

I WAS
JUST A GIRL,
LOST
BETWEEN
WORLDS

R O G U E



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AUTHOR OF HIVE

Pan Macmillan Teachers' Notes



ROGUE



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Introduction

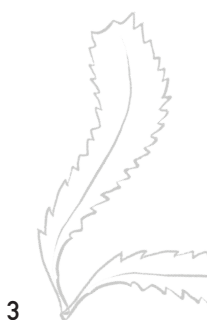
If I had words I would've said that I was just a girl from another world who'd been in the wrong place at the wrong time. A girl with a curiosity that wasn't welcome in that world. A girl who was given the option of a new life and took it, rather than live as a mad person. A girl like a rogue bee, who'd left her hive and gone in search of another. (pp 41–2)

In *Rogue*, the sequel to *Hive*, Hayley has escaped a closed society and reached the world above. She's travelled the ocean via a capsule and landed on Maria Island on 16 January 2119. But she has no idea what sort of world she has found. Hayley is a fifteen-year-old former beekeeper whose realm had been the garden in an enclosed, self-sufficient community, where people were assigned positions such as engineer, kitchener, gardener, seeder and netter. In that world, referred to later as 'the vault', growlights determined the pattern of days, designated plants were nurtured, and some seeds were stored for a possible future. Down there, Hayley had no words for wind or rain, ocean or birds, but up here these things are visible and she needs to learn a new vocabulary.

Maria Island is largely deserted, populated by flora and fauna mostly unfamiliar to Hayley. She is soon 'discovered' by a boy called 'Kid' and taken to a house which is also occupied by an old woman, Gigi, an old man known as Pop, and a girl named Petra who is Kid's older sister. They explain that they are caretakers who must alert the authorities if any illegal drifters arrive. Drones monitor the skies for these unwanted visitors as well.

The family soon discovers that Hayley's arrival has been undetected by drones. 'Let's just say you're special.' (p 61) Her specialness puts her in danger, particularly from a man named Buckley who she later encounters on the main island of Tasmania (now known as 'Terrafirma'). She must flee into the forest where she meets a trader named Jarod who helps her escape. Before she reaches the mainland, she discovers Will, her friend from the vault, but they are both captured by drones and processed separately as refugees. Later, two scientists who desire Hayley's blood help her escape the facility, before she again encounters Jarod. Secrets and past histories emerge as stories unravel and Hayley is shocked to discover that Will has been up to Terrafirma twice before but loses his memory after each visit. She is also devastated when she discovers that he intends to return home to the vault. Before he can do so, a catastrophic event destroys the vault below. The novel ends with Hayley discovering that the members of her former community are actually safe on Maria Island due to a message sent from Kid.

Rogue is a novel which examines notions of choice and home. Is the 'vault' under the ocean a prison or a refuge? Is the supposedly free world above *really* free? This dystopian fiction is a treatise on freedom and responsibility; the power of memory and history; and the rights of people to live in a society of their own choosing. Hayley is an everyman figure seeking a better life.



Themes


Future Worlds

Key Quote: Pop sat back a little, thinking of the best way to explain. ‘Only one family can live on Maria. We’re legals: me, Gigi, Petra and Kid.’ He paused again as if recalling something forgotten. ‘Legals?’ I asked, prompting him to go on. ‘It means we’re allowed to be here. More to the point, we’re obliged to be here, because it’s our job. We’re the caretakers, see? We take care of the borders. Look,’ he said as he removed two items from his shirt pocket. ‘This is called a radar. It detects drifters. And this thing here is the alert. When I press it, drones come to collect the drifters and carry them away.’ (p 58)

Discussion Point: In this future world the truth gradually reveals itself through the central protagonist’s eyes. Would you categorise this future Australia as ‘dystopian’? What about inside of the vault? How else might these worlds be defined?

