

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## THE CLONE CODES

by Patricia C. McKissack,  
Fredrick L. McKissack, and John McKissack

### ***About the Book***

In this suspenseful futuristic thriller set in the year 2170, cyborgs and clones are treated no better than slaves, and an underground abolitionist movement is fighting for their rights. Thirteen-year-old Leanna's world is turned upside down when her mother is arrested as a member of the Liberty Bell Movement, and Leanna is chased by a ruthless bounty hunter. Startling family secrets and a fight for her own survival help Leanna come to terms with her identity and her understanding of the world around her.

This exhilarating adventure challenges readers to discuss what it means to be human, and to explore the parallels between this work of science fiction and the themes of the McKissacks' many previous books about actual historical events.

### ***About the Authors***

Newbery Honor winner Patricia C. McKissack, and her husband Fredrick L. McKissack, have collaborated on numerous award-winning books including *Rebels Against Slavery: American Slave Revolts*; *Black Hands, White Sails: The Story of African American Whalers*; *Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?*; *Days of Jubilee: The End of Slavery in the United States*; and *Black Diamond: The Story of the Negro Baseball Leagues* (written with their son Fredrick McKissack Jr.), all of which were Coretta Scott King Honor Books. *The Clone Codes* is the first book they've written with their son John McKissack.



## Pre-reading Activity

Look up information about the following historical figures. What personal characteristics and beliefs can you identify that they have in common?

Benjamin Franklin  
Harriet Tubman  
Justice John Marshall Harlan  
Mohandas Gandhi  
Eleanor Roosevelt  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance of Leanna's "virtual" lessons in history? Compare Leanna's experience in her virtual history lesson on the Underground Railroad with her own experience later in the story as a fugitive from the authorities.
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of an all-virtual school? Compare Leanna's study of history with the way you study history at your own school.
3. Why didn't Leanna's mother tell her about the Liberty Bell Movement until she was about to be arrested?
4. Why does Leanna go to her neighbor's house instead of following her mother's directions? Does she think she can trust Mrs. Jaffe? Should she trust Sandra? What does she mean when she says Mrs. Jaffe is "check-the-box perfect"?
5. What is the role of Dr. Anatol Ayala, the person that Leanna calls Doc Doc? Why is he important to Leanna and her mother?
6. What is the difference between a hologram and a "biograph"? Why were the biographs created to share their story with Leanna, rather than her mother and Doc Doc telling her?
7. Why are the important people in the Liberty Bell Movement called Custodians?
8. Who are "The O" and what do they want from humanity? Why do they appear to certain individuals throughout history? How do you think they choose which individuals to contact?
9. Why is the Midwest Gypsy City a good place for Leanna to hide from the government forces?
10. Compare the clones #222 and #9767. How are they different? What are their similarities? What does Leanna notice about #9767 that is not what she expects of a clone?
11. What is the difference between a clone and a cyborg? How does Leanna feel about each of these beings in the beginning of the story? When does she start referring to clones as "he" or "she" rather than "it"?
12. What is Leanna's reaction when she learns that she is a clone? Why does she share this information with Houston—a stranger and a cyborg? How does she know she can trust him?
13. What is the role of Captain Newton in the story? What does Leanna learn from him about the nature of humans and clones?
14. Why is the Liberty Bell used as a symbol of the movement for equal rights for all? What was the significance of the Liberty Bell in American history?
15. Compare the Clone Codes of this book with the Black Codes of U. S. history. What are the similarities? Why do humans learn so little from the mistakes of the past?

## Suggestions for Further Reading

### Fiction

*Feed*, by M. T. Anderson (Candlewick, 2004)

In this futuristic society, a “feed” is embedded in the brain of every person to keep up a steady stream of information and, ultimately, control. Fitting in with the popular culture is the measure of a person’s worth.

*GemX*, by Nicky Singer (Holiday House, 2008)

A future society is divided into the “Enhanced” and the “Natural Born,” both manipulated by a heartless ruler; but love reaches across the society’s barriers and brings hope to a few.

*The House of the Scorpion*, by Nancy Farmer (Atheneum, 2002)

Matt learns what it means to be the clone of one of the most powerful and feared men in the world in this gripping saga of greed and, ultimately, hope.

*The Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins (Scholastic, 2008)

Prejudice against lower classes and a cruel method of “tributes” who fight for survival in a televised contest are the hallmarks of this completely involving futuristic story, which is continued in the sequel, *Catching Fire*. (Scholastic, 2009)

*A Wrinkle in Time*, by Madeleine L’Engle (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1962)

Meg must battle an unknown force called “It” to rescue her father and brother in this classic novel of time travel and the importance of love.

