

***Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow – Guided Reading**

Use this reading guide to help you as you move through the novel. Answer the questions, do the research tasks and keep detailed notes (using post-its or your own note-taking approaches). Class discussion will focus on the content of this guide and the culminating task (creative & essay based) will rely heavily on the work you do during reading.

Background (before you read):

1. The students go to Cesar Chavez High school – do a quick Internet search to find out who he was! This kind of cultural context information is KEY to understanding anything you read.
2. Look around your community (and our school) – create a list of the ways in which we as a society keep tabs on the individual citizens.
3. How do you define “security”? What do you believe makes us secure?
4. Where do you see security devices used in our community? Do they actually help make our world a safer or more secure place?
5. Define “utopia” and “dystopia” and then consider how much our current way of life in Ontario is both utopian and dystopian.
6. Explore the theme of power as it relates to our lives – who has power in our society and how do they use it? Is power a positive or negative force in society?
7. The novel *Little Brother* plays A LOT on the ideas found in the novel *1984* written by George Orwell (published in 1948) which imagined a future that was very dystopian. We will do a short lesson on the Orwell novel and its ideas; however, it would make you extra-smart if you did some extra Orwell research on your own – I remember reading Orwell in high school and having my mind blown; I consider my introduction to him a big part of my awakening as a reader and as someone with a social/political conscience.

The Characters (throughout the reading):

1. Create a list of characters – as we are introduced to each new character, detail how she/he fits into the social hierarchy of the novel. Who has power over whom? How do these individuals have power? How do these individuals use power?
2. Consider the non-human characters in this novel – like in “The Ray Gun: A Love Story,” there are some important “things” in this novel that end up taking on almost character-like roles.

The Language (throughout the reading):

1. Make a list of words you do not know – AND LOOK THEM UP so you learn what they mean.
2. Doctorow uses a number of NEOLOGISMS – made up words that he uses that we are expected to just accept – how many can you find?
3. Technical terms – this novel is FILLED with computer-speak, geek-talk and online meme terms – for example, the use of w1n5t0n for Winston is a standard computer method of writing a name using both numbers and letters. Create a list of the other technical terms used (and define them as needed).

Chapter 1:

1. Doctorow uses a “near future” – a vision of tomorrow that is just around the corner. In this chapter we are introduced to a number of things that could be reality in a few years. Identify a few of them and share your thoughts on if they are good advancements or not. For example, the students are all supplied their own laptops – this is possible ... in fact, in some places it is already a reality; do you think it’s a good idea? What are some of the pros and cons as described in this chapter of this?
2. Pg. 10 – “Spending Fridays at school was teh suck anyway, and I was glad of the excuse to make my escape.” What is the purpose of “teh”? Do a little research here – this is an Internet meme.
3. Pg. 11 – the description of the VP includes details of his physique and clothing: “and his college basketball days are far enough behind him that his chest muscles have turned into saggy man-boobs that were painfully obvious through his freebie dot-com polo shirts.” What is the importance and symbolism behind the VP wearing “freebie dot-com polo shirts”? You will need to look up and understand what the “dot-com” bubble was about and consider how the VP wearing a shirt from one of these companies tells the reader something about the type of person Mr. Benson is.
4. “Once people figured out that these “free” laptops worked for the man—and showed a never-ending parade of obnoxious ads to boot—they suddenly started to feel very heavy and burdensome,” (pg. 14). What is the metaphor created in this passage? Consider the two things that are being actually compared.
5. We are given a description of Harajuku Fun Madness that suggests it has its roots in Japanese fashion, role-playing, drama club and alternate realities. What kinds of games exist now that are similar, if not necessarily on the same grand scale as HFM?
6. Pg. 19 includes references to Microsoft’s Internet Explorer as well as Firefox; how does Doctorow’s inclusion of these very real companies and products add to the way in which the audience can relate to the story? IF you don’t know the difference between Explorer and Firefox, find someone who has an opinion on the two and have a quick discussion – it’s worth it to understand Marcus and the group of folks this story will be about (and it’s worth it to figure out which browser may be better for you right now).
7. Chapter one includes a number of ways in which Marcus and his friends circumvent a variety of security systems put in place by the school; list each of the security measures and provide a short explanation of how they get around them.
8. What are some of the similarities between the way students in the novel get around the security measures at Cesar Chavez High and the ways students are able to get around security measures at our school?

