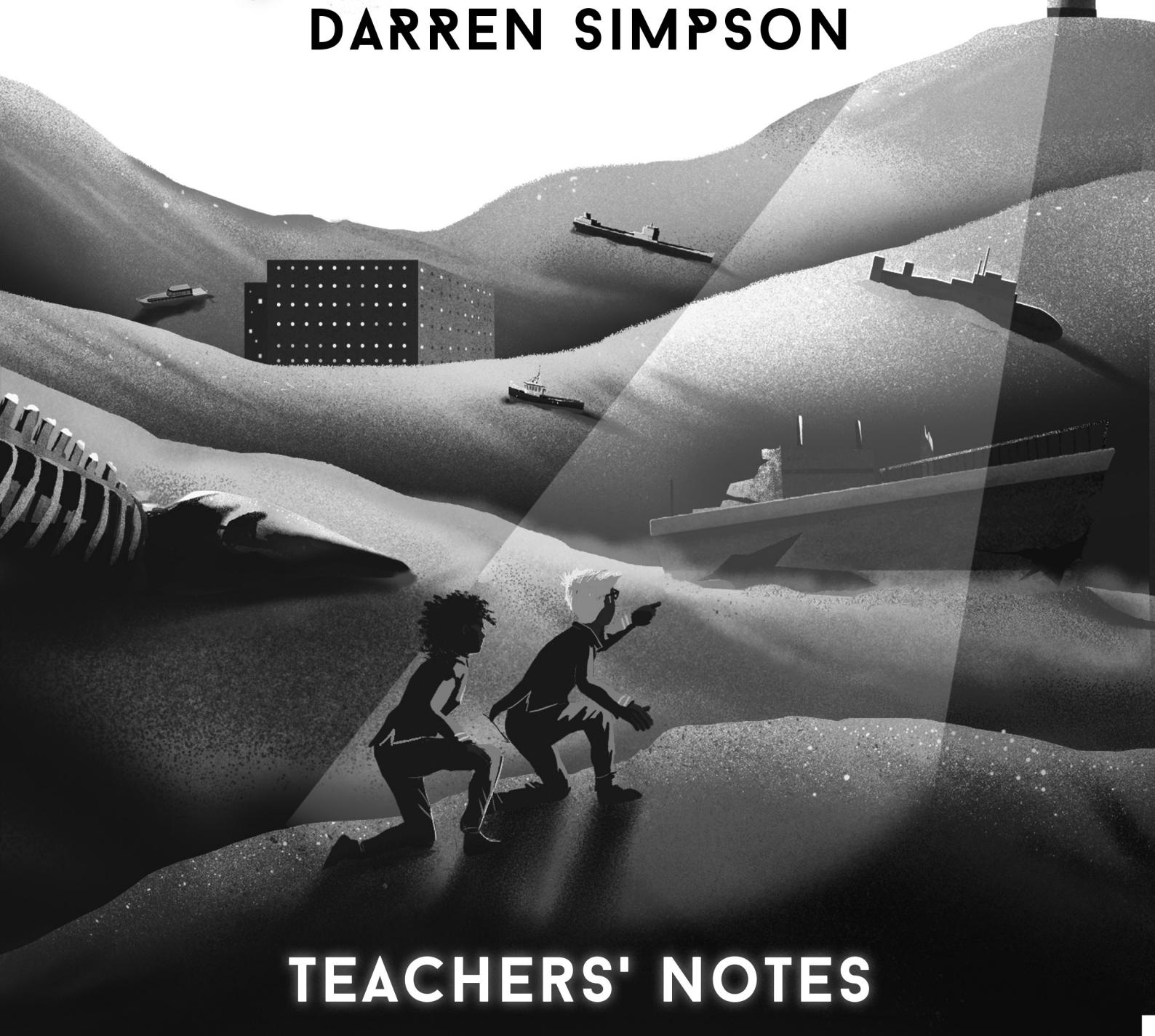


THE MEMORY THIEVES

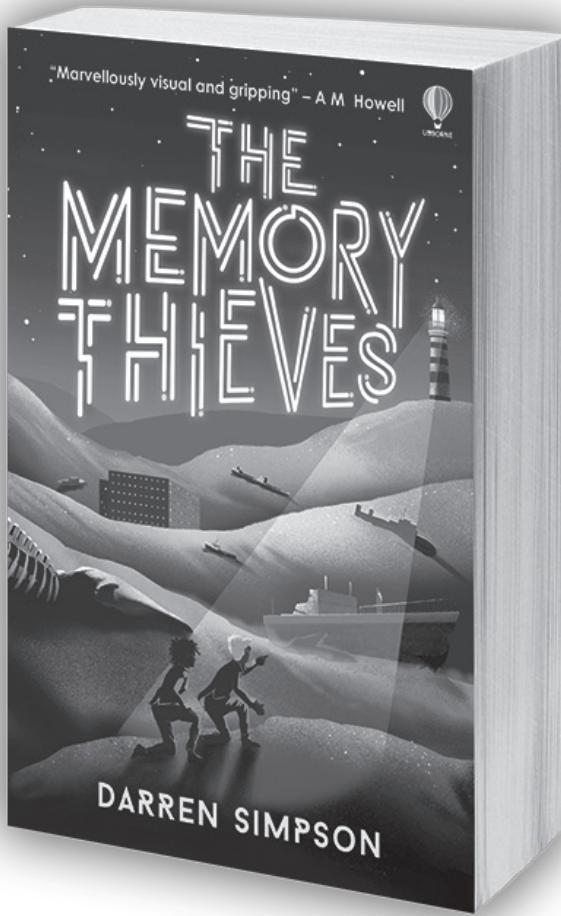
DARREN SIMPSON



TEACHERS' NOTES

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

THE MEMORY THIEVES



ABOUT THE BOOK

What you don't remember can't hurt you...

Cyan has lived at the Elsewhere sanctuary for as long as he can remember, freed by Dr Haven from dark memories of his past life. But when Cyan finds a mysterious warning carved into the bones of a whale skeleton, he starts to wonder what he had to forget to be so happy.

New resident, Jonquil, begins to resist the sanctuary's treatment, preferring to hold on to her memories - even the bad ones. So when Dr Haven resorts to harsher measures, Cyan embarks on a secret mission to discover the truth about the sanctuary... and himself.

TEACHERS' NOTES

A chapter-by-chapter exploration of *The Memory Thieves* aimed at KS3. Tasks include analysis, research and creative writing, and focus on text exploration, character exploration, key themes and key symbols.



WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

THE MEMORY THIEVES

TREATMENT PHASE A

DOSE 1 - TALL BONES

TEXT EXPLORATION

- What do you learn from the chapter heading? What do you think the word 'Dose' suggests? What about 'bones'?
- What does the setting suggest to you? Why do you think Darren Simpson chooses to set his book on an island?
- Cyan rides a quadbike rather than drive a car and new arrivals arrive via helicopter. What does this suggest to you?
- What do you think the message on the bone means? Where else is memory mentioned in the first chapter? What do you think happens to the residents of the island?

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

Create a character profile based on what you know about Cyan so far. You could include what he looks like, any friends he has, how he interacts with other characters, the age you think he might be, any interests you think he has. Include any quotes about him that you think are important.

CREATIVE TASKS

The setting is incredibly descriptive. Draw out what you think the island looks like and label your drawing with quotes from the chapter.

DOSE 2 - THE GRINDING DRAWER

TEXT EXPLORATION

- In this chapter we learn that all the characters are named after colours. Why do you think their names have been taken away from them? Do you think it's right that they have been renamed?
- What other colours are featured in this chapter? What do you think they suggest about the characters or the sanctuary?

