

STORY EIGHT *The Snow People: 30-46 AGM*

Coriolanus is set in ancient Rome where, following a famine, the common people, or plebeians, demand the right to set their own price for the city's grain supply. In response to their protests, the ruling aristocracy, or patricians, grant the plebeians five representatives, or tribunes—a decision that angers a patrician soldier who has nothing but contempt for the lower classes. *The Snow People 30-46 AGM* is set in the future where environmental degradation has spawned fear and oppression. The Snow People are kept from full participation in society by a paternalistic Rainbow government.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

If you're into Shakespeare

1. In *Coriolanus*, people are accorded power and respect according to their class. What is the basis for power and respect in *The Snow People*?
2. *Coriolanus* portrays a man's world where the two chief arenas in which one can gain power—politics and war—exclude women and where gender roles constrict both men and women. What are the gender politics in *The Snow People*?
3. The strong-willed Volumnia has impact in her male-dominated society by living through her son and keeping him dependent on her. To what extent does Selanna live through Akintunde? To what degree is he dependent on her?
4. In *Coriolanus*, the tribunes and plebeians challenge the idea that privileges should accompany class and that nobles are inherently more able to govern and make wise decisions. What Rainbow beliefs do Selanna, Gruzumi, and other Snows challenge?
5. In *Coriolanus*, the patricians support the ways of the past and the people want progress in their institutions. What tug of war is going on between Selanna and Gruzumi and some of their elders?
6. Is Selanna more like Coriolanus, the man, or Volumnia, his mother? How?
7. How does Shakespeare portray the crowds of plebeians? How would you characterize the collective nature of the Snow People?

If you're not

1. In *The Snow People: AGM 30-46*, what are the allegorical meanings of the characters and the setting? What do Chloe and the Mountain People represent to the Snows?
2. How do Selanna, Gruzumi, and Ada represent different reactions to oppression?

3. What are the gender politics in *The Snow People*?
4. What enables Selanna to leave her mother and begin to chart her own course?
5. How did you experience the change in voice from part 1 to part 2?
6. Was it beneficial or detrimental for the Snows to be left behind after the evacuation? Why?
7. Akin feels that he has disappointed Selanna by not turning out to be another Gruzumi. Do you agree? Why or why not?
8. What qualities has Akintunde inherited from his mother?
9. What role does myth play in the story?
10. Akin dreams about a woman he doesn't know, but *he recognizes her, all the same, from a place deep inside him*. What do you think he recognizes in her?
11. What does the story say about individual struggle for meaning and purpose?
12. How surprising were the key events in the story? How else could the story have ended?