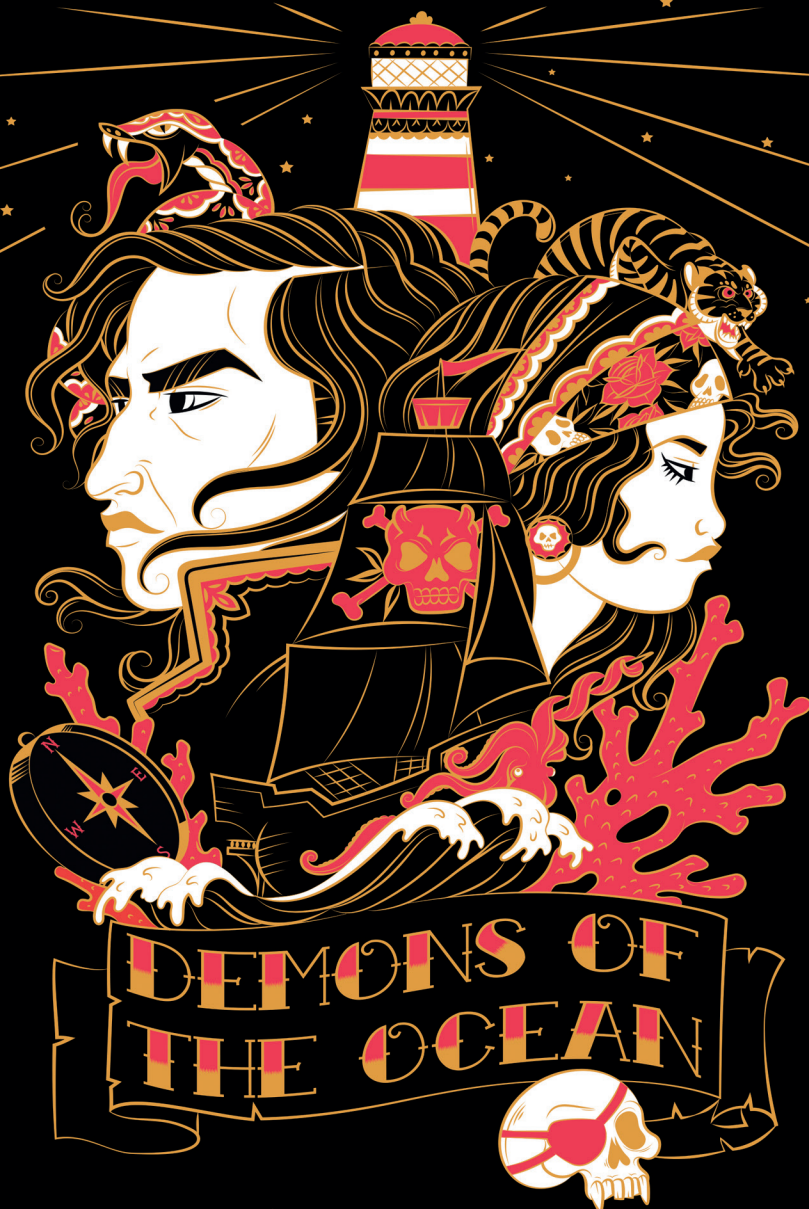


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# VAMPIRES



*Teaching Resources*

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## Before Reading

Prior to the session ensure that you have sufficient copies of the front cover to provide each child with their own copy. Give each child the opportunity to view the cover and note annotations about what the children notice and, subsequently, what those details might indicate about the story. Encourage them to draw on their knowledge of story and use this to consider what genre the book might be, as well as any predictions they may have about the story, the setting or the characters. Encourage children to note down any questions or puzzles raised by the cover design. Some specific areas of discussion might include:

- *What kind of characters do you think might be in the book? Why?*
- *Do you think the two figures on the front cover are likely to be the protagonists or antagonists of the story?*
- *What do we know about them based on these profile illustrations? What characteristics can we infer? What behaviours might we expect?*
- *What significance might the animal figures have which are depicted just above and behind their heads? Are they literal or metaphorical? Why do you think that?*
- *What does the scroll imagery remind you of?*
- *What are the objects that delineate the border of the cover design? What might they tell you to expect from the story?*
- *How does the title and the subtitle of the novel make you feel about the book? What predictions might you make in terms of tone, genre, story setting or events based on these titles?*

Before reading the prologue, turn to page 1 (immediately following the dedication) which features three lines of text that introduces the reader to the location and the year in which the story takes place.

- *How does this affect our expectations for the story?*
- *Based on our reading of the front cover, are you surprised by any aspect of this information?*
- *What type of story is set so far in the future? What might we expect the world to be like in 2505?*



## Prologue

Develop intertextual links by exploring the concept of prologues and what purposes a prologue might play in writing a narrative.

- *Have you read books with prologues before?*
- *Do you like books with prologues? Why/why not?*
- *What role does a prologue play in the story?*
- *How might this prologue set up themes, mysteries, characters or plot points for the rest of the novel?*

As well as books which feature prologues, children may also be familiar with films which start with pre-credit sequences or openings that serve a similar function to prologues, establishing the context, giving background details, an earlier story that ties into the main one, an introduction to the character when they are much younger at a time set years before the main story etc. Books which children may be familiar with which feature prologues include *Greta Zargo and the Death Robots from Outer Space* by A.F. Harrold and Joe Todd-Stanton, *Cogheart* by Peter Bunzl, *Nation* by Terry Pratchett and *Artemis Fowl* by Eoin Colfer. Films with openings that service a similar function include *Paddington* (2014), *Up* (2009) and *Black Panther* (2018).

Discuss more broadly children's early impressions of the book, story, setting, tone, genre. Compare it with their expectations from the cover:

- *What do you like or dislike about this opening scene?*
- *Is it what you were expecting? In what way?*
- *What feels like it's going to be important?*
- *What questions do you have? Are there any mysteries or puzzles set up by the prologue?*

Amongst other concepts and ideas, children might discuss the future setting (does this feel like it's set in the future or the past?), and the ship Grace sees from the window (why might her father wave towards the ship? What does this imply about the father? What might the connection be between Grace and Connor's father and this mysterious ship?)

