

The Girl with the Louding Voice

A Novel

By Abi Daré

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Dutton

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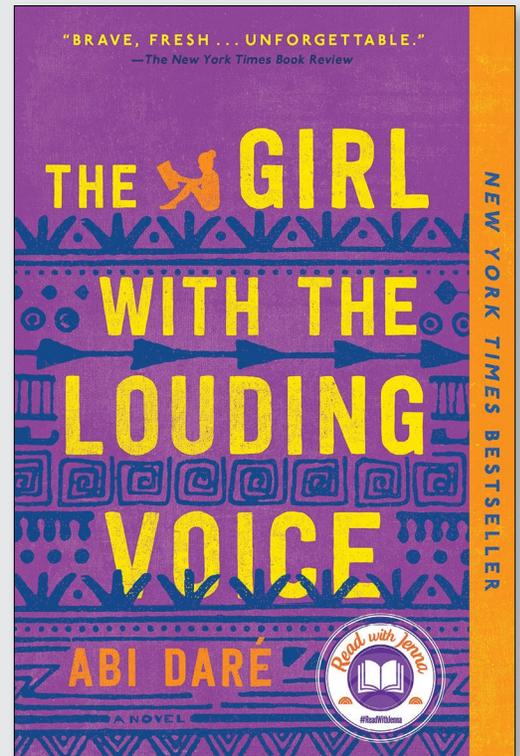
Reading Level: 11th-12th Grade

INTRODUCTION

In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, the reader experiences Adunni's moving story. A fourteen-year-old Nigerian girl, Adunni provides a gripping tale that beckons the reader to explore a number of noteworthy themes and real-world issues: the disturbing practice of child marriage; the immense gap between rich and poor; the devastating effects of abuse and domestic slavery; the oppressive effects of gender inequality and sexism; the liberating power of education; and the importance of hope and determination. This is a timely, thought-provoking book, and this guide was written to assist teachers and students as they engage with it. Through the questions, activities, and resources featured within, students are encouraged to adopt an analytical view of *The Girl with the Louding Voice* and related topics. This guide contains five sections: discussion questions, various classroom activities, research opportunities, service learning projects, and other resources for students and teachers. Each section is applicable to multiple curricular areas, and as such, this document has an interdisciplinary focus. Activities can also be easily modified and scaled, as they were constructed with flexibility in mind. Lastly, students are encouraged throughout to utilize technology and work collaboratively as they engage with this powerful novel.

Teacher's Guide

**INCLUDES: CHAPTER SUMMARIES,
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS,
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES,
AND LINKS TO RESOURCES**



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions can be posed to an entire class, given to small groups, used to initiate online discussions, etc.

1. “The bride-price is for you, Adunni. You will be marrying Morufu next week” (p. 6). In what ways is Adunni objectified throughout the course of the novel? How does this affect her?
2. “When I close my eyes on some days, I see my mama as a rose flower: a yellow and red and purple rose with shining leafs. And if I sniff a deep sniff, I can catch her smell too” (p. 8). How does Adunni engage with the memory of her mother throughout the novel? What larger role does the memory of her mother play in Adunni’s life?
3. “All Kayus ever worry about is what food to eat and where he can kick his football. He don’t ever worry about no marriage or bride-price money” (p. 34). In what ways do the males in Adunni’s life experience a privileged existence? How do you think Adunni’s life would change if she had been born male? What inferences can you make about gender roles in Nigerian society?
4. “‘You are strong, Adunni,’ she say, her voice low. ‘A fighter’” (p. 60). What do you think gives Adunni strength? What fuels her perseverance in the face of the many challenges she encounters throughout the novel?
5. How does Adunni grow from her relationships with Khadija and Tia? Conversely, in what ways, if any, do these two characters benefit from their interactions with Adunni?
6. “As I am looking it all, swallowing the whole place with my eyes and with my heart beating fast, I am thinking that maybe Big Madam is a queen, that this is the palace of the king” (p. 142). Compare Adunni’s life in the village with her life in Big Madam and Big Daddy’s home. How do these settings differ? How does the presence or absence of wealth in these settings affect Adunni?
7. “By the time she finish beating me, the hunger is not doing me again. That was the first time Big Madam beat me, and in the nearly one month I been here, she is beating me almost everyday” (p. 171). Why do you think Big Madam continually abuses Adunni? What do you think gives Adunni the strength to endure?
8. “Talking to this Ms. Tia is making the pain in my head to be stopping small. Her honey voice is like medicine, her laugh like cool water on my hot head” (p. 201). How do you think Adunni’s life would have played out if she had never met Tia?
9. How would you describe Big Madam and Big Daddy’s relationship? Given the dynamics of their relationship, do you feel any sympathy for Big Madam? Why? Why not?
10. Where does Adunni’s faith in the power of education come from? What role does this belief in education play for her during her journey?
11. In what ways does the writing style of the novel create a vivid world for the reader to inhabit? How did Adunni’s voice affect you as you read?
12. How do you define “louding voice”?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

