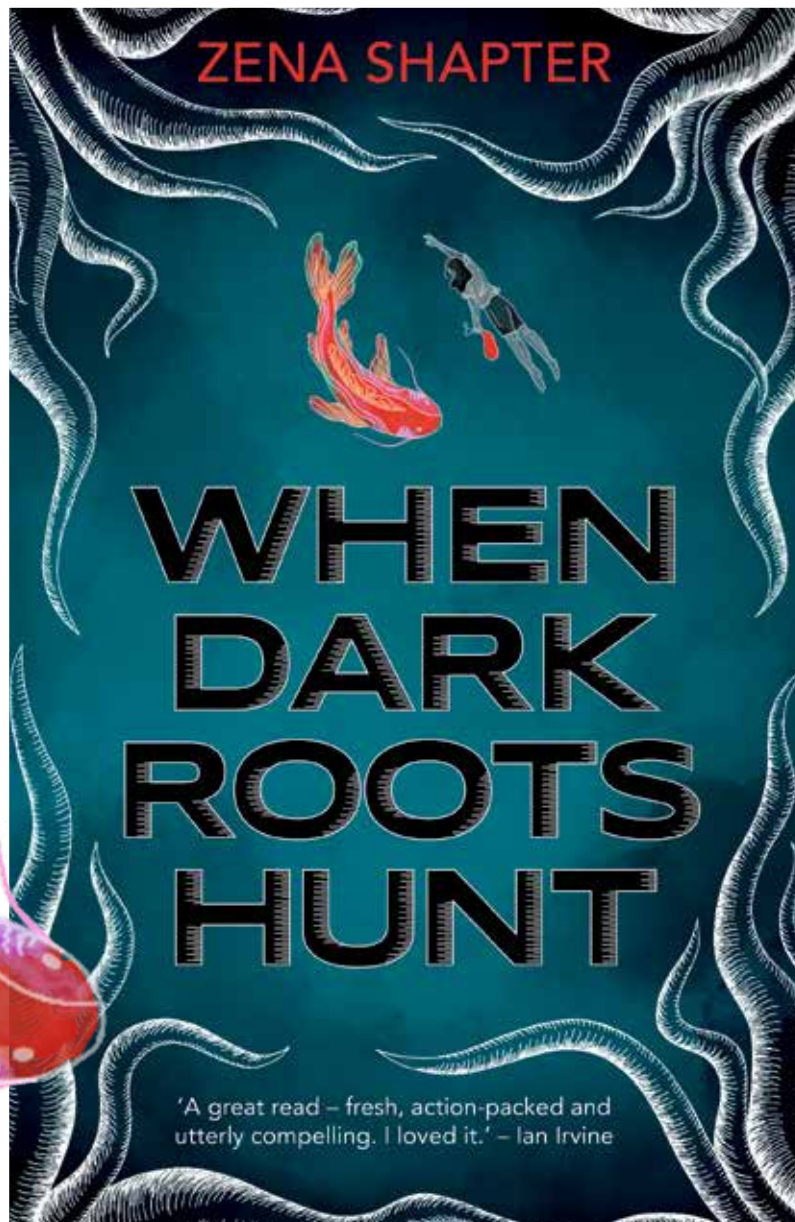


Teachers' Notes



RECOMMENDED FOR: AGES 12YRS+

ISBN: 9781922858061

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Publisher: MidnightSun Publishing

CURRICULUM LEARNING AREAS:

English, Humanities and Social Sciences

GENERAL CAPABILITIES:

Through a study of *When Dark Roots Hunt*, students can examine literary techniques, narrative form, worldbuilding, speculative fiction writing, contemporary issues and themes, and develop their general capabilities in:

Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability,
Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding

GENRE:

Speculative Fiction, Science Fantasy, Science Fiction

THEMES:

- Greed
- Wealth (Money, Property, Power, Security, Wellbeing)
- Value of Life
- Courage
- Love (Family, Friendship, Relationships)
- Identity and Belonging
- Sustainability
- Land Scarcity
- Technology
- Cultural Rivalries
- Social Responsibility

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INTRODUCTION

Set on a planet of carnivorous tree swamps and giant water-ants, *When Dark Roots Hunt* portrays a world where land and resources are alarmingly scarce. Survival depends on the various cultural groups of Palude putting aside their conflicting ideologies and cooperating to transfer their limited resources between various communities established on a saltwater lake, in freshwater swamps, and the only dry farmland atop towering 'hillfarms'. However, most remain resentful of what other groups have and have not, resulting in constant intercultural tensions and rivalries.

