

10. On page 376, Marcus remains unconvinced by Joe's belief that "Even the most foolish, vicious Feeb at HQ in DC...doesn't want to be used as a game token by scheming politicians...." Do you think a notion like this does provide a safety net against corruption, cyber-tracking, and other virtual invasions of privacy? Do you think the intelligence gathering and distribution efforts of hackers, like Marcus, are another type of safety net? What prevents them from "scheming" too?
11. Do you believe that Marcus is safe from Carrie Johnstone at the end of the novel? Who do you feel are the worst "bad guys" in the story? Carrie, Zyz, the US political machine, or even people like Liam and Jolu, or groups like Anon and the Noisebrige hackers who know about cyber-risks but perhaps don't do enough to fight them? Do you think Marcus made the right choice in abandoning the "system" completely and deciding to work from the "outside?"
12. Reread the Afterwords and Bibliography that follow the novel. What are the most important messages they offer? Does reading them change your perception of the novel? If so, in what way?
13. Marcus views his world as a place of ballooning college debt, unemployment, and a generally dark socioeconomic outlook for the masses. Is this the path down which you see your world progressing? Do you agree with Marcus, Doctorow, and his colleagues that information and technology can change the direction of the future? Why or why not? How might you take part in such efforts?
14. What kind of privacy do you want online? Do you feel there is a limit to the information to which people should have access? What positive role might the government play to support freedom and privacy? What role can individuals play?
15. If you could thank Marcus for just one thing he has accomplished on behalf of privacy and freedom, what would it be? If you could give him only one suggestion or piece of advice as to his future, what would you offer?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Author photograph by Joi Ito
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CORY DOCTOROW is a coeditor of BoingBoing and the former European director of the Electronic Frontier Foundation. He writes columns for *Make*, *Information Week*, the *Guardian* online, and *Locus*. He has won the Locus Award three times, has been nominated for the Hugo and Nebula Awards, has won the Campbell Award, and was named one of the Web's twenty-five influencers by *Forbes* magazine and a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum. He hopes you'll use technology to change the world.

HOMELAND BY CORY DOCTOROW FROM TOR TEEN

AGES THIRTEEN AND UP

Praise for *Homeland*

★ "Outstanding for its target audience, and even those outside Doctorow's traditional reach may find themselves moved by its call to action."

—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

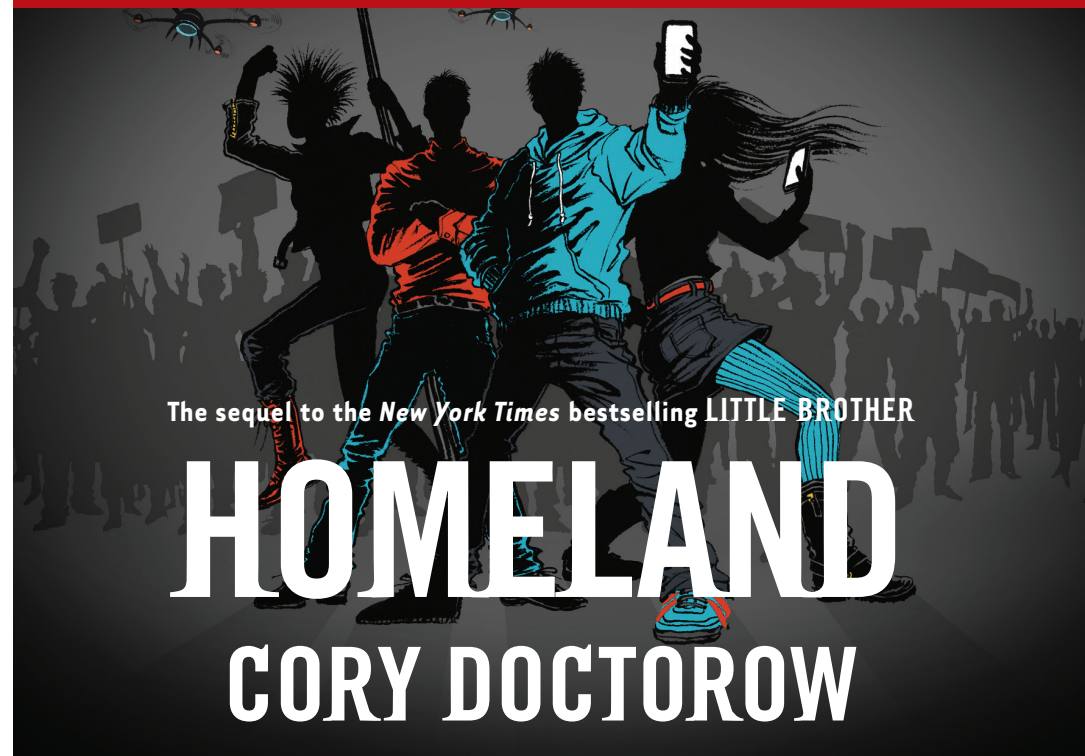
★ "Doctorow is the ultimate crossover author, whose sharp writing and commitment to investigating the hot-button political and technological issues of today (and tomorrow) engage YA and adult readers alike."

—*Library Journal*, starred review



tor-forge.com

TOR TEEN TEACHER'S GUIDE



ABOUT HOMELAND

Just a few years after *Little Brother*, Marcus's problems are back: California's economy has collapsed, taking his university tuition with it. But M1k3y's political past saves him and lands him a job as webmaster for a muckraking politician who promises reform.

Things are never simple, though, as Marcus discovers when his onetime girlfriend Masha emerges from the political underground to gift him with a thumbdrive containing a Wikileaks-style cable-dump full of hard evidence of conscious corporate and governmental perfidy. It's incendiary stuff—and if Masha goes missing, Marcus is supposed to release it to the world.

But Marcus can't out himself as the Bradley Manning of this leak, because if he does he'll cost his employers the election. And he's surrounded

by friends and acquaintances who regard him as a hacker hero. He can't even attend a demonstration without being dragged onstage and handed a mike. Nobody—his current girlfriend, his weary parents, his progressive-minded employer, his hacker admirers—knows just how unsure of himself he really is.

Meanwhile, hard people are beginning to shadow him, people who look like they've got plenty of experience inflicting pain until they get the answers they want. Inflicting it on Marcus...or, worse, on people he loves.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The information, activities, and discussion questions which follow are intended to enhance your reading of *Homeland*. Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your needs and interests.

WRITING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Three sections frame the writing and research activities for this novel. It may be useful to explore some of the discussion questions before embarking on these projects.

I. SIGHTS, SCENES, CELEBRITIES

- A. *Homeland* opens in the unique setting of the Burning Man. Visit burningman.com to learn more about the event, the playa, the art, and the community. Then, write a paragraph about why you might like to attend Burning Man and what “must-do” activities you would include in your travel itinerary.
- B. San Francisco is another important setting in *Homeland*. Go to the library or online to learn more about the city’s geography and history, including the Mission District, the city’s role in American counterculture (the Beat Generation), and the relationship between San Francisco and the Silicon Valley. Create an illustrated, annotated poster highlighting San Francisco landmarks, cultural notions, and other elements that make it an ideal setting for Doctorow’s novel.
- C. Real science fiction and technology celebrities make cameos in *Homeland* and are acknowledged by the author at the end of the novel. Imagine you are a reporter for an online news site. Write a fictitious but realistic article in which you interview one of these celebrities (or the author of one of the novel’s two “Afterwords” letters) about darknet, Marcus, and other social and technological trends described in *Homeland*. Include a factual biography of your chosen interviewee at the end of your article.

