1. **Algemene gegevens**
   1. Name author: Jeannette Winterson
   2. Title of book: Oranges are not the only fruit
   3. Year of publication: 1985
   4. Number of points: 3
   5. Number of pages: 171
2. **Analyse van een aantal aspecten**
   1. Summarize in one sentence what the book is about.

The book is about a girl who grows up in a religious environment and discovers she is a lesbian, while this is not excepted by the church community.

* 1. Write a summary in your own words of about 400-600 words.

The main character of the book is Jeanette, she carries the same name as the author, although it isn’t autobiographic. The book starts when she is seven and follows her till adulthood. She grows up in a strict-Christian house.- You learn about how her mother raises her, but her father is hardly mentioned during the entire book.

At first Jeanette doesn’t go to school, since her mother teaches her everything she “needs to know”, which contains all about her religion but hardly about anything else in the world. This changes when they receive a letter that Jeanette needs to attend school. At school Jeanette’s teacher wants nothing to do with her religion. She gets bullied by the other kids.

During these years Jeanette goes deaf, but instead of finding that alarming for her health, her religious surroundings claim that she is possessed by The Spirit. It isn’t until she sees Miss Jewsbury, who tells her mother she is deaf, that they go to the hospital, where her deafness is healed

Further Jeanette has a lot of bad dreams in which she gets married. Each time a different person stands in front of her at the altar, one time it’s her mom, another time it’s a pig. Jeanette discovers in her dream what, according to her, some women discover in real life, once it’s to late: all man are monsters. She didn’t comprehend why no one had told her about this, because the other women must know as well, since they married them. Jeanette goes eavesdropping on other women and discovers that they’re all unhappily wed.

On one day, when Jeanette and her mother head to town, Jeanette meets Melanie, who works at a fish stand. Once in a while they meet again and Jeanette invites her to church; from that day on, they both go to the same church and study the bible together. Jeanette stayed the night at Melanie’s house and Melanie told her how happy she was that God brought them together. When Jeanette asked Melanie if their feelings for each other were unholy, Melanie told her off, because according to their preacher that was something awful and this felt good.

Melanie talked to her mother about what she felt for Melanie, not specifically that she loved her, but she said enough for her mother to start doubting the situation. When her mother would sleep over by someone from the church community, Jeanette went, secretly, to Melanie. They slept together.

The next morning she went to church and found her mother crying. Jeanette and Melanie had to come to the front and their pastor accuses them of falling under Satan’s spell. That evening Jeanette goes home with Miss Jewsbury, she approaches her in her sleep and they have sex, even though it disgusts Jeanette.

The next morning the pastor, her mother and other church members try to fend the demons. This is a process in which Jeanette hallucinates and meets “her” orange demon. Miss Jewsbury secretly brings Jeanette to see Melanie.

When summer arrived the church said that Jeannette was “cured” and she could come along on their annual missionaries week. Here Jeanette met Katy a girl she would grow to love and they would have ‘the most simple love’. They did made sure their church didn’t find out.

When her mother and her church did found out, Jeanette had to give an explanation, because according to her sinning and following the Satan is something you choose to do. The counsel came with the answer, that the actual problem was the handing of power to woman in the church. Jeanette’s mother stood forward and agreed: Jeanette acted like a man, by preaching, cause that was truly a man’s job. The pastor decided that Jeanette and har mother needed to go on vacation, but Jeanette refused and instead decided to leave the church and the community.

Because Jeanette has no home, family or any money she takes various jobs. She works as a ice cream truck driver, she facilitates funerals and even works in a mental hospital for a while. At one funeral she runs into her mother, who denies she is her child. A couple of years later Jeanette turns home for Christmas and is welcomed by her mother. They don’t have a warm relationship and they don’t talk about Jeanette’s love for woman, but she seems accepted. Her mother is still a firm believer.

* 1. Describe the theme in one word.

Coming-of-age

* 1. Describe the main character in detail. Use about 50 words.

In the beginning Jeanette is only seven years old, she is a sweet girl who looks at the world with a big curiosity. She truly believes in her church. But when she starts to go to school and she gets exposed to the world she also starts doubting her believe. Jeanette doesn’t really get mad or aggressive during the story, it’s easy to feel compassion for her and to choose her side. During the book Jeanette grows to be a fully grown woman and her views on religion and God really change and grow with her.

* 1. Describe two minor characters.

Jeanette’s mother really cares about her status and how she and her family might look for the world around them. She is a devoted Christian and dedicates her life to god and the church community.

Melanie is the girl Jeanette first falls in love with. But Melanie chooses god over her love for Jeanette and so their ways part. Melanie does want to be a missionary, in contrast to Jeanette.

* 1. Describe the place(s) where the story is set in detail.

The story takes place in Lancashire in England. Most of the time the story takes place in Jeanette’s house, which is quite ordinary or in the church, which isn’t described.

* 1. When does the story take place

The story takes place after the Second World War. Her mother is always busy stocking tins with food, so they have some reserves when another war starts. The story covers about twenty years of the live of Jeanette, there are a few time-gaps.

* 1. Who is the person who tells the story (the narrator)?

The story is told from a first person perspective, this is the main character. But the writer sometimes shifts to a narrator, when she interrupts the story with an, almost fairy-tale like, dream.

* 1. Give an explanation of the title.

The title is quite literal; the only fruit the main character gets from her mother are oranges and they come up quite a lot in the story. In the end Jeanette’s mother declares that oranges are not the only fruit, when she had stocked a lot of pineapple in tins, for coloured people, but she discovered that that was not all they eat.

On the other hand the title can be interpret as though, the thing you are used to, doesn’t have to be the limit. Jeanette’s life was about her religion, but when she got rejected by her church she needed to find new habits.

The demon Jeanette faced when she needed to choose between god or Satan was orange as well.

* 1. Is the book just meant as a story or is the author trying to bring across a message? If so: why? If not: why not?

There are a lot of lessons to be found in the story. The most important one might be that god loves you and can be your friend no matter what, even if other Christians turn their back at you.

1. **Leesbeleving en evaluatie**Write a personal evaluation of your book in which you answer the following questions:
   1. What is your opinion about the book?

The book really intrigued me, being able to look inside of such a closed of world that is so strict in their believe, was really new for me. The addition of the “breaks” in the story with dreams that weren’t relevant to the plot of the story (to the moral, yes, but not to the plot) really gave a new level to the book. Al the biblical references in the book were, as well, new for me to read about, so that was a nice experience.

* 1. Would you recommend the book to your classmates?

Absolutely, I think that a couple of my friends who also enjoy metaphors would really enjoy reading this book.

* 1. Which part did you like best or was most important in the development of the story? Quote (citeer) a passage or sentence from the book which you found most impressive or touching.

When Jeanette hadn’t been home for a couple of years and suddenly she has to cater a funeral for someone inside the church community. She doesn’t want to be disrespectful so she tries her absolute best not to show her face and to stay in the background. But at a certain moment she has to. She goes out of the kitchen to serve the ice cream and then gets confronted with her mother and the pastor.

*‘Oh she’s a demon your daughter,’ wailed Mrs White, holding on to the pastor’s arm. ‘She’s no daughter of mine,’ snapped back my mother, head high, leading the way out.*

* 1. Which part disappointed you most?

There were about two scenes with a lesbian couple from their town, I think they were used to show the attitude towards them, but I didn’t really feel like they contributed to the story.