13. What would you say are some of the central themes of the novel? Defend your answer by referencing the text.
14. Despite the many obstacles she encounters during her journey, how does Adunni experience growth and acquire agency?
15. If you could ask Abi Daré one question about *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, what would you ask and why?

VARIOUS CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The following are activities applicable to a variety of curricular areas.

1. Student Generated Questions (QAR)

When students are able to generate their own questions, they are typically more invested in the analytical process. Allow them to take ownership of inquiry and explore *The Girl with the Louding Voice* through this activity. QAR refers to Question-Answer Relationships, and this activity works well in terms of encouraging both close analysis and personal connections. The types of questions include:

- **Right there questions:** answers to these questions are found explicitly in the text. (*When does Adunni first experience abuse?!*)
- **Think and search questions:** answers lie in the text, but may only be found by examining several different sections and piecing them together. (*How does the theme of empowerment through education surface in the text?!*)
- **Author and you:** answers require personal interpretation based on textual evidence. (*How do you think Adunni is ultimately changed by her relationship with Tia?!*)
- **On my own:** answers connect personal experience with themes of the text. (*Have you experienced poverty? If so, how has it affected you? How do you think it affects others?!*)

Have students work independently or in pairs to generate several questions per category for a specific section of the book. After these questions are generated, teachers have several options:

- Have students trade and answer each other's questions in writing
- Have students pose their questions during small-group discussions
- Have students select one question to expand upon in an extended written response or brief presentation ("Right there" questions do not work well for this).
- Have students answer each other's questions via collaborative documents on Google Docs (<http://docs.google.com>). *

For more information on this strategy, consult this resource:

<http://www.readingquest.org/qar.html>

*All Google resources mentioned in this guide are accessible with a free Google account.

VARIOUS
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
(CONTINUED)

2. Gallery Walk

“We are driving like that in the silent, until we climb down from another up road and we are now inside town again. This time, everywhere is just shining and brighting. Tall buildings with wall of glass, and shape like ship, like hat, like choco-cubes, like circles, like triangles, all different shapes and color and size is left and right of us on the road” (p. 139) .

“As I am holding the lantern up and looking the whole place, my heart is falling. There was a box tee-vee, wardrobe, chair, and fan before, but now, is only mattress on the floor and one blue kerosene stove behind it. Two or three cloths are hanging on one kind wooden handle behind the mattress and that is it” (p. 116).

In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Abi Daré provides a number of descriptive passages that construct vivid images of Nigeria, both of its immense wealth and poverty. To accentuate this visual experience, have students analyze images pertaining to the Nigerian experience through their participation in a gallery walk activity, described below.

A gallery walk requires students to move around the classroom while thoughtfully observing and analyzing visual content. To prep this activity, select five-eight images that you believe will provoke students to reflect on the text and think deeply. You can select these images from the following websites:

- “Children behind the lens” — photos from children who documented their lives (and the wealth gap) in Nigeria
<https://www.reuters.com/news/picture/children-behind-the-lens-idUSRTR22GSO#a=1>
- Images of poverty in Nigeria from Getty Images
<https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/poor-nigeria?phrase=poor%20nigeria&sort=mostpopular>
- Images of Lagos from Getty Images
<https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/lagos-nigeria?phrase=lagos%20nigeria&sort=mostpopular>
- George Osodi’s “Lagos Uncelebrated” photo collection
<https://georgeosodi.photoshelter.com/gallery/LAGOS-UNCELEBRATED/G00001O4PNHIW0AM/>

After selecting the images, display each on its own designated laptop/tablet or print each out in color. Each image should be placed at a different location in the room, and desks should be arranged so that students can easily move around and quietly visit each image. Encourage students to spend sufficient time reflecting on each image, and as they do so, have them record responses to the following questions, per image:

- What would a good title for the image be? Why?
- What strikes you about the figure(s) (clothing, facial expression, etc.), setting, or object(s) featured in the image?