Speculating on the true nature of wealth, and whether a society's continual pursuit of economic growth and power over others is to its own detriment, the story draws subtle parallels with contemporary society to expose a deep collective anxiety about the future. The novel's protagonist, Sala, is particularly anxious about the short-sighted environmental and wellbeing policies of Palude, and is increasingly convinced that she has the answer to Palude's greatest sustainability issue: the keei fish.

With everyone's solar technology in permanent decline, the oily saliva of keei fish will soon be the world's only fuel, yet her village keeps squeezing juvenile keei fish to death to extract the oil. A worldwide disaster looms. Yet no one will listen to Sala, a trainee engineer. Her ideas about extracting saliva oil from mature fish out on the lake go unheard. It's up to her to physically prove everyone wrong.

A thought-provoking page-turning adventure, the story champions the power of collaboration, empathy, and environmental foresight. As Sala discovers a long-hidden truth about her family, along with a stranger with unusual powers, and advanced tech that incites a violent and excessive individual and collective greed, *When Dark Roots Hunt* also explores themes of belonging, identity, and courage. Its dramatic climax not only challenges Sala with deep personal betrayals and issues of responsibility, but raises questions about the value of human life.



RELATED TEXTS

- *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (Harper Voyager/HarperCollins, 2008, ISBN: 9780006546061) – over-reliance on technology, the destructive nature of technology, struggles with individual identity, nature as a counterpoint to technology.
- ‘Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening’ by Robert Frost – the conflict between personal fulfilment and duty, nature as an escape.
- *Coast Road* by Robert Gray (Black Inc, 2014, ISBN: 9781863957021) – nature and the environment, environmental degradation caused by human activities, personal growth and self-discovery, the inevitability of change in both nature and human life, the impact of the past on the present, the transient nature of human life.
- ‘Father and Child’ by Gwen Harwood – childhood innocence, self-corruption, the power of family, the reversal of roles.
- *The Dressmaker* by Jocelyn Moorhouse (Universal Pictures, 2015) – the destructive power of secrets and omissions, romanticisation of the past, love as a transformative force, learned resilience.
- *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, 2014, ISBN: 9781107615397) – the value of human life, the destructive force of excessive greed, self-interest over love, the tragic flaws of avaricious characters, revenge as a natural human response to mistreatment.
- *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, 2014, ISBN: 9781107615533) – the complexities of familial relationships, the destructive pursuit of power and revenge, deception and betrayal, perceptions of monstrosity, the self-destructiveness of a cruel and domineering nature.
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (Penguin, 2003, ISBN: 9780141439471) – the dangers of technology and obsession, technology obstructing progress, familial responsibility, secrets, perceptions of monstrosity, destructive ambitions.
- *The Castle* by Rob Sitch (Roadshow, 1997) – the power of greed, the value of human life and experiences, the importance of connection (to family, friends, and land), the value of social principles over economic priorities.



BLURB

Don't go out onto the lake. Wyann trees search the shallows to spear passing prey with their roots. Giant water-ants hunt anything that moves on the water-skin. Sala's village survives hidden behind a wall of poisonous ivy, because everyone agrees: don't go out onto the lake.

But then a strange comet crosses the night sky, throwing Sala and her pet pointer into a race through wyann-infested swampland that has her risking it all, unearthing long-hidden truths and stirring rivalries into a terrifying conflict set to change the world of Palude forever. Sala must do whatever it takes to face the truth of who she is: to save her village, to save her family, to save herself.

If only they had listened.

"When Dark Roots Hunt is a rich and thrilling read... Shapter has created an intriguing new world filled with luminous beauty, exotic dangers, and unsettlingly familiar ageing tech, where the heroine must navigate strange cultural and political tensions and wrestle with the consequences of her own tangled ambitions."

