

Books by the Stack



Bayou Magic by Jewell Parker Rhodes

It's city-girl Maddy's first summer in the bayou, and she just falls in love with her new surroundings—the glimmering fireflies, the glorious landscape, and something else, deep within the water, that only she can see. Could it be a mermaid? As her grandmother shares wisdom about sayings and signs, Maddy realizes she may be the only sibling to carry on her family's magical legacy. And when a disastrous oil leak threatens the bayou, she knows she may also be the only one who can help.

Why you'll like it: suspenseful, friendship, magical

About the Author: Jewell Parker Rhodes is an award-winning author. Her books include *Voodoo Dreams*, *Magic City*, *Douglass' Women*, *Season*, *Moon*, *Hurricane*, and the children's book, *Ninth Ward*. Rhodes is a professor of creative writing and American literature at Arizona State University. She lives in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Questions for Discussion

1. On the first page, Maddy observes: "I like to cook. My sisters don't." Why is it important that the author set Maddy apart from her sisters at the very beginning of the novel?
2. Grandmere gives Maddy three important pieces of advice: respect yourself, pay attention, and use your imagination. How does each piece manifest itself in Maddy's development as a strong character?
3. When Grandmere asks Maddy who she wants to be, Maddy replies: a hero. Does she become a hero or does she allow the mermaids to become heroes?
4. Grandmere says that one can only become a hero when something bad happens. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?
5. Who is Mami Wata? What is her place in Maddy's family history?
6. How does Bear's Pa die?
7. The words *Bon Temps* are French and translate to "Good Times." Are there good times in the bayou at the beginning of the novel? At the end of the novel? If so, what are they? If there are no "Good Times," what are the "Bad Times?"
8. Grandmere gives Maddy many lessons. One is: "Do good and it'll fly right back to you." What does the phrase mean? How is it seen in the community of *Bon Temps*?
9. Rhodes gives three reasons for the disappearance of the wetlands. What are they?
10. If the building of levees plays a part in erosion of the wetlands, how can the mermaids' construction of levees help the situation?

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Questions provided by publisher)



