Child Soldier by Michel Chikwanine

Please fill out these discussion prompts as you read along. Each section is broken up into 3 parts, and each part has several questions. Choose 1 question (3 total per section) to focus on.

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| **SECTION I –** p.1-19 |
| * Which family member was Michael closest to, mom or dad? How did that relationship impact his personality?
* Life in Beni is not perfect but name some of the things Michael likes. He speaks very fondly of his country despite its problems, how can this be?
 |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| * Michel wanted to play soccer, even though he knew it meant disobeying his father. Do you blame Michel? What would you have done?
* Compare and contrast Michel’s school life with your own *(give several examples)*
 |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| * What were some of the methods the soldiers used to make the children fight for them? *(give several examples)*
* Michel was scared and unable to think straight, do you blame Michel? What would you have done?
 |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| **SECTION II –** p.20-36 |
| * There were many boys, yet Michel was the only one to run away. Why do you think so many of the children stayed with the soldiers?
* Michel thought of his family often and wanted to return. How might his life (and story) be different if he didn’t have a family he loved so much?
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| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| * Even though Michel escaped, he couldn’t “get back his childhood.” Why do you think the experience with the soldiers kept him from being a kid?
* Michel’s dad asks him not to talk to anyone about his experiences. How might Michel’s life have been different if he had people who could relate to him?
 |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| * Michel’s father loved his family but his actions put them in danger. Do you think what he was doing was worth the risk to himself? To his family?
* Michel’s family was forced to leave the Congo. How could a family that was so ‘well-off’ be forced to move and become refugees?
 |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| **SECTION III –** p.37-47 |
| * Michel and his family moved to Canada, but his father and eldest sister never made it. Did Canada do enough to help Michel’s family? Should they have done more?
* Michel comes to believe his horrible life is normal, *(p39).* How are the complaints he hears around the fire different from the ones he hears from people in Canada.
 |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| * What does his father mean, “If you ever think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping in a room with a mosquito.” (p41)
* What does his father mean, “A great person is not described by their money or success, but rather by their heart & what they do for others.” (p39)
 |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| * How many child soldiers are there, and which countries still use child soldiers to this day?
* What are the different ways child soldiers are used? What was Michel’s role as a soldier?
* What is a big thing that we can do to help and a small thing you can do?
 |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |