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About the Author

and their two children. Munsinger. She lives in Virginia with her husband Best Friend at School, illustrated by Lynn She is also the author of the picture book Hunter's Studies Trade Book for Young People (NCSS/ALA) for Young Adult Literature and a Notable Social Sky, winner of the Borders Original Voices Award acclaimed World War II novel Under a War-torn Laura Malone Elliott is the author of the

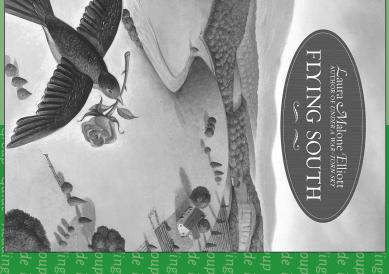
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Reading Group Guide

np Gu



Laura Malone Elliott

Flying South

Guide ISBN: 0-06-054508-9

About this guide:

This guide includes discussion questions intended to provoke thought and insight into the themes of the book, which include friendship, family, race relations, the women's movement, and mortality.

About this book

Alice has some lessons to learn during the hot summer of 1968—a year marked by much political and civil turmoil—on life and death, family and love, and about the trying times that engulf her.

At home, her mother is busied by a search for a husband who will help erase the memory of Alice's father. A new friendship for Alice causes trouble as it reminds her of the prejudices held toward blacks. Doc, the family gardener who shares his wisdom and helps her learn to do what's right, is growing older. For Alice, it is a summer for good-byes and new beginnings.

For discussion:

- I. Describe Alice's relationship with Doc. What important lessons does he teach her? What is the role of nature and gardening in this book? What does Doc mean by the statement, "No matter what's wrong in your life, if you can make flowers grow or stand still in nature, you'll find comfort."
- 2. When Alice gets caught in the thorny rosebush she cries from the obvious pain she is in. Why else does Alice cry? How is the rosebush symbolic of Alice's own existence?
- 3. When Alice begins hanging around with Bridget we see the marked age difference between the two girls. How is Bridget a foil to Alice? What other than tennis does Bridget teach Alice about the world we live in? Who is the better friend, Doc or Bridget? Why?
- 4. What role does prejudice play in the story? How are Bridget's views different from Alice's? Why? What is the difference between "allowed" and "wanted"? How have our views on race relations changed today?
- 5. The women's rights movement is an important background element of this book. How are Alice and her mother's views on women's roles different? How is this a sign of the changing times? How does Alice help her mother change?
- **6.** Describe Mr. Barker. What are his views on women and children? How do these views ultimately cause him to lose Alice's mother?

- 7. Doc describes life as a test that he feels Alice's mother is failing. Explain this statement. How does Alice's mother ultimately stand up for herself and "pass the test"?
- 8. Few decades have had such a profound impact on our lives as the 1960s. Discuss what was going on in the world at that time. How is your life today different from that of students in 1968? How is it similar?
- 9. What does "flying south" refer to?

Famous people mentioned in Flying South to inspire discussion:

- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- John F. Kennedy
- Billy Jean King
- Malcolm X
- Lyndon Johnson