

10. On page 206, Trent/Cecil tells Jem, "... it's easy to define creativity: it's doing something that isn't obvious." Do you think this is a good definition? Why or why not? Later, Cora points out that it is sometimes difficult to be certain whom to credit with the invention of an art or genre, such as the mystery novel or motion picture. How might this observation affect your understanding of creativity?
11. After Trent/Cecil, too nervous to speak to the crowd, runs out of Annika's meeting at the Turkish diner, he discovers his friends have been arrested. What chain of events is set off by the arrests? What concerns does Trent/Cecil have about his absence from the event?
12. On how many counts are Trent/Cecil indicted? What instructions does Trent/Cecil's lawyer give him while he awaits his hearing? Is he able to comply with his lawyer's instructions?
13. Who is Katarina McGregor-Colford? What information does she share with Cecil? How does this motivate him?
14. What is Parliament Cinema? In what ways does this represent the climax of the novel and the protest? What is the outcome of Tip-Ex? How does the story end for Trent/Cecil? In what way is this ending a beginning?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Author photograph by Joi Ito (joi.ito.com), licensed CC-BY

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.

Praise for *Pirate Cinema*

★ "His most cogent, energizing call-to-arms to date."

—*Booklist*,
starred review

★ "Funny, thought-provoking, and glorious."

—*School Library Journal*,
starred review

"Fun...*Pirate Cinema* offers ample and appetizing food for thought."

—*Seattle Times*

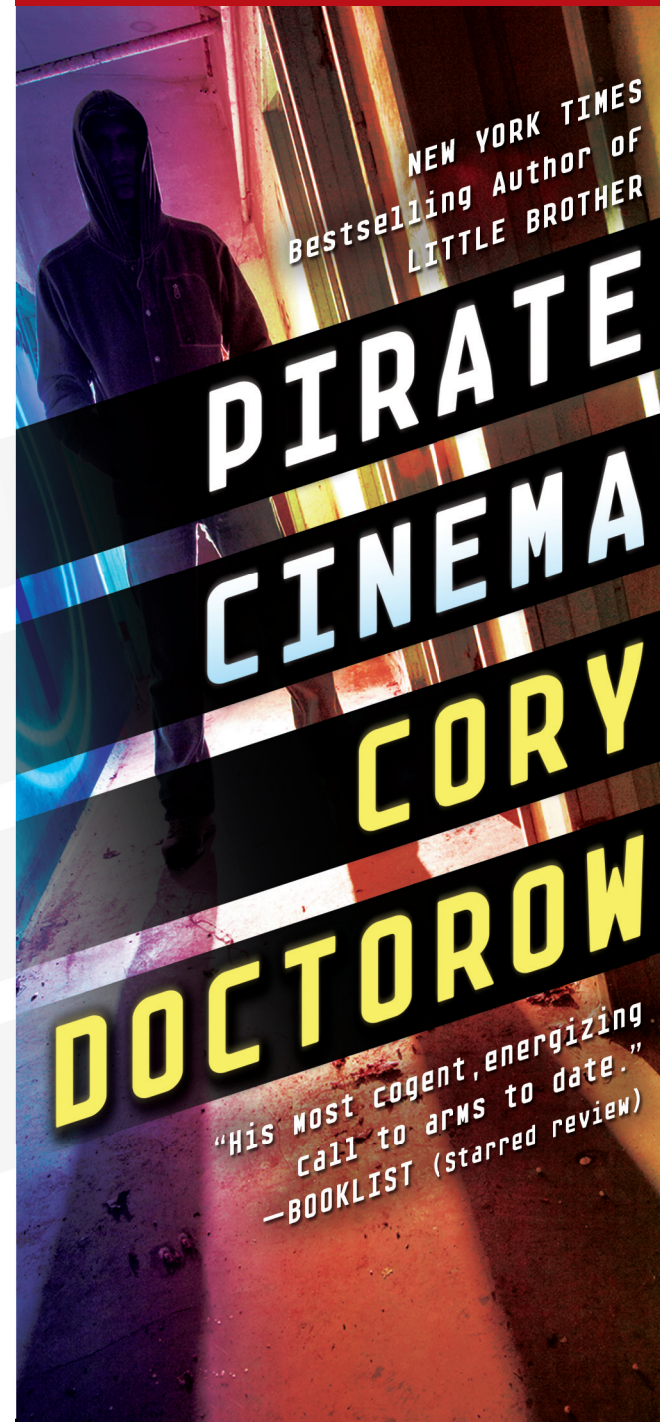
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TOR TEEN TEACHER'S GUIDE



ABOUT *PIRATE CINEMA*

Trent McCauley is sixteen, brilliant, and obsessed with one thing: making movies on his computer by reassembling footage from popular films he downloads from the net. In the dystopian near-future Britain where Trent is growing up, this is more illegal than ever; the punishment for being caught three times is that your entire household's access to the internet is cut off for a year, with no appeal.

Trent's too clever for that to happen. Except it does, and it nearly destroys his family. Shamed and shattered, Trent runs away to London, where he slowly learns how to stay alive on the streets. This brings him in touch with a demimonde of artists and activists who are trying to fight a new bill that will criminalize even more harmless internet creativity, making felons of millions of British citizens at a stroke.

Things look bad. Parliament is controlled by a few wealthy media conglomerates. But the powers-that-be haven't entirely reckoned with the power of a gripping movie to change people's minds....

