

ACTIVITIES

- Eloise Greenfield is Damaris' favorite poet. Before Damaris and her family lost their house, Damaris had copies of every single book she wrote. Have students research Eloise Greenfield and write a short biography that includes one of her many poems.
- Ask students to come up with three themes for a classroom poetry contest. Students should write a poem based on one of the three themes. Encourage students to include art to help visualize what the poem is saying.
- In *Rich: A Dyamonde Daniel Book* we meet Damaris. Damaris is homeless and lives in a homeless shelter. There are many families who are disadvantaged because they are homeless. Community-based shelters are the primary refuge for hundreds of thousands of homeless families in the United States. There are many ways help the homeless. Here are a few ways to get involved to help those in need:

National Coalition for the Homeless

www.nationalhomeless.org

Urban Institute

www.urban.org

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty

www.nlchp.org/

Children's Defense Fund

www.childrensdefense.org

National Alliance to End Homelessness

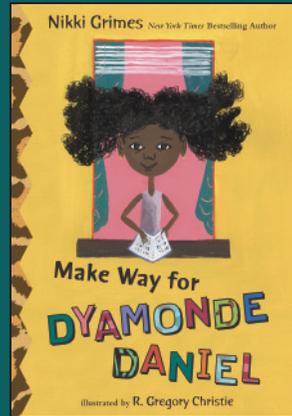
www.naeh.org

Health Care for the Homeless Information Resource Center

www.prainc.org/hch

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

www.nhchc.org



Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel

978-0-399-25175-7 • (HC) \$10.99



Rich: A Dyamonde Daniel Book

978-0-399-25176-4 • (HC) \$10.99



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DISCUSSION GUIDE

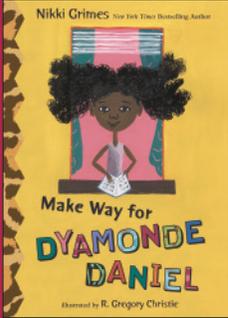
Nikki Grimes *New York Times* Bestselling Author



Make Way for DYAMONDE DANIEL

illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

ABOUT THE BOOKS



Dyamonde Daniel is new in town and new at school and doesn't have a lot of friends yet. But she is also one of the smartest kids in her class—she's pretty sure about that. When a new boy, Free, joins her class, Dyamonde finds him grouchy and unfriendly, and she is determined to get to the bottom of his attitude. Who knows, maybe they have something in common, and they may even become fast friends. *Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel* is a lighthearted story about a little girl with a big personality and awesome brainpower.



Dyamonde and her best friend, Free, are excited about the poetry contest at the local library. The grand prize is one hundred dollars and the winning poem will be printed on the Kids' Page of the Sunday newspaper. Dyamonde and Free, as well as dozens of other kids, think this is very exciting. Just think of what they could get with the money! But when they find out that one of their classmates is homeless and living in a shelter, their ideas about what it means to be rich or poor start to change.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



An accomplished poet, novelist, journalist, educator, and singer, Nikki Grimes was born and raised in New York City and now lives in the Los Angeles area. She has received numerous awards for her writing and has been honored by the Coretta Scott King Award committee multiple times. Her bestselling titles include *Bronx Masquerade* and the picture book *Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope*. In addition to writing children's books, she has contributed to magazines such as *Essence* and *Book Links* and numerous poetry anthologies. Visit her at www.nikkigrimes.com and www.visitingauthors.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Part I: *Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel*

- In chapter one, we find out that Dyamonde Daniel is exceptionally smart, but her mom tells her to keep it a secret. But then one night, she overhears her mom telling someone how smart Dyamonde is. Why do you think that it is okay for her mom to let out the secret but not Dyamonde?
- The new boy is introduced to the class and Dyamonde seems to have a problem with him already, but she doesn't even know him. What do you know about first impressions? How do you think people perceive you when they meet you for the first time?
- It's the weekend and Dyamonde is feeling a bit lonely. What are some ways that Dyamonde can get her mind off her old neighborhood and the friends she left in Brooklyn? Have you ever felt lonely? What are some of the things you did to cheer yourself up?
- It's been two days since Free joined the class. Dyamonde is finding it harder to ignore him. Why do you think she is beginning to notice him a little more? Explain.
- It's Chicken Nugget Tuesday and Dyamonde has had it with Free. Why do you think she finally says "that's it"? Have you ever wanted to say something to someone because they have treated others so badly?
- Free tries to stay out of Dyamonde's way, since she seems to catch him whenever he is being rude to others (students, teachers etc.). But one day, she finally asks Free what his problem is, why he is always mad. After a while, Dyamonde and Free find that they really have a lot in common. Has there ever been a time when you thought you knew a person, but really didn't know them at all? What are some of the things or qualities that changed what you thought you knew about that individual?
- Dyamonde and Free eat their lunches together at school and everyone notices. Do you think Dyamonde is starting to feel like she has at least one true friend in the neighborhood as well as at her new school? Why or why not?

Part II: *Rich: A Dyamonde Daniel Book*

Rich: A Dyamonde Daniel Book picks up where *Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel* left off. Dyamonde and Free are now the best of friends and Dyamonde is still trying to change Free's outlook on his situation at home.

- The story begins with Free and Dyamonde in front of a store window. Free is grumbling about how much he hates being poor, until Dyamonde explains the true meaning of being poor – having no money, no clothes, no food, no place to live and no one who cares. Has there ever been a time when you really wanted something but were unable to get it, because you or your parents didn't have the money?
- Mrs. Cordell announces that the local library is hosting a poetry contest, and the top three poems will be published on the Kids' Page of the Sunday newspaper, with the winner receiving one hundred dollars. Dyamonde and Free are truly excited thinking about what they could get for \$100. What are some ways you could spend \$100? Would you donate any of your money to charity?
- Dyamonde observes Damaris reading a book, rather than eating her lunch. In fact, Dyamonde has hardly ever seen her eat lunch. Dyamonde becomes curious about Damaris and wonders who knows anything about her at all. Have you ever been curious about someone or something? Did you find out what you wanted to know?
- In chapter four Dyamonde drags Free to the secondhand store for a treasure hunt. Free hates secondhand stores, but Dyamonde persuades him to see things her way and look around a bit, and they both come away with treasures. Have you ever tried to persuade one of your friends? Did you have a difficult time trying to make him/her see things your way?
- One Saturday Ms. Daniel joins Dyamonde on a treasure hunt. As they leave the store, Dyamonde spots Damaris coming out of a white building, but Damaris runs away. As Dyamonde passes the building, she notices a sign that reads SHELTER. What is a shelter? Have you ever visited a shelter?
- There are three topics that the students can choose to write their poems about: Nature, Make-believe and Home. Why do you think Damaris chooses to write about Home?
- On page 20, Free asks Damaris why she never invites him and Dyamonde to her house. Dyamonde kicks Free under the table and gives him a don't-you-even-think-about-it look. What is Dyamonde's reason for kicking Free? Do you think Free understands Dyamonde's reaction to his question?
- Dyamonde invites Damaris to her house for a sleepover. At breakfast a tear slides down Damaris' cheek. Why is she upset? What is Dyamonde's reaction to seeing her friend crying?