


**JOHN F. KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL**  
**PACE SUMMER ASSIGNMENT  2017**  
**CLASS OF 2020**

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*Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit*  
by Daniel Quinn © 1992

Daniel Quinn's *Ishmael* is arranged as an extended dialogue between (mostly) two characters. It is not 'action-packed' in the traditional sense: the plot's action is mostly *interior*, an intellectual "adventure of the mind and spirit" as suggested by the book's subtitle. Set your expectations accordingly, and approach the book thoughtfully. Be ready and willing to follow the many metaphors and analogies the characters use to illustrate big ideas. You can decide for yourself whether you accept or reject the author's deeper messages.

The following list includes, but is not limited to, many concepts and questions raised in the book; be prepared to discuss and write about the book during the first week of September, and beyond.

- Socratic dialogue
  - captivity
  - Takers, Leavers
  - Mother Culture
  - humanity's "story" (its beginning, middle, and end)
  - Taker Thunderbolt analogy
  - The law of life
  - various "-ologies":
    - mythology
    - epistemology
    - philosophy
    - anthropology
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- To what extent are we (as people, as a society) being lied to about something?
  - To what extent does humankind have a problem with knowing how to live?
  - What might Quinn's purpose be in publishing this story? Speculate what he may intend for readers to keep in their heads and their hearts.
  - Discuss the structure of the novel; what effect(s) does Quinn achieve by organizing his story this way?