Chapter 2:

1. What does Marcus wrapping the Physics textbook in paper towels before nuking the arphid suggest about his character?
2. Social engineering is the art and science of altering behaviour of individuals or of altering the outcome of a security measure. It is done by altering or convincing the individual or security measure to do something different than he/she/it originally intended. For example, sometimes you may socially engineer a situation with me to convince me to accept an assignment late – this can be done through perhaps pulling a fire alarm so that I can’t collect the work, or it could be done by convincing me that a

later due-date would be advantageous to everyone. There are a number of instances of Marcus' skills as a social engineer of both individuals and security to be found in this chapter; find at least one example of each.

3. This chapter notes that it's really easy to fake the return number on a caller ID? Doctorow even suggests the reader "google 'spoof caller id.'" Well ... did you google it? Why would Doctorow suggest we do this? How does his call to action pull the reader into the novel? Connect Doctorow's suggestion to what we know of him as a writer and an Internet activist – see, this is why knowing some background about him is VITAL.
4. Since the novel is set in near-future San Francisco, it would benefit you to actually know WHERE it is located in the USA and some of the basic information about the city – GO FORTH AND RESEARCH – come back with at least five interesting facts about the city to share with the class.
5. Marcus describes the juxtaposition between the touristy side of the city and the "tenderloin" – quote the description found in this chapter.
6. Consider how the contrast shown between the two areas of town (from q. 5) and what it says about the way cities WANT to be seen and the truth behind them. What is one thing about Peterborough that we are told is true but that you feel isn't the case? Why would the city rather its vision of the truth be told in both the novel and in our own town? Who has the right to truth? Who owns the image of our city?
7. *Just a note – not a question* – as you read through, be aware of how the idea of the future is filled with Asian influences. This is a common "trope" or concept in much writing about the future.

Chapter 3:

1. Page 36 includes the description of the "middle-aged lady in a hippie dress" who is trampled to death in the crowd rushing from the attack. Consider for a second how she is a symbol of more than just a single woman being trampled; she is wearing a HIPPIE DRESS ... what does this represent and what could the author also be suggesting is being trampled in addition to the woman?
2. What does Marcus' response to the woman's tragic situation show the reader about him? Think carefully ... he actually has two different responses.
3. Marcus thinks to himself: "I'd never really believed in terrorists before—I mean, I knew that in the abstract there were terrorists somewhere in the world, but they didn't really represent any risk to me" (p. 41). He later muses: "I didn't know what a terrorist looked like, though TV shows had done their best to convince me that they were brown Arabs with big beards and kint caps and loose cotton dresses that hung down to their ankles" (p. 43). These statements leads to the questions: a) What makes us safe? Who has power? What is safety? – *Consider these ... we will discuss them.*
4. P. 47 includes a fantastic juxtaposition between terror/torture and mundane normalcy – find it!
5. Marcus says to his captors, "I've got the right to my privacy" (p. 49). He may think he does, and we may think we do ... now look up Bill C30 and see how our own government is working to control privacy. Do the research and make up your own mind about who has the right to privacy.

Chapter 4:

1. P. 53 references Benneton – it's a company ... check out their ads and figure out what Marcus is getting at in his reference.
2. Marcus laments to himself, "God help me, I submitted to her will" (p. 56) after giving up his password to "severe hair cut woman." There is something interesting in this passage that shows the reader just how dearly Marcus holds the security of his password ... any ideas what?
3. On the same page, Marcus notes that he never deletes any of his messages – do you? Why? Has this novel made you rethink this strategy?
4. "There's something really liberating about having some corner of your life that's *yours*, that no one gets to see except you," notes Marcus, and then, "It's not about doing something shameful. It's about doing something *private*. It's about your life belonging to you" (p. 57). Comment on these thoughts ... agree ... disagree?
5. In this chapter Marcus describes both physical and emotional torture. He comments that he felt "dirty and ashamed" (p. 60). What do you think it is that finally breaks Marcus and makes him feel this way?
6. The Starbucks take-out cup is again seen in this chapter. What does it symbolize for Marcus?