Discussion Point: This and the previous novel *Hive* describe a society which has come about due to some past catastrophe. Creating these worlds in fiction relies on establishing details as to how people live in such imagined environments and the rules by which they operate. In *Rogue*, some of the details are:

- ‘Birds’, Kid mouthed to me. I looked up in awe. Birds were real? In my old world, ‘bird’ was just a word for describing a map – a *bird’s-eye view* – and nothing more. They didn’t even exist in stories, in the way of mythical creatures, like dragons and cows’ (pp 63–4)
- Drones monitor movement and LDVs listen in to human soundwaves in search of ‘drifters’ who if discovered are taken into captivity on Terraferma, a large island west of Maria Island.
- Terraferma was the island assigned to drifters, I remembered. It was to the left of here. West. I hadn’t suspected it would be close enough to see. ‘Is it really bigger than Maria Island?’ Kid laughed out loud, before remembering that Gigi was sleeping inside. ‘It’s *heaps* bigger! Nearly six-hundred times the size. Gigi’s mum grew up on Terraferma, but back then it was called Tasmania. That was before the handover, when the government turned it into an island for drifters because there were too many to keep turning away.’ (p 74)
- ‘She’s not a drifter!’ Kid said. ‘She’s so pale. Besides, no drones came for her.’ *Drones?* I wondered if I’d misheard. Drones were the male bees in a hive. Why should bees come for me? (p 40)
- ‘And no-one calls it Australia anymore – just the mainland.’ (p 81)
- He was good at explaining the old days, and he used pictures in encyclopaedias to help describe extinct things, like cars and planes and rockets. Many animals were extinct too, such as monkeys (not just a nickname for a



boy but a longlimbed, hairy creature) and cows (which weren't merely mythical beasts from the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, but real things, fat and brown). Tasmanian tigers were once extinct, Pop said, but were now alive, as were geckos. It baffled me, this coming and going of things. (p 82)

- 'I believe the scientists tried,' Pop said. 'But the cloned ones kept going rogue. They didn't understand how to work as a hive – that part of the DNA doesn't get passed down.' (pp 84–5)
- 'Losing the internet was the worst of it,' Gigi went on, 'because it meant there was no access to money. Everyone was suddenly the same kind of poor.' (p 88)
- 'There used to be hundreds of seed vaults in the old days. Didn't there, Gigi? Even in the 1900s. Some were called doomsday vaults, and they were built to protect seeds in case anything bad happened. Some were kept secret in caves or underground so they wouldn't be attacked.' (p 92)
- What unsettled me most about her story was that my old world had been a mistake. The first generation – that boatload of nervous people – was only supposed to stay under the water until the threat had passed, then resurface when they received the signal. They weren't supposed to keep on living inside, producing generation after generation, for almost a century. (p 95)
- 'Your id means your identity: your blood history and genes. It's your DNA in a snapshot, *compréndé*? Everyone's is unique; like a fingerprint in the blood. They must've been introduced after your boat people went down in 2020.' (p 125)
- 'They're long gone. There've been no bees anywhere since . . .' 'The early thirties,' I said, repeating what Pop had said. 'Yeah. More than eighty years. All that's left are a couple types of wasps, and the butterflies you see on Terrafirma.' 'So how do the plants on the mainland' – 'What plants?' Jarod said, before looking up to the sky. (p 192)
- But in this world, blood was significant and weighted with codes. It was the reason drones came for drifters; the reason Petra and her family were restricted to Maria Island. Jarod had told me codes could trigger alarms in invisible fences that would make a person's blood turn on them if they ventured where they shouldn't. (p 235)
- 'A marion is a kind of a . . . doll. There used to be thousands of them, with all kinds of . . . functions. Most got scrapped when the laws changed, but the government decided to salvage some and repurpose them for the centres. Each one has its own personality, but generally they're friendly, unassuming, flattering: perfect interrogators.' (pp 269–70)

- ‘Not many do. WilsonU92s used to be a popular brand of compact fission reactors – they could power a small city for twenty years or more. But with the Slovakian fallout of 2042 and the end of uranium, Wilsons became obsolete. Antiques.’ (p 293)

Discussion Point: What other details suggest this world might be dystopian?

Discussion Point: This new world is evoked in contrast to Hayley’s previous world:

Time behaved differently in this world. I didn’t know what I was supposed to do with it. There were no coloured growlights to signal when to eat, work, rest or sleep. There were no morning meetings to allocate jobs. No bath-time rituals. No prayers, and though I still felt the impulse, I wasn’t sure what to pray for here. If there was a god in this world, I couldn’t tell if it was the same one I’d known – a god who watched over us all and appraised our faith and virtues – or another. Here, no-one spoke of Him. God’s rules didn’t determine how they behaved or worked, and yet, somehow, these four people knew exactly what to do. I could hear them through the walls as they came and went in their own rhythms. (p 42)

Hayley is also used to her subterranean world where plants were manufactured and the water source came from above: So much baffled me, including a stick on the stony path ahead that wriggled as if alive. Was it really a stick? Or was there a kind of magic in this world? (p 33) How else has contrast been used in this novel? Consider its differences both to the vault, and also to our own world.

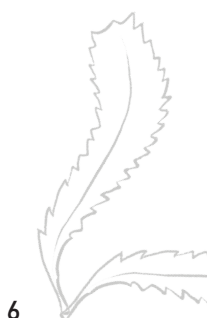
Discussion Point: This isolated island is an outpost of civilisation. Would you like to live as Pop, Gigi, Petra and Kid do?

Discussion Point: Various forms of power and control are used to coerce people into good behaviour in this society. One is the threat of ‘the other’. So-called ‘drifters’ are feared in this place. Discuss the treatment of the outsider in this novel.

Discussion Point: At the end of *Hive*, Hayley chooses an unknown ‘outside’ over the safety of the vault. Similarly in *Rogue*, she chooses to venture beyond the safety of Maria Island into the unknown forests of Terrafirma, then the arid landscape of Australia. Can you think of other films/books in which the protagonist must make a similar choice as Hayley does, between a safe world and the unknown?

Discussion Point: Pop and Gigi have accepted their roles as ‘caretakers’. Why do they not question the situation in which they live? Can you think of ways this might relate to contemporary life? Give examples of ways in which we do not question what we consider to be ‘normal life’?

Discussion Point: We are told that several catastrophic events have occurred and that as a result this society has developed forms of technology designed to track and interrogate people. Is this novel hopeful about human beings’ ability to use technology for good purposes rather than evil ones?



Morality and Values

Key Quote: ‘Thank you,’ I said. He did care, and not just for blood or treasure. He was a person who – like me and Will – was doing what he thought was best. (p 311)

Discussion Point: The action in this (and the previous novel) is punctuated by decisions and choices which could provoke a broad discussion of values. What is truth? What is honesty? Are there times when lying is necessary for the greater good?

Discussion Point: ‘Was it really up to Will to decide what was best for the others? Didn’t those people deserve a choice too?’ (p 330) Was Will right to decide what was best for the others? When is taking responsibility for others an act of control rather than guidance, or protection?

Discussion Point: What scene did you find most morally ambiguous?

Rite of Passage or Initiation into Adulthood

Key Quote: I wasn’t a gardener anymore. I wasn’t the keeper of bees. I wasn’t a friend to Celia or the ally of a boy with whom I shared secrets. I understood that I no longer belonged to that place. But nor did I belong to this one. I was just a girl, lost between worlds. (p 47)

Discussion Point: Hayley has to make adult choices in this novel, such as leaving the new family she has discovered to set off into a frightening wilderness with only two wild dogs for company. In what other emotional and intellectual ways does she develop into an adult in this novel?


Discussion Point: Are any of the other characters experiencing a rite of passage? How is this novel about maturation?

Climate Change

Key Quote: ‘Famine means hunger,’ she told me softly. ‘There’d always been famine before then, but usually somewhere else. Scientists kept saying a big one was coming because of the changing weather, but the government kept burning coal despite students marching in the streets. The authorities maintained there were more immediate problems to deal with: China, North Korea, Russia. No-one suspected how quickly the climate would change, or how wide the famine would spread.’ (p 85)

Discussion Point: When Hayley reaches the mainland she is shocked to discover its terrain: And then there was only land, studded with waxen shrubs but otherwise bare. There was no green of forest. No huts. Not even an animal. It wasn’t the orange of Kid’s atlas, but faded rectangles of dusty greys and browns. Ugly disappointment. If this was the mainland, where were the thriving, thrilling cities of Petra’s memories? (p 226) How does this relate to land degradation today?





Discussion Point: Hayley has a recurring dream in which she imagines the vault being flooded. ‘No-one could stop the ocean: not engineers or netters, teachers or priest, seeders or gardeners, the judge or the council. There was chaos. Water flooded the ways, then the houses. I saw it pour into the garden, where it swallowed the crops and hydrostacks, and knocked down trellises. Even the trees snapped with the might of the deluge. There were no screams anymore, only the roar of water, and among the swirling, gasping faces, I found Celia’s. She was so close, I could smell her strawberry breath.’ (p 9) Do you interpret this dream as a fear? A prophesy? Or as a metaphor for contemporary oceanic disasters?

Discussion Point: How much are the events in these two novels metaphors for global climate change?

Discussion Point: What other details in this novel refer to climate change?