Leife Shallcross, author of *The Beast's Heart*

"Fresh, action-packed and utterly compelling. I loved it."

Ian Irvine, internationally bestselling author of *The Gates of Good and Evil* series

"Shapter has created an immersive, fantastical world with tension poised to snap at any moment. I couldn't put it down."

USA Today Bestselling Author Dionne Lister,
author of *The Circle of Talia*

"A completely captivating fantasy world, that is full of action with intriguing characters and a great story line. Sala is a complicated character who will have you screaming at her one minute and cheering her on the next... A perfect story for fantasy and sci-fi lovers." Lamont Books

"This book has broad appeal across age, gender, cultures and book genres, it's YA for AA, that stands for All Adults. When Dark Roots Hunt takes you to a fantastical intriguing world. To fully enjoy this book, suspend all judgment and immerse yourself in its luminosity and complexity. It's as though Game of Thrones met Alice in Wonderland in an underwater world."

Tawny Frogmouth Magazine



AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

1. What inspired you to create the world of Palude?

For over a decade I tutored English students, helping them to fall back in love with stories after becoming disenchanted with reading. They said they would read more if books helped them to escape, through a captivating story that also authentically represented their contemporary perspectives.

So I set out to create a story world that not only intoxicated them with lush imagination and fast-paced action, but which also resonated with their concerns. Along with fears about sustainability and the constant threat of war, they told me they felt continually anxious about what kind of world they would inherit, and particularly the future of land. They worried about the rising cost of living on it, the preciousness of it, yet the lack of responsibility people take for its preservation. These anxieties were exacerbated by the feeling that ‘no one listens’ to young people, so why bother to speak out or get involved? Someone else will surely fix things...

In the world of Palude, land is critically scarce. Resources are low. Important environmental issues are being ignored. There is political instability and constant cultural rivalry. The future is scary and unknown. My young adult hero is unheard, frustrated, and even constrained by the adults who are supposedly acting in everyone's best interests. And it's clearly resonated with YA and adult readers alike, as the first novel set in Palude, *When Dark Roots Hunt*, sold out prior to release!

2. What was the hardest part for you to write?

Sala's emotional journey – it's a rollercoaster of shock, disillusionment, compassion, love, betrayal, and hope. Yet the truth of her story lies in what it says about us as humans, our relationships with each other, and our relationship with the world in which we live.

3. What was your favourite book as a child?

When I was a young reader, I loved the *Little House on the Prairie* books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, so much so I'd go to sleep dreaming about building my own log cabin, where I might find water and food in the woods or on the prairie, and how I'd cook and eat it all! The pioneering lifestyle of the 1800s was of course in no way as simplistic or idealised as it is in those books, but that didn't matter to little young me – it wasn't the simplicity of life that appealed. What I found fascinating was exploring a different world new to me, the books' survival aspects, and how it allowed me to observe the basic needs of humans and what little we need to live. I still find this fascinating, whether I'm reading dystopian novels, watching *The Walking Dead*, or disaster movies on the big screen. I enjoy taking things back to basics and examining our essential nature. I still have my Little House books!

4. What authors inspire you today?

Margaret Atwood, Suzanne Collins, Cormac McCarthy, Veronica Roth, Patrick Rothfuss, William Shakespeare.

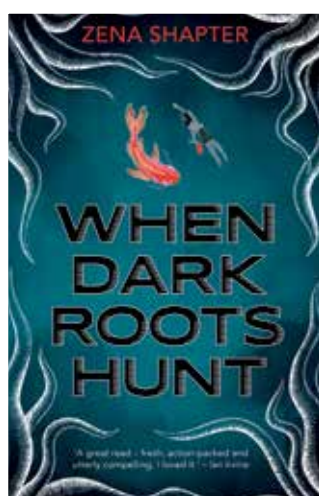
DISCUSSION & ACTIVITIES

BEFORE READING:

The following activities are designed to deepen students' contextual understanding of the novel, its parallels to contemporary culture, and to 'set the scene' before reading.

