

Born A Crime Summary

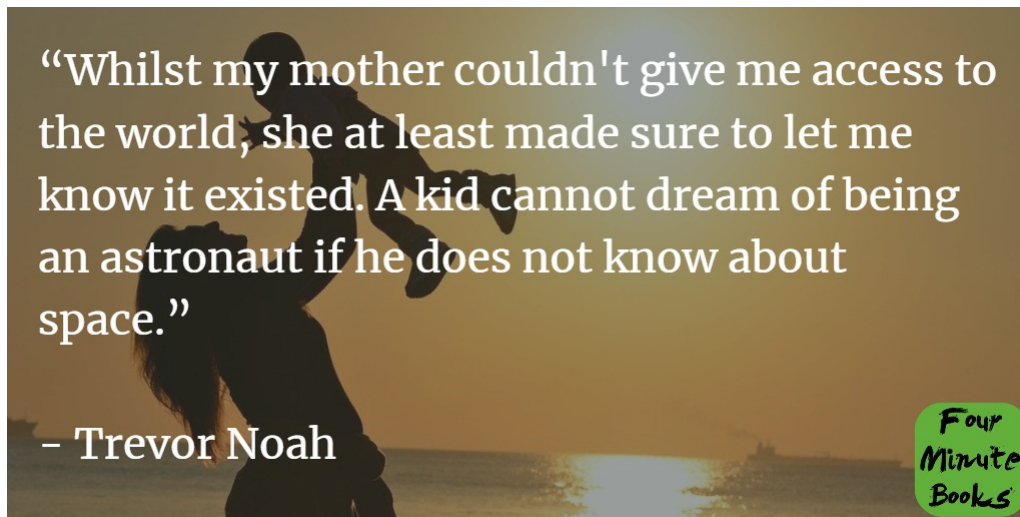


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1-Sentence-Summary: *Born A Crime will inspire you to make great things happen no matter what circumstances you're born into by revealing the story of how Trevor Noah grew up as a mixed child in South Africa on the way to becoming an adult.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



You've seen him behind the desk of *The Daily Show*. But you might not know that talented comedian Trevor Noah has an inspiring back story.

Trevor was born in apartheid South Africa. As if that wasn't hard enough, his very existence was a crime because he was the child of a white father and a black mother. His mother had to go to extraordinary measures to protect him.

Through poverty, violence, and abuse, Noah's mother committed to make a better life for her son. In his book, *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* he details his life. From his isolated upbringing as a curious and mischievous boy to discovering himself and his new freedom as a teen at the end of apartheid, you'll see it all.

Trevor Noah's funny and heartfelt stories of a his life in a dangerous time only equipped with humor and wit will give you a whole new appreciation for him.

Here are the 3 greatest lessons I got from this one:

1. Trevor's existence was a crime, but his mother went to great lengths to protect him.

2. Post-apartheid South Africa had its own struggles as Trevor struggled to find who he was.
3. His wit and ability to fit in with different groups helped him in his business endeavors.

Let's learn from this inspiring story!

Lesson 1: **Apartheid South Africa made Trevor's existence a crime, but his mother made sure he was safe.**

One of the laws during apartheid, a period of segregation in South Africa, was that there should be no interracial sex. Authorities would imprison men and women who broke this rule. They were even known to look inside windows to make sure no illegal relations were taking place behind closed doors.

Noah was born into this world in 1984. **His father was a white man of Dutch descent, and his mother was a black woman of the Xhosa tribe.** This made his very existence proof of the crime they had committed.

Because of this, his father couldn't be seen around him and his mother had to be careful. If authorities came around, she would have to put him down and pretend he wasn't her child.

He spent much of his childhood alone, but it didn't bother him as he enjoyed playing by himself. Though he grew up in poverty, his mother had the determination to make a better life for him. She taught him many languages and made a point to teach him English, something that she knew would give him an advantage when he was older.

Trevor's mother also wanted to make sure he didn't have to pay what she called the "black tax." This was the money spent by black kids to make up for their parents' poverty, which passed on to each generation, making it impossible to escape.

She spent what little money she had on books for him and a lot of time teaching him how to navigate the racist world they lived in. Though he was smart, Noah was a rascal. He often got himself into trouble for his love of knives and pyrotechnics. He recalls getting spanked by his mother for his mischievous behavior, but he knows now it was coming from a place of love.

Lesson 2: **Apartheid ended when Noah was coming of age, and it proved difficult in its own way.**

In 1991, a year after Nelson Mandela was freed from his life sentence, apartheid finally came to an end. But though it was over, a whole new range of problems came. At the end of apartheid, there came a power struggle over who was actually in charge. The two tribes, Zulus and Xhosas, fought. Many people died.

Though things were dangerous, Noah's mother was strong. He tells the story of one time when they had to take the bus to church because their car wouldn't work. The buses were extremely dangerous because of the turf wars being fought over the routes.

On their way home, the Zulu bus driver and Noah's Xhosa mom got in an argument. When the driver told his mom he would "teach her a lesson" and sped up so they couldn't get off, his mother knew what she had to do. As they slowed down at an intersection, she forced the door open and pushed out Noah and held his little brother in her arms as they jumped out. From there they ran quickly home.

He found the best way to navigate post-apartheid Africa was to learn many languages. He knew several languages, it this helped him many times. One time he overheard an approaching gang of Zulu boys planning to mug him. They thought he was white, but when he suggested in Zulu that they attack someone else they quickly backed off.

Lesson 3: Noah's natural wit and ability to blend in with different types of people helped him in his young business endeavors.

Noah may have been considered "coloured," or a mix of black and white, but he thought of himself as black. He spoke several African languages and grew up among African relatives. So it was no wonder he gravitated toward the black kids.

But he didn't limit himself to one group of people. Instead, he found a way to blend in with different types of people.

This skill helped him become the "tuckshop guy" that sold treats after assembly. His customers were of all kinds of backgrounds, and he learned to navigate between nerds, jocks, and rich kids easily.

He also developed and improved his famous comedic skills. **As he moved around to every group, he found that they welcomed him as long as he cracked a few good jokes.**

Other business endeavors extended to selling bootleg CDs with the CD writer his rich white friend had given him. Then he moved on to be a DJ for parties and had bookings all over town. He had a few brushes with the law as a rebellious teenager, but these taught him to be cautious because he saw the odds stacked against black people he saw in jail.

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Born A Crime Review

And the moral of the story is Mom's rule! I have so much respect for Trevor Noah after reading this one, but especially for his mother who worked hard to take care of him through a troubling time. *Born A Crime* is a great book with a lot of great lessons, and this is just one of them!

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Who would I recommend the Born A Crime summary to?

The 36-year-old who loves watching The Daily Show, the 58-year-old with an interest in history, and anyone that would love to hear an inspiring story.