Chapter 5:

1. Consider how the last paragraph on p. 69 acts as an example of how the small pleasures in life and the little things we take for granted can be so powerful. What kinds of things in the description of the meal demonstrate to the reader about the experience Marcus and his friends have just had?
2. P. 70: "In the telling, it receded into the distance." What receded? And why is the telling of this thing so important to Marcus?
3. On p. 71 Marcus laments that his punishment "had been sheer vindictiveness. My mind reeled at the thought. They had done all that as a mere punishment for defying their authority." Explain how this comment can be connected to the themes of evil and morality.
4. The description of the two San Francisco bridges on p. 72 acts as a juxtaposition between beauty and truth – explain.
5. Marcus comments to his friends that "'Terrorists don't hate airplanes or bridges. They love terror'" (p. 73) and continues to think to himself, "It was so obvious I couldn't believe I'd never thought of it before" (p. 73). Why is this realization so shocking to him?
6. Why does Marcus describe the "have-you-seen" sites looking for missing citizens as "pretty goulish" (p. 79)?
7. Marcus demonstrates his deep understanding of how media works and how it only chooses to publish some information about the attack on SF. Look specifically at his thoughts on p. 80 about why the BART blowout isn't on the front page of the *Chronicle* – what is wrong with this kind of media control of the message?
8. Throughout this chapter there are numerous instances of Marcus feeling "familiar" and "comfortable" – identify at least THREE and then summarize why these feelings are so important to him.

9. When Marcus finds that his laptop has been tampered with he feels sickened and betrayed. This leads him to feelings of insecurity and fear. So, I ask you – What is security? What is safety? What is privacy?
10. Look up Linux – what is it? This is important!!!
11. On the last page of the chapter, Marcus finally feels in control – identify the passage that suggests this is the case and comment on the power it suddenly gives to Marcus.

Chapter 6:

1. Check out the third paragraph in this chapter – it describes a new reality of surveillance for San Francisco. Now consider how this new “Culture of Fear” (yes, this is a term, so look it up if you’d like to be super smart) will affect Marcus’ daily life.
2. How is the Turk important to Marcus’ understanding of how the government’s level of control is so dangerous?
3. P. 94 contains another great example of “social engineering” – find it and describe what is being controlled.
4. Marcus alludes to *Silence of the Lambs* – go do the research – what does it mean to “go all weird and Silence of the Lambs” (p. 95)?
5. The chapter has a number of examples of how Marcus’ interest in social sciences, researching on the Internet and just knowing things gives him power – find at least one instance of this and explain what the power he gains from having this knowledge.
6. The Castro is a very important place in the history of San Francisco – look it up and then consider how it is an appropriate place for social change and why Cory Doctorow would possibly include a reference to it in this chapter.

Chapter 7:

1. P. 104 notes that “gas had hit seven bucks a gallon.” This is US pricing ... check out TODAY’S current price for a gallon of gas in the US. Then check out the current Canadian price for a gallon of gas. We pay a lot more than the states (for a variety of reasons) but the reality is that if it’s seven bucks a gallon there it will be a heck of a lot more in Canada.
2. 1337 = “leet” – what are some other hacker words (other than “w1n5t0n” and “m1k3y”)?
3. The BART and the SF Bridge Authority both use Fast-pass type technology to supposedly make it easier for consumers to use their systems; however, these chip-cards also track the movement of the users, thus taking away their freedom. What ways do we currently have of having our daily actions tracked? Who has ownership over our actions?
4. P. 109 makes reference to the ACLU – look it up ... what is it? Why is it important here?
5. What types of posters does Marcus have to remove from his bedroom wall in order to use his projector? Why is the type of music he listens to relevant to our understanding of the character?
6. OK, so Doctorow creates a pretty smart character in Marcus, as evidenced throughout this chapter, including the young hacker’s knowledge of Bayesian statistics. Find out two interesting fact about Thomas Bayes beyond that which is outlined in the chapter.
7. P. 112 includes another techno-term, “flamewars” – look up the term “flaming” as it relates to the Internet and consider how this type of activity happens in your own online experiences.