Communities and Societies

Key Quote: ‘They reduced his wiki-access and shortened his walking privileges. It was humiliating. I tried to reason with them but Human Resources aren’t exactly open to conversation.’ (p 203)

Discussion Point: The vault was ruled by unseen forces, as is the world Hayley encounters above the ocean. Do all societies rely on control in order to prevent chaos? How much control is too little or too much?

Discussion Point: Unlike the vault, this new world has no obvious leaders. Does this make it more sinister? What hints are there to who or what leads or governs this society?

Friendship and Love

Key Quote: ‘Does it hurt?’ I asked. ‘The transfusion?’ ‘Love.’ ‘So much.’ She looked down at her bag. ‘It makes you do stupid things. Like this. Love’s a bitch.’ She turned her face too late to hide the brimming tears. ‘But what else is there?’ (pp 281–2)

Discussion Point: Hayley confesses her feelings for Will to Petra: **Will, for me, was like Dexter for her: only for remembering.** (p 141) Is remembering enough to maintain and fuel a love?

Discussion Point: Owen and Dee need Hayley’s blood to live as partners. **Love was stronger than blood-laws. Love risked everything for the chance to start again. Love was desperate and reckless.** (p 268) Is this statement generally true of love?

Discussion Point: **Love was blind, he said. Love was ridiculous, she said. Love was the best story. And the worst. And it had no guarantee of a happy ending.** (p 287) Discuss what this statement suggests.

Discussion Point: ‘No. Well, yes. They’re just letters, okay? They’re messages.’ ‘Messages of what?’ ‘Love,’ he said, flinching as a dog almost struck him with a paw. ‘I trade love.’ (p 170) Jarod’s work is one of the most enigmatic aspects of this novel. It suggests that even in the most distressed societies there is an overwhelming need for love. Discuss.

The Power of Memory and History

Key Quote: ‘Cos if you don’t know your history, how can you know what’s valuable?’ (p 117)

Discussion Point: ‘Will had forgotten. He’d been *made to forget.*’ (p 318) This novel suggests that many societies are left bereft by the loss of personal and community history. Discuss.

Discussion Point: ‘For I was a girl stepped out of history. I was myth embodied. I was a living secret.’ (p 144) Hayley’s life has been one of secrets. She has no idea where the vault lies, or what the purpose of her world really was. How difficult is it to hold onto your identity when you can’t trust your beliefs or memories?

Women

Key Quote: ‘There, there,’ said the old woman as she stroked my hair. ‘There, there.’ The comforting words of an aunt. How do women, regardless of which world they come from, know to say this? (p 37)

Discussion Point: Gigi has something of the qualities of the ‘wise woman or sage’ about her. Hayley is the central character and plays the role of young adventurer or warrior. Discuss the role played by these two female tropes in this novel.

Discussion Point: ‘You didn’t, because there aren’t any. There’s room for all, except breeders. When you get processed and accept the conditions of refuge, you agree to give up your gods then you swallow a pill. You’re safe, sure, but you’re made sterile.’ (p 272) Interfering with fertility is another form of social control of women. It features in several works of dystopian fiction notably Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985). Discuss this in relation to both this novel and other dystopian fictions.

Refugees

Key Quote: ‘You think you can just waltz in and out of whichever countries you fancy, spreading whatever viruses or religions you’re harbouring?’ (p 247)

Discussion Point: In Chapter 18, Hayley finds herself in the Geelong Processing Centre which has eerie similarities to the processing of asylum seekers today, and also of past historical injustices. She is delivered by a drone, showered and given an injection to make her sleep. The movie she is shown (Ch 19) is a form of brainwashing. Discuss the ethics of treating people so inhumanely when all they are seeking is a better life.

Discussion Point: Recent events in Australia's government policy would suggest that this is a thinly veiled account of our own regime.

Discussion Point: 'No it's different, Hayley. They're drifters, they're . . . refugees. And they come in boats, many at a time, because they don't have a home anymore – or not a home that's safe.' Then they are like me, I thought. 'They've got radars to look for land,' Pop continued, 'but Maria Island – and the other small islands like Bruny, King, Flinders – don't show up on their screens. There's kind of a . . . shield around us that keeps us hidden.' 'Camouflaged?' I asked.' (p 59) Hayley realises that she, too, is a refugee. How important is this sort of revelation? Is empathy the answer to such problems?