**VARIOUS
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**
(CONTINUED)

- How does the image make you feel? Explain.
- In what ways can you connect the image to *The Girl with the Louding Voice*?

After students have circulated around the room, have them share their responses in small groups or during a whole-class discussion.

3. Paideia Seminar

A Paideia Seminar is a student-centered, Socratic discussion. In it, the teacher serves as facilitator by providing students with open-ended questions, prompting students to respond, and by linking student comments. There are three main question categories: *opening questions*, *core questions*, and *closing questions*. *Opening questions* identify main ideas from the text (What larger points does the book make about sexual abuse?). *Core questions* require students to analyze textual details (What do you consider to be some of the central turning points in Adunni's life? Why?). Finally, *closing questions* personalize textual concepts (What sort of lessons did you take from the book? What makes it such a timely text?). Construct multiple questions like these, and have students gather in a large circle.

Establish group goals for the discussion and have students create individual goals as well. Some group goals could include practicing active listening strategies, disagreeing constructively, and having each participant express at least two thoughts. Individual goals could include referring to specific passages, building on another student's comment, and making consistent eye contact with others. Facilitate the conversation and concentrate on eliciting student responses. When the discussion concludes, have students self-assess and provide feedback on the seminar. Note that many of the discussion questions in this guide can be used during this activity.

For more information, consult <https://www.paideia.org/our-approach/paideia-seminar/index>

4. Character Blog

To encourage students to think more deeply about the world Adunni inhabits, have them blog from the perspective of a secondary character in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. To begin, have students select a character. Some possible choices include:

- Adunni's father
- Big Madam
- Tia
- Kofi
- Khadija

Students should write multiple entries from their selected character's perspective that refer to various events in the book. Have them write in first person, and encourage them to be reflective and creative as they compose. For example, a student writing as Khadija could provide an account of her interactions with Morufu and her resulting feelings about him; Kofi could detail the challenges of living with and working for Big Madam and Big Daddy. This activity should inspire students to think critically about the text and compose in a creative fashion. To add more depth to the assignment, have students include images and videos in their character blog entries. Also, students (as characters) could comment on each other's blog posts to introduce another imaginative layer.

VARIOUS
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
 (CONTINUED)

Either of these resources would work for this assignment:

- Google Blogger: <http://www.blogger.com/>
- WordPress: <http://wordpress.com>

Students could of course draft their entries on paper, but one advantage of digital composition is that students write for an authentic, interactive audience, and teachers may find that this provides extended discussion and reflection during the activity.

5. Nigerian Housemaid Experience Comparison

During her time as a house maid, Adunni experiences various forms of abuse. Unfortunately, her story echoes those of other child house maids in Nigeria. Invite your students to learn more about this intersection of fiction and reality by asking them to choose one of the two resources listed below to compare with Adunni's experiences in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. Both resources detail the experiences of house maids in Nigeria. After students make their selection and read their chosen article, ask them to compare and contrast its content with Adunni's experiences in the novel. Where are areas of overlap? Where are areas of difference? What should be done to address this real-world problem? Have students address these questions through writing and then transition to a whole class discussion to further unpack their interpretations.

- "Maids as glorified slaves in Nigeria"
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/02/maids-as-glorified-slaves-in-nigeria/>
- "Trafficked, beaten, abused: life of a Nigerian house girl"
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-trafficking-children/trafficked-beaten-abused-life-of-a-nigerian-house-girl-idUSKBN1A80ZI>

6. Character Portrait Creation

"When it open, one short man with skin so smooth, the color of cooling charcoal, is standing in my front. His cheeks are round, swelling, as if he keeping air inside of it, with mustaches that curve around his mouth. He is wearing white trouser and shirt with a long white cap on his head. There is a long blue cloth hanging around his neck and in front of his stomach with a writing on it: *The Chef*" (p. 146).