1. Visual Text Analysis

- How do the visual and literary techniques used in the novel's cover create atmosphere, what is that atmosphere, and what does it suggest of the story ahead?



2. Film Text Analysis

- How do the visual and literary techniques used in the novel's cover reveal video create atmosphere, what is that atmosphere, and what does it suggest of the story ahead?

<http://zenashapter.com/portfolio/when-dark-roots-hunt/>



3. Understanding Speculative Fiction

Authors often create speculative fiction worlds to reflect on contemporary concerns and experiences. Such stories lean on subtle societal parallels and analogies to explore important world issues; yet provide enough escapism for readers to take a breath, then see the world differently.

Speculative Fiction is a broad term that refers to any story that departs from the real world in some way. It includes science fiction, fantasy, horror, alternate history, dystopian fiction, superhero and supernatural fiction, and any combination of these.

- Research the most common tropes and elements of:
 - o science fiction
 - o fantasy
 - o science fantasy
- Research the following Shakespearean plays. List out the elements that would classify them as speculative fiction:
 - o The Tempest
 - o Hamlet
 - o A Midsummer Night's Dream
 - o The Winter's Tale
 - o The Two Gentlemen of Verona
- Make a list of ten speculative fiction novels or movies in which humans are hunted, not hunters.
 - o Why do so many writers create speculative worlds like this? What does this say of our collective experience of being human?
 - o Which of your ten worlds would you most like to experience and why?
 - o Which of your ten worlds would you least like to experience and why?
- If you were to speculate about the future of our world, what kind of world do you think you'll inherit?



4. Understanding Context & Worldbuilding

Authors are often inspired by the world around them, both subconsciously and consciously. *When Dark Roots Hunt* may be an epic science fantasy rollercoaster, but the world of Palude also offers readers the opportunity to reflect on the societal concerns and experiences that influenced the author's imaginative worldbuilding. These include issues such as sustainability, land scarcity, rising property prices, social responsibility, and technology.

Land Scarcity, Property Prices & Sustainability

Most of Palude is uninhabitable – covered in carnivorous tree swamps, with giant water-ants hunting the only saltwater lake, and the only dry land atop 'sky-high' hillfarms. Resources are scarce, which makes the keei fish saliva that fuels Palude even more precious. Yet few are working to protect the keei fish, and the lack of land causes constant rivalrous intercultural tensions.

- Discuss how the geography of Palude reflects contextual concerns about land scarcity and sustainability.

Land Scarcity references the fact that since 1975 the world has lost a third of its arable land due to population pressures, social inequality, and environmental issues such as erosion and pollution.

Sustainability is the way humans interact with their environment to preserve resources for future generations. It involves meeting the needs of the present without endangering the needs of the future.

Since 2000, Australia has experienced unprecedented growth in the ratio between wages and property prices. According to Grattan Institute analysis, while wages may have doubled, house prices have risen four-fold.

- Discuss the implications of this for house-buyers in the author's context, and how this has impacted the text's worldbuilding.

According to the Energy Institute's 2024 Statistical Review of World Energy, fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) make up around 81% of the world energy demand, whereas renewables (such as wind and solar energy) make up only 14.6%.

- Discuss the implications of this for Earth's future, what it tells us about the author's context, and how this might have impacted the text's worldbuilding.

Social Responsibility

The novel's main character, Sala, has a clear idea of how to solve her world's imminent energy crisis, and wishes to act on it. But no one listens to her. She becomes determined to physically prove her ideas.

- Discuss the ways in which individuals, families, communities, businesses, and governments are each responsible for improving sustainability issues today. What does this tell us about social responsibility in the author's context?

Social Responsibility is the active consideration of the impact that actions can have on society and/or the environment, wherein the behaviours of individuals, governments, and organisations can benefit or harm the welfare of others or the planet as a whole.

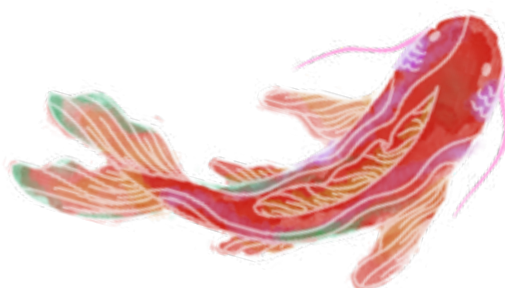
Eleanor Roosevelt once said that, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." In the novel 1984, George Orwell's character O'Brien says that, "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face – forever."

