

## The Known World Reading Guide

1. Why is the character of Moses significant to the novel? How would you characterize his relationship with Henry and Caldonia Townsend? What about with his wife and child?
2. What is the significance of the title, *The Known World*? What "known world" is charted in John Skiffington's map in the jail? What world is charted in The Creation described by Calvin in his letter to his sister Caldonia? What role does the land and its borders play in this book?
3. Who is William Robbins and how does he impact the lives of blacks on neighboring plantations? Did you find his relationships with Henry, Augustus, and Mildred Townsend, and Philomena, Dora, and Louis compelling?
4. What is the significance of the Augustus Townsend character? In what ways is Augustus a victim of attitudes about slavery in the South? In what ways is he a victor? How did you respond to his captivity and its outcome?
5. How would you characterize Jebediah Dickinson? What explains his sudden appearance at the Elston farm? When Fern says of Jebediah: "With him there ... I feel as if I belong to him, that I am his property," what does she mean?
6. Were relationships between parents and children notably different during the era of slavery than in the present day? Consider Caldonia, Calvin, and Maude; William Robbins, Patience, and Dora; and Augustus, Mildred, and Henry in your evaluations.

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