Religion

Key Quote: She rolled her eyes. 'Heaven, hell, Disneyland, who cares? When the governments banned planes and bullets, they got rid of the gods too. Didn't you hear? No more buddha, Jesus, Allah, or tooth fairy.' (p 68)

Discussion Point: Petra had said there was no god in this entire world, but how could she know if she'd only ever seen the mainland and Maria Island? If this world was as huge as Kid said, then how could anyone know what was possible? It made sense to me that there was a god, for someone must've imagined this world and built its rivers and forests, animals and people. There had to be someone who cared enough to make it, and cared for it still. (p 75) Hayley's world view was previously driven by a fierce devotion to an unknown God-like being. How does arriving in this new world alter that view?

Discussion Point: What other aspects of religion are explored in this novel?

Freedom and Responsibility

Key Quote: Where should I go? Where shouldn't I go? I went as the tiger went, slipping into forest and freedom. (p 158)

Discussion Point: Hayley begins her journey with the idea that she is free from the shackles of her past. But the wilderness she discovers is equally conflicted. Here she has to make decisions. Where does she find guidance? How does she decide what to do?

Discussion Point: *What if home isn't behind me, in my past, I wondered, but somewhere in front of me, still waiting? What if home is everywhere I've never been? There was no choice: for the family, or for me.* (p 150) Discuss what 'home' means for Hayley, and how her search for it influences her actions.

Plot & Structure

1. The Dystopian fiction genre adheres to certain conventions.

Activity: Study these conventions and then analyse this text in relation to them,

identifying tropes and features which are common to such fictions. [See **Further Reading.**] Do you consider *Rogue* to be a work of dystopia?

2. The novel is structured with a **Prologue** followed by **twenty-seven chapters**.

Discussion Point: What is the purpose of the prologue? How does the prologue prepare the reader for what follows?

3. **Tension or suspense is essential to a novel's structure** and here is created by gradually revealing answers to several questions posed at the beginning.

Discussion Point: **I shot him in the leg. He swung round, grabbed his calf, then glared at me. 'Hayley – what the hell?' The dogs yelped. Then I shot him in the chest. His body twisted, and was caught by ferns. I'd never told him my name.** (p 197)

This scene, in which Hayley stuns Jarod with her gun, is shockingly unexpected. But his use of her name is the key suspenseful aspect of it. Are there questions unanswered in this novel? What are they? Discuss.

4. **Pacing a Story** to achieve minor and major climaxes is integral to a novel's structure. Each chapter begins with a tempting statement, for example: **Everything has a price. This was Buckley's favourite lesson.** (Ch 10, p 127) Each chapter ends with a cliff hanger, for example, **We all needed something to believe in.** (Ch 6, p 80) OR **That's when I heard the splash.** (Ch 12, p 162)

Discussion Point: In what other ways is pacing achieved in this story?

5. The events which make up the **plot** of a novel trace a **narrative arc** which describes characters and themes.

Discussion Point: Research the plot structure of the archetypal 'hero's journey', as first described by Joseph Campbell. In what ways does the narrative of *Rogue* conform to or contradict the dramatic plot structure?

Characters

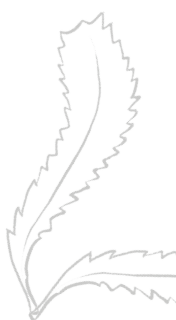
Action in this novel revolves around several major characters and a cast of minor characters.

1. **The major characters** are Hayley (narrator), Kid (her new friend), Gigi, Petra, and Pop; Will (the judge's son); and Jarod, the trader of messages.

Discussion Point: The novel is told from Hayley's point of view. How does that direct the reader's attention?

Discussion Point: Hayley initially mistakes Jarod for Will. How are they similar and how are they different?

2. **A cast of other minor characters are mentioned, although many are never fully described:** Buckley; Karen, Lany and Imogen (three processing officers); Dee and Owen, (the pathologist and tech guy who are lovers).



Discussion Point: Which of the minor characters is most intriguing and why?

3. Writers generally create a **mixture of characters, some intended to evoke sympathy in the reader, and others not to**. Others defy categorisation and their motives remain obscure.

Discussion Point: Which characters did you have sympathy for and why? Which ones were unsympathetic? Were there any 'minor' characters you would have liked more information about?