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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CHARACTER EXPLORATION

- What do we learn about the girl? Create a character profile for her like the one you created for Cyan.
- What new information do we learn about Cyan? Did anything particularly surprise or shock you?

KEY THEMES

Time

- Why do you think none of the clocks at the sanctuary had hands?
- Why was Jonquil's watch taken away from her?
- What do you learn about time from Ms Ferryman?
- How would you feel if you didn't know what the time was?

KEY SYMBOLS

Locket

What is the purpose of the lockets? Do you think they have any functions that weren't mentioned by Ms Ferryman?

ANALYSIS TASKS

How does Darren Simpson create a sense of disorientation in this chapter? Write a paragraph to explain your answer including quotations from the text.

CREATIVE TASKS

Draw the sanctuary's emblem then write underneath what you think it represents.

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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DOSE 3 – THE LETHE METHOD AND DOSE 4 – THE STROBE CHAIR

TEXT EXPLORATION

- Jonquil is given pills to take without explanation of what she's taking and asked to sign something that she isn't able to read. What's wrong with this?
- Cyan says, "*It's not just time we don't do here. It's tears too.*" Do you think this is a healthy attitude to have?
- Dr Haven encourages Cyan to keep secrets to himself. Why do you think this is? Why don't you think he wants Cyan talking to the other residents?
- Dr Haven says, "*Words can't do justice to how advanced the Lethe Method is, to be able to target memories with such laser-like accuracy. It's this that allows us to remove unwanted memories while preserving the patient's understanding of the world – of who they are within it.*" What have you learned so far that suggests that this isn't true?

KEY SYMBOLS

What could the butterflies be a metaphor for?

ANALYSIS TASKS

How has Darren Simpson created Dr Haven to be a sinister character? Think of three examples from the text and write three paragraphs to explain them.

DOSE FIVE – BOOKS AND CHOCOLATE AND DOSE SIX – RECONFIGURATION

TEXT EXPLORATION

- All the rooms move around in a grid meaning that the residents need to use their lockets to navigate their way around. Why do you think this is? What impact does this have on the residents? How do you think the doctors would claim that this helps the residents?
- In the sanctuary there are 'go-zones' and 'no-zones'. What do you think the function of the 'no-zones' is?

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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KEY SYMBOLS

Books

- Cyan explains to Jonquil that there are certain books that each resident isn't allowed to read in case it triggers memories from their past. Do you think this is the real reason they aren't allowed free access to the books? What other books might the doctors not want them to read?
- Jonquil asks Cyan if the books make sense to him when he's forgotten about the world and the stuff that's in it and he says, "*So, all the stuff that's out there beyond the island – you know, countries, sports, animals, stuff like that – it's all still in here [...] But not in a way that's connected to our personal experience. It's sort of abstract, I guess. Detached.*" Do you think what's happening to the residents is right? Do you think they can ever leave the island if the world outside it is just abstract to them?

DOSE SEVEN – THE S WORD

TEXT EXPLORATION

- Why do you think the staff don't use their real names?
- Professor Vadasz tells Jonquil that the term shuffle suggests random movement while reconfiguration is exact and planned. If the movement is designed to disorientate the residents, why do you think it is planned rather than random?
- Cyan is ready to tell Teal and Ruby about the carving on the whale bone until he takes his pills. What happens when he takes the pills to change things?

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

What do you learn about Ruby and Teal in this chapter? Write down 3 different things you learn about each of them and include quotations if you can.

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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TREATMENT PHASE B

DOSE EIGHT – GET SET

TEXT EXPLORATION

Jonquil questions the setting of the sanctuary. What does she have doubts about? Do you think the sanctuary is really on an island?

KEY THEMES

Memories

Dr Haven calls Cyan in for strobe therapy. When Cyan questions if it's about making him forget about the whale bones, Dr Haven says, "*You know very well we can only touch memories from before residents arrive here.*" Is this true? What might make you think otherwise?

