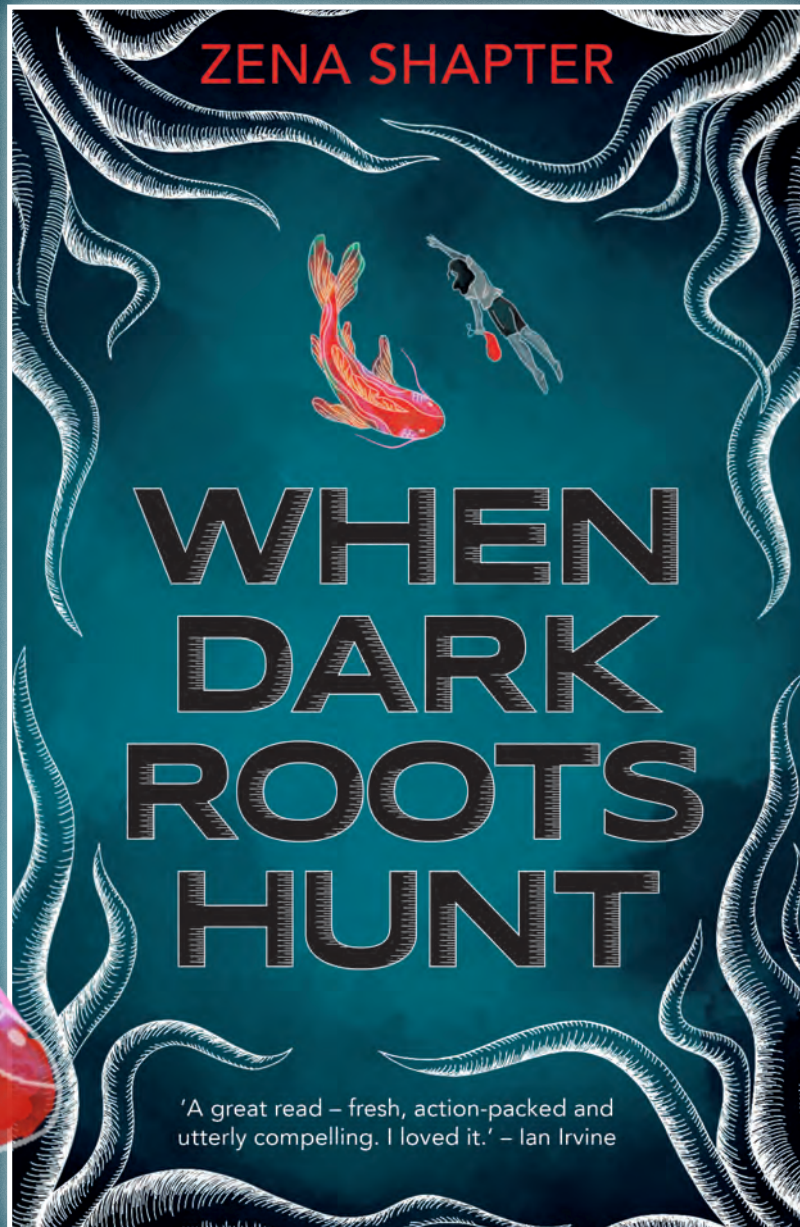


Teachers' Notes



MidnightSun



RECOMMENDED FOR: AGES 12YRS+

ISBN: 9781922858061

RRP: AUG\$19.99

Publisher: MidnightSun Publishing

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS LEARNING AREAS:

English, HSIE, Science, Technology, Society & Culture

GENERAL CAPABILITIES:

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

WHY USE THIS TEXT:

An exhilarating speculative fiction with belonging and becoming at its heart, *When Dark Roots Hunt* is ideal for a wide range of readers aged 12yrs+, including reluctant readers and EALD students. In studying this book, students can:

- Engage in discussion around the following contemporary issues:
 - Sustainability
 - Land Scarcity
 - Technology
 - Family
 - Relationships
 - Belonging
 - Identity
 - Societal Rivalries
 - Social Responsibility
- Examine speculative fiction writing.
- Get creative with imaginative and discursive writing.
- Analyse literary techniques, narrative form, and world building.



