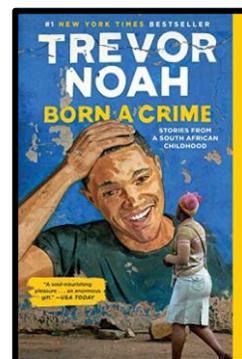


Topics & Questions for Discussion – **SPOILER ALERT**



1. Trevor Noah opens his memoir with a story about being thrown from a car by his mother. In what ways does this story illustrate the overarching narrative of Trevor Noah's early life?
2. In *Born a Crime*, Noah seeks to dispel the myth that the ending of apartheid was bloodless. How much did you know about the end of apartheid before reading this book, and what did you learn about the history of South Africa by reading Noah's story?
3. One of the most impressive characteristics that Noah conveys about his mother is her faith. How did Patricia's faith impact young Trevor, and what do you think has been the lasting impression of Patricia's faith on Trevor Noah's life?
4. Trevor Noah learned to speak six different languages growing up. What impressed you about the ways Trevor and his mother navigated neighborhoods, cultures, and family; how did language make that possible?
5. With all of the challenges Trevor faced growing up, he was gifted by his mother's assurance that he was always wanted and loved by both of his parents. Given that knowledge, how did issues of race play out in Noah's relationships with those closest to him (his mother, father, grandparents, and cousins)?
6. Noah recounts his mother's use of the Xhosa term *Sun'qhela*, "a phrase with many shades of meaning" including, "Don't undermine me," "Don't underestimate me," and "Just try me." Noah recalls that *Sun'qhela* is, "...a command and a threat, all at once." Were there any such phrases employed in your childhood, and if so, what were they?
7. In sharing his story, Trevor Noah recounts the stories of many of his family members, including how the meanings of their names were reflected in their lives. His mother's name, Patricia Nombuyiselo Noah, means "She Who Gives Back." His grandfather, Temperance Noah, was anything but temperate, but his nickname "Tat Shisha"—which translates loosely as "the smokin' hot grandpa"—was a perfect fit. What insights does Noah's story offer about the ways that identity is both assigned and chosen?
8. A prominent character in this memoir is Noah's stepfather, Abel. The name "Abel" recalls the biblical character in the book of Genesis, but his stepfather's Tsonga name, Ngisaveni, means "Be afraid." Those two names turn out to be indicative of his stepfather's public and private personas. How does Noah describe and wrestle with the issue of domestic violence?
9. Some of the most humorous and heartbreaking stories in *Born a Crime* are about young Trevor's early forays into relationships with girls. How did his parents' relationships with others influence his perspective on love and relationships?
10. A notable relationship in *Born a Crime* is between young Trevor and his dog, Fufi. What parallels might be drawn between the way Noah describes his dog Fufi and how he describes himself in his childhood and youth?
11. Noah describes an incident that happened when he was home alone with his great-grandmother (Koko) and didn't want to use the outhouse. Which incidents, friends, or family members described in *Born a Crime* are most memorable to you?
12. Noah and his mother lived in a variety of neighborhoods over the years. How did racial segregation affect the daily lives of young Trevor and his mother? What connections can you identify between the challenges in transportation and housing faced by Noah's family and those faced by people living in poverty in racially segregated communities in the U.S. and Canada today?