ANALYSIS TASKS

How does the sanctuary take a sense of identity away from its residents? Think of three different ways that the residents lose parts of their identity or are prevented from creating their own identity and use quotes to support your answer.

DOSE NINE – THE SERENITY

TEXT EXPLORATION

- What's unusual about the shipwreck of The Serenity compared to other shipwrecks you know about? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
- Why do you think Cyan doesn't tell his friends about what he discovered?
- When Jonquil asks Cyan if he and Ruby are boyfriend and girlfriend he says, "*The sanctuary doesn't have stuff like that.*" What do you think he means by this? Why wouldn't the sanctuary want the residents to form relationships?

CREATIVE TASKS

Write the story of what happened to the passengers of The Serenity.
Why were they never found?

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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DOSE TEN – DISCLOSURE

TEXT EXPLORATION

- What does Jonquil point out that's strange about the island?
- Jonquil wants to talk about her past but the others tell her she can't as it might compromise all their treatment. Do you think this is true? Do you think it's healthy to forget about the things that happened to you in the past?
- Cyan doesn't want Jonquil to talk about her past as "*He'd have to alert the sanctuary if Jonquil kept going.*" How does the sanctuary keep the residents under control?

ANALYSIS TASKS

How do you think Cyan, Ruby and Teal feel about how Jonquil is treated at the end of the chapter? Use quotes to support your answer.

DOSE ELEVEN – GREY OCEANS

TEXT EXPLORATION

- When Cyan tells Dr Haven that he feels like he betrayed Jonquil through running away from her, Dr Haven says, "*You helped her by discouraging what she was doing.*" Is running away from people helpful? What are they teaching the residents at the sanctuary?
- Dr Haven says, "*People usually don't know what they need, Cyan. They don't know what's best for them. That's why the world has doctors.*" Do you agree with this? What are the doctors at the sanctuary trying to stop the residents from doing?
- When Cyan asks Dr Haven why no-one has boyfriends or girlfriends, Dr Haven says, that they "*use special means to suppress such [...] urges.*" Why is this wrong?

KEY THEMES

Control

Make a list of all the ways that the sanctuary controls its residents using quotes from the text to support your answer.

CREATIVE TASKS

Write a letter to Dr Haven explaining why you think his treatment of Jonquil was unacceptable.



WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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DOSE TWELVE – CAT AND TONGUE

TEXT EXPLORATION

What do you think has happened to Jonquil?

DOSE THIRTEEN – SNUGS AND HOLLOWES

TEXT EXPLORATION

- We find out that most of the residents' bedrooms don't have windows. Why do you think this is? Do you think they seem more like bedrooms or something else?
- We also find out that residents aren't allowed pens and paper. Why do you think this is?

KEY SYMBOLS

The locket

Ruby explains to Cyan that the lockets are how the residents are tracked. What does this remind you of? Why do you think Cyan seems surprised by this?

RESEARCH TASKS

Research a prison and a sanctuary and write down the key rules or things you find out about them. Now create a venn diagram which contains prison, sanctuary and the Elsewhere sanctuary and use it to fill in the similarities and differences. Which two are most similar?

DOSE FOURTEEN – DUNE-LIGHT

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

When Cyan tries to tell Ruby that he thinks there's something that every resident is hiding and that he's concerned over whether their treatment is the right thing for them, she tells him he's being paranoid. Why do you think Ruby doesn't want to believe there's more going on at the sanctuary?

CREATIVE TASKS

Cyan and Ruby finally talk about some of the things that they've been feeling including Cyan's fear of fire and Ruby's feelings of emptiness. Imagine you are an agony aunt. What advice would you give to Cyan and Ruby to help them?

Imagine you are Ruby and you're thinking about what Cyan has said to you. Write a diary entry where you either dismiss what he thinks as ridiculous or you start to question things yourself.



