



# ...what the end will be DISCUSSION GUIDE

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR THE PLAY  
BY MANSA RA

DIRECTED BY JAMES WEBB

GUIDE CREATED BY TIFFANY BRYANT-JACKSON

**"At some point, you gotta decide for yourself who you're going to be. Can't let nobody make that decision for you."**

Moonlight

- How do you respond when someone you care about chooses to live differently than you expect or understand?
- What messages about masculinity did you grow up with?
- How do you show up for the people in your life who are experiencing illness, grief, or transition?
- When you have faced challenges, how have you leaned on your village for support and guidance?
- Do you see opportunities to grow beyond what you were taught or experienced in your upbringing?

# ALL THE WORLD IS A STAGE: A TESTAMENT TO SURVIVAL, IDENTITY, AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF THE ARTS

by Jermaine Nakia Lee

Born in vibrant Miami to a close-knit yet wildly dysfunctional Caribbean-American family, my life began in duality: the pulsating rhythms of island culture on one side, and the shadows of pain and silence on the other. Now, at 50, as a proud African-American gay man, I see my story not as tragedy, but as a powerful anthem of resilience, artistry, and truth.

In my deeply religious household, “same gender loving” wasn’t just misunderstood—it was vilified. Scripture was weaponized, and silence was demanded over self-expression. Archaic ideas of masculinity clashed with my nuanced, creative spirit and aching need to sing, move, and write. Layered atop rampant addiction and family chaos, survival meant navigating dangerously sharp edges daily.

In those dark chapters, I found my calling: the performing arts. Musical theater became both salvation and sanctuary. When I couldn’t voice my truth at home or in church, I whispered it through Stephen Sondheim’s lyrics, Alvin Ailey’s choreography, and August Wilson’s stories. Every note and scene helped me build the courage to live out loud.

The stage wasn’t just an escape—it was sacred. Repertory theaters, dance rehearsals, and late-night jam sessions became my haven. Among other misfits and dreamers, I wasn’t “other.” I belonged. There, I discovered storytelling’s power not just to entertain, but to heal.

That healing shaped a thriving career. Today, I am an award-winning songwriter, playwright, stage director, teaching artist, and producer. My work has graced stages nationwide, amplifying stories too often silenced. I teach young people from marginalized backgrounds that their pain, joy, identity, and dreams deserve space—in the world and onstage.

To borrow from Langston Hughes, life ain’t been no “crystal stair.” I carry scars of repression and survival, but also banners of triumph. The arts didn’t just shape my career—they saved my soul. They offered a mirror to see myself and a microphone to be heard. When my own family fractured, the arts became my kin.

I am living proof that the arts are not a luxury; they are a lifeline. And my purpose now is to open those same doors for others still finding their way through the dark.



About the Author: Jermaine Nakia Lee is a Charlotte-based playwright, songwriter, and storyteller known for bold, socially conscious works. His latest musical, *A WALK IN MY SHOES*, blends R&B, hip-hop, jazz, and gospel to explore friendship, secrets, and resilience in the face of adversity.



# Additional Resources To Watch

## **MOONLIGHT**

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4975722>

## **MR LOVERMAN**

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt16493232/>

## **THE LAST BLACK MAN IN SAN FRANCISCO**

<https://tinyurl.com/5x3avp45>

## **PARIS IS BURNING**

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt16493232/>

# Book Corner

## **ALL BOYS AREN'T BLUE** BY GEORGE M. JOHNSON

<https://tinyurl.com/55hcvfh7>

## **HOW WE FIGHT FOR OUR LIVES** BY SAEED JONES

<https://tinyurl.com/7649v7mu>

## **HERE FOR IT; OR, HOW TO SAVE YOUR SOUL IN AMERICA** BY ERIC THOMAS

<https://tinyurl.com/56duk3cu>

## **REAL LIFE** BY BRANDON TAYLOR

<https://tinyurl.com/yp9svmvm>



## Move the Mission Forward

Our mission is to create a performing arts experience that is socially engaged, professionally managed, and creatively inspired.

Now that we've introduced you to "...what the end will be," we encourage you to join us in fostering meaningful conversations within your loved ones. Share your reflections on the play's themes, engage with others to deepen your understanding, and consider how you can contribute to creating safe spaces for more open dialogue.