After reading the prologue, ask for the children's first impressions of the two main characters, Grace and Connor Tempest. Start a Role on the Wall for each character as a strategy to capture and shape their reflections (see pages 40-45 for character art). Draw two separate outlines to represent the characters. Discuss what they have learnt about Grace and Connor from the text so far. Encourage children to justify their opinions using evidence from the text, making note of their key points on the Role on the Wall outline. On the inside of the outline, include words and phrases to describe their internal characteristics – thoughts, feelings, words to describe their personalities. Around the outside of the outline describe their external characteristics – their actions and appearance, include body language and facial expressions, what they say and what they do. Consider the author's choice of names for the principal characters – *what might we infer from their family name?*

Look again at the lyrics to the Vampirate sea shanty. Discuss the children's prior knowledge of sea shanties. *Do they already know some? Who would have sung them and why?* You might listen to recordings of some common sea shanties and consider the types of narratives they tell and the strong rhythmic repetitive nature of the melodies. Children might work in small groups to work up a performance of a verse of the shanty which could be expanded as part of their cross curricular music opportunities, adding accompaniments or melodies. BBC Bitesize features videos and classroom resources to develop work around sea shanties: [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zwh7tfr](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zwh7tfr)

Look again at the term 'Vampirates' and, if children haven't already noted the portmanteau nature of it, draw out the two root words used to create the title. It would be helpful to spend some time exploring children's background knowledge about both vampires and pirates. Children might discuss these two topics in groups creating mind maps or spider diagrams to capture everything they know about them.

- *How would we expect a vampire/pirate to behave?*
- *What would we expect from their appearance?*



- *Do we know the names of any famous vampires/pirates?*
- *What stories (books, films, comics, etc.) do we know which feature these types of characters?*
- *Typically, what do stories demonstrate a vampire's strengths and weaknesses to be?*

An awareness of common vampire tropes such as the way in which they do not age, their need to drink blood, their nocturnal nature and reaction to sunlight, etc. will all support children's ability to infer and make predictions as they continue to read the story.

Before reading Chapter 1, briefly discuss their response to the "Seven Years Later" page. What does this remind them of? Have they read books or seen films that use this method of jumping forward in time? What do we imagine might have happened in the intervening seven years.



## Chapter 1: The Funeral

After reading the chapter, ask the children to discuss their responses to the text so far. Start by drawing out their personal responses with the help of Aidan Chambers' **Book Talk** questions. These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion (Tell Me: Children, Reading and Talk - Thimble Press):

- *Tell me...was there anything you liked about this text so far?*
- *Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?*
- *Was there anything that puzzled you?*
- *Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed...?*

As the book continues to be read, the children will benefit from regular opportunities to return to these questions and share their personal responses to the key events and character developments as they occur.

Among other areas for discussion that might be raised, explore children's observations of the new characters set up in this chapter. *What are their early impressions of Polly Pagett and Lachlan Busby? What do they each think of the twins? What do they want from them? How might we describe their behaviour and their desires? Do you think they have the twins' best interests at heart?*

Amongst their questions, children might raise some of the additional mysteries which the author sets up in this early chapter, including the parentage of the twins which is left open to interpretation and the inhabitants of the seas surrounding Crescent Moon Bay (*"waters teeming with sharks and pirates... and worse"*).

Children might also continue to develop intertextual links by noting the common trope from children's fiction of separating the main child characters from their parents in some manner and why this is such a widely used device. *In what way might this instigate the plot or story? Would the story be different with a maternal or paternal figure to guide/support the twins? How?*

Based on our early impressions of Grace and Connor, how do you think they would respond to Polly and Lachlan's plans for them? *Which would they prefer? What might they say in response to those two options?*



## Chapter 2: The Uninvited Guest

## Chapter 3: Things Get Worse

After allowing time for children to respond to the events in these chapters, return to the Role on the Wall posters created for Grace and Connor. *What further insights do we have about the two characters? What similarities do they have? What differences? What do their actions and behaviours tell us about their characters, their feelings and their values?* Children might discuss the chapter opening with their return to the top of the lighthouse and how this recalls the prologue and the lighthouse's role in connecting them with their father. They might also draw out how they physically respond to Lachlan's appearance and dialogue ("*eyes blazing*", "*bile rose up in her throat*"). *How do you think they feel about the town where they live? How do you know? Children might also refer back to the first sentence of Chapter 3. What does this tell you about the town? Why do you think the author is choosing to paint such a negative view in the reader's mind?*

Give children time to respond to the arrival of the bank manager and to consider how his characteristics are communicated by the author through not only his dialogue and his actions, but also through his smaller mannerisms and appearance. For example: "*red-faced*", "*clammy hands*", "*...reaching out a fatherly hand.... then thinking better of it*", "*his eyes sadly downcast*", "*his perfect white teeth glinting in the sunlight*". *What might they compare his behaviour to? Do they feel he is always being genuine or is some of his behaviour disingenuous?* Children might also compare his arrival with the appearance of the bank manager in the first volume of Lemony Snicket's *Series of Unfortunate Events* books. You might also look again at how the author uses similar techniques to inform the reader's view of Polly Pagett who is described preparing for the orphans' imminent arrival by "*turning dirty sheets inside out.*" *What does this tell us about her character and about the orphanage?*

Encourage the group to begin picking out any key vocabulary that they may not be familiar with or may not fully understand in context in the story so far. For example, stoicism or tangible. Ask the group to note these down and then following up on deepening children's understanding of new and unfamiliar vocabulary, using further contextualised examples, role play photographs or video sources to bring these words to life and support the pupils in using them. As you continue to read the book, children can take ownership for picking out and discussing words and possible meanings and finding ways to confirm meanings, enriching and enlarging their repertoire of vocabulary. You may want to create a glossary of new language that appears in the text as you read the book.

Finally, re-read the letter the twins receive from Lachlan Busby. *What techniques is he using to try and persuade the twins to come around to his way of thinking? What do you think they should do? What might Connor be planning?* Children could engage in writing a letter back to Busby in role as one of the twins. *How do you think they would respond? What sort of tone might they use? What differences might there be in their responses depending on which twin wrote it? Why?*





## Chapter 4: Hell or High Water

After reading the chapter, ask children to reflect on how they felt at the various turning points in the chapter.