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DOSE FIFTEEN – MUSTARD AND STARCH

TEXT EXPLORATION

This is the first time that we see the residents reacting against what is happening to them. What happens to the residents that won't take their pills? What does this teach them?

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

Using quotes from the text to support your answer, explain how you think Jonquil is feeling in this chapter and what she thinks about the people that work at the sanctuary.

ANALYSIS TASKS

Find examples of similes and metaphors in this chapter. What does Darren Simpson use them to show?

DOSE SIXTEEN – PINS

TEXT EXPLORATION

- When Cyan wakes up in strange surroundings he has lots of questions for Dr Haven and says that he has a right to know the answers to them, but Dr Haven replies saying: “*Actually, you don't. There are certain rights you signed away when you began your treatment. Not that you'll remember. But take my word for it: rights can be more damaging to people than they know. So, forget about why we're here and answer my questions.*” What's concerning about this answer?
- What do you think the basic human rights are? Write a list of the rights that you think every human should have. Do you think there are any cases where people don't deserve to have these rights?
- What do you think has happened to Jonquil?
- Why do you think Teal and Ruby didn't say anything to Dr Haven about her?

CREATIVE TASKS

Write a speech explaining why everyone deserves to have basic human rights.

RESEARCH TASKS

Does everyone in the world have basic human rights? Find examples of where people don't have basic human rights.



WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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DOSE SEVENTEEN – NEEDLES

TEXT EXPLORATION

- Cyan finds out that the sanctuary is a big experiment for Dr Haven and describes himself and the other residents as 'lab rats'. Do you agree with him? Where in history have we seen similar human experiments being done?
- What do we find out about the Lethe Method?
- Dr Haven claims that the residents agreed to the treatment, but were they of sound mind when they agreed to it? Is this a problem?

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

How is Dr Haven presented by Darren Simpson? Write three paragraphs to answer this question and use quotations to support your answer.

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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TREATMENT PHASE C

DOSE EIGHTEEN – AWAKENING

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

How is Ms Ferryman presented differently to Dr Haven?

DOSE NINETEEN – BRUISING TO BLUE

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

Do you think Ruby believes Cyan? Why do you think he chose to place his trust in her?

DOSE TWENTY – DEEPER AND DOSE TWENTY-ONE – WITHDRAWN

TEXT EXPLORATION

What do you learn about the way the sanctuary is run in this chapter? Note down your answer in bullet points.

ANALYSIS TASKS

How does Darren Simpson create a sense of danger in this chapter? Write three paragraphs to answer this question using quotes from the text to support your answer.

CREATIVE TASKS

Draw a map of the staff quarters of the sanctuary and label each room.
Write Cyan or Ruby's diary for these two chapters.

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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DOSE TWENTY-TWO – LAST ONE WHERE

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

Do you think Cyan and Ruby are doing the right thing by excluding Teal from what they're doing?

CREATIVE TASKS

Drama: In groups of 3 create an interview scene between Dr Haven and two orderlies about what happened that night. You should consider: Are the orderlies scared of Dr Haven? Do the orderlies suspect it was some of the residents? Are the orderlies going to tell the truth or try to cover up what happened?

DOSE TWENTY-THREE – SOMETIME-SOMEWHERE

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

- What is Cyan questioning now he's no longer on medication?
- What feelings does Cyan now have that he didn't before?

KEY THEMES

Control

- How is the sanctuary shown to be further controlling the residents at the start of this chapter?

DOSE TWENTY-FOUR – TICKLESS TOCKLESS

TEXT EXPLORATION

- How is a sense of lifelessness shown in the doctor's office?
- How does Dr Haven show that he wants all residents to be the same? Why is he suspicious of Ruby and Cyan?

KEY SYMBOLS

Time

- How is time (or the lack of it) used as a way to control the residents?



WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

THE MEMORY THIEVES

ANALYSIS TASKS

How does Darren Simpson show you how Ruby and Cyan are feeling? Use examples from the text to support your answer.

