

THE HELP - QUOTES/DIALOGUES FROM THE FILM

1. Here you find some quotes and longer scenes/dialogues from the film. Work in pairs of two. Find photos (search on the internet) from the actual scenes from where the quotes/dialogues are. *Discuss what can be understood from what is being said.*

Hint: Sometimes a person says something meaning something else. Or: sometimes a person says something to underline a fact or make a statement (but there is more in the saying than what's actually being said). What can be understood from what's being said when it comes to society, race issues, relationships, parenting, personalities, attitudes etc.? *Write down two to three sentences pr. quote/dialogue where you reflect on the deeper meaning of each quote/dialogue.* There are also some extra questions in this handout that you need to discuss as well (related to the quotes/dialogues).

2. Present your findings in class (your photos and what you discussed).

FOR THE TEACHER: Alternatively, the tasks may be divided among the pupils (because there are pretty many quotes/dialogues here). You can also choose to focus on the tasks related to either parenting/caregiver/caretaker (HO) or the ones related to food (RM), but they are all relevant for both programmes (or for any English class). Social issues etc. can be discussed with any of these questions/quotes. You can also use this handout as a basis for the pupils to make a PowerPoint, Prezi or a Photo story to be presented in class.

QUOTES:

PARENTING/CAREGIVER VERSUS CARETAKER

1. Why does Aibileen keep on saying the following to Mae Mobley:

You is kind.

You is smart.

You is important.

2. What is Aibileen trying to tell Mae Mobley through this story:

"Once upon a time they was two girls," I say. "one girl had black skin, one girl had white." Mae Mobley look up at me. She listening.

"Little colored girl say to little white girl, 'How come your skin be so pale?' White girl say, 'I don't know. How come your skin be so black? What you think that mean?'

"But neither one a them little girls knew. So little white girl say, 'Well, let's see. You got hair, I got hair.'" I gives Mae Mobley a little tousle on her head.

"Little colored girl say 'I got a nose, you got a nose.'" I gives her little snout a tweak. She got to reach up and do the same to me.

"Little white girl say, 'I got toes, you got toes.' And I do the little thing with her toes, but she can't get to mine cause I got my white work shoes on.

"So we's the same. Just a different color', say that little colored girl. The little white girl she agreed and they was friends. The End."

Baby Girl just look at me. Law, that was a sorry story if I ever heard one. Wasn't even no plot to it. But Mae Mobley, she smile and say, "Tell it again."

3. Is telling difficult things through stories a good way to explain things to children? Give reasons!
4. What does the dialog between Mae Mobley and Aibileen (a), together with what Aibileen tells Skeeter (b), say about Mae Mobley's biological mother (Elizabeth):

a) *"Mae Mobley: Aibee... You `re my real mama.*

Aibileen: Now, you know who your mamma is.

Mae Mobley: I `m your real baby, Aibee..."

b) Aibileen to Skeeter:

"Baby girl don't get her diaper changed `til I get there in the orning. That's `bout ten hours she gots to sit in her mess. I be so worried about her on my day off. I always come in an hour early on Mondays."

"Miss Leefolt pregnant again, too. And, law, I pray this child turn out good. It a lonely road if a momma don't think theys child is pretty."

5. What does the following scene tell about the relationship between Constantine and Skeeter?

"The first time I was ever called ugly, I was thirteen. It was a rich friend of my brother Carlton's over to shoot guns in the field.

'Why you crying, girl?' Constantine asked me in the kitchen. I told her what the boy had called me, tears streaming down my face.

'Well? Is you?'

I blinked, paused my crying. 'Is I what?'

'Now you look a here, Egenia'-because Constantine was the only one who'd occasionally follow Mama's rule. 'Ugly live up on the inside. Ugly be a hurtful, mean person. Is you one a them peoples?'

'I don't know. I don't think so,' I sobbed.

Constantine sat down next to me, at the kitchen table. I heard the cracking of her swollen joints. She pressed her thumb hard in the palm of my hand, something we both knew meant Listen. Listen to me.

'Ever morning, until you dead in the ground, you gone have to make this decision.' Constantine was so close, I could see the blackness of her gums.

'You gone have to ask yourself, Am I gone believe what them fools say about me today?'

She kept her thumb pressed hard in my hand. I nodded that I understood. I was just smart enough to realize she meant white people. And even though I still felt miserable, and knew that I was, most likely, ugly, it was the first time she ever talked to me like I was something besides my mother's white child. All my life I'd been told what to believe about politics, coloreds, being a girl. But with Constantine's thumb pressed in my hand, I realized I actually had a choice in what I could believe."

6. What does Constantine mean when she says the following about Charlotte to Skeeter: *"She didn't pick her life. It picked her."*

7. What is Charlotte saying about herself and Skeeter as she says: *"Courage sometimes skips a generation. Thank you for bringing it back to our family."*

8. What does Skeeter mean when she says the following to Charlotte about Constantine: *"You broke her heart."*

9. What does Aibileen indirectly say about the mothers of the babies and their society as she says: *"Miss Hilly was the first of the babies to have a baby.*

And it must a come out of her like the eleventh commandment. `Cause once Miss Hilly had a baby, ever girl at the bridge table wanted one too."

10. What is the irony in Miss Hilly's saying: *"I do whatever it takes to protect our children."*

FOOD

11. Why is Minny slightly offended when she says to Celia: *"Minny don't burn chicken."*

12. What does Minny's reaction tell about the skills required in order to work as a house maid, about job proficiency and pride?

13. On the other hand, Celia says the following: *"Please, I want him to think I can do it on my own. I want him to think I'm...worth it."*

What does this tell about Celia and what she thinks of herself?

14. Minny also says: "*Fried chicken just tend to make you feel better about life.*" How can food help people feeling better? When is food healthy? When is food unhealthy?
15. What does the chocolate pie that Minny gives Miss Hilly tell about the responsibility and job proficiency that comes with preparing food for others?
16. Do you know the dishes and ingredients that are mentioned in the following dialogue? Explain.

MINNY

"-What can you cook?"

-Minny dips pieces chicken in an egg wash, then drops them in a paper bag. A puff of flour rises out of the bag.

CELIA

-I can cook corn pone, boil potatoes, and do grits.

Minny bursts out laughing.

CELIA (CONT'D)

We didn't have electric current where I was raised.

MINNY

- Well, I reckon if there's anything you ought to know `bout cooking...

Minny holds up a can of Crisco.

MINNY

- It's this. The most important invention since they put mayonnaise in a jar. You don't even know the things you can do with this here can.

Celia peers into the skillet as Minny spoons out a mound of Crisco.

CELIA

- How pretty. Looks like frosting.

Minny rolls her eyes and hands Celia the bag of Chicken.

MINNY

- Shake that.

Celia starts shaking the bag.

CELIA

- This is fun!

17. Why does Celia say "*This is fun!*" What does it say about her life so far? What does it say about the importance of cooking together with someone?
18. What does the following dialogue say about Celia's thoughts of racial segregation and also about the importance of eating together with someone?
- Celia Foote: *There you are! I'm starved. Looks so good!* (sits down with Minny to have lunch)
- Minnie Jackson: *We done been over this, Miss Celia. You're supposed to eat in the dining room, that's how it works. Here, let me take your plate back.*
- Celia Foote: [assertively, yet with respect, holding her plate] *I'm fine right here, Minny.* "

List of sources: QUOTES

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