A gifted writer, Abi Daré wields language as a brush and paints vivid portraits of characters in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. Use this activity to invite your students to take a closer look at Daré's use of descriptive language in the text. To begin, ask your students to select a passage, such as the one featured above, that provides character description. Next, ask students to reference the language and create a character portrait. Encourage them to move from a sketch to a more finished, colorful version. If you lack artistic materials in your classroom, or if your students would prefer to utilize digital design tools, suggest they use tools such as those listed below. Finally, ask students to share their artistic creations with their classmates and compare their interpretations of the text. To extend this activity, ask students to also craft artistic depictions of settings from the text (such as Big Madam's house, for example).

- Autodesk SketchBook <https://sketchbook.com/education>
- Sketchpad 5.1 <https://sketch.io/sketchpad/>

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

The following topics are designed to provide students with opportunities for extended inquiry and analysis. In response to these, students could:

- Compose a research paper
 - Deliver a presentation
 - Design a lesson plan and teach a class
 - Record a podcast (<https://lifelifehacker.com/how-to-start-your-own-podcast-1709798447>)
 - Create a website (<http://www.wix.com>, <http://www.weebly.com>, and <https://sites.google.com> are excellent free resources for this)
 - Use Adobe Spark (<https://spark.adobe.com/>) to create and share a variety of graphics and videos
1. Disturbingly, Adunni experiences sexual abuse during the course of her relationship with Morufu. Perform research to learn about the real-life sexual violence that many women and girls experience in developing countries such as Nigeria. In which environments does sexual abuse often occur? What are the central risk factors? Who are the main perpetrators of sexual violence? How does child marriage intersect with the sexual abuse of minors? What can, and should, be done to prevent sexual abuse? To focus your research, you might choose a single country to focus on.
 2. Perform research to learn more about domestic slavery in Nigeria (or another country of your choice). How common is it? How did the practice originate? Who primarily benefits from it? What cultural forces sustain it? As you learn about the roots of this issue, also consider how it can be challenged. What laws and organizations exist to protect victims of domestic slavery? In addition to current protections you find, if any, what other forms of protection are needed? Which organizations need additional support to fight and end forms of domestic slavery?
 3. “My eyes was watching myself as I was kneeling down in front of my father, as he was saying a prayer to be following me to my husband house, as my mouth was opening, my lips parting, my voice saying ‘Amen’ to the prayers even though my mind was not understanding what is happening to me” (p. 36). Perform research to learn more about child marriage. Choose a country where it is practiced and examine its roots. How long has it been practiced? What economic and/or social forces and beliefs (consider poverty and gender stereotypes, for example) sustain it? How prevalent is it? What are the various consequences of child marriage? How can it be prevented? Who can do so?
 4. “Born-boy is the first born, so Papa say it is respecting for him to be sleeping on the only one bed in the room three of us are sharing. I don’t mind it. The bed have a thin mattress foam on top of it, full of holes that bedbugs are using as kitchen and toilet. Sometimes, the mattress be smelling like the armpit of the bricklayers at the market square” (p. 12). Adunni experiences profound poverty, particularly in the earlier parts of the novel. Perform research to learn more

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

about poverty in Nigeria. How many people live in poverty? In which areas of the country? What economic and social policies perpetuate poverty in Nigeria? How wide is the gap between rich and poor? To extend this research activity, compare the state of poverty in Nigeria to that in the United States.

5. “Your schooling is your voice, child. It will be speaking for you even if you didn’t open your mouth to talk. It will be speaking till the day God is calling you come. That day, I tell myself that even if I am not getting anything in this life, I will go to school. I will finish my primary and secondary and university schooling and become teacher because I don’t just want to be having any kind voice . . . I want a louding voice” (p. 25). Perform research on your own relationship with education. How have you been empowered by your educational experiences? How has education helped you develop your own “louding voice”? What sort of opportunities has education provided you and those around you?

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

These projects are designed to connect students’ learning experiences with the larger community.