- *When you started reading, did the author mislead you into thinking that maybe they were going to stay at the orphanage; and then maybe they would move in with the Busby family?*
- *How did you feel when they turned away from the orphanage?*
- *How did you feel when they ran away from Loretta Busby?*
- *Did you think their behaviour was cruel? Why/why not?*
- *Why do you think they went to each property before heading for the harbour?*
- *What would you have done?*
- *How did you feel when they stole their father's boat?*
- *Were they justified in taking the boat? Who does it belong to?*

Explore some potential predictions drawing on clues from the text. How do they feel about Grace and Connor's forthcoming voyage? What signs are there that there may be trouble ahead?



## Chapter 5: Journey's End

Pause after reading the first section of Chapter 5 depicting the storm (stopping at “...down into the freezing, churning water.” page 32). Re-read this section again and this time ask the children to imagine the scene in their mind’s eye as you are reading. They might find it helpful to close their eyes and picture the scene unfolding as if it were a scene in a film. Read the section aloud two or three times and then ask them to describe to a partner what they pictured.

Following this, ask the children to identify key vocabulary or phrases which support their understanding or interpretation. Children may draw out Somper’s use of personification, opposites, similes, rhetorical questions, dialogue, and repetition. Ask the children why any particular words or phrases in particular stood out to them.

- *What made them so vivid or memorable?*
- *What mood or sense of place is created by the author through the descriptions?*
- *Which choice of words or phrases helped them to see the setting in their mind’s eye?*
- *How do these descriptions make them feel?*
- *What do you predict will happen?*

Go on to read and response to the rest of the chapter, particularly to consider what more we learn about Connor, his determination to find his sister and how his emotions vary across these pages. Give children the opportunity to add to his Role on the Wall as well as to think about what may have happened to Grace. *Whose voice does he hear at the end of the chapter?*

Discuss the significance of the boat that he sees. *Why might the author have chosen to dwell so long on its description only for it not to rescue him? Is there anything strange, unusual or unexpected about the ship?*



## Chapter 6: Pirates

After reading Chapter 6, return to the Book Talk questions from Chapter 1 to capture children's response to the book so far. Continue to add to Connor's Role on the Wall and add to any vocabulary list/glossary that has been started. Children may wish to explore the definition of terms such as 'utilitarian', 'endurance' or 'forecastle'.

Give the children time to re-read sections of the chapter to reflect on their first impressions of Cheng Li. What do we learn about her? What do we know for certain? What do we want to find out? Start a Role on the Wall poster using the same approach as that used for Connor and Grace so that further insights can be added as more of the book is read.

Discuss the children predictions for Connor's story and how they feel about his 'vision' of Grace.

- *What direction do you expect Connor's story to take from this point? What might happen to him next?*
- *What are your expectations for or impressions of the other named pirates: Bartholomew, Cate and Captain Wrath?*
- *What do you think really happened to Grace? Did Connor see her?*
- *How do you think Cheng Li might feel about Connor's description of the mysterious ship and his conclusion that it is the Vampire ship?*
- *Why does she refuse to search for Grace? Do you think her decision was the right one?*
- *What might have led Connor to feel so certain that his sister is on board the Vampire ship?*



## Chapter 7: Lorcan Furey

As with Chapter 6, spend some time exploring children's responses, observations and insights into another new character: Lorcan Furey. Create an additional Role on the Wall, drawing together everything we learn about him. *How much do we find out for certain? How much is left as a mystery or a puzzle to be solved?*

As children revisit the chapter, consider from whose point of view we are seeing the events. While the last two chapters have shown us Connor's point of view, we have now had to shift to Grace's. *How do they feel about this narrative choice?* Discuss the choice and impact of maintaining a third person narration while also giving an insight into either Connor or Grace's interior monologue and emotional response. *What are the consequences of this technique?* Consider whether there is anything we know as readers that Grace remains unaware of.

*What questions are raised during the chapter?* Children might draw attention to the significance of the mist; Lorcan and the captain's particular interest in Grace and Connor being twins; the captain seeming to be invisible in the mist; the whispering voice in her head; the mention of 'the feast'; the urgency in getting her to the cabin and keeping her presence a secret...

Draw together children's thoughts about the chapter overall with predictions about where Grace has found herself, what might happen to her and how we feel about Lorcan. Does Grace appear to trust Lorcan? *What makes you think so? What has led to the presence or lack of trust? Do you trust him? Why/why not?*





## Chapter 8: Molucco Wrathe

After reading Chapter 8, return to their early impression of the characterisation of Cheng Li. Add any new insights or observations to her Role on the Wall poster started after Chapter 6.

- *How do they feel about her immediate lack of confidence in Connor's story of the Vampire ship?*
- *Can we see things from her point of view? What would you believe if you were in her position?*
- *Does Connor's tale sound plausible?*
- *How do we feel about her manner when talking to Connor about this? Do you feel she is too blunt or is she trying to support him in coming to terms with what she believes is the loss of his sister?*
- *How might Connor persuade her to consider his view of things?*

Discuss how the text doesn't take an impartial approach but instead shares some of Connor's point of view and opinions of Cheng Li, for example, his thoughts about her weapons being 'as sharp and lethal as her tongue' – *do you agree with Connor's point of view? Is this a fair characterisation?*

Move on to their first impressions of Captain Molucco Wrathe. The children might draw their visualisation of him based on the descriptive passages and details included from page 48-50 and then compare these with each other, looking at what details different readers have picked up on and how they might draw on wider reading experiences and other cultural references to fill in any gaps.

- *What do we know about him?*
- *What are Connor's expectations prior to meeting him?*
- *In what respects does he compare to our expectations of a pirate captain?*

Discuss how he responds to Connor's story, the song and the idea of the Vampirates. How does his characterisation and response compare with Cheng Li's?

