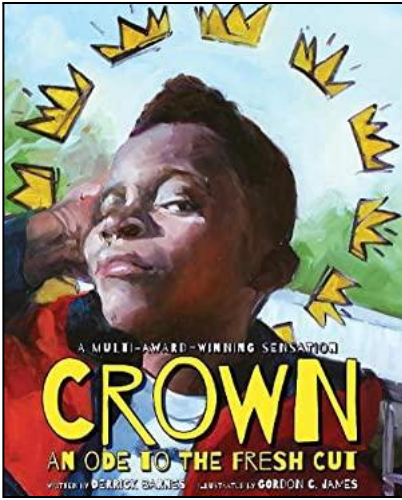


Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers and Educators



Book Title

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut by Derrick Barnes, illustrated by Gordon C. James

Recommended Ages

5 and up

Book Summary to Share With Children

In this book, the importance of a trip to the barbershop for a Black/African American boy is highlighted. Visiting the barbershop means being cared for and tended to by community members who help to contribute to developing a healthy sense of self. Listen to hear how being treated like royalty and getting a fresh haircut makes him feel smarter, more visible, and ready for the world.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver/Educator

1. When have you felt pampered, tended to, or treated like royalty? How did it change your outlook on the world and your confidence? Why is it important for children to feel this as they grow up?
2. Where and from whom did you learn to care about how you presented yourself to the world? Who were the adults that taught you about this?
3. How might the children in your life see themselves reflected through this story? If so, might this story help boost their self-esteem? If a child's culture is not represented in this story, how is this a powerful window into the life of a young Black child?

Reader's Note

Some of the language in the story is colloquial. The terms *tight fade*, *high/low/bald*, (*Dark*) *Caesar*, *faux-hawk*, *deep part*, and *skin fade* all refer to haircut styles and are commonly used in barber shops. *Cornrows* are a hair braiding style. A *durag* is a piece of fabric worn on the head and tied in the back, and it is used to hold waves, braids, or locs in place. The book uses the term *loc* instead of *dreadlock* because of the negative association of the word *dreadlock*. If you are a member of the African American community, you and your child will likely be familiar with terms, but it may be helpful to read through them to boost understanding. You will also see the use of the word *dude*, instead of *man*. In a poem such as this, written from a first-person narrative perspective about a personal experience, this language is appropriate and relevant to the narrator's life.

Be sure to share the Author's Note at the back of the book with your child, as it gives more insight into the importance of the barbershop in Black/African American communities.



Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

SEL

Self-Awareness

Self-Management

Social Awareness

Relationship Skills

Responsible Decision-Making

ABE

Empathy and Understanding

Healthy, Complex Identities

Respect Across Differences

Notice, Name, and Reject Bias

Responsiveness and Action

Discussion Questions (*essential questions in bold)

1. **What do the terms *Tight fade, Dark Caesar, faux-hawk, deep part, skin fade, cornrows, durag, and loc* mean? Have you ever had any of these hairstyles?**
2. Why might getting a "fresh cut" help someone do well on a test or get on the honor roll? Is it true that it might "do something to your brain"?
3. **How can "looking good" (in whatever way you define that for yourself) help you to feel good about yourself? Why is it important to have confidence in yourself?**
4. What are some adjectives that the narrator uses to describe himself and others at the barber shop? What do these words tell you about the significance of the barbershop experience?
5. **What does the boy learn from his trips to the barbershop?**
6. **What is something you can say when you see someone with a fresh haircut or if you notice someone is trying a new style? Why is this important?**

Journal Questions/Extension Activities

- What makes you feel "magnificent", "flawless", and "like royalty"?
- Describe a time that you felt confident, proud, and ready to conquer the world. What helped you feel that way? How can remembering that experience help you in times when you are struggling?
- **Activity:** Invite your child to write their own odes to what makes them feel magnificent, flawless, and like royalty, using their journal responses as a starting place. This can be a poem, a story or a rap. Encourage the use of figurative language that the book uses.