



the Other BOY

Discussion Guide

Twelve-year-old Shane Woods is just a regular boy who loves pitching for his baseball team, working on his graphic novel, and hanging out with his best friend. But Shane is keeping something private—he was born female. And when a classmate threatens to reveal his secret, Shane’s whole world comes crashing down. It will take a lot of courage for Shane to ignore the hate and show the world that he’s still the same boy he was before.

Discussion Questions

1. What is Shane’s big secret? Why do you think that he and his mother decided to keep this information private when he started at his new school?
2. Throughout the book, Shane is referred to as “he.” When his father does not use the correct pronoun, Shane describes this as driving him crazy in an “all-the-air-sucked-out-of-the-room way” (page 45). Why is it important to use the pronoun that Shane identifies with? How does this relate to respecting a person’s sense of self?
3. When did Shane realize he was a boy? What’s the difference between a tomboy and someone like Shane?
4. Why is the decision to start on testosterone injections so important for Shane?
5. Why does Shane’s father have a difficult time accepting that Shane is a boy? Why do you think his parents had different reactions to this information? How is Shane finally able to communicate his real feelings to his father?
6. Do you think Shane should have told Josh sooner? Would things have been different if he had not kept this information private at school? Why is it important that the decision to talk about this is only Shane’s decision? If you were Josh, would you have been angry that Shane didn’t confide in you?
7. Why do you think Nico has such a problem with Shane? Do you think Shane handled the bullying appropriately, or should he have done something differently?
8. “That’s what I loved about baseball, it always felt right” (page 1). Why is baseball so important to Shane? Is there something in your life that always feels right?
9. What was Madeline’s reaction when she found out the truth from Shane? What do you think about her reaction? If you were in her place, would you have felt the same way?
10. Based on how Alejandra describes her transition, how do you think it differed from Shane’s? Do you agree with her when she says, “It’s all about figuring out what your choices are, and trying to make the right ones” (page 196)? What does that mean to you?
11. What parallels can you see between what Shane is going through and his graphic novel? Why do you think the author thought it was important to include images of Shane’s comic in the book? Is he anything like his hero, Hogan?

Please visit the following websites for more information:

Gender Spectrum (genderspectrum.org), which hosts online support groups and conferences
Transgender Law Center (transgenderlawcenter.org)
PFlag (community.pflag.org/transgender)
TransYouth Family Allies (imatyfa.org)

Transkids Purple Rainbow Foundation (transkidspurplerrainbow.org)
Camp Aranu’tiq (camparanutiq.org)
Trans Student Educational Resources (transstudent.org)
The Trevor Project (www.thetrevorproject.org)

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www.harpercollinschildrens.com