8. Later on on p. 112 Doctorow references the fact that China is filtering how people use the Internet in that country. Look up some basic information about modern China. Why would China want to filter the activity of its citizens? How are these actions any different than the way we are watched on the Internet in Canada?
9. In this chapter, how does Marcus again demonstrate his sense of moral responsibility?
10. My new favorite line of this text is "What if we changed the definition of normal?" – What do you think of this line? Why do you think I'd like it so much?
11. Marcus thinks a lot about "encrypting" his online activity; how safe is your online activity? Do you even care? Why?
12. Pigspleen is the fictional Internet Service Provider (ISP) in the book that also works to help indie bands get their music out for free, thus making copyright somewhat optional. Do some research ... yes, please do it!!! ... and come up with a couple of points about how Cory Doctorow actually views the idea of copyright. *Hint – you COULD send him a question to his website craphound.com or tweet to him @corydoctorow – he does write back!*
13. Marcus waxes poetic about the joys of programming a computer and how it can make one experience a whole new world where if "you program a computer, it does *exactly* what you tell it to do" (p. 119). What other kinds of experiences do you equate with the joy Marcus feels here?
14. Hey ... any code writers in our class? IF you are a code writer be prepared to tell us something cool about code writing or to perhaps share some of your work with the class.

Chapter 8:

1. What is the difference between "guilty people" and "people with secrets" as defined by Marcus on p. 121?
2. P. 122: "No one had given it much thought. And now that people were paying attention, we were all starting to notice little things, like the fact that the FasTrak doesn't have an off switch." Are you bothered by this fact? Think about the ways in which your life is under surveillance; are there any similarly bothersome instances?
3. What is the continued claim to support the increase in tracking that is being done to the citizens of SF?
4. Marcus argues to his father that, "It's crazy. For every guilty person they catch, they have to punish thousands of innocent people. That's just not good" (p. 123). What percentage would you be ok with? *For every _____ innocent people they interrogate and punish they would need to find _____ guilty people for me to be ok with it.*
5. Check out Carioca Proibidao (different spelling to find it on YouTube). Tell me one interesting fact (beyond what Marcus tells us) about this type of music. *Marcus suggests it's a specific band, but I found out it's actually a type of music.*
6. "h4wt" (p.125) means?
7. By reading into Marcus' time in the park with Van, how do we know that despite all his brilliance, he's still just a teenage boy?
8. Describe the technique that Marcus suggests all the XNetters use to create havoc in the city.
9. On p. 126 Marcus and Van have a pretty serious argument about the intent of Marcus' actions. Who do you agree with? Why?

10. Marcus spends two pages explaining the “paradox of the false positive” (p. 128). Describe it in simple terms and decide if you think it’s acceptable or not that “To catch ten bad guys, you have to haul in and investigate two hundred thousand innocent people” (p. 129).
11. Define “aggro” – p. 130.
12. Who are the silent, unseen victims of the chaos Marcus and the XNetters have created in this chapter?
13. Consider the financial, emotional, physical, social, environmental and political damage Marcus’ scheme to mess up the surveillance has caused. Is he any better than the terrorists or the Department of Homeland Security?

Chapter 9:

