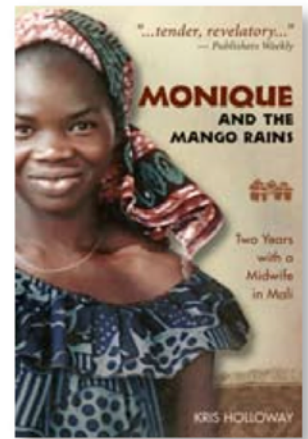


A Book Club Reading Guide

Monique and the Mango Rains

By Kris Holloway



1. Monique and Kris grew to be very close friends, yet they came from radically different background and faced many cultural barriers. What makes these rare connections possible?
2. Is Kris' experience as a Peace Corps volunteer what you thought it would be what would have been the hard parts to adapt to in village life? What do you think you would miss when you came back to the U.S.?
3. How does your culture affect how you think about childbirth? What do you think we could learn from working with Monique? Where would you rather give birth? Why?
4. How do you think Kris' presence in the village affected Monique? How was Kris' life changed by having known Monique? Have you ever known someone that well from another culture?
5. The title of the book is *Monique and the Mango Rains*. Why is weather so important in this book? What are the "mango rains" and how do they relate to Monique's life?
6. In many places in the text, there are references to the connections between the land and the people. People are described with adjectives / words pertaining to the earth and vice versa. For example, "the moon showed only a fingernail of light," "the earth had gone five months with out a drink," and "I longed for her to lie fallow.." What does this say about the culture? About how the society constructs our relationship with the earth?
7. "Every act of development necessarily involves an act of destruction." Do you agree or disagree? Explain. (Quote by George Appell, from *Cultural Anthropology*, Daniel G. Bates, Elliot M. Fratkin, 1999.) Do Americans and other foreigners have the right to intrude in another culture?
8. Do you feel that certain values are universal and that all peoples should be encouraged to adopt them? Name some of these values. What did both Monique and Kris share as values that they worked hard to implement? Are some human rights inalienable? If so, what are these rights? (See the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on www.un.org/rights)
9. How can North Americans to be involved in transforming the health care and poverty situations in places like West Africa? It's wonderful that Oprah has made a \$40 million gift to girls' education in South Africa, but most of us aren't in this league. Monique's story is an example of how large amounts of money are not always needed to make life better for people with few resources. How do you think we can best help the Moniques of the world?
10. The news is riddled with stories of war, disease, and famine in Africa. Yet Kris has said "I'm immensely hopeful when it come to Africa because I knew Monique." After reading the book, what is your perspective?