CREATIVE TASKS

Drama: As a class nominate one person to play the role of Dr Haven. The rest of the class will play the role of journalists and will interview Dr Haven on his controversial treatment methods.

DOSE TWENTY-FIVE – TINKERING

TEXT EXPLORATION

- Do you think the staff are controlled by Dr Haven too or do you think they're complicit in everything he's doing?
- What do you think Cyan has figured out?

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

What do you think about Ms Ferryman. Do you think she knows the truth about the sanctuary or not?

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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TREATMENT PHASE D

DOSE TWENTY-SIX – FOLLOWING DOTS AND DOSE TWENTY-SEVEN – CLIPS AND CODES

TEXT EXPLORATION

- What do you think each of the treatment phases mean? Who is issuing the treatment?
- What do you learn in these chapters?

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

How does Darren Simpson show the friendship between Ruby and Cyan?

DOSE TWENTY-EIGHT – DEEPER STILL

TEXT EXPLORATION

How does Darren Simpson make the reader feel in this chapter? Were you shocked by what Ruby and Cyan discovered?

ANALYSIS TASKS

- Which sense is used most by Cyan and Ruby in this chapter? Find examples from the text of how this sense seems heightened.
- How has Darren Simpson used similes and metaphors to convey a sense of being trapped? Find examples from the text.
- How does Darren Simpson build the tension as the chapter goes on?

CREATIVE TASKS

Pick one of the characters from the locked rooms. Using the senses, describe what they can hear, see, smell, taste and touch.

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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DOSE TWENTY-NINE – BAIT

TEXT EXPLORATION

Dr Haven tells Cyan that the other staff are not aware of what he's doing. He says that "*The staff don't ask questions. They're paid well not to.*" Do you think this makes them complicit in what he's doing?

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

Why do you think Dr Haven acts the way he does?

CREATIVE TASKS

Create a poster advertising the sanctuary to investors. What do you think they're told about the sanctuary? What are they not told?

DOSE THIRTY – A PARTING GIFT

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

What do Ruby's actions show you about her as a character?

ANALYSIS TASKS

How does Darren Simpson use senses to draw out Cyan's memories of the fire? Find examples of them from the text.

CREATIVE TASKS

Drama: In pairs, imagine Cyan has just arrived at the sanctuary – one plays the role of Cyan recounting what happened to him and the other the role of Dr Haven explaining how they can help him.

Leaving note: Write a note to Cyan's dad from Cyan explaining why he's run away.

Cyan's file: Create Cyan's file.

DOSE THIRTY-ONE – NO ZONE

TEXT EXPLORATION

Why do you think the orderlies didn't believe or help Cyan?



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ANALYSIS TASKS

How does Darren Simpson create a sense of panic in this chapter? Look at devices he uses and use examples from the text to support your answer.

DOSE THIRTY-TWO – HEARTBEAT

TEXT EXPLORATION

Do you think there's any hope for the residents Cyan frees?

CHARACTER EXPLORATION

Why do you think Teal believes Cyan straight away? Should Cyan have trusted him earlier? What does Teal teach us about bravery?

CREATIVE TASKS

Either:

Drama: Assign members of the class to be some of the freed residents with the rest of the class hot-seating them to find out how they feel, whether they understand what's happening to them and whether they remember anything of their life before.

OR

Creative writing: Choose a freed resident and write their diary entry from that day. Include how they feel, whether they understand what's happening to them and whether they remember anything of their life before.

DOSE THIRTY-THREE – GREY PARADE

TEXT EXPLORATION

- Why do you think some of the orderlies were so reluctant to believe what they saw? Why were some quicker to support Cyan than others?
- Were the orderlies complicit in any way in Dr Haven's crimes?

CREATIVE TASKS

Write a newspaper report about the scandal at the sanctuary or produce a news broadcast where residents and orderlies are interviewed about what happened and what they knew.

WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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RECOVERY PHASE A

STEP ONE – SALTWATER

TEXT EXPLORATION

- Why do you think there are military helicopters flying among the other helicopters?
- What do you think the sea represents at the end of the novel?

CREATIVE TASKS

Write a final chapter 3 months on – what happens to the characters?

POST READING

TEXT EXPLORATION

Class discussion:

- Who was your favourite character?
- What was your favourite moment?
- What was the turning point for you in the novel?
- When did you work out what was happening?
- Did anything about the book surprise you?
- Are there any other books you think are similar?

CREATIVE TASKS

- Each class member takes a different chapter heading and summarises what happens in that chapter in a continuous frame. Exploration could be through drama, a drawing, a summary sentence etc
- Pick a chapter title and use it as the inspiration for a short story
- Drama: Create the scene of Dr Haven being interviewed by the police
- Tell the story from Ms Ferryman's perspective

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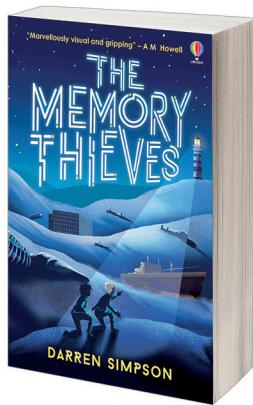
- Marketing activity: In small groups create a marketing campaign for this book. You need to consider what the target audience is and why you think they'll want to read it. You should come up with a hashtag and a strapline for the book. You might want to create a poster, a bookmark, a booktrailer, and a social media plan to promote this book
- Write a book review of *The Memory Thieves*

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think about the power of names in the novel. How might the residents be affected by having their real names replaced with colours? Do the names of the adult characters give any clues about their roles in the story?
2. “What you don’t know can’t hurt you.” Do you think this saying is true? Is it true for the characters in *The Memory Thieves*?
3. Look up the word “sanctuary” in a dictionary. Do you think the Elsewhere Sanctuary deserves its name? If not, what would you call it and why?
4. Look at the first three pages of the novel. How does Darren Simpson create a sense of place in *The Memory Thieves*? How does this help to prepare the reader for the story to come?
5. “We don’t do time here.” Why do you think Dr Haven has removed all sense of time from the residents of the Elsewhere Sanctuary? How do you think you would cope in a world where you never knew the time?
6. Think about the nautical references in *The Memory Thieves* – the anchor logo, the greeting “ahoy!”, the doffing of imaginary sailors’ hats, the Serenity. Why do you think the author has chosen to include these? Consider the significance of the ocean in the novel.
7. What do you think happens to Cyan and his friends after the end of the novel? How might they cope with going back to “the real world”, and learning about their pasts?



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WHAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER CAN'T HURT YOU...

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

8. How does the author portray the character of Dr Haven in *The Memory Thieves*? What do you think makes for a good villain in a story?
9. Look at the passage on pages 85-86, showing the memories Ruth McMurphy recorded on the Serenity. Why do you think she chose these details to write down? If you could only save a few memories, what would they be?
10. What genre, or mix of genres, best describes *The Memory Thieves*, and why?
11. Have you read Darren Simpson's author's note? In it, he explains that he wrote *The Memory Thieves* after a car accident made him realize the importance of talking about your problems. How does this theme appear in the novel?
12. "Can you imagine how much people will pay to have their worst memories removed?" If the Lethe Method was possible, do you think people would actually pay for it? Would you?
13. Other than strobe therapy and medication, what measures are used at the Sanctuary to disorientate residents? How do you think these things impact the children's memories?
14. Compare the first (pages 47-51) and last (pages 271-274) reconfigurations in the book. How does this turn from something that seems like a fun adventure, into something more sinister?
15. Turn to page 297, the very end of the novel, and reread the last page. How did you feel while reading this ending? Why do you think the author chose to end the story at this point?