Consider how the author uses a wide variety of techniques to develop characters through the passages of dialogue. *In the exchange between Connor and Wrathe between pages 50 and 54, how does the author convey both tone of voice and emotional response?* Children might highlight the descriptions of actions and reactions, their facial expressions, the language choices within their spoken words, the hesitations and repetitions in their dialogue, the author's punctuation choices and use of italics, the variety in sentence length, as well as the dialogue tags or speech verbs. Children may find it easier to reflect on the impact of some of these authorial choices by working in pairs to rehearse a short selection of the dialogue for performance.



## Chapter 9: Cabin Fever

After reading the chapter, return to the children's questions about the ship and Grace's rescuers that were raised during Chapter 7. What further puzzles have been raised now? Look at how the author allows the reader access to Grace's point of view, as he did in Chapter 7, allowing us to consider and reflect on the same questions that Grace is asking herself as she discovers more about her surroundings and her early tentative conclusions ("Perhaps they hadn't eaten properly... Maybe the ship had only just...").

- *What impact do the questions and puzzles raised by Grace have on you as you read?*
- *Do you like them? Do they echo your own thoughts and questions?*
- *Are there any questions raised that you think you know the answer to or are you as in the dark as Grace?*
- *Do the questions help you to empathise with her?*

Children might develop their empathy for Grace further by using hot seating techniques to ask her questions: clarifying how she feels about her cabin, the ship, Lorcan and the mysterious captain. They could then write in role as Grace demonstrating how they think she might be reacting to the situation in which she has found herself.

Start drawing on children's knowledge of the vampire mythos to consider what clues Justin Somper is providing us with about the true identity of the ship's crew, for example, no one ventures out into the light; no glass in the mirror; references to the crew's hunger. Jot down any hints or clues that the children have noticed.



*Chapter 10: The Life of a Pirate*

*Chapter 11: Some Kind of Danger*

*Chapter 12: A Gentle Way to Die*

*Chapter 13: Broken Mirror*

*Chapter 14: The Dawning*

Across the next five chapters, the book leads the reader back and forth between life aboard the Diablo for Connor and life aboard the Vampirate ship for Grace. As they read continue to give children the opportunity to share their insights into the similarities and differences between life aboard each of these ships, what more they learn about the principal characters and note any further puzzles or mysteries that are set up.

As well as responding to the descriptions in the text, allow time for the children to explore the cross-section illustration of the Diablo included at the end of the book.

- *What do they notice?*
- *What areas of the ship interest them the most?*
- *What questions do they have?*
- *How does the ship's design and layout compare with what they had pictured in their mind's eye?*
- *What are their views on life on board ship?*
- *How do they think it feels in Bart's and Connor's sleeping quarters?*
- *Do you think the experiences on board feel different for other members of the crew?*

Discuss what more they learn about the crew of the Diablo, particularly Bart, Cheng Li, Wrathe and Cate. *Do they feel as though Bart's accounts of his crew mates might be at all biased or did they find him to be considered and fair in his descriptions?*



Consider the pirate life and how Bart describes it to Connor:

- *Do they agree or disagree with Bart's declaration of the benefits of the pirate life style?*
- *Does he make it sounding appealing? Why/why not?*
- *Would you like to be a member of the Diablo crew?*
- *What impact do you think Bart has or will have on Connor?*
- *What role might he play in the story as it unfolds?*

Based on what they have read so far, *what do they think the positive and negative aspects of being a pirate might be?* Chapter 12 tells the reader that Connor "... *had no real interest in being a pirate. But she [Cheng Li] didn't need to hear that...*" (p82). If he isn't interested in being a pirate, what do they think his plan might be?

What additional insights do they gain for the character of Cheng Li?

- *Why do you think she chose to raise the story of the Vampire ship with Connor?*
- *Were you surprised by any of her decisions?*
- *Connor is unsure of what she does or doesn't believe. What do you think? Does she believe in the Vampire ship?*
- *Connor reflects that "he had an ally" – Do you think that Cheng Li is his ally on board the Diablo? What makes you think that?*

Meanwhile, for Grace's chapters, discuss some of the further hints that life on board her ship may have a supernatural element (e.g. "*as if reading her mind*"; "*I'll catch more sleep when the sun comes up*"; "*his hands were surprisingly cold*"; the items that appear mysteriously in the cabin and the curtain that feels as though it has been tugged out of her hand; "*She must be growing weak – or else some dark magic was at work*"

Lorcan tells Grace "...*our ways are strange*" -

- *Do you agree? Why/why not?*
- *In what way would you say the crew of this ship have strange, unusual or unexpected habits or behaviour?*

- *Is there anything that makes you feel frightened or uncomfortable?*
- *How would you feel in Grace's position? What might make you feel that way?*
- *Lorcan encourages her to trust the captain; would you?*

Finally, after reading Chapter 14, clarify with pupils what they understand Grace's situation to be. You might also reflect on the double meaning in the title of the chapter – the literal dawn or the dawning of the truth for Grace.

- *What do we now know about Lorcan?*
- *How do we know? What have the clues been?*
- *Are you surprised that it took Grace so long to realise where she was?*
- *Do you think that Grace is in danger from Lorcan? Why/why not?*
- *What do you think she should do?*
- *How might she feel?*
- *What would you do in her situation?*



## Chapter 15: Conflict

## Chapter 16: Under Attack

Discuss what more they discover about Captain Wrathe in these chapters. *How does it compare with their first impressions? What do they like about him? Is there anything that they don't like? Do they agree with Connor that he is an easy character to like?*

Give the children the opportunity to debate the captain's approach to life. They might consider how his attitudes very much reflect the values that Bart was promoting – “A short life but a merry one.” *Do you think the captain considers the consequences of his actions and of the decisions that he has made? How do you think Cheng Li's values differ from his? Captain Wrathe also explains that when it comes to piracy “the only rule is that there are no rules.” Do you think this is true for pirate life? For example, what would life aboard the Diablo be like if there were no rules? Does ‘no rules’ mean that there is nobody in command? How would Wrathe feel about that?*

Look again at Wrathe's defence of a pirate's actions: “Last week they were the governor's. Now they're mine. End of story.”

