

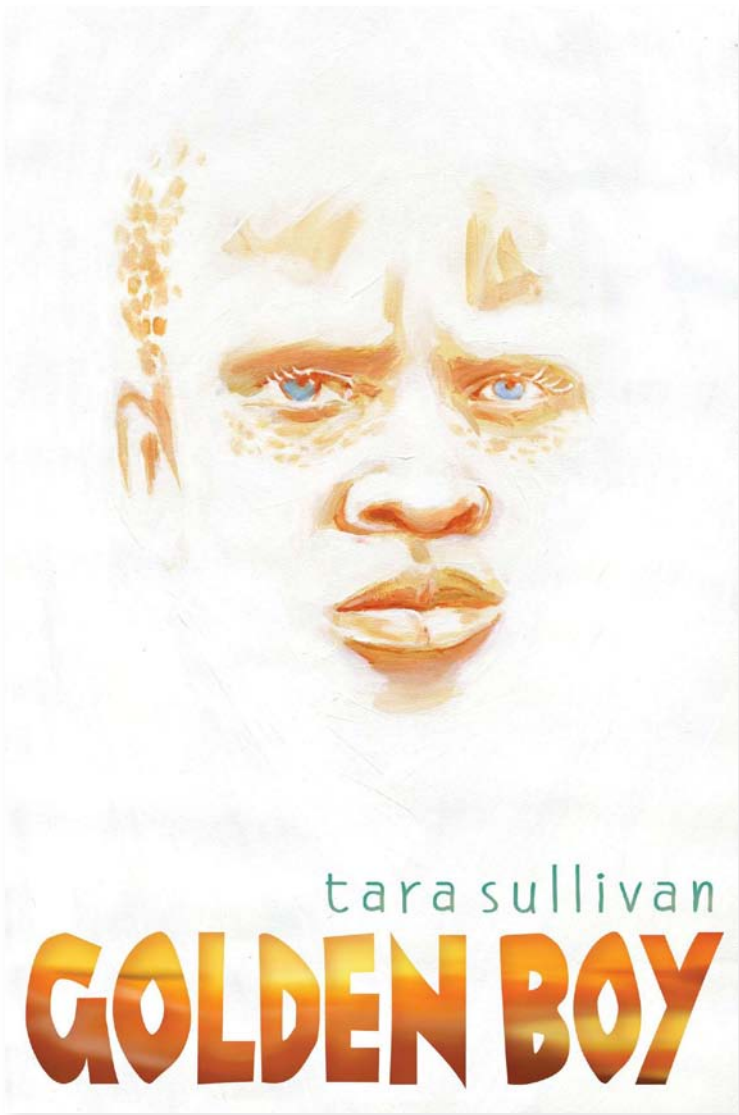
Golden Boy • Discussion Guide

Golden Boy

by Tara Sullivan

Thirteen-year-old Habo has always been different--light eyes, yellow hair and white skin. Not the good brown skin his family has and not the white skin of tourists. Habo is strange and alone. Only his sister Asu loves him well. But even Asu can't take the sting away when the family is forced from their small Tanzanian village, and Habo knows he is to blame.

Seeking refuge in Mwanza, Habo and his family journey across the Serengeti. His aunt is glad to open her home until she sees Habo for the first time, and then she is only afraid. Suddenly, Habo has a new word for himself: albino. But they hunt albinos in Mwanza because albino body parts are thought to bring good luck. And soon Habo is being hunted by a fearsome man with a machete. To survive, Habo must not only run, but find a way to love and accept himself.



9780399161124 • Ages 12-up • \$16.99

About the Author:

Tara Sullivan was born in Calcutta and spent her childhood and early adolescence moving around South America and the Caribbean with her parents who were international aid workers. Having never lived in the US before, she stepped off the plane at the age of 14 and started 9th grade the very next morning at a high school in rural Virginia. She now lives in Massachusetts. This is her first novel.

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Discussion Questions

1. Using examples from the text, describe Habo's relationship with his family members, including his father. Aside from Asu, do you blame them for the way they act toward him? Explain.
2. Poaching is illegal. Knowing this, why would Alasiri take Habo and Chui with him to harvest the elephant? What does it say about Habo's character that the poaching upsets him?
3. In Chapter 5, Habo comments on the way the other poachers treat Alasiri: "It's not wise to tease a wild animal, no matter how big a stick you're holding." What has Habo already realized about Alasiri that the others haven't?
4. When Habo arrives in Mwanza, he hears the term "albino" for the first time. How do his feelings about being called an "albino" differ from his feelings about being called a "zeru-zeru"? Why does the difference in wording matter to him?
5. Habo is surprised to hear his aunt say that in Mwanza, albinos are "lucky." What does she mean? How does Habo's luck change throughout the book?
6. Kweli is blind. Despite this, how is he able to "see" Habo better than anyone else has? Cite examples from the text to show how Kweli views Habo.
7. Why does Habo put off contacting his family? What would you do if you were him?
8. Explain Habo's reaction after speaking to the police in Dar es Salaam. "All he cared about was the ivory!" Habo says. "What about my life? Doesn't that matter to anybody?" How does a person's environment or upbringing impact their self-worth?
9. Is Alasiri evil? How else can you account for his actions?
10. Why end the book with Habo's phone call to Kito? What is the significance?

Extension Activities:

- Write a description of Habo from Kweli's point of view. (CCSS 7.RL.6)
- The novel contains a great deal of figurative language. List 10–15 examples of figurative language found in the text and compose a found poem that summarizes a theme of the novel. (CCSS 7.RL.2)
- Research the hereditary and social impacts of albinism. Create a media presentation or brochure to promote awareness. (CCSS 7.SL.5)
- Research the history of the poaching of wild animals in Africa. Include why it began and what its impacts are today. Use the information gathered to educate other students about this issue. (CCSS 7.SL.4)

Arts Infusion:

Using molding clay, pairs of students will take turns sculpting an animal, first with a blindfold and then without. They will then write a journal entry comparing and contrasting the experiences.

About the Discussion Guide Authors: Laura Paradis and Jenny Pray teach English and social studies, respectively, at Southwood Academy of the Arts in Anderson, South Carolina. Between them, they have two masters degrees and sixteen years of teaching expertise.