

Night on Fire
Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Billie was so fascinated by buses? What kind of bus ride did she dream of? How did it compare with the real bus ride she took with Jarmaine?
2. Billie had been around Lavender all her life but didn't really know her. Are there people like that in your life? How could you get to know them better?
3. In Billie's town, it was not safe for African Americans to show all of their feelings. What feelings do you think Lavendar and Jarmaine were hiding? If they had been able to express those feelings, what might they have said or done?
4. In the 1960s, some people did not treat African Americans well. What groups do we mistreat today? What could you personally do to change that?
5. Sometimes the people we love do things that hurt others. Sometimes we do things that hurt others. What did Billie learn about why we hurt others and how we can stop?
6. Janie Forsyth showed that you can be brave and be a leader even if you aren't an adult. What are some ways you could be brave and be a leader?
7. Billie admired Mr. McCall and thought she might like to do what he did. Who are some of the people you admire in your life? What have you learned from them?
8. Grant seemed sure of what to do with his life. Have you met people like that? Are you like that? If you met Grant, what would you ask him?
9. Billie experienced a different world when she went to Jarmaine's house and to the church rally, a world that existed alongside hers but which had been invisible to her. Are there invisible worlds alongside yours? How might you enter them, and what might happen?
10. Why do you think it was important for Dr. King to come to the rally at the church? How did his actions influence events? How did his actions influence the people there?
11. What did it mean to Billie to ring the bell? How do you think she felt? Are there bells that you need to ring?
12. At the end of the story, Billie asked if Gus had reached the place she was going. Gus said, "Honey, I live in that place." What do you think Gus meant?

13. Billie, her family, and her friends were not real people, but the events in the story were real. What history did you learn from this story that you didn't know before? What else would you like to know about that time and place?
14. The events in the story were important moments in Billie's life that helped define her. What defining moments have you had in your life? What defining moments can you imagine in the future?
15. The characters in a story often change because of what happens to them. Did Billie and Jarmaine change, and if so, how? In what ways do you think they might act differently in the future because of their experiences?