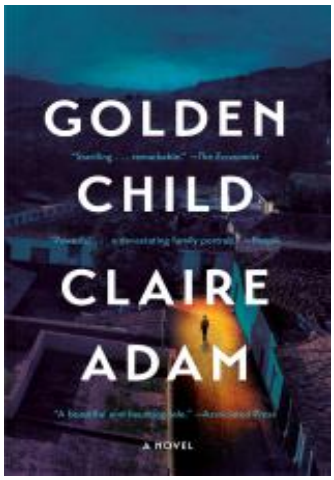
Golden Child

by Claire Adam



About the Book

A deeply affecting debut novel set in Trinidad, following the lives of a family as they navigate impossible choices about scarcity, loyalty and love

Rural Trinidad: a brick house on stilts surrounded by bush; a family, quietly surviving, just trying to live a decent life. Clyde, the father, works long, exhausting shifts at the petroleum plant in southern Trinidad; Joy, his wife, looks after the home. Their two sons, 13 years old, wake early every morning to travel to the capital, Port of Spain, for school. They are twins but nothing alike: Paul has always been considered odd, while Peter is widely believed to be a genius, destined for greatness.

When Paul goes walking in the bush one afternoon and doesn't come home, Clyde is forced to go looking for him, this child who has caused him endless trouble already, and who he has never really understood. And as the hours turn to days, and Clyde begins to understand Paul?s fate, his world shatters --- leaving him faced with a decision no parent should ever have to make.

Like the Trinidadian landscape itself, GOLDEN CHILD is both beautiful and unsettling --- a resoundingly human story of aspiration, betrayal and love.

Discussion Guide

1. Why is Clyde hesitant to accept help from people, even family? Do you think Uncle Vishnu is genuine in his desire to help? Do you trust him?

2. Why does Joy insist that the twins attend the same school?

3. Should Peter be responsible for looking after Paul, even if it impedes his progress?

4. While living, Uncle Vishnu helped keep the Deyalsinghs afloat, improving Peter?s prospects and securing his future. How does his death affect them in the immediate and distant future? How does his death affect the family, as a whole, in the immediate and distant future?

5. Is Romesh right in feeling that he, as well as the rest of the family, is entitled to a portion of the money that Uncle Vishnu left for Peter? How do you foresee this affecting relationships within the family moving forward?

6. Does putting Paul in St. Saviour?s --- a school he?s not qualified to attend --- for the sake of keeping the twins together, help or hurt him?

7. What do you make of Father Kavanagh assuring Paul that he?s normal, contrary to what others have said his whole life? Is he right? Is too much made of Paul?s deficiencies? Do you think Father Kavanagh oversteps his boundaries in expressing this belief to Clyde?

8. What effect does Father Kavanagh?s assurance have on Paul? How does it affect their relationship, as well as Father Kavanagh?s relationship with Clyde?

9. Paul initially stands up to the bandits during their attempted robbery. When they later approach him outside of the house, Paul all but surrenders. Why does he submit the second time around?

10. Why does Clyde opt not to use Vishnu?s money for Paul?s ransom despite the mounting pressure from the kidnappers, Joy, and, then, Peter?

11. Does Clyde make enough of an effort to bring Paul home safely? Because of his actions, or lack thereof, is he ultimately responsible for what happens to Paul?

12. Is it right to sacrifice the future (or life) of one child to ensure the future of another if the latter?s is assuredly brighter? Would you make the same decision as Clyde?

13. In the airport, Peter thinks to himself, *Paul has played his part. Daddy has played his part.* What do you make of each person?s role in Peter?s eventual success? How should Clyde feel about his role, especially after Paul?s death? How do you think Paul would feel about his role? Do you think he sacrificed himself in order to protect his family?

14. Should Peter feel guilty about attending Harvard after Paul?s death?

15. What does Clyde?s reaction at the end of the book reveal about his guilt? Does he think what he did (or didn?t do) was worth it? In your opinion, was it worth it?

16. What do you think are a parent?s obligations to his or her children?

Author Bio

Claire Adam was born and raised in Trinidad. She lives in London.

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