

Discussion Questions for *Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime That Changed America* by Mamie Till-Mobley and Christopher Benson

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not? Are you glad you read it?
2. The author says on page 197: "I'm no historian. But you don't have to be a historian to tell about the history you have lived." Do you trust her as a narrator? Do you wonder about the "other side" of the story?
3. How did you find the pace of the book? Did the author's retelling of her own life before and after the birth and death of Emmett enhance the book or distract you?
4. Did this book alter your thoughts on what happened to Emmett Till in Mississippi in 1955?
5. Did you learn something unexpected, and if so what was it? Were you surprised by anything that you learned from this book?
6. Does this book have any relevance to the state of things in the United States today, and if so, what?
7. One of the passages that really struck me is on page 164:

Rod Serling, like so many other writers, would later draw inspiration from this event, this trial of the human experience, by crafting several television dramas. That seemed so fitting to me, because, looking back on it, that place *was* "the Twilight Zone." I mean, I felt like I had been transplanted to some distant time and place, a very strange world. Planet Mississippi. Everything there seemed so different from the place I had left behind. There, everything was hostile and insecure and threatening.

Were there particular passages that you remember?

8. Has anyone had any experiences that relate to places or experiences in the book?
9. Did the book trigger any emotions while you were reading it?
10. On the book jacket, Random House calls Mamie Till-Mobley a hero of the civil rights movement. Do you agree? Why or why not?
11. Do you have unanswered questions? If the author were here, what would you ask her?
12. Are there other questions you would like to ask or comments you would like to make?