A range of analytical, imaginative, discursive, multimodal and EALD assessment task options are provided to cater for different ability levels and learning styles, along with marking criteria suggestions.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE:

These Teachers' Notes are available free of charge for use and study within schools but may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale. Copyright in these Notes remains with the author, Zena Shapter.



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



PRE-READING ACTIVITIES:

Before reading *When Dark Roots Hunt*, use the following activities to explore students' preconceptions about sustainability, land scarcity, speculative fiction, and the future.

Sustainability & Land Scarcity

When the author was interviewing students as research for *When Dark Roots Hunt*, sustainability and land scarcity issues were high on their list of contemporary concerns, with students particularly anxious about where they'd be able to afford to live in the future, and the state of the environment they would inherit. This inspired the author's creation of Palude's hillfarms and keei fish.

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

Land scarcity references the fact that the world has lost a third of its arable land in the past 40 years, due to population pressures, social inequality, and environmental issues such as erosion and pollution.

1. Which ancient cultures also experienced land scarcity, and what happened to them?
2. Compare your country's current income growth with house price growth, and how this has changed over the past two decades. What are the implications of this?
3. What steps are the government taking to address this unprecedented ratio growth?
4. What is the most sustainable country in the world, and what makes them so?
5. In what ways are your family more sustainable today than in the past? Which of these changes were made voluntarily, and which were enforced through law?
6. How could everyone be more sustainable: at home, at school, in the community, and in social groups?
7. What steps are your local council taking to create a more sustainable future?
8. If you had the definitive answer to Earth's sustainability issues, how far would you go to ensure that answer was heard, if not realised?



Speculative Fiction

Authors often create speculative fiction worlds to reflect on societal concerns and experiences in the present. Such stories lean on subtle parallels and analogies to explore contemporary 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.

1. Make a list of ten speculative fiction books or movies in which humans are hunted, not hunters.
2. Why do so many writers create speculative worlds like this? What does this say of our collective experience of being human?
3. What was the first ever story to explore this?
4. Which of your ten worlds would you most like to experience and why?
5. Which of your ten worlds would you least like to experience and why?
6. What are the most common tropes and elements of:
 - science fiction,
 - fantasy, and
 - science fantasy?



The Future

When the author was interviewing students as research for *When Dark Roots Hunt*, she discovered that one of their most popular collective experiences was that 'no one listens'. This informed her development of the book's main character Sala, who has a clear idea of the future that awaits her world.

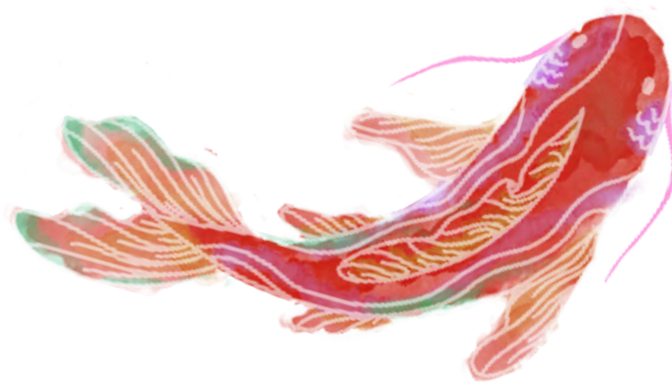
1. What concerns you most about the future?
2. Do you think those concerns are being addressed by today's world leaders?
3. What could be done to better address your concerns – by our leaders, communities, and families?
4. How will the world be different in the future?
5. Which of these quotes do you identify with the most and why?

"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come.
We have only today. Let us begin." Mother Theresa

"The future belongs to those who believe in the
beauty of their dreams." Eleanor Roosevelt

"If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot
stamping on a human face – forever." George Orwell, 1984

6. What do you think will be expected of you in the future?
7. What can you do now to prepare yourself for that?
8. In what ways is the future a terrible unknown, a beautiful opportunity, or both?



QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES:

Use these questions as group discussions or individual study, with the 'Get Creative' activities as individual reflection and assessment opportunities.

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: the long-term sustainability of milking the keei fish, or her ideas being heard? Why do you think this is?
2. "Can't you just drink dag and kiss under the ivy like everyone else our age?" (Chapter 3) – Should Aten admire Sala's social responsibility? Why doesn't he?
3. "It smothers me as soon as I reach it." (Chapter 5) – How does Itta's air 'smother' Sala? What literary technique is this?

