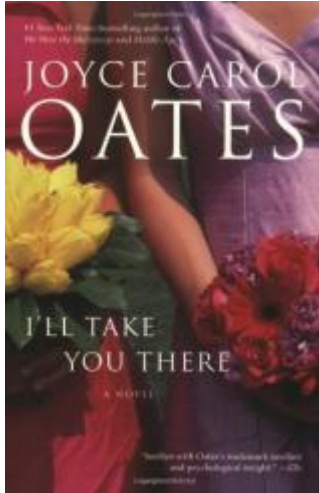


I'll Take You There

by Joyce Carol Oates



About the Book

"Anellia" is a young student who, though gifted with a penetrating intelligence, is drastically inclined to obsession. Funny, mordant, and compulsive, she falls passionately in love with a brilliant yet elusive black philosophy student. But she is tested most severely by a figure out of her past she'd long believed dead.

Astonishingly intimate and unsparing, and pitiless in exposing the follies of the time, *I'LL TAKE YOU THERE* is a dramatic revelation of the risks --- and curious rewards --- of the obsessive personality as well as a testament to the stubborn strength of a certain type of contemporary female intellectual.

Discussion Guide

1. The narrator never reveals her own name. What do we know for sure about this girl? What events in her childhood have left her emotionally conflicted? Is everything she says the truth? What does she lie about?
2. The first section of this novel evokes a Gothic romance: an old mansion, an aura of foreboding, a hidden secret in the housekeeper's room. How do the narrator's perceptions of her surroundings reflect her mental state? Is this kind of thinking typical of a teenage girl?

3. What is the narrator's fascination with Mrs. Thayer? Why does she trespass in the housekeeper's rooms? What does she find?
4. What attracts the narrator to Vernor Matheius? Do you think her brother Hendrick's words at the opening of Chapter Five -- "You! You are capable of any thing" -- are relevant to her choice of Vernor as the object of her desire? What attracts Vernor to her?
5. The narrator wants Vernor to love her. She says she loves him. Do you think that the narrator's feelings are love? If so, how would you describe this love? What happens to her relationship with Vernor?
6. The search for the missing father is a frequent theme in literature. Why? What has the absent father to do with our conception of ourselves? How has the narrator been affected by her relationship with her father? How does it change in the final section of the book?

Author Bio

Joyce Carol Oates is a recipient of the National Medal of Humanities, the National Book Critics Circle Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award, the National Book Award, and the PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in Short Fiction, and has been several times nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. She has written some of the most enduring fiction of our time, including the national bestsellers *WE WERE THE MULVANEYS*, *BLONDE*, which was nominated for the National Book Award, and the *New York Times* bestseller *THE FALLS*, which won the 2005 Prix Femina. Her most recent novel is *A BOOK OF AMERICAN MARTYRS*. She is the Roger S. Berlind Distinguished Professor of the Humanities at Princeton University and has been a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters since 1978.

Photograph by Dustin Cohen.

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Publication Date: September 1, 2003
Genres: Fiction
Paperback: 304 pages
Publisher: Harper Perennial
ISBN-10: 0060501189
ISBN-13: 9780060501181