

BOOK CLUB IN A BOX

Bookclub-in-a-Box presents the discussion guide for Aravind Adiga's novel The White Tiger

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Quotations used in this guide have been taken from the paperback text described above. All information taken from other sources is acknowledged. This discussion companion has been prepared and written by Marilyn Herbert, originator of Bookclub-in-a-Box. Marilyn Herbert is a graduate of the University of Toronto, Canada and has taught English language skills to students at all levels: elementary school to college. Currently, Marilyn organizes and conducts literary presentations, workshops and discussions for private and public groups. For more information about the Bookclub-in-a-Box team, visit our website.

Bookclub-in-a-Box discussion companion for The White Tiger

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This guide was co-written by Erin Balsler.

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CONTACT INFORMATION: SEE BACK COVER.

BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

READERS AND LEADERS GUIDE . 2	SYMBOLS
INTRODUCTION	Animals in Nature53
Novel Quickline 7	The Number Four57
Keys to the Novel 8	The Red Bag59
Author Information12	The Chandelier60
Background Information ...15	The Great Socialist61
CHARACTERIZATION	River Ganges62
Balram Halwai25	LAST THOUGHTS
Kusum27	The Four Poets67
Ashok28	A Glossary of Gods68
Pinky Madam29	Conclusions69
Dharam30	Suggested Beginnings71
FOCUS POINTS AND THEMES	FROM THE NOVEL (QUOTES) ...75
Democracy and Entrepreneurship35	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS87
Moral Responsibility38	
Slavery and Freedom41	
Family43	
WRITING STYLE AND STRUCTURE	
Structure47	
Voice48	

BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX

Readers and Leaders Guide

Each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide is clearly and effectively organized to give you information and ideas for a lively discussion, as well as to present the major highlights of the novel. The format, with a Table of Contents, allows you to pick and choose the specific points you wish to talk about. It does not have to be used in any prescribed order. In fact, it is meant to support, not determine, your discussion.

You Choose What to Use.

You may find that some information is repeated in more than one section and may be cross-referenced so as to provide insight on the same idea from different angles.

The guide is formatted to give you extra space to make your own notes.

How to Begin

Relax and look forward to enjoying your bookclub.

With Bookclub-in-a-Box as your behind the scenes support, there is little for you to do in the way of preparation.

Some readers like to review the guide after reading the novel; some before. Either way, the guide is all you will need as a companion for your discussion. You may find that the guide's interpretation, information, and background have sparked other ideas not included.

Having read the novel and armed with Bookclub-in-a-Box, you will be well prepared to lead or guide or listen to the discussion at hand.

Lastly, if you need some more 'hands-on' support, feel free to contact us. (See Contact Information)

What to Look For

Each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide is divided into easy-to-use sections, which include points on characters, themes, writing style and structure, literary or historical background, author information, and other pertinent features unique to the novel being discussed. These may vary slightly from guide to guide.

INTERPRETATION OF EACH NOVEL REFLECTS THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX TEAM.

Do We Need to Agree?

THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION IS NO.

If we have sparked a discussion or a debate on certain points, then we are happy. We invite you to share your group's alternative findings and experiences with us. You can respond on-line at our website or contact us through our Contact Information. We would love to hear from you.

Discussion Starters

There are as many ways to begin a bookclub discussion as there are members in your group. If you are an experienced group, you will already have your favorite ways to begin. If you are a newly formed group or a group looking for new ideas, here are some suggestions.

Ask for people's impressions of the novel. (This will give you some idea about which parts of the unit to focus on.)

- Identify a favorite or major character.
- Identify a favorite or major idea.
- Begin with a powerful or pertinent quote. (not necessarily from the novel).
- Discuss the historical information of the novel. (not applicable to all novels).
- If this author is familiar to the group, discuss the range of his/her work and where this novel stands in that range.
- Use the discussion topics and questions in the Bookclub-in-a-Box guide.

If you have further suggestions for discussion starters, be sure to share them with us and we will share them with others.

Above All, Enjoy Yourself

INTRODUCTION

Novel Quickline

Keys to the Novel

Author Information

Background Information

INTRODUCTION

Novel Quickline

Balram Halwai murdered his master, got away with it and is now free. But is he? In the aftermath of the crime, Balram has become a slave to India's economic system. He spends his days sleeping and his nights slogging away at building his start-up taxi company. As the story opens, he recalls, over seven nights, how he transformed from a young boy, born into a caste of lowly sweetmakers, into one of the most wanted men in India.

Adiga explores Indian economics, culture and politics with this darkly satirical take on contemporary Indian life. He takes us from small town Laxmangarh, to the capital of Delhi, and finally, to Bangalore, the city which best represents where India's economics, politics and culture are headed. He does this through the eyes of the charismatic, egotistical Balram Halwai, as he writes to the premiere of China, Wen Jiabao, who is coming to visit India.

Keys to the Novel

China and India

- Adiga claims that Indians are obsessed with all things Chinese. They live next door to each other and China has replaced the U.S. as India's largest trading partner, an ironic twist on "keeping up with the Joneses."
- To Indians, China is a new symbol of the modern world. A city like Shanghai is fast becoming the "new" New York. China has moved into modern global times with lightning speed and this has captured India's imagination.
- Although India is making headway in technology, China is light years ahead. India has to deal with superstition and "half-baked" knowledge. For example, Balram, who is very proud of his personal proficiency with his Macintosh laptop, claims that cell phones have led to the decline of the *"white man [because] ... cell phones cause cancer in the brain and shrink your masculinity."* (p.262) As a result, Balram uses only a land line, despite the inconvenience, because his brain is very important to his identity as a "thinking man" in the current world.
- In Balram's (and perhaps, India's) mind, America, as the leader of the world, is finished. This is despite the flourishing call centers, tech industry and McDonald's. India will openly take what the West has to give, while China is more circumspect about what it adopts. Balram supports India's outlook and challenges China's perspective.
- In spite of her colonial history, India is still an outsider to the west. And yet, India is also an outsider to China because her fundamental personality is profoundly unlike China's. Adiga presents the possibil-



**Thanks for previewing this
Bookclub-in-a-Box discussion guide.**

**If you'd like to purchase the full guide in
print or PDF format, just visit:**

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