- *How do they feel about this statement? Is this fair?*
- *Is it acceptable for some to live by Wrathe's system and not others?*
- *What would it be like if everyone acted this way?*
- *How practical is it to live by Wrathe's values?*
- *How might it make other people feel?*
- *What might be the consequences of these decisions?*

Re-read the description of the contents of Wrathe's cabin (p103-14). Ask the children to try to visualise the space in their mind – they might even draw out what they imagine the cabin to look like. Following this, ask the children to share what they imagined and to identify any key vocabulary or phrases which support their

understanding or interpretation. *Was there a favourite detail? How does the author make the treasures which fill the cabin seem particularly impressive?* Children might note the hint that the famous Van Gogh painting could be amongst the riches allowing the reader to connect this fantasy with the real world. They might have been influenced by the use of verbs such as *towered, spilled, crammed* or the adjectives and nouns which define the rare or rich materials the objects are crafted from: *gold, marble, jewelled, antique, ancient, silk*, etc. They might draw comparisons to other treasure-laden settings from other books and films, e.g. the cave of wonders from Aladdin or the locked vaults of Gringotts in the Harry Potter series.

In contrast to this descriptive passage, Chapter 16 provides the reader with a moment of action – a surprise attack and then a sword fight. Explore some of the techniques the author uses to communicate the action, to maintain clarity whilst building tension and pace.

- *What would it be like if everyone acted this way?*
- *What did they find most effective in the writing of the action scenes?*
- *What could they most easily visualise?*
- *How does the author support the reader in keeping up with where the opponents are, who has the advantage, and who has access to the different weapons?*
- *Is there anything that was held back as a surprise?*
- *What do you feel is most important in writing action? What do you enjoy reading the most?*
- *Were you surprised by Connor's prowess with the sword?*
- *How have the events in the book prepared us for this progression in Connor's character? Is it within the likelihood of the characteristics we have identified so far?*  
(Refer back to his Role on the Wall poster and add to it if necessary)

One aspect of action writing you might choose to focus on is the use of active verbs to specify exactly what 'actions' are happening and who is acting. For example, text marking the verbs and some verb phrases in the long paragraph on page 114 would offer up: *struck out, parried, clashed, trembled, withdrawing, swung it back, slipped, jumped forward, seized, reached down, stooped low, didn't notice, move up, bound, trapped, etc.*





## Chapter 17: The Vampire

Return to the Role on the Wall that was started for Lorcan in response to Chapter 7 and ask the children to encapsulate and reflect on what more we learn about the vampire in this chapter. The term is still not used at any point in this chapter, but the reader is given further references which indicate what sort of ‘monster’ Lorcan is. Discuss whether the children thought any of these details about his character were surprising.

- *How does Lorcan feel about being a vampire?*
- *Do you think the other vampires feel the same way?*
- *According to Lorcan’s description, what might be the negative effects of becoming a vampire?*
- *Do you think there is anything positive about his condition?*

Children might reflect on some of Lorcan’s dialogue on page 116: *“I don’t remember how it felt to be alive”; “I cannot feel the things you feel”; “Even your pain would be better than this numbness”*.

At the end of the chapter, consider what changes Lorcan’s mind. Why does he react so suddenly and why might he have chosen to let her go?

Grace uses the same term for Lorcan that Connor used about Cheng Li – she thought he was her ‘ally’. What other parallels are there in the two relationships?



## *Chapter 18: Punishment to Fit the Crime*

Discuss Connor's response to the capturing of the two young men who have invaded the Diablo and any signs they've noticed that Connor is unsettled by the events on deck and unsure about who is in the right in this situation. Spend some time debating some of the issues raised during the chapter.

- *Do you think the two young men were justified in their attack?*
- *What do you think is fair or just in this situation?*
- *What do you believe Wrathe should have done?*
- *Wrathe explains that "the crew are justly baying for their blood". Is it just?*
- *Do you think it's possible for morality to change according to your role or position in society?*
- *Will Connor's sense of right and wrong have to alter if he stays within this community?*

Use the Role on the Wall posters created for the principal characters to consider the different responses taken by Connor, Cheng Li and Wrathe.

Give the children the opportunity to share any additional responses or questions raised by the end of the chapter. *Does Connor really hear his dad's voice or is it just his own inner voice persuading him? What might 'Trust the tide' mean? What do we know about the tide, how it behaves and what it does? What might that mean for Connor?*



## Chapter 19: The Captain

## Chapter 20: Safe Haven

After reading these two chapters, return to the rhetorical question raised on page 130 - *“What demon lay beyond the dark gap in the doorway?”* – and consider how Grace’s views on the captain and her feelings alter throughout this section of the book.

*What differing emotions – positive and negative - does she feel as she steps from own cabin, looks out across the sea, enters the darkness of the captain’s cabin, etc.?*

Map out this range of emotions.

Move on to considering their own views on the captain. Reread the description of his appearance (from *“Then the doors folded back on themselves...”* p131 to *“...in the centre of his head.”* p132). As you read, ask the children to close their eyes and try to visualise the captain as they did with Molucco Wrathe in Chapter 8. They might try to see him in their mind’s eye or they could listen to the passage 2 or 3 times and try to sketch out what they see. *What aspect of his appearance comes through most strongly or could they see most clearly? What aspects were more open to interpretation? What questions or puzzles are raised?*

Look back at Grace’s Role on the Wall poster. Do we have any further observations or reflections on Grace’s behaviour and character? The captain calls her ‘brave’ and ‘bright’, but also implies that she is an ‘outsider’. What does this mean? Do they agree?

*Do they think that this ship might be a ‘safe haven’ for Grace?* The captain refers to the ship as *“a refuge... for outsiders, for those of us forced, or drawn, to the very edges of the world.”* *What do they think this means? In what way might Grace and Connor fit this description? Were they forced or drawn away from Crescent Moon Bay?*

If the children haven’t referred to them already, look back at the questions raised at the top of page 139. Give them time to share their own opinions about the captain’s possible connection to Grace and Connor Tempest and their father.