- Discuss to what extent these quotes reflect attitudes towards social responsibility in our contemporary context.

Technology

In 2020, the state of Victoria implemented mobile phone restrictions in all schools. Queensland followed in 2021, then South Australia and New South Wales in 2023. Mobile phones have now been banned or restricted in all Australian public schools.

- Discuss what this tells us about the obsession with technology in the author's context, and how you think the world of Palude might react if an individual suddenly had exclusive access to powerful advanced tech.



WHILE READING:

The following activities are designed to be used after reading the specified chapter sections. If completed for homework, rather than in class, you might like to attribute your choice of mark values for both assessment and student time management purposes. Quotes are provided either for analysis or as discussion prompts.

Chapters 1-5

1. "I have a good idea, the only idea, and everything will be alright." (Chapter 1) – What do you think is more important to Sala at this point in the novel: the long-term sustainability of milking the keei fish, or her ideas being heard? Why do you think this is? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
2. "Can't you just drink dag and kiss under the ivy like everyone else our age?" (Chapter 3) – What does this quote tell us about Aten's opinion of Sala and her sense of social responsibility? What other quotes from the text support your answer?
3. "It smothers me as soon as I reach it." (Chapter 5) – What literary technique is this, how does it convey Sala's feelings about returning home, and what are those feelings?

Creative Task:

Write a letter from Sala to her mother, describing what she loves most about life right now, which her mother could enjoy too if she were still alive; and what Sala finds most frustrating about life, which her mother could help with if she were with her. (250 words)

Chapters 6-10

1. "It's not my ideas they have a problem with – it's me." (Chapter 6) – List three adjectives that Ittans might use to describe Sala at this point in the novel, and also list three adjectives that Sala would use to describe herself. What does a comparison of these lists tell us about the nature of identity and self-reflection?
2. "He's as zippy as solar karts racing along hanging bridges." (Chapter 7) – What literary technique is used here to immerse readers in the speculative world of Palude?
3. "It wasn't black roots I saw earlier." (Chapter 8) – What is the author's purpose in creating a world where humans are hunted by water-ants and wyann trees?

Creative Task:

You are an Ittan councillor concerned about the challenges your village faces. Write a petition to Palude's Joint Council expressing whether you agree or disagree with Sala's idea to milk the mature keei fish out on the lake, and what you propose should happen next. Outline the advantages and disadvantages of your proposal. (250 words)

Chapters 11-15

1. “Yet this store is left wide open and unlocked.” (Chapter 11) – What does this tell us about swamper culture, and why does Sala want Aten to notice this? What literary technique is this?
2. “This is how family is supposed to make you feel. Light. Special. Safe.” (Chapter 13) – What does this convey about Sala’s expectations of family, compared to her own experiences, and what literary technique is this? What other quotes from the text support your answer?
3. “Their ancestors used to believe roots were possessed by angry relatives, intent on punishing them for being lazy and not being aware enough of their surroundings.” (Chapter 15) – Rituals and beliefs about death can often tell us more about the living than the dead. When swampers kiss their fingertips before touching the memorial names carved into wyann trunks, what does this tell us about their cultural values?

Creative Task:

Throughout Chapter 11, Sala feels both unease and fascination while travelling through the swamps. Write a vivid and sensory description of the last time you travelled somewhere unfamiliar, paying particular attention to creating an atmosphere that reflects how you felt. Include a shift in your feelings. (250 words)

Chapters 16-20

1. “...the Sendalg also triggered its forming mode... accidentally released unfiltered cryogenic gas... maybe the archives and search results were all wrong...” (Chapter 16) – Is Kib’s technology more reliable, less reliable, or the same as technology today? What is the author’s purpose in presenting technology this way?
2. “Cranfield swampers only care for their own.” (Chapter 17) – What do we know so far about the relationships and rivalries between Ittan, swamper, Tillar and mounder communities?
3. “Because I am their queen.” (Chapter 20) – What is this literary technique, and what does it reveal about Sala’s subconscious beliefs at this point in the novel?

