

Further Reading

The Education of Kevin Powell
Kevin Powell (2015)
BIOGRAPHY POWELL

In a memoir by a child of post-Civil Rights America, an acclaimed poet, journalist, essayist and public speaker recounts the poverty of his youth; his struggles over a legacy of anger, violence and self-hatred; and his life-affirming journey to be a man and a voice for others.

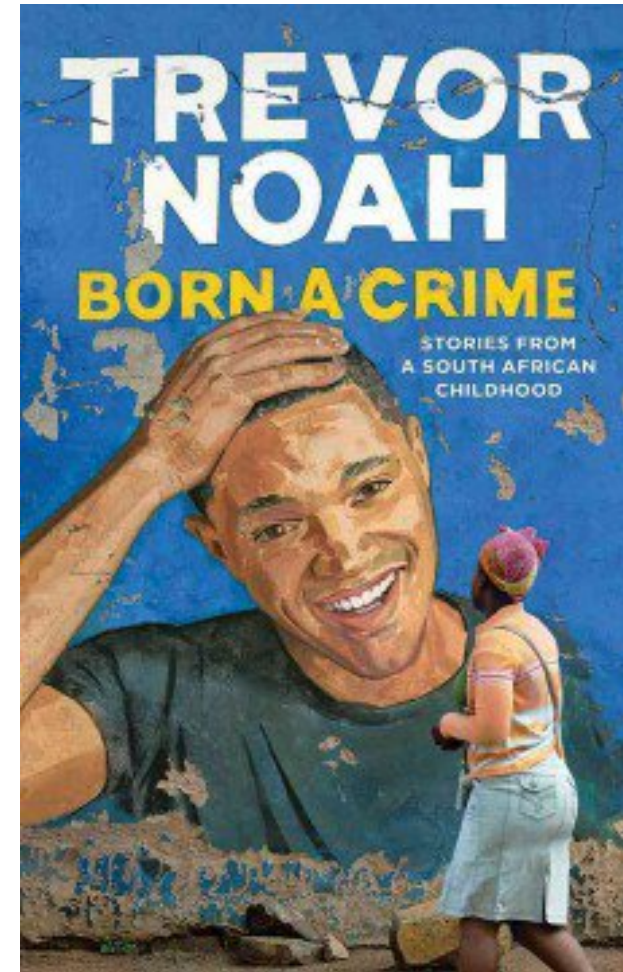
Born Bright
C. Nicole Mason (2016)
BIOGRAPHY MASON

The author describes the path she took to escape poverty, after being raised by a 16-year-old single mother in 1970s Los Angeles, and examines the conditions that make it nearly impossible for others to replicate her journey.

The Fire Next Time
James Baldwin (1963)
SOCSCI CIVRTS BAL

A powerful evocation of James Baldwin's early life in Harlem and a disturbing examination of the consequences of racial injustice, the book consists of two "letters," written on the occasion of the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, that exhort Americans, both black and white, to attack the terrible legacy of racism.

Book Discussion Guide



About the Book

Having thoroughly mined his South African upbringing in his standup comedy and monologues on The Daily Show, Noah here tells the whole story in this witty and revealing autobiography. Born to a black African mother and a white Swedish father, Noah violated the Immorality Act of 1927, which outlawed interracial relationships. Though apartheid ended a decade after Noah's birth, its legacy lived on in the country's nigh-inescapable ghettos and perpetual racial conflicts, continuing to affect his life as he came of age. Noah's story is the story of modern South Africa; though he enjoyed some privileges of the region's slow Westernization, his formative years were shaped by poverty, injustice, and violence.
-Publishers Weekly

Discussion Questions

1. Trevor's experience growing up seemed similar to the experience of people growing up in our country more like 60 years ago than 30 years ago. Does his youth resonate with you in the ways that racism affected him and in the childhood that he had growing up not very long ago?
2. What role does being bi-racial play in Trevor's life? How do Americans see him?
3. What did you think about Trevor's mom? How would you characterize her as a mother?
4. What did you think about Trevor's mom's discipline?
5. Why did Trevor always feel like an outsider? How did he cope with that? Where did Trevor fit in?

6. What did you think about Trevor's relationship with his biological father, Robert? What was Trevor's father like? How did you view him as a person?
7. How was apartheid similar to American Jim Crow and how was it different?
8. What did you think about the way Trevor's Mom tried to raise him to treat women, and how does that reconcile with her marrying Abel? Why did she marry Abel when she said she wouldn't consider marrying Trevor's father?
9. A lot of what happens in this story is told with humor, even though many things were very dark. Would you consider Trevor an optimist and how did his attitude and views of his own life influence the person he became?
10. How did you respond to Trevor's use of humor in telling stories from his youth? How did humor shape his experience growing up?
11. How does this book compare to other memoirs/autobiographies you have read? What do you think of Noah's writing style? Do you like his voice?
12. Do any of his stories / comments challenge your beliefs? Do you think any of his opinions are provocative?
13. What did you think of how he structured the book?
14. Did you like the book? What surprised you? Would you recommend it to friends?

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