4. **Dialogue** can also add to the characterisation established by direct descriptions of characters, for example, **'It's only rain,' Petra said. She was gripping the broom handle while she watched me, unimpressed. 'What does it want?' 'What does it want?' Petra repeated, exasperated. 'For God's sake, are you serious?' It shocked me – God's name should only be spoken with reverence and gratitude, and I told her so. 'Why?' Water dripped onto her nose. She didn't wipe it away. 'Because God hears all,' I explained. 'Is that so?' Petra leaned against the broom handle, tilted back her head, then called up at the leafy canopy. 'God! Can you hear me? Yes? Oh good. Now that I have your attention, can you please stop the trumping rain?'** (p 68)

Discussion Point: What does this passage reveal about Petra and Hayley? Choose another passage of dialogue and discuss what it reveals about the characters.

5. **Characters in novels can be dynamic or static.**

Discussion Point: Is Kid a dynamic or a static character? (Consult definitions of such types to answer this question, and use examples from the text.)

Style and Use of Language

1. The prologue, chapters and epilogue are written in **first person singular, in past tense**.

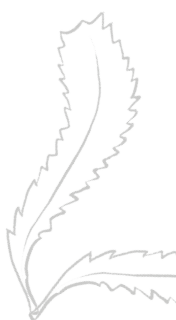
Activity: Re-write a small section of the narrative in present tense. How does this alter the narrative?

Activity: This narrative could also have been written in another voice. Choose a passage and rewrite it from Kid's perspective.

2. **Voice** is created by a range of devices including syntax and choice of words, use of language, etc.

Activity: Read a passage and analyse how it works. What makes Hayley's narrative voice distinctive?

3. **Literary Devices** are frequently used as description in this novel, eg. **Blue was everywhere – above and below. It made my eyes ache to see so much blue. So much space! This world was bigger than a hundred of my old ones. Bigger even than**



that. I was giddy with the expanse of it. (p 24)

Activity: Find examples of metaphor, simile, alliteration, personification and other devices in this novel. For example:

Personification: It could slink in with a shy, soft drizzle, or announce itself with the playful pattering of a child. It might sweep sideways on a stinging wind, or fall in fat, heavy plops that soaked our clothes and clung to our skin. Some days it arrived as a violent, pounding deluge that forced us to open the doors so water could rush from the house. (p 67)

4. Words and word play are explored in this text to cement the idea that words have power; that naming things makes them real. It also suggests the ambiguous nature of stories or histories. For example, when Karen, the marion, is speaking to Hayley: 'Just a smidge. Shall we play a game while we wait? UNO?' 'No.' 'Oh.' (p 235)

Many of the things which Jarod says to Hayley are also riddle-like since she isn't familiar with colloquialisms in this world.

Discussion Point: What other examples of word play did you find particularly poignant?

5. Humour is another device used by this writer to deal with serious themes, for example, Trade was the only system that mattered, he told me, since the end of Amazon, and I don't mean the river.' (p 127) OR 'I'm coming,' I grumbled. 'So's Christmas.' Christmas? I swung around, fearing a man called Christmas was stalking us. I scanned the trees but saw no-one. I turned back to see that Jarod, surprisingly, was smiling. 'It's just a saying. There's no such thing as Christmas anymore.' 'Is it extinct too?' He considered it. 'I guess so.' (p 189)

Discussion Point: Find other examples of humour and discuss how and why it has been created.

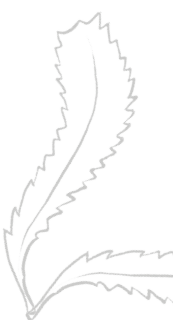
Setting

1. **Setting** in a dystopian world must be suggested gradually by statements which are teasing hints that all is not quite as we might expect it to be in a 'real' world.

Discussion Point: What statements were particularly suggestive of an alternative world?

2. The **setting** in this novel contains descriptions of the untamed Maria Island and later the arid mainland. As these are real places imagined in a distant future, the writer fills her novel with both recognisable and imagined details.

Activity: Identify any details in this imagined setting which relate to our own.



3. This novel is set in a **futuristic time period**. Gigi tells Hayley that it is the 16th January 2119, and that she's on Maria Island (p 45). Another reference is made here: 'Well, you're early. Wasn't expecting you to swing by for another . . . fifteen years.' He'd said it like a riddle. Not understanding, I looked to the door. Where were Pop and Petra? 'Halley's Comet,' he explained. 'Due in 2134. You didn't know that? Your own namesake?' (pp 116–7) The year 2020 is also referred to several times as a significant date in the past which resulted in this present situation.

