

Thank You, Omu!

by Oge Mora

Oge Mora created *Thank You, Omu!* as an assignment for a class while she was still in school at the Rhode Island School of Design. When the students presented their books, an editor from Little, Brown and Company was there and signed her to publish her book before she even had an agent. Her book went on to win a Caldecott Honor in 2019.

Introductions: Tell your group your name, where you are from, where you live now, and if this book reminds you of something in your life, someone you know, or another story.

Discussion questions:

Omu means “queen” in Igbo, a language spoken in Nigeria, a country in Africa. It is what the author called her grandmother. Why do you think she chose this name for the main character? What did/do you call your grandmother? Does the name you call your grandmother have another meaning?

There are several words and phrases in the story used to talk about the good taste of food. What are they? Can you think of others?

The author thought about including a recipe for her grandmother’s red stew in the book, but decided not to. Why do you think she made this decision? Would you have included the recipe?

Is there a food or recipe that you associate with your grandmother?

How would you describe Omu?

In the Author’s Note, Oge Mora says, “When my grandmother cooked, she danced and swayed her hips to the radio as she stirred what was often a large pot of stew.” Do you have memories of how your grandmother (or someone else) moved while cooking? How about you when you cook?

What are the themes in this story? What might a child learn from this story?

Omu felt sad and disappointed when it was time to eat and her pot was empty. Then her neighbors shared food with her. She said that dinner was the best she ever had. Have you had an experience of being disappointed, but something better happened in the end?

When I smell the scent of cinnamon rolls wafting through the shopping mall, it makes me want buy a cinnamon roll. When I smell the aroma of baking bread wafting from a bakery window, my mouth waters. Use “waft” in a sentence and then talk about a food that is comforting to you.

Hospitality: friendly, welcoming behavior towards guests or strangers. Does your culture have expectations for practicing hospitality? How are you expected to provide hospitality to guests? To strangers? Do you find hospitality very different in the United States?

What is your opinion of the art in this book? Do you have a favorite illustration? Do you think the art is worthy of being recognized as a Caldecott Honor book?