

Popular Clone

The Clone Chronicles #1

by M.E. Castle

Ages: 8-12

"Castle's debut, the first in a planned series, strikes just the right balance of humor and action and is sure to keep young readers turning the pages. Fisher's struggles to fit in, to relate to girls and to uncover and preserve his true self feel genuine, making him a misfit and unlikely hero worth rooting for."—*Kirkus Reviews*

Summary:

Meet Fisher Bas a 12 years-old, growth-stunted, geeky science genius and son of the Nobel Prize-winning creators of the Bas-Hermaphrodite-Sea-Slug-Hypothesis. No surprise: Fisher isn't exactly the most popular kid in his Middle School and he's tormented daily by the beefy, overgrown goons he calls The Vikings. But he senses relief when he comes upon the idea of cloning himself—creating a second Fisher to go to school each day while he stays at home playing video games and eating cheetos with ketchup. It's an ingenious plan that works brilliantly, until Fisher's clone turns out to be more popular than him—and soon after gets clone-napped by the evil scientist Dr. X.

Discussion Questions:

1. Fisher's best friend is FP, a biologically engineered pig who can fly. If you could have a biologically engineered animal as your best friend, what animal would you choose and what unique ability would you want it to have? Explain your answer.
2. Why does Fisher want to clone himself?
3. Is it possible to clone humans? Do some research on the subject of cloning. What did you learn?
4. What story does Fisher tell Two to convince him to go to school in his place?
5. If you had a clone to go to school for you, what would you spend your free time doing?
6. Why doesn't Fisher's mom want him talking about the Accelerated Growth Hormone (AGH)? What is she afraid will happen?
7. After Two saves the baby ducks, Fisher slinks off "feeling outmatched, unloved, and inches away from disaster." (pg. 119) What is he so upset about?



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8. Who is Vic Daring?
9. Fisher has invented a lot of cool and useful gadgets, from his social survivor watch to his spy suit. Using your imagination, come up with an invention of your own. What would your invention do and what would it look like?
10. "He'd thought Two was completely sure of himself, that he really knew how to handle things. Apparently, Two had thought the same of him. Were they both right . . . or were they both wrong?" (pg. 192) What do you think? Are they both right or are they both wrong? In what ways are Fisher and Two similar and in what ways are they different?
11. Why does Dr. X want to destroy Ed Woodhouse, owner of the popular Kings of Hollywood restaurant? How does he plan to carry out his scheme?
12. "Fisher had achieved something that the most brilliant and mysterious scientific mind on earth had not been able to do, even with this immense machine of research supporting him. Then a chill went through him. He had used it for just as selfish a purpose as Dr. X would have." (pg. 249) Do you think Fisher is anything like Dr. X? Explain your answer.
13. Who is Gassy Greg and how does he help Fisher and Two escapes from Dr. X?
14. Thanks to Vic Daring, Fisher is able to correctly describe Dr. X's schemes as *nefarious*. Define nefarious. What are some other adjectives Fisher could use to describe Dr. X?
15. In the epilogue, Two sends Fisher a note saying he escaped the TechX blast and is in Hollywood looking for their mother. How do *you* think he escaped?

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978-1-60684-232-4 * \$15.99

eBook: 978-1-60684-301-7 * \$15.99



About the Author:

M.E. Castle is a writer and actor working in the glorious center of the universe, New York City. He graduated from Oberlin College in 2008 with a degree in theater and has written a number of short stories, only a handful of which have ever been seen by an audience wider than his closest friends. Throughout his college years, he was one of the leading writers of the noir detective radio drama *The Dead Hear Footsteps*, to which he also lent his vocal talents. *Popular Clone* is M.E.'s first novel. He lives in New York City.

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