

Explore the Raven Treasure Box with Sita Brahmachari and Natalie Sirett

Find self-expression with *When Shadows Fall!*



Level:

S2–S5 / KS3–4

Explore themes of:

√ Friendship √ Family √ Hope √ Self-Expression √ Community √ Protecting the Natural World

Subject Checklist:

√ Expressive Arts √ English Language √ Social Studies √ Wellbeing and Health √ Creative Writing

Note to teachers: These books contain some material that may not be suitable for some students. We recommend that teachers read the books carefully before using it in the classroom or recommending it to students and/or seek parental guidance.

At a Glance

Before watching Sita and Natalie's event or reading the extract!

1. What does the word 'shadows' mean to you? What does it make you think of?
2. What connections can you find between the title and artwork?
3. Can you spot a tree and ravens on the cover? What might they represent or symbolise?

Book Cover Activity: Inside my Head . . .

There are many different ways to express yourself! Look at the cover of *When Shadows Fall*. Note down some inferences you can make about the central character's thoughts, feelings, and experiences from the artwork. Consider the following:

- *The use or lack of colour*
- *The contrast between light and darkness*
- *How the character has been illustrated*
- *Anything else you find interesting*

Reflect on how you are feeling today. What colours reflect your mood? What book title could express what it is inside your head? How would you express this in an illustration on a book cover?

Read the Extract

Taken from the illustration on page 6 and Prologue of 'When Shadows Fall'.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the story 'not going to be'? Why do you think Kai states this at the outset?
2. What is Kai's 'point in writing' his story? Who has he written it for?
3. How does the illustration on page 6 add to the Prologue and story? Do you notice any connections between it and the book cover?
4. On page 8, what do you think Kai means by, 'If you ever get sucked into the Shadowlands remember: no matter how bleak, seasons change'?
5. What is the significance of the Green Hill song? What is revealed about Kai's relationship with his dad on this page?
6. Who are Orla, Om, and Zak? What do you learn about them on pages 10–11?
7. What does Kai think is missing from his notebook on page 14? What does this reveal about the importance of friendship to him?
8. How does Kai describe looking back to 'when [they] were kids' at the end of the chapter? What do you think we will learn about his past?
9. What is interesting about the way Sita has structured these opening pages of the book? Can you pick any specific examples that stand out to you?
10. How have Sita and Natalie collaborated in the Prologue? What decisions and discussions might they have had in creating *When Shadows Fall*?



Sita Brahmachari & Natalie Sirett

Get to Know the Book!

The Theme of Community

Sita and Natalie's book is not only beautifully written and illustrated, but also encourages readers to tackle important questions about how to empathise and connect with one another in our communities, as well as how to protect the natural world.

- In *When Shadows Fall*, many of Kai's cherished memories with his dad and friends are from spending time in nature. Together, Kai's community form the GREENLANDS GUARDIANS campaign to save the Rec from urban development.
 - Discuss the following questions as a group:
 - *Why is it so important for communities to have access to nature?*
 - *How can being in nature support your mental and emotional wellbeing?*
 - *How might animals and creatures be affected if woodlands are destroyed?*
 - *How else could urban development negatively impact the environment?*
 - Use these ideas to design an eye-catching poster to raise awareness for the GREENLANDS GUARDIANS campaign and support Kai's community. Include some illustrations inspired by the text to make your poster stand out.
 - Finally, can you think of any natural spaces in your community that are under threat from development? Or perhaps as in *When Shadows Fall*, there is a neglected piece of land that could be transformed into a shared green space?
 - Write a letter to your local MP inspired by these issues, persuading them to do all they can to protect the natural world in your community.
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Your Turn: Creating your Own Artwork!

Expressing Yourself Through Art

The power of art enables the young people of 'When Shadows Fall' to find their voice and tell their story. Create your own artwork inspired by Natalie's incredible illustrations and the words 'When Shadows Fall'...

- Spend a few moments reflecting on what the line 'When Shadows Fall' means to you. Here are some ideas to get your imagination flowing:
 - *Finding hope after a difficult time in your life*
 - *A time your community came together*
 - *A natural space or animal(s) that are significant to you*
 - *A friend or family member who was there for you when you needed them*
 - *Finding your voice*

 - Draw your own artwork inspired by the words 'When Shadows Fall'. Think carefully about what you wish to express in your artwork and how you can do this through:
 - *Experimenting with different materials*
 - *Variations of light and shade*
 - *Using colour and blank space expressively*
 - *Drawing and writing with different pressures and thickness*
 - *Experimenting with how your text is structured*

 - Perform a 'Show and Tell' with a partner if you're happy to, asking one another about how you have expressed yourselves in your artwork. Can you contribute to each other's ideas and help with the creative process?
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Reflection and Further Questions

Reflection Activity

Think over all that you have learned. Perhaps you have been inspired to collaborate with a partner in a future artistic project? Or maybe you've thought of other ways to bring your community together and protect the environment. . .

Plan a trip to a natural space to use as inspiration for a piece of art. What kinds of wildlife might you expect to see there? Will your artwork be observational or abstract?

Lastly, do you have any final questions you would like to ask Sita and Natalie if you got the chance? Try to think of at least two and make a note of them.

Keep your eye out for more awesome books from Sita Brahmachari and Natalie Sirett, as well as the other authors and illustrators from the Edinburgh International Book Festival!



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