### Nonfiction

*5,000 Miles to Freedom: Ellen and William Craft’s Flight from Slavery*, by Dennis Fradin and Judith Fradin (National Geographic, 2006)

*Mutants, Clones, and Killer Corn: Unlocking the Secrets of Biotechnology*, by Samantha Seiple and Todd Seiple (Lerner, 2005)

*Rebels Against Slavery*, by Patricia McKissack and Fredrick McKissack (Scholastic, 1996)

*Sojourner Truth: Ain’t I a Woman?* by Patricia McKissack and Fredrick McKissack (Scholastic, 1992)

*The Underground Railroad: An Interactive History Adventure*, by Allison Lassieur (Capstone Press, 2008)

## Websites

Cloning Fact Sheet provided by the Human Genome Project:

[http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human\\_Genome/elsi/cloning.shtml](http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/elsi/cloning.shtml)

What is cloning? Answers by the Genetic Science Learning Center at the University of Utah:

<http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/tech/cloning/whatiscloning/>

Learning about what it means to be a cyborg:

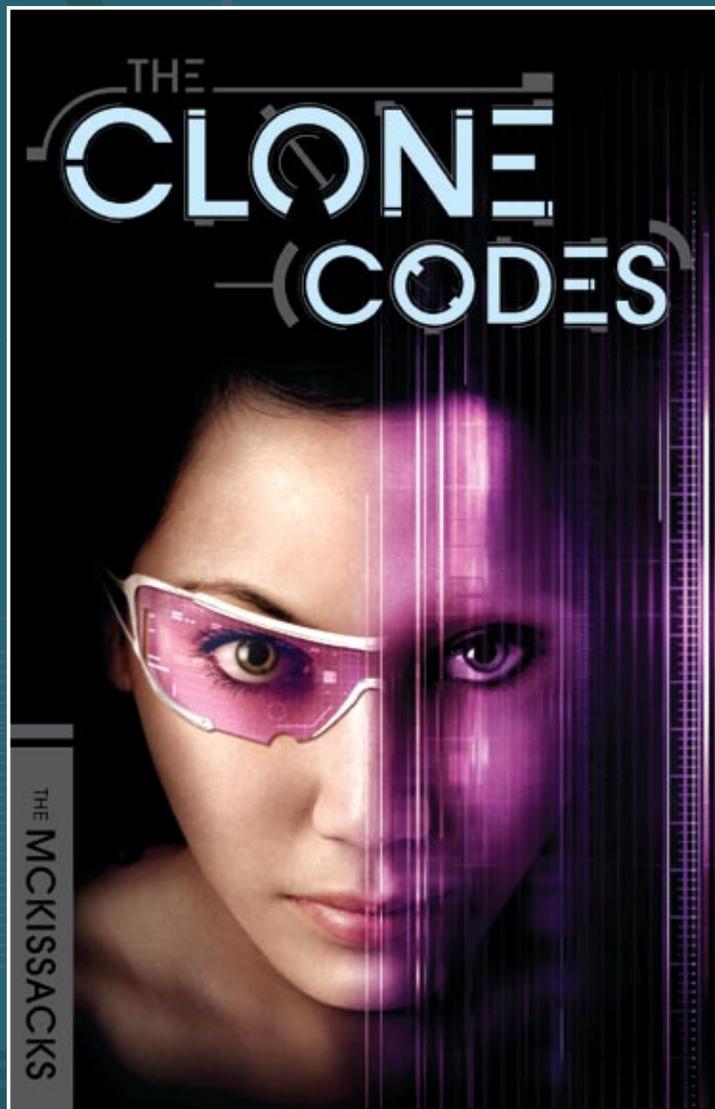
<http://www.kevinwarwick.com/ICyborg.htm>

Information about cyborg technology in today’s world:

<http://www.techradar.com/news/world-of-tech/meet-the-real-life-human-cyborgs-600543>

National Geographic simulation of the Underground Railroad experience:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>



***The Clone Codes***

Ages 9-up • Hardcover

978-0-439-92983-7 • 0-439-92983-0 • \$16.99

Available from your local bookstore or usual supplier, or from:  
Scholastic, 2931 East McCarty Street, P.O. Box 7502, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

Discussion Guide prepared by Connie Rockman, Youth Literature Consultant, adjunct professor of children's and young adult literature, and Editor of the eighth, ninth, and tenth books in the H. W. Wilson Junior Authors and Illustrators series.



Scholastic Press



[www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)

SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.