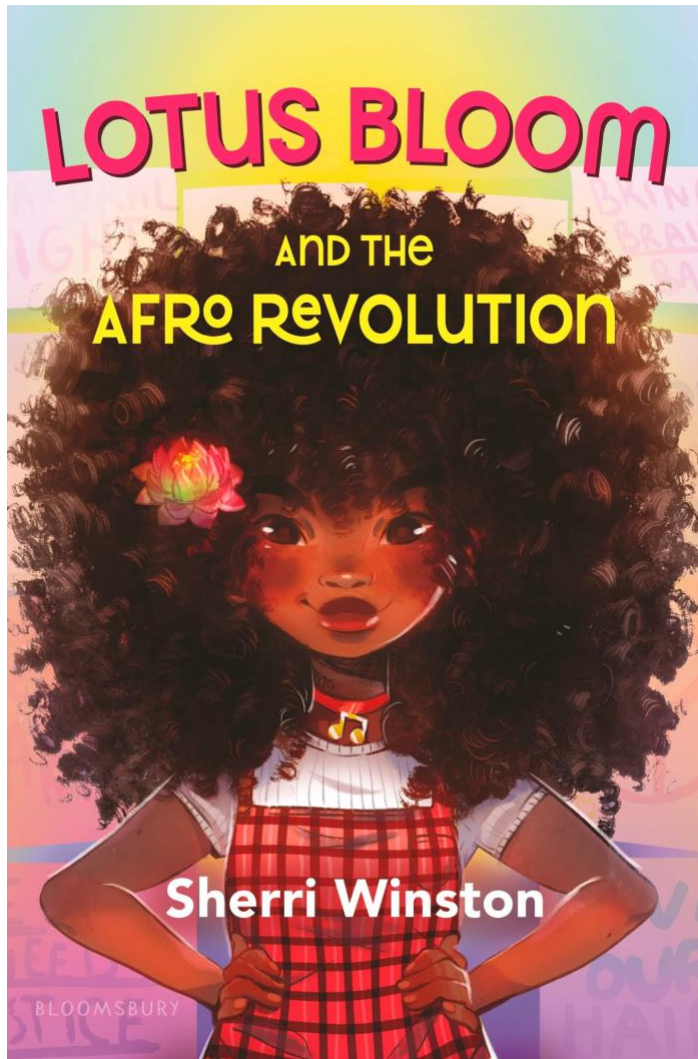


Lotus Bloom and the Afro Revolution
By: Sherri Winston
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Recommended Age or Grade Level: 4th-7th grade

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About the book:

In this book, a twelve-year old girl named Lotus Bloom starts seventh grade at a new school that specializes in the performing arts, with lots of opportunities to be creative and think outside the box. Lotus is excited to bring her talent for playing the violin and her love for music to this school, but she has to leave her best friend Rebel behind at her old underfunded public school. Rebel is an advocate for equal funding and opportunities between the two schools, and Lotus feels torn between Rebel's activism and her own dream of one day becoming a professional violinist.

Lotus has always loved to express herself freely through her clothes and her hair. She has nicknamed her afro the “woolly mammoth” and is proud to show off her culture to her classmates. However, the boys in her class are not as welcoming to “the woolly mammoth” as they throw paper airplanes in her hair. This bullying from the boys in her class continues until finally Lotus is told she is in violation of the school's dress code and is no longer allowed to wear her afro. Lotus Bloom is stuck between fighting for her beloved identity, or losing her spot at her new school. What will she do: join Rebel in the fight for action...or hide away her woolly mammoth for good?

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is Lotus’s afro so important to her?
2. Why do you think the boys bully her? What does that say about who the boys are?
3. On page 121, Lotus talks to Mr. Mackie about the bullying she’s experiencing. How does bullying affect Lotus’s mental health?
4. How would you feel if you were told you couldn’t express yourself in school? Would you fight back or stay quiet?
5. In the beginning of the book, Lotus has her heart set on going to Paris for music school, but towards the end of the book she changes her mind. Why does she change what she wants by the end of the book?
6. Do you think both schools have equal opportunities? What causes any differences?
7. What could be some solutions to making the schools more equal?

Extension Activities

1. Have students draw their hair and write over it traits that make up their identity.
 - Draw a picture of your own hair.
 - Write down your different identities over it.
 - Ex: woman, Jewish, middle class...
 - Teacher can prompt discussion:
 - How do your different identities connect?
 - Do you have a combination of identities that sometimes surprise people?
 - How do your identities make you unique?
2. Have students design their own dream school.
 - Students draw on a poster what their dream school would look like.
 - Students work in groups to talk about things they want to add that may not already be at their school.
 - Use colors and label what the different aspects are.

- Taking it a step further...
 - How would that school respond to Lotus's hair?
 - Brainstorm ways to implement changes to things that you feel are unequal at your school.
- 3. Connection to community or current events
 - Option A: Students research an issue regarding dress code in current events.
 - Ex: Recently the Olympics changed rules regarding swim caps for Black athletes.
 - Option B: Find out what your own school's dress code is.
 - Taking it a step further..
 - Teacher will have 4 pieces of paper around the room, labeled:
 - Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree
 - Teacher will say different statements and students will go to the paper that most resonates with them.
 - Students from each group will talk about why they chose that paper then share aloud to class.
 - Example statements:
 - Our school's dress code policy is fair.
 - Certain students are discriminated against within the dress code.