Creative Task:

Write a short report on how the geography and land scarcity of Palude influences the way it’s currently governed, and the cultural rivalries that have arisen because of it. (250 words)

Chapters 21-25

1. “I don’t belong here...” (Chapter 22) – Sala used to believe she belonged among swampers. What made her think that, and why has that now changed? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
2. “...he didn’t want me to be too much like Mum.” (Chapter 23) – Why does Kib think this of his dad, and what does this reveal about his family dynamics?

3. "I smear away my soundless tears, though find some semblance of strength in them." (Chapter 24) – What literary techniques are used here to reflect Sala's physical, emotional and psychological reactions to what she sees in Sendalg?

Creative Task:

Write a diary entry about meeting Kib, outlining his appearance, personality, technology, and personal ambitions. Include a personal reaction to where he's from and how he came to be in Sendalg. (250 words)

Chapters 26-30

1. "...dag and unclean bandages are triggers for him." (Chapter 26) – What does this tell us of Aten's relationship with his parents? What other quotes from the text support your answer?

2. "I love it – a part of the lake will always be with me now." (Chapter 27) – What does Aten's gesture tell us about the changing relationship between him and Sala? What does this, and other quotes from the text, tell us of the nature of friendship?

3. "Our discussions lift me, and something tells me they always will." (Chapter 28) – What is this literary technique, and what does it tell us about Sala's feelings towards Kib?

Creative Task:

Write a paragraph about how your relationships with (a) your family, (b) your friends, and (c) your romantic partner might change over time or in a crisis. (250 words)

Chapters 31-35

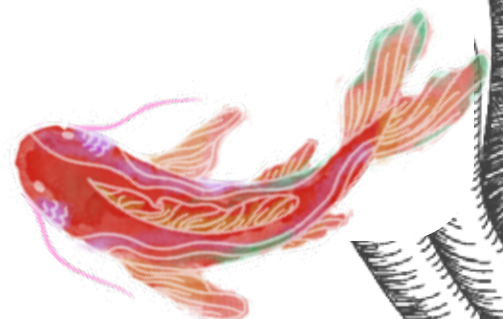
1. "...trying to be valued by people who don't even know I'm here." (Chapter 33) – Why does Sala tremble, even though she's safe inside the airlock? What does this tell us about her character? Use this quote in your answer.

2. "All Tuni's done is hurt herself." (Chapter 35) – Why did Tuni set fire to the oil and what does Aten mean here by 'hurt'?

3. "I don't need excuses anymore, because trying is what I do." (Chapter 35) – What does Sala mean by 'excuses' and 'trying'?

Creative Task:

Oprah Winfrey once said that "Failure is another stepping stone to greatness." Harry Potter author JK Rowling once said: "It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all, in which case you have failed by default." Write some additional internal thoughts Sala might have as she returns to the hatch, which reflect these quotes. (100 words)



Chapters 36-40

1. “Water I understand. Diving I know. In doing this, I reclaim both.” (Chapter 36) – What literary technique is this, and what does it tell us about Sala and the nature of identity?
2. “As if in answer, the ship lurches.” (Chapter 37) – In what ways does technology drive the plot of *When Dark Roots Hunt*? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
3. “...why do we have to leave places before we realise we love them?” (Chapter 40) – What literary technique is this, and how does it reflect how Sala is different now compared to Chapter 1?

Creative Task:

Henry David Thoreau once said, “I went to the woods because I wanted to live deliberately. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life. To put to rout all that was not life; and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.” (as quoted in the film *Dead Poet’s Society* (Peter Weir, Touchstone/Disney, 1989)). Write a letter to yourself about how you will personally endeavour to live deliberately. (250 words)

AFTER READING:

The following activities are designed to be used after finishing the novel. If completed for homework, rather than in class, you might like to attribute your choice of mark values for both assessment and student time management purposes.

1. Visual Text Analysis

- Now that you’ve read the novel, re-examine its cover and your answer about how its visual and literary techniques create atmosphere.
- Design a poster that conveys the novel’s themes to readers.

