

Born A Crime: Stories From A South African Childhood

by Trevor Noah

Reviewed by Cindy Lewis

Being a frequent traveler, I listen to audio books a lot on the road. One of my favorite books I listened to last year was *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah. Trevor did the audio narration and that was a huge selling point. He is an amazing story teller and that came through in his delivery of the book. He is also able to use his voice and language skills, to play the characters, to share every detail in upmost accuracy, and to share the emotion behind the story. Truly you would have no idea that he was reading anything. I was motivated to purchase this audio book because it had a 5 star rating with 80,000 listeners. The book details Trevor's childhood experiences that touched on the challenges of active children, poverty, entrepreneurship, importance of education, the role of his very wise mother, the role of the community, and the role of family and the role of church. Some of the great takeaways I had in this book:

1. It is often the perspective of the issue or problem that totally changes the problem.
 2. Sometimes you have to start over or try again.
 3. Energetic and thinking kids will get in trouble, but they can still learn something from the situation.
 4. There can be power in your own personal dedication to something.
 5. You don't know your situation is wrong, bad, or even different unless someone tells you or you observe something that tells you.
 6. You truly can change your situation and find creative ways to have fun or make money.
- Here is an example of a lesson from one of the chapters. Around the middle of the book, Trevor talks about his experience in school when he realizes he is an outsider and he has to either decide to be quiet and sit on the sidelines or to try to find ways to connect with groups he doesn't belong to. To quote Trevor, "I learned that even though I didn't belong to one group, I could be a part of any group that was laughing."

This is a book I will continue to recommend and I hope after you read or listen to it that you can tell me what one of your favorite stories in the book was!

This the Amazon description of the book:

Trevor Noah's unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of *The Daily Show* began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Living proof of his parents' indiscretion, Trevor was kept mostly indoors for the earliest years of his life, bound by the extreme and often absurd measures his mother took to hide him from a government that could, at any moment, steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa's tyrannical white rule, Trevor and his mother set forth on a grand adventure, living openly and freely and embracing the opportunities won by a centuries-long struggle.

Born a Crime is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man's relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother—his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.

The stories collected here are by turns hilarious, dramatic, and deeply affecting. Whether subsisting on caterpillars for dinner during hard times, being thrown from a moving car during an attempted kidnapping, or just trying to survive the life-and-death pitfalls of dating in high school, Trevor illuminates his curious world with an incisive wit and unflinching honesty. His stories weave together to

form a moving and searingly funny portrait of a boy making his way through a damaged world in a dangerous time, armed only with a keen sense of humor and a mother's unconventional, unconditional love.