

One Crazy Summer Rita Williams-Garcia

1. Why does Big Ma not care for Cecile?
Cecile left the family when Pa was still not feeling well, Delphine was only 4, Vonetta was young enough to be picked up, and Fern “wasn’t on the bottle.” Big Ma had come up from Alabama, to Brooklyn, to help care Pa care for the girls.
2. After meeting Cecile, what conclusion did Delphine come to why she left the family?
She thought Cecile was crazy. She had a green stucco house, with a palm tree in the front yard, and she didn’t want her daughters.
3. In the beginning, why were the girls not allowed in Cecile’s kitchen?
This is where she had her work set up. This is where she kept her printing supplies to help spread the word for the Black Panthers.
4. Why did Cecile call Fern, “Little Girl”?
She refused to call Fern by her name, because she did not want to name her Fern.
5. Who is Nzilla?
Nzilla is Cecile’s poet name that the Black Panthers call her. It is a Yorubb word that means, “The path.” Cecile’s poems “dust off surfaces to make clear and true paths.”
6. Why did Delphine not want to watch the TV show, Flipper?
The kids at school would make fun of her, because she was named after a dolphin. They would push her and ask her to speak dolphin. Delphine was proud of her name before she found out the boys were not lying, and her name really did mean dolphin under the sea.
7. What did Vonetta do to Fern’s doll Miss Patty Cake?
She drew with black magic marker on the doll’s face, so she wouldn’t be a white doll anymore.
8. What was happening to Cecile when Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern got back from San Francisco?
Cecile was being arrested, along with two Black Panthers. The police were after the Black Panthers, but Cecile was also helping to spread the word by volunteering her printing services.
9. When Vonetta reads Cecile’s poem at the rally, how did she change it?
She added the word *black*.
10. What happened when Fern recites her poem at the rally?
Fern’s poem was about Crazy Kelvin being a police informant. Fern exposed him at the rally.
11. Why does Delphine become angry with Cecile and tell her “I don’t just up and leave”?
Cecile was asking her why she did not call Pa while Cecile was in jail. She said that Delphine should not have taken the girls on herself, and to protect them should have called Pa. Delphine was angry, because she was only 11 years old doing the best that she can.

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12. What happened to Cecile when she was eleven?

Cecile's mother died, and she went to live with her aunt. Her aunt had her clean, watch the kids, and made her sleep on a blanket on the floor in the kid's bedroom. When the aunt was getting married when Cecile was sixteen, she gave Cecile \$20, a sandwich, and kicked her out.

13. How did Cecile meet Pa?

After being kicked out of her house, Cecile was living on the streets. Pa and his brother found her sick, hungry, and living on a park bench. She stayed with them in an apartment. It was the first time in since she was eleven that she slept in a bed.

14. What name did Cecile want to give to Fern?

Afua (pronounced A-foo-a)

15. What did Cecile do, before the girls got on the plane that Delphine did not expect?

When Delphine turned around, Cecile was looking at her. She expected her to leave, as soon as they were boarding. She also, hugged the girls back when they ran to give her a hug.