## Chapter 21: Broken Sword

As much of Chapter 21 focuses on the art and action of swordsmanship, the text includes many examples of subject specific vocabulary, including: broadsword, mollinet, gauntlets, hilt, pommel, quillons, foible, forte, scabbard, épée, rapier, pronate, protégé, katanas, sheaths, etc. Give the children time to draw out any vocabulary that they were unfamiliar with. *Was there any language in the text that it would be helpful to research, to look up definitions or photographs to support our understanding? How many of the words were defined by context – either through the description of action or through Cate’s dialogue?*

Give the children time to add any terms they are interested in to their glossary and to write their own definitions for these. You might also explore the meaning behind certain turns of phrase or idioms, such as Cate’s reference to ‘*smoke and mirrors*’ on page 143.

Continue to develop the debate about the morality involved in being a pirate, what we as current day readers think about that, and whether we believe Connor will be able to come to terms with it. Discuss his reflection on page 143: “*He realised that if he was going to be a pirate, he too would have to deal with death on a daily basis. Worse than that, he would be called upon to inflict it.*” You might also look back at Bart’s explicit description of the damage that Cate’s épée can do and Connor’s response to it. *Do we feel the same as Connor when we read Bart’s speech? Are our feelings about life aboard the Diablo changing as we learn more about what it might entail?*

Consider what more we learn about Bart, Connor and Cheng Li in this chapter, as well as our impressions of Cutlass Cate who we get to spend more time with here.



## Chapter 22: Bread and Soup

After reading Chapter 22, reflect on Grace's decision to explore the interior of the ship. *How did they feel when she made that decision? Did you want her to explore or to return to her cabin? How did you feel when she was moving further and further into the ship? What made you feel that way?*

Consider some of the strategies the author uses to maintain and build tension as Grace investigates. *Are there any particular moments, or any particular words or phrases that you found most impactful?* Amongst other approaches, the children might draw out both the explicit questions raised in the text as if they were Grace's thoughts ("Why should the rest of the crew prove any different, or any more dangerous?" or later: "Which of the doors was it?") as well as the implicit questions raised by the description of the environment, for example the lack of illumination prompting us to wonder what might be in the shadows, or the carpet absorbing the sound of her footsteps prompting us to think about what might be listening. The children may also draw attention to some of the more evocative language choices, for example "*plummeting down into the darkened depths...*" and "*propelled her...*" both making it seem as though Grace has no control over her movements or choices. Her image of an imagined '*lair*' or the author's use of the adverb '*dead*' to describe how suddenly she stopped might both put threatening images into the reader's mind.

At the end of the chapter, do they have any predictions or ideas about what might be happening in the kitchens? *What further puzzles or questions might this raise? How do we feel about the cook and the mysterious old man?*



### *Chapter 23: Action Stations*

### *Chapter 24: The Nightfall Bell*

### *Chapter 25: Raid*

After reading these chapters, discuss their visualisation of the raid. *Could they see the events clearly in their mind? Did they always know what was happening? What images stood out?* The children might revisit specific moments in the chapter in pairs or small groups, reading aloud paragraphs and talking about what they visualise with each other. They could use pencils or pens to draw out the most memorable moments considering what it looked like as the two ships drew alongside one another; what the bridges – the ‘three wishes’ – looked like as they were lowered between the ships for the pirates to cross over, the churning sea beneath them; Wrathe stepping aboard through the cannon smoke, etc. If the children are familiar with pirate boarding scenes from television shows or films, they might make links with these to support or to help explain their visualisation. Appropriate films might include classic films such as *The Sea Hawk* (1940), animated movies such as *Sinbad* (2003) or *Pirates! In An Adventure with Scientists!* (2012) or live-action modern films such as the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series.

Explore further the captain’s growing conflict with his deputy, Cheng Li, and the regulations laid out by the Pirate Federation.

- *How do they feel as readers about the captain’s pursuit of the raid?*
- *Do they think this was a good idea for Wrathe and the crew of the Diablo? Why/why not?*
- *How did they feel about the ‘vote’ the captain set before the crew (on page 160/161)? Do they think it was a fair debate?*

Give the children time to work in small groups to set out the arguments on both sides of the debate – *what arguments might Cheng Li make against breaking the Pirate Federation’s regulations and what arguments might Captain Wrathe make in favour of the attack?* After the children have had sufficient time to discuss and jot down their reasons for and against, you could use a decision line or conscience alley to summarise those arguments and make a group decision about whose side they would be on in this debate.

Reflect on Connor’s response to the events before, during and after the attack; how he behaves, the choices he makes and the range of different emotions he feels.

- *What might Connor be thinking and feeling as his loyalties are pulled between Cheng Li and the captain?*
- *What do you predict the outcome could be of this ongoing conflict aboard the Diablo? What could it mean for the development of Connor and his story?*
- *What do you think the consequences of this raid could be?*

Add any observations or reflections to his Role on the Wall.

Between those two chapters, the children have learned a little more about life aboard the Vampirate ship. Discuss what further clues Grace and the reader are given during her time in the kitchen and what the children predict might be happening. Children might draw on the dialogue between Grace, Jamie and the cook, including Jamie’s comment that *“this grub isn’t for them”*, the cook referring to Grace’s situation as *“an awful waste”* and her later reference to *“the feast”*.

- *Who do you think the grub might for?*
- *Why might Grace be ‘an awful waste’?*
- *What might the ‘feast’ be?*
- *What conclusion might Grace have reached?*
- *Why do you think she feels “a tide of panic.. starting to rise”?*
- *Do you think the cook or her nephew are vampirates? What makes you think that? What does the text suggest?*



In addition to those clues, they might also re-read the section where Grace cuts her finger and the reactions of the cook. She repeats her comment of ‘what a waste’ – but what might she be referring to – *her nephew, Grace, the cut*? Reflect on Justin Somper’s choice in writing each chapter to be deliberately ambiguous at times and to lay out the clues gradually. *What is the impact on you as you read the story? Do you enjoy trying to figure everything out as you read? How might your response be different if you knew everything from the start?*



## Chapter 26: The Figurehead

## Chapter 27: The Slow Parade

After reading these two chapters, allow children to share their impressions of Lieutenant Sidorio and his relationship with Lorcan Furey. It appears that they have a professional relationship aboard the ship, both referring to each other according to their rank. What more do we know about their feelings towards one another and their role on board the ship? Children might be interested to research the traditions of military ranks in the navy to see whether the role of midshipman or lieutenant has greater seniority and what this might mean as the story develops.

