About the Author

Malorie Blackman has written over seventy books for children and young adults, including the Noughts & Crosses series, Thief and a science-fiction thriller, Chasing the Stars. Many of her books have also been adapted for stage and television, including a BAFTA-award-winning BBC production of Pig-Heart Boy and a Pilot Theatre stage adaptation by Sabrina Mahfouz of Noughts & Crosses. There is also a major BBC production of Noughts & Crosses, with Roc Nation (Jay-Z’s entertainment company) curating the soundtrack as executive music producer. In 2005 Malorie was honoured with the Eleanor Farjeon Award in recognition of her distinguished contribution to the world of children’s books. In 2008 she received an OBE for her services to children’s literature, and between 2013 and 2015 she was the Children’s Laureate. Most recently Malorie wrote for the Doctor Who series on BBC One, and the fifth novel in her Noughts & Crosses series, Crossfire, was published by Penguin Random House Children’s in summer 2019.

Discussion Questions

Chapter 1: In this opening chapter, what do you learn about Dante’s life and situation? How would you feel if you were in Dante’s position?

Chapter 2: Do you think Adam’s father is right to be concerned about his headaches?

Chapter 3: Dante comments that his father says ‘boys don’t cry’. What do you think about this statement - do you agree with it or disagree? Do you feel that Dante has good reason to be upset?

Chapter 4: What happened to Adam’s mother?

Chapters 5 and 6: What are your initial thoughts about the character of Dante and Adam’s father, and his relationship with his sons?

Chapter 7: How does Dante’s father react to the news that Dante is the baby’s father? Do you think this is a normal reaction or is he being unreasonably tough on Dante?
Chapters 8, 9 and 10: Why does Adam believe he will never become a father? Why does Dante worry about Adam?

Chapters 11 and 12: How have each of the three family members reacted to the arrival of baby Emma?

Chapter 13: What sparked Dante’s emotional outburst?

Chapter 14: Adam is suspicious of Josh’s offer. Do you think he has good reason to feel this way?

Chapters 15 and 16: Why do you think Dante hesitates before posting the DNA tests?

Chapter 17 and 18: Dante believes that Adam is keeping a secret from him - do you agree? Now that Emma has been confirmed as Dante’s biological daughter, how do you think the story will develop?

Chapters 19 - 26: As Dante bonds with his daughter and plans for the future, Adam is becoming more and more unhappy. Who do you think the ‘he’ is that Adam is secretly in a relationship with? Why do you think Josh treats Adam the way he does?

Chapter 27: Why would Adam kiss Josh on the lips? What reaction did this spark?

Chapters 28 and 29: At the hospital, Dante questions his father about his relationship with his late mother. How does this make Dante feel about his parenting of Emma?

Chapters 30 and 31: Dante is worried about Adam and looking for revenge. What does Josh reveal to a shocked Dante?

Chapters 32 and 33: Adam is struggling and not well enough to return to school. What does he mean when he describes his future ‘lying in front of me like a desert without end’?
Chapter 34: What do you think Dante means when he tells Veronica that Emma is his ‘world’? Considering his young age, how well do you think he has adjusted to having his daughter in his life?

Chapter 35: Adam and Dante have a good talk in this chapter. Why does Dante chose his words ‘carefully’?

Chapter 36: Why does Emma’s hug make Adam tearful?

Chapter 37: Dante discovers Adam lifeless in his bed, on his birthday. What is the significance of the pill that Adam supposedly finished ‘months ago’?

Chapter 38: Why is Dante confused about Josh’s letter to Adam?

Chapter 39: Dante tells Adam, ‘Boys don’t cry, but real men do’. What do you think he means by this?

Chapter 40: Why do you think Adam asked his family if he could join them in the kitchen? What made him want to come downstairs?

Chapter 41: What impact has Emma’s arrival had on the family members? What are your thoughts on this final chapter in the book - is it a fitting ending?

Final thoughts on Boys Don’t Cry:

- What did you think of the book? Did you enjoy it?
- Is there a message to the story?
- What opinions do you have about the two main characters? Did you find them believable?
- What would you say are the main themes of the book?