2. Understanding Speculative Fiction

- Which elements of the novel belong to the genres of science fiction, fantasy, or science fantasy?
- Write a glossary for the novel’s most unusual words and terms.
- Which books and/or movies would you compare to *When Dark Roots Hunt*, and why?



3. Understanding Context & Worldbuilding

- Revisit your pre-reading answers on context and worldbuilding, make adjustments to reflect what you now know of Palude, and add quotes from the text to illustrate how the author's worldbuilding reflects contextual issues of sustainability, land scarcity, rising property prices, social responsibility, and technology.
- Now that you've read the novel, how would you order the following contextual themes 1-11, with '1' being the most important, and what are your reasons?
 - o Greed
 - o Wealth (Money, Property, Power, Security, Wellbeing)
 - o Value of Life
 - o Courage
 - o Love (Family, Friendship, Relationships)
 - o Identity and Belonging
 - o Sustainability
 - o Land Scarcity
 - o Technology
 - o Cultural Rivalries
 - o Social Responsibility



As of 2020, the throwaway culture of fast fashion was producing 92 million tonnes of global waste each year (*The environmental price of fast fashion* by Niinimäki, Peters, Dahlbo, Perry, Rissanen & Gwilt, Nature Reviews Earth & Environment, 2020), leading scientists to call for a major shift in consumer behaviour – in particular, decreasing clothing purchases and increasing garment lifetimes.

- In Chapter 1, Aten asks Sala when she last went to the Be'all cabin, warning her that 'You pollute yourself with this constant idea of 'more''. Use this quote and others from the text to draw analogies between the author's context and the philosophy of Be'all.

4. Understanding Setting

- Choose a passage from the text that vividly describes the world of Palude, and discuss how that passage develops atmosphere. What literary techniques are involved?
- What is 'Be'all', and what does its philosophy tell us about Ittan culture? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
- What is the definition of a 'chewer', and how do Palude's various cultural groups differ in their value of life? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.

- Are the keei fish sentient? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
- Are the wyann trees sentient? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
- To what extent is Palude an inclusive society? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
- To what extent do physical appearances impact cultural rivalries in the world of Palude? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.

5. Understanding Structure

- Suspense is key to any narrative's structure. Discuss how it is crafted in this text. Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
- Compare the last sentence of each chapter with the first sentence of the next chapter. What does this tell you about how the novel is structured?
- 'Because trying is all anyone can do' – In what ways is the novel's dedication developed as a motif throughout the text? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
- What is the author's purpose in quoting technological notes directly from "light-surface layers" throughout the novel?

6. Understanding Character

- Find a key event for each main character – Sala, Kib, Aten, Tuni, and Beata – then write a brief character study for them, using quotes from the text to illustrate their personalities and character arcs.
 - Which character is the most courageous, and why? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
 - What does Sala learn about the nature of wealth (money, property, power, security, wellbeing) through her experiences in the novel? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
 - Which character best illustrates the dangers of excessive greed, and why? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.

ASSESSMENT TASKS:

The following tasks are designed to be post-reading formal assessments. Please attribute your choice of mark values for both assessment and student time management purposes.

Analytical Task

“Greed is predictable.” (Sala, Chapter 30) – In what ways does this statement reflect the central concerns of the text?

OR

‘Texts rely primarily on suspense and setting to create reader engagement.’ – To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Write an essay discussing your answer. Follow correct essay structure with an introduction, two analytical body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Include quotes and examples from the text as evidence to support your ideas. (600 words)

Success Criteria:

1. Correct essay structure is followed with an introduction, two analytical body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
2. Quotes and examples from the text are included.
3. The essay sustains a thesis that directly engages with the question.
4. Writing has been edited for spelling and grammar.
5. The essay is approximately 600 words in length.