1. Support It’s Never Your Fault’s #raisetheage Campaign

“ . . . Papa collect my hand, cold and dead, and put it inside Morufu’s own and say, ‘This is your wife now, from today till forever, she is your own. Do her anyhow you want. Use her till she is useless! May she never sleep in her father house again!’ and everybody was laughing and saying, ‘*Congra-lations!* Amen! *Congra-lations!*’” (p. 37).

Adunni’s marriage to Morufu highlights the many dangers of child marriage. To combat this issue, in 2018, three Nigerian teenage girls formed a non-profit organization called It’s Never Your Fault. They chose to take on child marriage through the #raisetheage campaign. Invite your students to support the #raisetheage campaign by connecting with It’s Not Your Fault through their social media accounts, provided below. Also, the organization has created a petition that calls for the Nigerian government to raise the age of marriage in all Nigerian states to the age of eighteen. Ask your students to sign the petition and share it with others online.

- Information on It’s Never Your Fault’s #raisetheage campaign (written by the three Nigerian teens who created it): <https://assembly.malala.org/stories/nigerian-teens-work-to-end-child-marriage>
- It’s Never Your Fault’s social media pages:
 - <https://www.instagram.com/itsneveryourfault/>
 - https://twitter.com/neveryourfault_
- It’s Never Your Fault’s petition: <https://tinyurl.com/raisetheagepetition>

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

(CONTINUED)

2. Support a Non-Profit or Charity active in Nigeria

To initiate this activity, have students organize themselves into groups and invite them to select one of the charities/non-profits described below (note that these are just suggestions; students can look online to locate others as well. If they do so, encourage students to vet charities/non-profits through the use of <https://www.charitynavigator.org> or <http://www.guidestar.org>). All of the organizations listed below are focused on social issues relevant to *The Girl with the Louding Voice*.

- Girls not Brides (<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/nigeria/>) is “a global partnership of more than 1500 civil society organizations committed to ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfill their potential.”
- Malala Fund (<https://malala.org/countries/nigeria>) works “to champion every girl’s right to 12 years of free, safe, quality education.”
- SOS Children’s Villages Nigeria (<https://www.sosvillages-nigeria.org/>) performs “work for children who are orphaned, abandoned or whose families are unable to care for them.”
- Save the Children (<https://nigeria.savethechildren.net/>) “protect[s] children from all forms of violence, especially girls, orphans, vulnerable children and children affected by conflict. Our programs work from the community to the national level to promote children’s rights and protection. We also campaign to ensure that girls have equal access to education and are protected from child marriage.”
- The Modern Slavery Helpline and Resource Centre (<https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/>) “brings us closer to the eradication of modern slavery. It provides victims, the public, statutory agencies and businesses access to information and support on a 24/7 basis.”

After students select an organization, ask them to plan and implement several different fundraising activities to support it. To provide students with some fundraising ideas, refer them to the extensive list located here: <https://www.causevox.com/fundraising-ideas/>.

Whatever students choose to do, encourage them to promote their efforts through social media. After students conclude their fundraising efforts, have them debrief and reflect on what was successful and what could be improved.

3. Become an Expert and Educator

Have students select a topic related to *The Girl with the Louding Voice* to research in small groups. Some suggested topics include:

- Child marriage in Nigeria (and elsewhere)
- Modern forms of slavery
- Oppression in patriarchal societies
- The effects of sexual, emotional, and/or physical violence
- Gender inequality and sexism
- Educational access in developing countries

The purpose of this activity is for students to become experts on their topic so that they may effectively educate other members of the school community. First,

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

student groups should read and analyze the applicable sections of *The Girl with the Louding Voice* while performing secondary research as well. After students have sufficiently researched their topic, have them answer the following two questions:

1. What is the essential information that others must know about my group's topic?
2. What are controversial elements of my topic?

Finally, have students present their research to the school community in such a way that it both informs and invites them to discuss the issue. Groups could:

- Staff an information booth (be sure to obtain permission first) within the school and distribute brochures, fliers, or other documents. Free web resources such as <https://www.canva.com/> will work for this, or students could use programs such as Microsoft Publisher to create documents.
- Launch an online campaign through social media or a designed website. Encourage students to create captivating presentations through Prezi (<http://www.prezi.com>), Google Slides (<http://www.google.com/slides/about/>), or Microsoft Sway (<https://sway.com>). Students could also blog through a site such as WordPress (<http://www.wordpress.com>).
- Design and publish infographics. An infographic is a visual representation of information that features short sections of text and multiple charts, graphs, and other visuals. The digital medium offers students a unique way to package and convey knowledge while sharpening their digital literacy skills. Free resources for this include <http://piktochart.com>, <http://easel.ly>, and <https://spark.adobe.com/>.

Regardless of the format students select, their presentations should invite their audience to ask questions and engage in dialogue.

4. Participate in the International Women's Day Campaign

"We pass the womens with trays of firewood, bread, and green plantains on their head, their childrens sleeping in the wrappers around their back. They are just coming from the farm, taking the firewood and food to the house for cooking. I think about this, why the mens in the village are not letting many of the girls go to school, but they are not minding when the womens are bringing firewood and going to market and cooking for them?" (p. 82).

The Girl with the Louding Voice beckons readers to both recognize and take action on gender inequality. One way students can do so is by participating in International Women's Day. International Women's Day occurs on March 8th, but your students can initiate a related campaign at any time.

To do so, first ask them to navigate to <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/HowToPlanIWD>, a website that promotes the International Women's Day (IWD) #ChoosetoChallenge Campaign (choose to challenge gender bias and inequality). As indicated on this website, the current theme for IWD is listed here and the campaign runs all year.

Ask students to group up and consider initiating one or more of the actions listed on this website. There are numerous ideas here including securing an IWD speaker, supporting women-owned businesses, entering IWD competitions, making IWD-

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

related videos, etc. There are also related materials students can download to support and promote their efforts.

After students initiate their actions, have them come together as a whole class to reflect on the experience and plan their next action.

5. Become a RAKtivist

Adunni certainly experiences her share of abuse and hardship, but she also experiences acts of kindness, both small and large, from characters such as Tia, Iya, Kofi, and Khadija. Taking inspiration from these characters' good deeds, encourage your students to initiate acts of generosity and kindness through their work as "RAKtivists."

- A "RAKtivist," as defined by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, is a "Random Acts of Kindness activist." Invite your students to become RAKtivists by directing them to <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/become-a-raktivist>.
- Once there, they can sign up and join an online community of thousands of other people who have joined the kindness movement.
- After they sign up, direct students to <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas>. Here, they can browse an extensive list of kindness ideas. Have students, either individually or in pairs, select several ideas from the list that they are willing to implement. Give them time to plan, and instruct them to carry out their plans in the community. Encourage students to capture images and video of their kindness efforts.
- After all students implement their plans, come together as a class and debrief. Have students discuss the particular acts of kindness they performed, and have them consider the effects of their compassionate actions on both themselves and others. If they have images and videos, ask students to share these with classmates.
- Finally, make sure students are aware that they can also participate in national Random Acts of Kindness Week, from February 14–20, 2021. Direct students to <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/rak-week> for more information and to download a participant toolkit.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

The following are resources useful for extending a study of *The Girl with the Louding Voice* and its related subjects:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/mar/17/beaten-raped-and-forced-to-work-why-im-exposing-the-scandal-of-nigerias-house-girls>
"Beaten, raped and forced to work: why I'm exposing the scandal of Nigeria's house girls," a piece by Abi Daré.
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/01/books/abi-dare-girl-with-the-louding-voice-interview.html>

An interview with Abi Daré from *The New York Times*.

**OTHER RESOURCES FOR
STUDENTS AND TEACHERS**
(CONTINUED)

- <https://assembly.malala.org/stories/abi-dari-interview>
An interview with Abi Daré from *Assembly*.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIQOPneQDco>
Penguin Random House's Inside the Book with Abi Daré.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBkDDJ7oMds>
A book chat with Abi Daré.
- <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/inequality-nigeria-exploring-drivers>
Information on inequality in Nigeria from Oxfam International.
- <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british-council-girls-education-nigeria-report.pdf>
A report on girls' education in Nigeria from British Council.
- <https://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/child-marriage-nigeria-wedded-poverty>
Information from Yale University on child marriage in Nigeria.

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