Discussion Point: This is exactly one hundred years from now. What is the novelist suggesting in setting this novel so precisely in terms of time?

4. **Place is evoked by beautiful description**. John Marsden in *Everything I Know About Writing* (Pan Macmillan, 1992) reminds writers to use detail in describing setting (p 113) and words which appeal to all the senses (pp 121–126); to describe what can be seen, felt, heard, touched, smelt etc.

Discussion Point: Find examples in which A.J. Betts achieves this.

5. Settings evoke **moods and atmosphere**.

Discussion Point: Find particular passages which describe place. What mood do these descriptions convey?

6. We learn that Hayley's former world was actually a functioning seed vault which was turned into a bunker following a catastrophic event in 2020.

Discussion Point: What do you know about seed vaults around the world? Why do you think the writer chose to use one as a setting? How does this aid or stretch the believability of the duology?

Writing Exercises

1. **Titles** of books are designed to intrigue and entice. One word titles can be especially intriguing.

Discussion Point: What did this title suggest to you before/after you read the novel? What other title might the novel have had?

2. The **Packaging of a Book** includes the **cover and blurb** which must offer the reader an insight into the contents without giving the ending away.

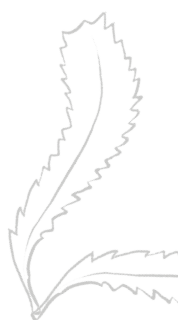
Activity: Assess this cover and then design your own cover in any medium. Write your own back cover blurb.

3. This novel contains many dramatic scenes.

Activity: **Write the script** for any of the scenes with a view to the scene being filmed.

4. Hayley describes her meeting with Jarod.

Activity: Re-write this as a **diary account** from Jarod's perspective.



5. This book is a **sequel**. There are no further sequels planned. However, if there were to be a sequel, imagine what might take place in it.

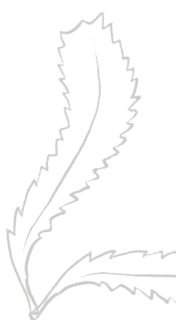
Activity: Write your own imagined synopsis or blurb for such a sequel.

Questions for Discussion after Reading the Novel

1. The new community Hayley discovers is not a commune but rather a segregated society of the powerful and the powerless. How does it compare to societies in our contemporary world?
2. **A greater mistake now would be to tell them the truth. It would be too cruel to show them the atlas and point out their smallness. It would trivialise everything they've done and believed in. It would mock their prayers and hard work.** (pp 99–100) Is it sometimes kinder not to reveal the truth?
3. Read Petra and Buckley's contrasting views of cities (pp 187–9) and discuss.
4. **I belonged to the terrestrial world now, despite its not-girls and blood-laws and other things I didn't understand. The whims of this world's moody ways would always appeal to me more than the false comforts of the other.** (p 285) Is it human nature to seek uncertainties and disorder in life, rather than settling for predictable peace?
5. Technology is a significant topic in this novel. The marions at the processing centre are one example; the drones and dogs are another; the blood testing regime is a further example. What does the novelist suggest about the ethics of using such technology?

Further Reading Ideas for Class Discussion

1. Classic works of Dystopian fiction include Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (HarperPerennial, 2006, 1984); George Orwell's *1984* (Signet Classics, 1950); and Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (Penguin Classics, 2011, 1962). Read these and other works of contemporary Dystopian fiction and compare to *Rogue* and *Hive*, for example, James Bradley's *Clade* (Penguin, 2015); Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (Knopf, 2006); Robert Swindell's *Brother in the Land* (Puffin, 1984); Isabelle Carmody's *Scatterlings* (Scholastic, 1995, 1991); Kirsty Murray *Vulture's Gate* (Allen & Unwin, 2009); Mark Smith's *The Road to Winter* (Text, 2017); Mark Smith's *Wilder Country* (Text, 2018); Mark Smith's *Land of Fences* (2019) ; Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (Scholastic, 2008–2010); Lois Lowry's *The Giver Quartet Boxed Set* (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2014); Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies Pretties Specials Extras Boxed Set* (Simon Pulse, 2012); Philip Reeves' *Mortal Engines* (2001) and sequels; M.T. Anderson's *Feed* (2002); Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) (and sequels).
2. The novel and its prequel are peppered with references to traditional stories and fairy tales, such as the trope of a journey fraught by obstacles; of wild dogs protecting a protagonist **'or the classic tale of *Romeo and Juliet*'** (p 248) which is referred to in relation to Will and Hayley, and Owen and Dee. Petra says at one point to Hayley: **'Says the girl from the fairytale.'** (p 124) What other classic tale tropes did you observe in



this novel? For example: ‘Or maybe, I thought, I was here so I would find Will and rescue him – just as he had rescued me.’ (p 218) What role does the trope of transformation or rescue play in this novel? Will’s letter (p 301) is similar to many notes in classical tales which often mislead and result in complications in the action; he writes that he is returning to the vault, but Hayley wonders if he is telling the truth? What other notes or documents in this novel are catalysts for plot developments?

