

NO BULLETS. NO KNIVES. NO QUESTIONS.

NOBLE CONFLICT



Notes for
Readers

malorie

blackman

AUTHOR OF THE AWARD-WINNING NOUGHTS & CROSSES

The Story

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AUTHOR OF THE AWARD-WINNING NOUGHTS & CROSSES

Years after a violent war destroyed much of the world, Kaspar has grown up in a society based on peace and harmony. But beyond the city walls, a vicious band of rebels are plotting to tear this peace apart. It is up to the Guardians – an elite peace-keeping force – to protect the city, without ever resorting to the brutal methods of their enemy.

When Kaspar joins the Guardians, he has a chance encounter with a rebel – a beautiful girl named Rhea. Haunted from that moment on by strange visions and memories – memories that could only belong to Rhea – he realises he hasn't been told the truth about what the rebels really want, and what he's really fighting for.



NOBLE CONFLICT by Malorie Blackman
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The Author



Malorie Blackman has written over fifty books, over a million copies of which have now been sold. She is acknowledged as one of today's most imaginative and convincing writers for young readers.

She has been awarded numerous prizes for her work, including the Red House Children's Book Award and the Fantastic Fiction Award. Malorie has also been shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal. In 2005 she was honoured with the Eleanor Farjeon Award in recognition of her contribution to children's books, and in 2008 she received an OBE for her services to children's literature.

She has been described by The Times as 'a national treasure'.

What the critics say

On **Noughts & Crosses**: 'This must be the most original book I've ever read. It's intelligent, emotional and imaginatively wicked . . . I insist on calling it a work of art' *Benjamin Zephaniah*

On **Knife Edge**: 'Relentless in its pace and power . . . devastatingly powerful' *Guardian*

On **Checkmate**: 'Thought-provoking brilliance' *Sunday Times*

On **Double Cross**: 'Few writers can sustain a plot as well as Malorie Blackman' *Sunday Telegraph*

On **Boys Don't Cry**: 'An extraordinary book, and truly is Malorie Blackman at her best' *Guardian*

Themes in NOBLE CONFLICT

War
Terrorism
Peace

Violence and the use of guns and weapons
The treatment of prisoners

Telepathy
Friendship

Love
Loss and bereavement
The abuse of power
Propaganda, cover-ups and the rewriting of the history books

Points to discuss once you have finished the book:

Epigraph

- The story opens with three brief lines from Quintus Horati Flaccus, Sun Tzu and the Oxford English Dictionary. Why do you think the author chose to include these at the start of the story?
- Do the statements from Quintus Horati Flaccus and Sun Tzu contradict each other in any way? Which statement do you believe to be more accurate, and why?
- A crusade is described as both 'a vigorous movement against poverty or a social evil, and also a personal campaign undertaken for a particular cause'. Are there examples of both in the story? How does Rhea's crusade compare to that of Kaspar, Tilkian, and Brother Simon?

Ours is a Noble Conflict

• Sister Madeleine explains:
We had to adopt a new ethos or lose our very souls. With our technical ability, we put our minds to the development of non-lethal weapons. Thus came the stun rifle, immobilizing gas and the glue-guns, amongst others. Renouncing killing was our salvation. Though the battle may continue, let us never return to those dark days of long ago where killing is seen as the first, last and only solution.

Ours is a noble conflict.

Kaspar's society is one that is constantly in conflict with the Insurgency, but that makes a point of avoiding lethal weapons and aims for peace wherever possible. What do you think the advantages of living in such a world might be? Are there any disadvantages?

- Do you believe the use of this new and non-lethal form of weaponry is any more moral than traditional weapons?
- Is there ever any circumstance in which you think it might be acceptable for a police force to be armed and use guns on a regular basis?

Kaspar's Discovery

- Kaspar is dedicated to the cause of the Guardians and the High Council, but a number of strange incidents make him begin to question the world around him and the truth about the Crusaders and the Insurgents. Did you feel that any one of these moments were the tipping point for Kaspar?
- Had he not witnessed the ninja committing suicide, or realised that the men posing as Old Bob's workers were fake, do you think he would ever have uncovered the truth? What other clues were available to Kaspar and to Mac?

Touch-Empathy

- Once Rhea and Kaspar have made physical contact, Kaspar begins to experience Rhea's thoughts, feelings and memories. One memory that is particularly strong and seems very important to Rhea is that of her grandmother's house and the smell of her baking. Why do you think this moment in Rhea's life stood out above all others?
- If you were to allow another person a glimpse of all the most important memories and moments from your life so far, what do you think might stand out?
- Would you feel comfortable living in a society where touch-empathy was possible? Would you choose to opt into this ability, or opt out? Do you feel the world might be a better place if people had this sort of power, or would new problems arise?

Mercy Killing

- When Rhea is badly injured by Commander Voss, Kaspar is forced to make a very difficult decision – and chooses to take her life. What were his reasons?
- Do you think he had any alternative?
- Discuss how the story might have played out differently for Kaspar, Rhea and the twenty-one Brothers and Sisters of the Council, had he not done this.

Mac's Accusation

- The story ends with a blog post from Mac, in which she makes the following statement:
Each and every Alliance citizen is as guilty as those in the High Council for how we have treated the Crusaders in general and the Insurgents in particular. We stopped thinking for ourselves because it was easier to let others do our thinking for us. Do you agree with this? Was there any way the citizens of the Alliance could have acted differently, or should have questioned what they were told about the Crusaders?
- How much do you trust the world around you? When you watch the news, read an article in a paper or a magazine, or listen to updates on the radio, do you automatically trust that what you are being told is the truth? Do you think reading this book may change how you feel in future?