1. There are two instances where Marcus realizes his parents have aged. Find them both and consider why he finds this significant. Think about Marcus’ age, the age of his folks and the roles they all play in the family structure.
2. On p. 135 Marcus notes that he’s done all this to his dad when referring to the chaos that has happened in SF. He doesn’t seem to care about the trouble he’s caused the city and its citizens, just that which he’s caused his father. What do we learn about Marcus and the development of his character through this?
3. Marcus notes that “There was something magic about a total stranger doing you a favor” (p. 135). What is so magical in this instance? And why is it so magical? Now ... go deeper ... consider the work Marcus and all the XNetters are doing for SF and the world ... are they doing anyone a favor?
4. On p. 137 Marcus’ dad excitedly argues with Marcus the benefits of the increased police, military and surveillance presence in the country, noting that, “They’ll catch every alimony cheat, every dope dealer, every dirtbag and ever terrorist. You just wait. This could be the best thing that ever happened to this country.” Would this be a step closer to Utopia? Is it acceptable for a society to take drastic, Dystopian measures in order to obtain a Utopia?
5. I find it interesting that Marcus is so shocked by his father being so convinced of his own rightness in his views about the changes in the city’s security; Marcus is equally smug in his views. This is a great example of how extreme ideas can breed a high level of self-righteousness. Is it OK for the two to be so sure about the rightness of their opinions? Surely they can’t both be right, can they?
6. Marcus writes about the young man who calls in to the California Live radio show that “He sounded like an idiot. Not just the incoherent words, but also his gloating tone. He sounded like a kid who was indecently proud of himself. He *was* a kid who was indecently proud of himself” (p. 139). What is the irony in this description from Marcus?
7. P. 141 contains another example of Marcus’ sense of moral responsibility. Find it.
8. “The President went on TV with the Governor to tell us that no price was too high for security” (p. 141). What is more valuable, freedom or safety? Can money buy both?
9. Look up Norwegian Death Metal. It is referenced in this chapter; why is it relevant? Who are these people and why is it interesting that they are the ones who have developed the free game, Clockwork Plunder (aka windup pirates)?

Chapter 10:

1. What is the gender assumption made in the opening of this chapter?
2. I STILL don't really understand how the "ring of trust" and "keys" work ... anyone able to explain it? Please!
3. There is a wonderful juxtaposition and irony on p. 156 in the choice of venue for the planning of the ring of trust – explain the juxtaposition and how it is ironic.
4. How is the FasTrak in the "supplier's" van ironic?
5. Jolu takes a turn away from the work that he and Marcus have been doing – explain how the idea of the Culture of Fear has added to this decision and include some of the words Jolu says that demonstrate how fear has overtaken him. *There are at least two different passages on the same page that really point to the struggles Jolu is having with his own fears.*
6. "Watching you try is like watching a bird fly into a window again and again" (p. 159). What are two literary devices used in this stunning description given by Jolu about his frustration with Marcus' work and lack of progress?
7. Describe the double standard that Jolu faces.

Chapter 11:

1. In the opening paragraphs of this chapter we are given a glimpse into Jolu's morality. What does he do that demonstrates he is of similar moral fiber to Marcus?
2. Jolu says to the XNetters who are gathered by the shore "You are all here because we trust you. I mean, really trust you. Trust you with our lives" (p. 165). Can YOU really trust anyone, fully?
3. Why do you think it is so important for the crowd to hear of the experiences of Van, Jolu, Marcus and Darryl?
4. How is the telling of the experiences with the DHS to the crowd important to Marcus?
5. What does the contrast of how old and young envision being spied on say about the assumptions of both the young and the old?
6. On p. 167, Marcus says to Ange, "I'm glad I finally told people. Any longer and I might have started to doubt my own sanity." How does the DHS use this very fact to their benefit earlier in the novel?
7. Describe the way in which Doctorow juxtaposes the innocence of youth with the power of the work they are doing in the way he has Marcus think about working with Ange at the top of page 168.
8. Marcus' teacher, Ms. Galvez, asks the students to consider the work of the Freedom Riders – LOOK THEM UP ... go to YouTube and search for "Freedom Riders film" and watch the trailer for the documentary about this incredible moment in the history of Civil Rights. The film is FANTASTIC!!! I'm only asking you to watch the trailer, but maybe you'll be hooked and find time to watch the whole film.
9. Ms. Galvez and Charles have seriously opposing opinions about how to classify the work of the Hippies. Looking at the class discussion near the end of the chapter, consider all the sides of the situation; who do you believe is correct?