Discursive Task

‘Stories are how we connect with each other, and ourselves.’ Write a discursive article exploring this statement. As research, read the series of short articles written by the author on ‘Storytelling Over Time’ on her blog: <http://zenashapter.com/blog/?s=StorytellingOverTime>. Include at least one quote by the author, and use discursive writing techniques to express your viewpoint. (600 words)

Success criteria:

1. The discursive involves discussion of the topic.
2. The discursive features one quote from the author on ‘Storytelling Over the Centuries’.
3. Discursive writing techniques are used.
4. Writing has been edited for spelling and grammar.
5. The discursive is approximately 600 words in length.

Imaginative Task

Write the scene when Aten finds Tuni after she's set fire to the oil. Choose to write in either first person or close third person, from either Aten or Tuni's perspective, but include both their viewpoints in an argument between them, as well as a decision about what they will do next. Remember to use creative writing techniques to set the scene in Palude and to reflect the tension between the characters. (600 words)

Success criteria:

1. Both Aten and Tuni's perspectives are reflected in the narrative.
2. The narrative is written in first person or close third person consistently, with no 'head-hopping'.
3. The narrative includes an argument, a decision, and recognisable details from the original text.
4. Creative writing techniques are used.
5. Writing has been edited for spelling and grammar.
6. The narrative is approximately 600 words in length.

Multimodal Task

In pairs or small groups, create an eye-catching 60-second video as a reel / short illustrating one of the text's central themes, designed to intrigue interested readers. Be sure to include relevant imagery, words and phrases from the novel. Themes could include:

- Greed
- Wealth (Money, Property, Power, Security, Wellbeing)
- Value of Life
- Courage
- Love (Family, Friendship, Relationships)
- Identity and Belonging
- Sustainability
- Land Scarcity
- Technology
- Cultural Rivalries
- Social Responsibility



Success criteria:

1. The video has a clear theme and markets it to the correct audience.
2. The video is professionally presented, visually attractive and engaging.
3. Relevant imagery, words and phrases from the novel are included.
4. Creative film techniques are used.
5. Any text included has been edited for spelling and grammar.
6. The video is approximately 60 seconds in length.

EALD Task

“With dark oval eyes focussed on us, it lifts its chin as if tasting our scent on the air, clatters like it relishes the flavour, then swishes its jagged black mandibles through the water, left and right.”

In Chapter 9, Sala and Aten encounter a scout ant. Scout ants differ from the water-ants that float chains across the lake – they’re different colours, sizes, have different legs and shells, and have different purposes. It is common for ant colonies to feature several different types of ants, all working collectively to support the colony, which is therefore described as a ‘superorganism’. How would you feel if you encountered a scout ant? Would you be terrified, curious, or in awe? Write a scene where you encounter a scout ant, either in the world of Palude or in a contemporary Earth setting. It could see you, or not see you. Describe the encounter, portray your reaction, and use creative writing techniques to create a distinctive atmosphere that enhances and reflects your feelings about the ant. (500 words)

Success criteria:

1. The scene portrays a narrator’s reaction to encountering a scout ant.
2. The scene has a distinctive atmosphere that enhances and reflects the narrator’s feelings.
3. Creative writing techniques are used.
4. Writing has been edited for spelling and grammar.
5. The scene is approximately 600 words in length.

Links to Further Information:

For free creative writing tips:

<http://zenashapter.com/blog/?s=writing+rockface>

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For other interesting articles on writing and living a creative life:

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For Zena’s YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHOg2qfRECB6qpZwsjHKPw>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zena Shapter writes from a castle in a flying city hidden by a thundercloud, reaching across age and genre into the heart of storytelling. A multi-award-winning author of speculative and contemporary fiction, she loves conjuring journeys into the beyond and unusual. To read more of her work, please browse the bibliography on her website at zenashapter.com

When not writing, Zena loves movies, frogs, chocolate, potatoes and living with her family among Sydney's beautiful Northern Beaches. She's travelled all around the world, visiting close to 50 countries, which inspire her to create worlds of her own.

With her BA (Hons) in English Literature, and a plethora of post-graduate qualifications, Zena enjoys working as a mentor, editor and inclusive creativity advocate, inspiring writers to develop their craft. She teaches storytelling and writing at festivals, libraries and schools, judges various literary awards and encourages everyone to value the importance of creativity.

She believes that stories are our best invention.



To book Zena for a school visit or author talk:

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