At the beginning of Chapter 27, every character has a slightly different interpretation and response to Lorcan calling over and taking Sidorio away from Grace. *How do we interpret Lorcan's behaviour as a reader? How does each character interpret it? How does Grace feel? Why do you think she feels that way?* Children may wish to add any character observations to their Role on the Wall posters.

Discuss how Sidorio is presented in these few pages. We first heard his name back in Chapter 11 and may have formed some first impressions at the time. *What more do we know about him based on the end of Chapter 26 and the opening of Chapter 27? How do we feel about him? What can we infer about his personality or characteristics based on his behaviour, speech and appearance? Why do you think the author emphasises the description of Sidorio's physical appearance in this chapter?*

Discuss what we (and Grace) observe about the vampires on board, how they behave and how they appear. *Do any of them remind you of other vampires from popular culture, from other stories, books or films?* Grace considers that having found out more about the Vampire ship she now has 'specific questions' for Lorcan. *In addition to the feast, what do we think those questions might be?* Spend some time jotting down and discussing potential questions and predicting the potential answers that Lorcan could give.

Children may also wish to share their first impressions of Darcy Flotsam, who has a more significant role to play in future books in the series.

- *What do we know about Darcy so far?*
- *What words might you use to describe her?*
- *What does she remind you of? What does her story remind you of?*
- *What does she mean when she says that she 'had crossed'?*
- *How old do you think she is? How long ago did she become a vampire?*
- *How does she seem different from the other vampires?*
- *Do you think Grace should be wary of her? Can she be trusted?*
- *Do you think her name has any significance? What does 'flotsam' mean?*

The children might benefit from looking at photos of different figureheads to help them to comprehend Darcy's transition from 'statue' to a 'living' being each day.

*Why might she have been given the responsibility of ringing the nightfall bell? Does she have a different reaction to the sunlight than the other vampires?*



## Chapter 28: The Dividing of the Spoils

This chapter follows the pattern of taking us back to the *Diablo* to keep up as events unfold there. Children may have some reflections on this pattern of structuring the novel, following the events on one of the ships for a chapter (or two occasionally) and then moving back to the other. *How do they feel about these transitions? Do they like being able to keep track of both Tempest twins? How did it feel to move to the Diablo just when Lorcan was going to tell Grace about 'the feast'? Is there a storyline – Grace or Connor's - that you find most engaging or does that vary throughout the book?*

Chapter 28 finds Connor increasingly torn between his growing camaraderie and friendship with the crew of the *Diablo* and his feelings of moral uncertainty about what it means to be a pirate – to steal precious objects – away from those they belong to. After discussing his feelings and what more we observe from his behaviour and decisions, as well as the insights into his interior voice that this particular kind of third person narration offers us, add any new insights to his Role on the Wall poster. Children might then write briefly in role as Connor summarising his response and emotional shifts during the events of the day, from the preparations for the raid, to the attack itself and the return to the *Diablo* to divide the treasures. They could also be encouraged to refer back to any notes or reflections from earlier chapters when this moral dilemma was previously explored. Children could choose to write in the form of a diary, or as a letter to his sister or a speech directed at the voice of his father, or in the form of dialogue between Connor and Bart.



## Chapter 29: Dressing for Dinner

## Chapter 30: The Feast

## Chapter 31: The Hunger

Across these three chapters, Grace's (and therefore also the reader's) understanding of how the Vampire ship is operated grows as does our awareness of the conflicts within the crew. Respond to the cliff-hanger ending, and what this might mean for the captain's governance of the ship and for Grace's safety, then look back through the chapters to reflect on what we have learnt .

Consider, for example, how children visualised the dining room and the feast. *What images stayed most strongly in your mind? Did the description of the room or the feast remind you of anything you'd seen before – perhaps in films, on television or in paintings?* Children might draw comparisons to the long wooden tables and great feasts depicted in Hogwarts' Great Hall in the Harry Potter films and books or with photographs of the Royal Banquets at Windsor Castle, both of which might give them some impression of the size and spectacle of the feast. Children might also benefit from exploring photos of other named items from the description, such as the crystal chandeliers, the damask tablecloths, fine china and cut glass. *Can they imagine what this long dining room might look and feel like down on the lowest level of the Vampire ship? Is this the sort of formality that you might have expected based on other aspects of the ship described so far? What is there about this feast that is unusual or unexpected?*

Summarise what we have learned about the arrangements the captain has made for life aboard the Vampire ship. Allow time for children to draw out and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these arrangements. *Do you think this system is fair? What do you think would happen if the Vampirates did not have these routines to follow?* Ask the group if there are any further questions raised by the captain's explanation, that you might want to find out the answers to, particularly if you were in Grace's position. Children might raise such questions as: *Where do these donors come from? Do they volunteer? Are they kidnapped? Are they 'rescued' from the sea? What happens if one of them wants to leave? What happens when they become too frail, like Nathaniel?* The children may also have further reflections and questions about the still nameless Vampire Captain.



## Chapter 32: Ma Kettle's Tavern

As the chapter title implies, Chapter 32 takes the reader to another new location. As before, allow children time to share how they pictured this new setting.

- *How did you feel when it was described?*
- *What did you like or dislike about it?*
- *Was it easy to visualise? Why/why not?*
- *What aspect of the tavern was easiest to see? What helped you see it?*
- *Have you heard the word 'tavern' before? If so, where?*
- *What is a 'tavern'? What does the word remind you of?*
- *Did the description of the tavern remind you of anything from other books or from films or television shows?*
- 

After gathering the group's response to the location, discuss what more we learn about our central characters, particularly in this chapter Captain Wrathe and, later in the chapter, Cheng Li.