Chapter 12:

1. Look at the description of Delores Park on page 184 and consider how it is another example of how Doctorow uses the contrast of beauty and ugly in this novel. What does this particular example serve to remind the reader about public spaces?
2. Do you think that the idea of having the big concert in order to provoke the police into action is a good one? Why?
3. Mission Burritos are REAL ... tell me something about this company ... look them up!!
4. On page 189, Marcus describes the setting at the concert and that there are very young children there. He assumes "No one would do anything too stupid with kids that little in the crowd. No one wanted to see little kids get hurt." What does this tell us about Marcus and just how naïve he is?
5. Page 191 includes a reference to "Gulag America" – you need to understand what a Gulag is before you can understand how Doctorow uses it. So, tell me what "Gulag" means and then try to explain Doctorow's usage.
6. As Marcus and Ange escape the chaos of the concert on page 197, we are again given a glimpse of just how much moral responsibility Marcus feels; find the passage that details this feeling.
7. Ms. Galvez is gone and Marcus is betrayed. Do you think the school was right in removing Ms. Galvez from the class?

Chapter 13:

1. The 2nd paragraph of this chapter uses three words in quotation marks: "reporting," "riot," and "rioters." What is the intent of using quotation marks for these words?
2. Comment on the irony of the board of education calling Ange's theft of the No Child Left Behind tests (yes, they are real, just like EQAO) "edu-terrorism." To get into this question fully, you need to explore WHY Ange decided to take the tests and put them on the Internet.
3. Al-Jazeera is a real news service – do some basic research and tell me three things I should know about Al-Jazeera. *Hint, I have them on my Twitter feed for a specific reason.*
4. Page 206 references the NPR – what is it and what is the Canadian equivalent?
5. Why does Marcus say that "I didn't know *any* women under the age of sixty that called themselves "Mrs" (p. 207)?
6. The chapter ends with Mr. Benson, the VP, telling Marcus "You don't want to declare war on me in my own school" (p. 213). So, I am left wondering ... whose school is it?

Chapter 14:

1. The chapter begins with Marcus at home watching TV. Identify the passage that acts as another demonstration of the Culture of Fear that is being developed.
2. On page 221 Marcus describes Ange's bedroom and notes that there were parts of computers laying around "that would dig into your stocking feet like caltrops." Define "caltrops."
3. As Marcus explains that the meme of the AbusesOfAuthority was spreading, he does so in a way that suggests it is fun and crazy. Find the passage (p. 227) and explain why this is a disturbing way to view this meme.
4. Page 228 includes two important moments in the text. First, this is where we have the first reference to "Little Brothers," and second, there is reference to the fact that the

American news agencies have failed to cover the story of the A-oh-A. Describe who the Little Brothers are and explain what is important about the American news services NOT covering what the Little Brothers are doing.

5. Marcus' dad notes that "They're trying to discredit us," and "They've trying to sabotage the efforts to keep us safe" (p. 229). Who is they?
6. Doctorow references a number of real news agencies at the close of this chapter. My guess is that you have heard of most of them, except maybe Deutsche Welle; look up Deutsche Welle and tell me who they are.
7. What is ironic about Marcus' concern that the online press conference take place somewhere in the game where "noob reporters" (p. 230) won't get killed in the game by the regular players?

Chapter 15:

1. What does the fact that Ange and Marcus stop their lovemaking in order to host the press conference say about them as activists? As lovers? As friends?
2. Identify the very naïve statement Marcus makes about the media just before he pastes his pre-written comment into the game chat on page 235.
3. Marcus notes to one of the reporters (in the voice of Mik3y) that he doesn't really know what the answer is to terrorism is, but that he does know that what is being done won't do anything to stop it, either. So, I'm left wondering, does dissent and challenging a government's actions always have to come with a solution?
4. When Marcus has a story made up for his mom about the movie he supposedly went to (but didn't want her to know that), is this lying or is it social engineering? Defend.
5. How do the headlines surprise Marcus?
6. What does Marcus' surprise suggest about his character?
7. Identify the comment that Ange makes during their fight that suggests that Marcus may be letting his power go to his head.
8. In the letter from Zeb (and I'd like you to note the beauty/ugly juxtaposition between his clothing and his teeth), there is a reference to Gitmo-by-the-Bay (an allusion to a real place from not too long ago). Look up Gitmo (Guantanamo Bay Naval Base) and share three important pieces of information about it.

