father* by Grace Paley** (Grace Paley (1922 – 2007) was the official New York State writer and the Poet Laureate of Vermont. She was a feminist and political activist. Her best-known writings were *Goodbye and Good Luck* and *The Used-Boy Raisers*.)

1. About how many years have passed since the wedding?
2. What school assignment is Maya having trouble with?
3. Why is A. J. looking for a new house? Why can't he find one?
4. On page 183 we read that Mr. Balboni is "out." What does this mean?
5. Who are the first two short story contest finalists? What are their stories about?

***A Perfect Day for Bananafish* by J. D. Salinger** ((1919 – 2010) J. D. Salinger is best known for his novel *Catcher in the Rye*, which is either required reading or banned by practically every high school in the this country. He became a recluse at a young age and published his last work in 1965.)

6. What is the chapter titled *A Trip to the Beach*? Who is Mary in real life?
7. Mary has a scholarship to Harvard and will lose it. What is her problem?
8. Is Mary's problem solvable? What does she do?
9. Maya's friend and competitor John Furness wins first place in the contest. What does Maya win? What does A. J. think she should have won? Why?
10. What important purchase does the family make before the school year ends?

***The Tell-Tale Heart* by E. A. Poe** ((1809 – 1849) He is credited with developing the short story, the detective, and the science fiction genres. His first known work is *Tamerlane and other Poets*, which has a central place in *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry*.)

NOTE: This sheet is double-sided.

11. What man is interested in Ismay? Is this a likely match?
12. What is Ismay's ideal book? How is it like *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry*?
13. To what does Lambiase compare Ismay?
14. What does Lambiase discover in Ismay's bedroom? What does he do?

***Ironhead* by Aimee Bender** (Ms. Bender was born in 1969 and has refused to die so far. She is a noted author of many short stories and a few novels. She has won many writing awards.)

15. What does A. J.'s mother give him for Christmas? Why isn't he happy with it?
16. What happens to A. J. after he and Amelia go to bed? What does she want him to do? Why does he object?
17. What does the Boston physician tell A. J.?
18. Where does Lambiase propose that A. J. get the money for treatment?
19. How did Ismay come into possession of *Tamerlane*? Who is Maya's father?

***What We Talk about When We Talk about Love* by Raymond Carver** (Raymond Carver was a short story writer and poet. (1938-1988). He lived in California and supported his family with unskilled jobs. He is most famous for his short stories.)

20. What price does *Tamerlane* sell for? Does this cover A. J.'s medical expenses?
21. What does A. J. want Amelia to do after he dies? How does she feel about this?

***The Bookseller* by Roald Dahl** (A British author (1916 – 1990) known best for his children's stories such as *James and the Giant Peach* and *The Chocolate Factory*. During World War II he was a British fighter pilot.)

22. A. J. can still understand, but he can no longer speak. What does he want to tell Maya?
23. After A. J. dies, Amelia decides she is not the right person to run the bookstore. Who buys it? Why?
24. Do you like to read? Do you prefer paper books or ebooks? Why?
25. Has reading this book made you want to read any of the works named in it?