- *How do the other pirate captains feel about Wrathe's methods and attitudes?*
- *How is he treated at the tavern? What does that tell us about him?*
- *How does he stop the fight from escalating?*
- *What do you think might have happened if his strategy hadn't worked?*
- *Do you think he'll need to change his practices and his behaviour?*
- *Were you surprised when Cheng Li believed Connor when he told her about hearing his father's voice?*
- *Has she changed her mind? Does she know something?*
- *Do you think she has an ulterior motive?*
- *Why do you think she trusts Connor?*

*Reflect on Cheng Li's final speech of the chapter. Do you think it's good advice? Do you agree or disagree? If those are the journeys worth taking, then how might that be reflected in Connor's and Grace's journeys so far?*



## Chapter 33: The End of My Story

Read the first three paragraphs on page 231. Pause at *“The only person who could save her now was herself. But how?”* and consider what we know of Grace and what we think she could do. *What is the main threat that she needs to deal with? What do we know about that threat; and what options are available to her?*

Refer back to Connor’s description of his sister from page 229:

“She’s much smarter than me. She reads books and she has this knack for reading people too. And she’s strong – not so much physically, but mentally. Grace never gives up.”

Consider how Connor’s description of Grace matches with everything we have read throughout the book so far. Refer back to the Role on the Wall and the different observations made at each stage. With this in mind, what do they think she could do to save herself? *Will she be able to fight back physically or will she need to somehow trick him or persuade him? What does Connor mean by her ‘knack for reading people’? What do we think Sidorio’s weaknesses could be?*

Read the rest of the chapter and consider what we learn about Sidorio. The captain has banished him from the ship, but do they think that this is the end of his role in Connor’s and Grace’s story? What makes them think that?

Add to their notes and observations about Sidorio and consider why he might have chosen to tell Grace his story. *What do we learn about his history? What do we learn about his character? Why do you think he wants to tell his story? Is it his vanity? Is he lonely? Is it his pride?*

The children might be interested to find out that there is a layer of truth behind the story that Justin Somper created for Sidorio's tale. Cilician pirates were a major problem in the Mediterranean during the period Sidorio describes and there is a story described in Plutarch's Life of Caesar which relates the kidnapping and ransoming of Julius Caesar by a group of those pirates. A version of it is summarised in this Encyclopaedia Britannica article: [www.britannica.com/story/the-time-julius-caesar-was-captured-by-pirates](http://www.britannica.com/story/the-time-julius-caesar-was-captured-by-pirates)

An extended version of Sidorio's story that gives more detail about how he crossed over as a vampire is included as a bonus at the end of the book as if it was an interview transcribed later by Grace Tempest.





## Chapter 34: The Stranger

After this chapter, children will likely be eager to move on and find out how the story finishes. You might briefly reflect on the unusual structure of the chapter and how the children felt about it. It's very different from the chapters that we've read so far, which have principally shown us the events from either Grace's or Connor's point of view. In this chapter, in the first section, Justin Somper chooses to hold back a lot of information about character and setting – 'the swimmer', 'the boy', 'the place'. Then in the second section, we're seeing things as Connor would see them which means 'the swimmer' is now referred to as 'the stranger' until finally in the last section of the chapter, he is revealed to be Sidorio and we see things from his point of view.

- *At what stage did they know who the swimmer/stranger was and where he was?*
- *Why do you think the author held back using names for so long?*
- *How did it feel to find out that your prediction was accurate?*
- *As we prepare to read the last chapter, how do you think the book will end?*



## Chapter 35: It Begins

Read the final chapter and then allow time for children to share their responses to how this story ends and to the book overall.

- *What are the children's initial responses to the way the story ends?*
- *Are you satisfied with the ending? Why? Why not?*
- *Did it end the way that you thought it was going to?*
- *What did you think might happen at different stages of the last chapter, for example, as Connor was running at Lorcan with his sword, when Darcy started ringing the bell, or when Bart boarded the ship to defend Connor?*
- *Will Grace discover that it was Sidorio who brought Connor to her?*
- *Do you think Grace should leave the Vampirates and join Connor, or vice versa? Or do you think they should stay aboard the separate boats?*
- *What has happened to Lorcan? Does Grace know that he is injured?*

Discuss how the children felt about the book overall and compare this to their initial expectations:

- *When you first saw this book, even before you read it, what kind of book did you think it was going to be? What made you think that?*
- *Now you've read it, is it as you expected?*
- *Have you read other books like it? How is this one the same? How is it different?*
- *When you were reading, did you 'see' the story happening in your imagination?*
- *Which details –which passages- helped you 'see' it best?*
- *Which passages stay in your mind most vividly?*
- *Who was your favourite character? Why?*
- *Whose point of view did you see the story from?*
- *Would you recommend this book to a friend?*
- *Would you be interested in reading further books in the series?*

Discuss the book in terms of how it serves as an introduction to the Vampirates series.

- *How do you feel about the final two sentences? “So it ends. So it begins.” What might the captain mean? What is ending and beginning?*
- *Does it make you want to read on and find out more?*
- *Have they read any other serialised stories like this?*
- *What would you expect from the different books in the overall arc? What might be revealed if we read more?*
- *Who do you think the characters are who will be important to the larger story?*
- *What has been left unresolved in this book?*
- *What might happen next?*
- *What mysteries do you still want to see resolved?*

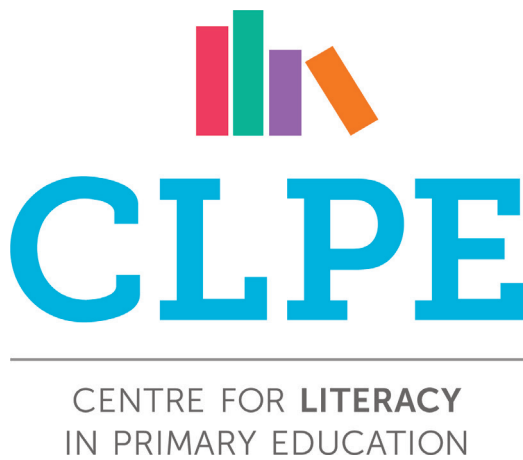
*Resources coming soon:  
Vampirates: Tide of Terror  
Vampirates: Blood Captain*



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# VAMPIRATES



*Grace'*

# VAMPIRATES



Connor

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Wu cheng Li



# VAMPIRATES



Lorcan



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*Molusso*

# VAMPIRATES



Sidorio