Chapter 16:

1. On page 253, Marcus notes that, "Holding in the secret had dirtied me, soiled my spirit." What does he mean by this? And do you think this is something the DHS would have intended?
2. Contrast the two versions of Darryl's father we see in this chapter. Why would he be one way and then be able to change suddenly?
3. How does the coffee served at Barbara Stratford's house act as a symbol of Marcus' growing maturity?
4. I am left wondering why Marcus is so interested in how Stratford's house is decorated; he spends a lot of time describing it and what he likes about it. What do you think he likes about it and why do you think Doctorow includes this quirky element to his character?
5. How is Barbara Stratford's office a great example of the continued contrast between beauty and ugly?
6. Why does Stratford want to take the story very carefully?

Chapter 17:

1. On page 269, Barbara reminds Marcus that his story now is not his own; it belongs to her and she is sending it out to the world. How is this an important message for Marcus to remember, especially since he is such a fan of communicating through the Internet?
2. What is the literary device used in Marcus' comparison of the story to a rocket?
3. Why does Marcus feel something has changed between him and Ange now that they have had sex?
4. What is the irony of Marcus receiving spam?
5. Identify the statement in Masha's discussion with Marcus that pinpoints the power of the media.
6. This chapter explores how both Marcus (and the XNetters) and the DHS have power. Whom do you believe has the greatest power at this point in the novel?

Chapter 18:

1. Marcus tells the story of putting Charles's clothing in the urinal at camp. Do you think this is an example of bullying or is it just an early example of Marcus standing up for what he believes is right?
2. What is the mistake in judgment that we have already seen Marcus make earlier in the novel (although later in chronology) that we see him also make on page 291?
3. On page 293, Marcus declares, "Hell, people will print anything these days." Do you think we can ever trust the media?

Chapter 19:

1. Page 304 contains yet another example of how Doctorow contrasts beauty and ugly. What is the beauty and what is the ugly?
2. The whole VampMob game is a fantastic juxtaposition of innocence and adulthood, freedom and power ... how so?
3. How does the outcome of the VampMob again demonstrate how naïve Marcus is?
4. Let's just take a moment and celebrate the Star Wars reference on page 313!! ☺
5. Who is Rosa Luxembour and why would it be appropriate for Marcus to have a t-shirt with her image on it?
6. What is a Faraday pouch (referred to on page 314).
7. What does Marcus' turning over of his ID so readily to Masha suggest about how his character is changing? Why do you think he does this so quickly? Fear, trust, confusion?
8. Page 315 contains more of the beauty/ugly contrast – find it.
9. Page 319 contains another example of Marcus' sense of moral responsibility – find the quotation that best represents this.

Chapter 20:

1. When Marcus is speaking to the two young boys who idolize him and are rescuing him he tells them that he will be sure to look after them and give them tips on how to stay safe. What does this remind us about Marcus' character?
2. Beauty/ugly shows up again on page 328 – quote the passage that describes this contrast.
3. Another of the same happens on page 332 – quote this one.

4. How is Marcus' giving Van his passwords important to our understanding of Van, of Marcus and of their relationship?
5. Van says to Marcus, "What a waste. What was it all for, anyway?" Why does this cut so deep with Marcus?
6. What is ironic about what is stenciled on Zeb's tent?
7. Do some research and find out how closely Domino's Pizza is tied to the Republican Party in the USA. Explain why Marcus would find this problematic.

Chapter 21 AND Epilogue:

1. On page 351 Marcus says about one of the cops who is rescuing him, "He had his faceplate up and he looked like any other cop, not like my savior." I like this quotation because it makes me think about how we often put people up on a pedestal when, in reality, we are all just humans. So, connect the quotation and my thoughts to the whole of this book.
2. What is the important thing Marcus realizes about most of the folks who are on Treasure Island with him? How does it prove Jolu's earlier fears to be true?
3. What is ironic about the judge's final comment to Marcus on page 355?
4. What are two ways we know that the DHS still wins over Marcus and the XNetters?
5. On page 364 Ange says to Marcus, "You did become a terrorist when they sent her to your town." So, is Marcus a terrorist???????