II. TECHNOLOGY AND PRIVACY

- A. The novel is peppered with the word and concept of “paranoid,” from computer program names to states of mind. Find a definition of the word “paranoid.” Then, inspired by the novel, compose a poem, rap, or new lyrics to a favorite tune, entitled “Just Because You’re Paranoid...”
- B. *Homeland* contains scenes of Marcus working alone at his computer and scenes in which he is part of a giant swarm of protesters. With friends or classmates, role-play a conversation in which Marcus discusses with Ange, Jolu and/or other story characters, whether he feels more watched, afraid, inspired, and/or free, at his keyboard or at a rally.
- C. Read the “privacy policy” pages on such websites as burningman.com, makezine.com, and mediabistro.com, as well as the privacy information posted on at least one additional website of your choosing. Create a comparison chart regarding the accessibility and primary privacy foci of each site, as well as the objectives and content of the sites themselves. Present your chart to friends or classmates and discuss what conclusions you might draw about the sites, their contributors, their perceived readerships, and how carefully reading these privacy pages has affected your thoughts on subscribership or online privacy in general.
- D. Create a “Hacker’s Dictionary” for readers of *Homeland*. Include computer-oriented definitions of at least twenty words, including torrent, pnw, darknet, Noisebridge, and hacker space.

III. CREATIVITY AND COMPUTERS

- A. One challenge with which Marcus grapples throughout the novel is the owning, understanding, distribution, and perception of the information with which Masha provides him. Create a “Torrent File Status Chart” with an entry for each of the novel’s fifteen chapters, noting what has happened with Masha’s information, Marcus’s thoughts about the information’s status, and your own judgment as to whether or not Marcus is making the right choices at the end of each chapter.

- B. Masha’s sources for the torrent files and the nature of her capture and imprisonment during the story are never fully revealed. Reveal them now. In the character of Masha at the end of the novel, write an autobiographical short story entitled “My Life As A Captive Of Carrie Johnstone”.
- C. In his afterword, Aaron Swartz tells readers that, “This stuff is real.” Write a short essay that begins, “I thought I was just reading another sci-fi novel but now I think...”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think the author chose to open his novel about privacy, technology, and government on the site of the temporary desert city of Burning Man? What elements of Burning Man pose the most poignant contrasts to the settings in which the rest of the novel takes place? What thoughts and observations does Marcus make at Burning Man that help him later in the story?
2. Who is Masha? What dangerous and ethically challenging request does she make of Marcus? If you had been with Marcus and Ange on the playa, would you have told them to take the USB drive or not to trust Masha? Explain your answer.
3. Despite his certainty that Masha and Zeb are Carrie Johnstone’s captives, Marcus does not immediately release the information Masha has given him. Do you agree with this choice? Why or why not?
4. What are “lawful intercept certificates?” How does the discovery of such documents impact Marcus’s decisions regarding the release of Masha’s data? Could you make a case for valid uses of documents such as “lawful intercept certificates?” Explain.
5. Who is Joe Ness and what makes him so appealing to Marcus? Imagine you have been hired by Joe. What suggestions might you make to him for using the internet to change the way candidates campaign and, if possible, the political landscape more generally?
6. Compare the protocols Marcus follows to protect his online identity and data to the types of safeguards you yourself use. Having read *Homeland*, do you plan to learn and implement more online security measures? Why or why not?
7. When Marcus, with the help of Jolu, finally leaks the torrent files, it does not cause the expected sensation. What are at least three reasons for this anticlimactic effect? How do you know whether things you read on the internet are trustworthy? What is your opinion of Cory Doctorow’s instructions for using Wikipedia, as described in the bibliography?
8. Have you ever participated in a live protest, such as those Marcus attends in the novel? If so, describe the event in which you participated and your experience. If you have not, would you like to attend such an event some day? Why not or why and about what issue would you most want to raise awareness via public demonstration?
9. On page 368, Marcus wonders, “What was the point of living out my little fantasy of democratic change and justice...?” How does this relate to his disappointment in Joe Ness? What conclusions does Marcus draw about the way to “fight the system” or affect change in San Francisco, America, and the world?