Get Creative:

If Sala were to write a letter to her mother, how would she summarise her life right now? Write a letter from Sala's perspective, describing what she loves most about life, which her mother could enjoy too if she were still alive; and what Sala finds most frustrating, which her mother could help with if she were there. (250 words)

Chapters 6-10

1. "It's not my ideas they have a problem with – it's me." (Chapter 6) – List five adjectives that you would use to describe Sala, and also list five 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 this, what does it tell us about Aten, and how does it contribute towards immersing readers in the speculative world of Palude?
3. "It wasn't black roots I saw earlier." (Chapter 8) – What do you think is the author's purpose in creating a world where humans are hunted by water-ants and wyann trees?

Get Creative:

You are an Ittan councillor who either agrees or disagrees with Sala's idea to milk the mature keei fish out on the lake. Write a petition to the Joint Council explaining your views, and proposing how to resolve the challenges your village faces. 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) – In what ways do you agree and disagree with Sala's expectations of family?
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 culture?

Get Creative:

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. If you can, 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) – In the future, how will technology be more reliable, less reliable, or stay the same? Why do you think this?
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?

Get Creative:

Write a short report on how the geography and land scarcity of Palude influences the way it's governed, and the societal 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 that made her think that, and why has that now changed?
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 technique is this, and what does it tell us about Sala's physical, emotional and psychological reactions to what she sees in Sendalg?

Get Creative:

Write a summary of what you know so far about Kib – his background, personality, appearance, technology, and ambitions, as well as the different ways he's trying to help Sala and why. (250 words)

Chapters 26-30

1. "...dag and unclean bandages are triggers for him." (Chapter 26) – What are the positive and negative aspects of Aten's relationship with his parents? What does this tell us of the nature of family?

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 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? What does this tell us about how romantic attachments are formed?

Get Creative:

Write a paragraph about what you will expect in the future from your relationship with (a) your family, (b) your friends, and (c) your romantic partner. (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?

2. "All Tuni's done is hurt herself" (Chapter 35) – Would you have set fire to the oil like Tuni did, and would be your reasons?

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

Get Creative:

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." What do these two quotes tell us about the nature of failure? (250 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 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*?
3. “...why do we have to leave places before we realise we love them?” (Chapter 40) – How is Sala different now, compared to when she first dived with the keei in Chapter 1?

Get Creative:

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 ‘Dead Poet’s Society’). Write a pledge to your future self about how you will personally endeavour to live deliberately. (250 words)

POST-READING DISCUSSION:

After reading *When Dark Roots Hunt*, discuss the following in small groups:

1. In what ways does the novel lean on subtle parallels and analogies to our contemporary world?
2. Which elements of the novel do you think belong to the genres of science fiction, fantasy, or science fantasy?
3. What is the author’s purpose in quoting technological notes directly from light-surface layers?
4. What does Sala learn about herself through her experiences in the novel?
5. Order the following themes 1-9, with ‘1’ being the most important.
 - Sustainability
 - Land Scarcity
 - Technology
 - Family
 - Relationships
 - Belonging
 - Identity
 - Societal Rivalries
 - Social Responsibility

ASSESSMENT TASKS:

Use the following assessment tasks at the end of a unit of work on the text. There are Analytical, Imaginative, Discursive, Multimodal and EALD task options to cater for different ability levels and learning styles, as well as marking criteria suggestions.

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 TEEL 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 TEEL 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:

- Sustainability
- Land Scarcity
- Technology
- Family
- Relationships
- Belonging
- Identity
- Societal Rivalries
- Social Responsibility
- Speculative Fiction
- The Future

Success criteria:

1. The video has a clear theme and markets it to the correct audience.
2. The video is professionally presented and visually attractive.
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 encounters 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>

For discussions on #StorytellingOverTime, including The Hero’s Journey, The Insight of Wildernesses, Worlds of Upheaval, Love & Betrayal, and How Monsters are Metaphors, please go to:

<http://zenashapter.com/blog/?s=StorytellingOverTime>

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

<http://zenashapter.com/blog/>

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:

<http://zenashapter.com/contact/>

To connect with Zena on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or elsewhere:

[@ZenaShapter](https://www.instagram.com/ZenaShapter)

