BunnyWine - Discussion Guide

By Victoria Bolton

About the Novel

The Rude Boy USA series is dialogue-driven by design, relying on conversation rather than exposition to reveal character, power, and motive.

BunnyWine follows three intertwined lives: Bunny LeBlanc, a woman rebuilding herself through reinvention; John LeBlanc, a man reshaping crime into legitimacy; and Ben Berardi, whose proximity to both exposes the costs of loyalty and ambition. Set between New York and Jamaica, the novel explores how identity, power, and survival evolve when private choices become public consequences.

BunnyWine takes place after the events of Rude Boy USA, which established John LeBlanc as a rising figure inside the Chimera Group, a sophisticated criminal organization operating behind legitimate business fronts in New York. For years, John built his reputation through violence, strategy, and control, becoming deeply embedded in a world where loyalty and fear were currencies. By the time this novel begins, he is determined to leave that life behind and convert his criminal power into something lawful and lasting, using business, wealth, and physical distance as protection from both rivals and law enforcement. Bunny, born Celia Jones, enters his life as a high-end club waitress who learns early that survival depends on presentation and reinvention. She adopts the name "Bunny" as homage to her beginnings and as part of reshaping herself, moving from anonymity into luxury, influence, and proximity to danger. Ben Berardi, John's longtime associate, follows them into this new life while carrying the psychological weight of the old one. He struggles with drug dependency, unstable relationships, and a growing sense of guilt over the harm that built their success, even as his loyalty to John keeps him trapped inside the system he wants to escape. The decision to flee to Jamaica is meant to be a reset for John and Bunny, a chance to become different people in a different place, but the novel asks whether reinvention can ever truly erase the past, or whether legitimacy simply gives old power a cleaner name.

Discussion Questions

1. How does John redefine himself differently than Bunny does?
2. How does Ben struggle with his sense of identity as John's world becomes more legitimate?
3. Which character seems most honest about who they are? Which hides the most?
4. How do Bunny, John, and Ben each define power?
5. Who truly holds control in their relationships?
6. Does John's pursuit of legitimacy change his morality, or only his methods?

7. Where does Ben have power, and where does he lack it?

9. Is Bunny's relationship with John built more on love, protection, ambition, or necessity?
10. What does loyalty cost Ben?
11. At what point does loyalty become self-destructive?
12. Which compromises feel unavoidable, and which feel chosen?
13. Do you view Ben as complicit, victimized, or both?
14. Does John ever underestimate Bunny? Ben?
15. How do New York and Jamaica shape each character differently?
16. What does BunnyWine symbolize for Bunny? For John? For Ben?
17. How does environment influence the kind of power each character can access?
18. Which character carries the greatest moral burden?
19. Is John responsible for the harm caused by his ambitions?
20. Is Ben responsible for what he enables?
21. Does Bunny escape the moral weight of the world she benefits from?
22. What kind of future is Bunny building?
23. What does John believe he is leaving behind?
24. What future does Ben realistically have?
25. Do you see their paths as converging, separating, or inevitably colliding?

Reflection

Which character did you sympathize with most, and why?

Which character frightened you most?

Did your opinion of any character change dramatically?

Who paid the highest emotional price?

Style

1. How does the restrained, dialogue driven prose shape your view of Ben's inner conflict?
2. Does the minimalism intensify or soften the story's moral weight?
3. What is left unsaid, and how does that affect your understanding of guilt and responsibility?