

BOY 2.0

TRACEY BAPTISTE

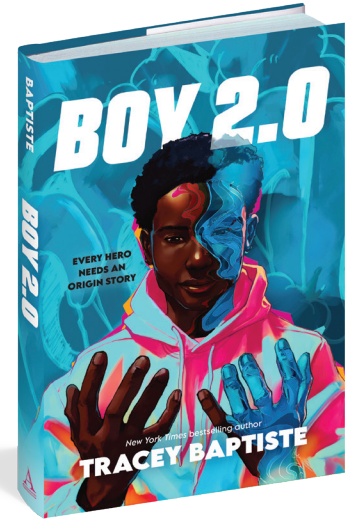
BOOK CLUB GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK

Win “Coal” Keegan is an ordinary kid who, in a moment of danger, learns he can turn invisible. Now he has to figure out how. As Coal searches for answers and slowly learns to control his invisibility, he turns to his foster family and friends both new and old for help. But they soon discover they’re not the only ones looking for a black boy with superpowers, and the situation is far stranger—and more dangerous—than they ever could have expected.

DISCUSSION GUIDE



1. *BOY 2.0* borrows its framework from the fairy tale of Snow White. What elements of the original fairy tale, including plot, characters, locations, etc., do you see in Coal's story?
2. In Chapter One, Doc introduces Coal to a poem by Danez Smith titled “alternate names for black boys.” How do the themes of this poem match *BOY 2.0*?
3. Coal uses his artistic ability as a tool for activism. Think of an issue that you care about. How might you use your talents to make change?
4. In his presentation, Dr. Achebe talks about “creating products that are ethical, environmentally friendly, and harm free.” Is this an accurate description of his company's practices? Why or why not?
5. Doc attempts to teach Coal mindfulness exercises through yoga. Why do you think she does this? Is this a benefit to Coal? How?
6. In Chapter Fifteen, Coal and Dr. Achebe have a conversation about the role of DNA in making a person who they are. What other elements do they discuss that go into shaping someone's personality? Are there other elements you think they missed?
7. Coal has difficulty trusting people. Why do you think this is? How have the people in his life—from the McKays to Vice Principal Hart—shown that they care about him?
8. What is the significance of the symbols on Coal's baby blanket?
9. The McKay siblings and Door devise a scheme to get Coal into Mirror Tech. Make an argument for who you think is really the “lynchpin” of the operation.
10. When does Coal's understanding of who he is change over the course of the story, and how many times does he experience a change? Compare who he believes he is at the start of the story to his perception of himself at the end.

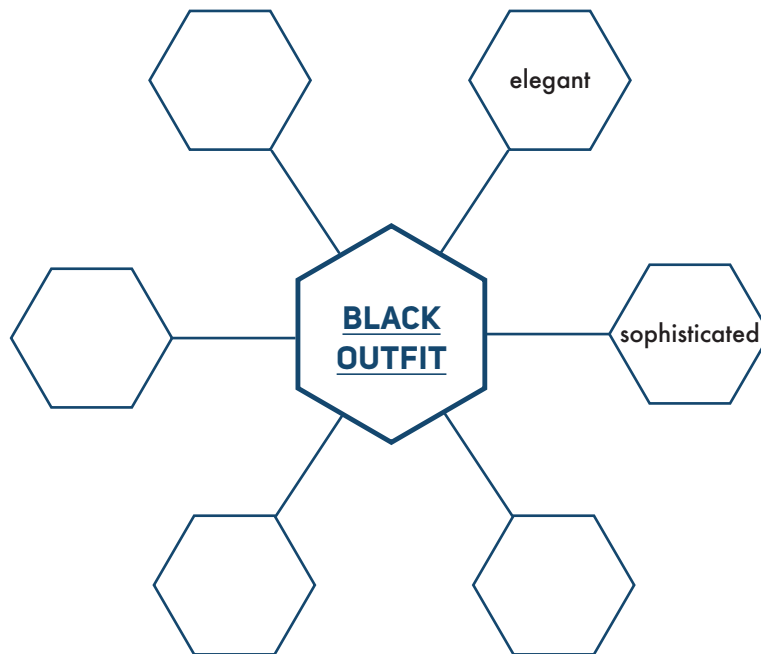
- The story leans into the science of gene editing and genetic modification. Based on the plot, what do you think the author's attitude is regarding genetic manipulation? What are your thoughts about genetic manipulation?
- The story also talks about the effect of trauma on the human body. Trauma is usually negative. How has the author made trauma into a positive for Coal?

ACTIVITIES

- In Chapter Twenty-Seven, Dr. Achebe writes a letter to Coal in which he talks about the way "dark" is used in popular language. Make a list of phrases that use the word "dark," write their meaning, then find alternate phrases to use. This activity can also be done with the word "black."

| TERM | MEANING | ALTERNATE TERM |
|------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| dark cloud | something that causes unhappiness | |

- There are also many opportunities and contexts to use "dark" or "black" positively. For example, black clothing can be used as a marker of elegance or sophistication, while dark soil is rich with nutrients and life. Fill out the word cloud example below, then make your own word clouds of dark or black things and how they might be interpreted in a story.



- Coal's ability is the subject of "family lore," a story that is handed down from generation to generation and retold over many years. Does your family have any stories like that? Interview a family member to hear stories from your family's past, then share the funny/incredible/strange things that your family members have been involved in as a cartoon, graphic novel panel, video clip, or other media.