3. Compare this novel to its prequel *Hive*.

4. Read some of A.J. Betts’s other novels and discuss ways *Rogue* is different – and similar – to these.

5. For further insights, read essays and interviews with A.J. Betts:

‘In the Writers Room with AJ Betts’s with Claire Nichols ABC The Book Show 10 July 2018

<<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/the-book-show/writers-room:-aj-betts/9898240>>

Niewenhuizen, Agnes ‘Reading Australia: Zac and Mia by A.J. Betts’ Australian Book Review Monday 9 January 2017

<<https://www.australianbookreview.com.au/reading-australia/a-j-betts/zac-and-mia-by-a-j-betts>>

‘Exclusive Interview with AJ Betts’ by Lucy Moore Female First 12 September 2014 <<http://www.femalefirst.co.uk/books/aj-betts-zac-and-mia-529719.html>>

‘Author Interview: AJ Betts’ Kids Book Review Sunday 26 September 2010

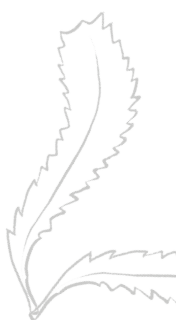
<<http://www.kids-bookreview.com/2010/09/author-interview-aj-betts.html>>

Further Ideas Using Technology

- Access websites which offer insights into the work of A.J. Betts.
- Locate information about any of the themes or topics raised in these notes.
- Create a book trailer for this book.
- Establish a class chatroom online about this and other Dystopian novels.

Conclusion

Rogue is a sequel to *Hive* in which a possible future is imagined based on some of the social, economic and environmental issues of our present day society. The novels also draw on past history in creating this imaginary world, for these people seem to have reverted to customs which are reminiscent of more primitive societies. Hayley’s arrival in this new world makes her question her previous assumptions and to imagine what a future world might look like. The novel ends on an uplifting



note of hope as the former inhabitants of the vault arrive on Maria Island and embark on a new life with Hayley's new family as their guides. Despite Will's grief over the loss of his former world they are both hopeful that this new one will offer them untold opportunities. Importantly, the safe delivery of the bees from the vault suggests hope for environmental change.

Author Note

A. J. Betts is an Australian author, speaker, teacher and cyclist, and has a PhD on the topic of wonder, in life and in reading. She has written four novels for young adults. Her third novel, *Zac & Mia*, won the 2012 Text Prize, the 2014 SCBWI Crystal Kite Award, and the 2014 Ethel Turner prize for young adults at the New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards, was shortlisted for the 2014 Queensland Literary Award, and is available in 14 countries. It was adapted for American television by AwesomenessTV, and will soon be available globally. Her fourth novel, *Hive*, was shortlisted for the 2019 Indie Book Awards and is a notable book in the Children's Book Council of Australia awards.

A. J. is originally from Queensland but has lived in Fremantle since 2004. See her website: <http://www.ajbetts.com/>

Further Reading

Teaching Activities:

'Book Trailers for Readers' by M. Harclerode Teacher Librarian

<<http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com/>

How+to+make+a+book+trailer?responseToken=0c2e4a301db0b64e25f8746f47567667>

'6 Tips for Making a Book Trailer that Works' Reading Agency

<<http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com/>

How+to+make+a+book+trailer?responseToken=0c2e4a301db0b64e25f8746f47567667>

'How to Create a Book Trailer' by Joanna Penn *The Creative Penn*

<<https://www.thecreativepenn.com/2011/01/07/how-to-create-a-book-trailer/>>

Research:

'Commune' *Wikipedia*

<<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commune>>

'100 Works of Dystopian Fiction' *Vulture*

<<http://www.vulture.com/article/best-dystopian-books.html>>

'Utopian and Dystopian fiction' *Wikipedia*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utopian_and_dystopian_fiction>