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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

WRITING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Three topics 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. LITERATURE AND LAW

- A. From his descriptive chapter headings to his use of the name “Dodger,” Doctorow’s story pays homage to the nineteenth century novel *Oliver Twist* and other works by Charles Dickens. Read the opening pages of *Oliver Twist*. Make a list of the ways in which *Pirate Cinema* evokes Dickensian images and themes. If you have read other Dickens works or additional chapters of *Oliver Twist*, feel free to reference them as well in your list.
- B. Cory Doctorow is in favor of liberalized copyright laws and Creative Commons licensing. Go to the library or online to learn more about the Creative Commons organization. Write a 1-2 page outline describing the policies and programs of Creative Commons.
- C. In the novel, Doctorow makes reference to a cheesy film franchise of which *D’Artagnan’s Blood Oath* is the latest installment. Research a one-page essay answer to the question: Why might the author have chosen to reference the name D’Artagnan in this fictional film title?
- D. As a writer, Cory Doctorow could be considered a 21st century “muckraker.” Research the history of the term and learn about another muckraker, such as Studs Terkel, Rachel Carson, Upton Sinclair, Ida Tarbell, or the team of Woodward and Bernstein. Create an informative poster about one of these writers. If desired, arrange several posters into a classroom display. Discuss how you see Doctorow fitting into this historical line of literary muckrakers.

II. “IT’S EVERYONE’S CULTURE” (PIRATE CINEMA, page 118)

- A. In Chapter 3 of *Pirate Cinema*, 26 discusses the common ownership of culture. But what is “culture”? Write a one-paragraph definition of “culture” as you understand the word. Then find a dictionary definition and etymological history of the term. With classmates or friends, create a giant brainstorm list of words and ideas related to the concept of culture.
- B. On page 161 of *Pirate Cinema*, Trent/Cecil describes one portion of his film as a “blur of actors” explaining that “Originality is just combining things that no one ever thought to combine before.” (p. 161) Do you agree or disagree? Do you think there should be any details or caveats added to the sentence? Write a short essay answer or, better still, create a film, song, sculpture, or other creative work that represents your position on this statement.
- C. On several occasions, Trent/Cecil acknowledges that input from others has improved his films or perhaps to put it another way, he cannot take complete credit for the works he creates. If creativity is simply “recombination” and originality is “new recombination,” then can anyone credit himself or herself for creating a film, novel, or other artwork? Do artists have a right to make a living from their work—to charge those who use it in recombinations or reproductions? With friends or classmates, form a committee to write an Internet Usage and/or Copyright Law that you think would be best for your country. Use internet research, quotations from *Pirate Cinema* or other novels, legal books or other materials to support your project.

III. CREATIVITY AND COMPUTERS

- A. When he begins his new life in London, Trent chooses a new name: Cecil B. DeVil. Go to the library or online to learn about the film director, Cecil B. DeMille, whose name is evoked in Trent’s new one. In the character of Trent, write a journal entry describing how you came to choose this new name,

what you know about the real artist who partly inspired it, what other associations you intended with the name, and what you hope people will remember about Cecil B. DeVil.

- B. The squat in which Trent/Cecil and his friends live is named the Zeroday. Learn more about the technological term “zero-day attack.” Then, in the character of Jem, Rabid Dog, or Chester, write a short monologue explaining why you are satisfied with the name Zeroday for your home.
- C. In his Chapter 11 speech, Trent/Cecil says, “I think a law that protects creativity should protect all creativity, not just the kind of creativity that was successful fifty years ago.” (p. 293) Do you think there is a difference in creativity between traditional films and Trent/Cecil’s films, between musicians and deejays, between books and movies? Do you agree with Cora’s statement that, online, “. . . copying is a feature, not a bug”? Discuss these questions with friends or classmates. Then, write your own speech about creative freedom to present to your class or community. In your speech, feel free to reference your family, friends, creative interests, and other personal experiences you have had.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what year or century do you envision *Pirate Cinema* taking place? Do you think people are as tied to the internet today as they are in Trent’s era?
2. How does Trent meet Jem Dodger? What are some of the first lessons Jem teaches Trent about living in London? How does Trent feel about Jem’s lifestyle?
3. Who is the second “Dodger” Trent meets? How does he help improve the squat? What is the significance of the squat’s name? What contribution does Aziz make to Trent’s new life?
4. What is Cynical April? What happens after Trent/Cecil’s film is shown in the graveyard?
5. On page 110, 26 takes Jem to a meeting with “The sort of people who’re worried that they’ll get done over by the Theft of Intellectual property bill.” Trent/Cecil observes that, “She said this as though I should know what it was, and I was too cool to admit that I had no idea, so I nodded my head sagely and made enthusiastic noises.” Explain the bill 26 is working to defeat. Who are her compatriots? Is it important that, up until this point, Trent/Cecil was unaware of the political machinations that partly motivated his run to London? Why or why not?
6. Who encourages Trent/Cecil to call to his family? What realizations does Trent/Cecil have after talking to Cora? Compare Trent/Cecil’s relationship to his family with 26’s relationship to her mother, stepdad, and father, in terms of values, level of education, dreams, and politics.
7. How do 26, Cecil, Annika, and other characters react to the passage of the Theft of Intellectual Property Bill? What connection do they draw between the film industry and the passage of the bill? Who is Jimmy Preston and what is the significance of his arrest?
8. What is *D’Artagnan’s Blood Oath*? Can you think of any real-life movie franchises that are similar to Trent/Cecil’s discussion of Milady de Winter films? How does this new film opening inspire Trent/Cecil’s first high-tech protest plan? Does the plan succeed or fail, and how?
9. What is “Sewer Cinema?” Compare it to several other large gatherings described in *Pirate Cinema*. Would you call these events primarily protests or creative celebrations, or might you suggest another descriptive term or phrase? Explain your answer.

