



This resource pack is based on *When Shadows Fall* by Sita Brahmachari and encourages students' engagement with the ideas and themes of the novel, as well as creative thinking.

The tasks are divided into the following categories:

- Personal Reading Journey – comprehension and empathy task
- Writing activities – a mixture of fiction activities
- Questions – designed to develop inference and essay writing skills
- Cross-curricular activities – making links between the novel and other subjects

*\* Some of the PSHRE tasks explore some of the more difficult themes in the novel. They should be handled with sensitivity and in line with the school's safeguarding policy and PSHRE lessons.*

These resources were prepared by Ms. S. Santana

## Personal Reading Journey

The protagonist (main character) Kai decides to tell his story by writing it down in a journal. The first person narrative allows Brahmachari to reveal Kai's thoughts and feelings about people and events in his life.

After each reading session, pick an activity to help you reflect on your reading:

- **Write** a short paragraph about how you empathize with Kai
- **Write** three to five sentences about why you sympathize with him
- **Select** a sentence or phrase that you think was particularly powerful. **Explain** why you think it is so powerful in telling Kai's story and how it affects you as a reader
- **Write** your thoughts and feelings about the decisions Kai makes and whether you would make different choices and why
- **Select** one of the illustrations in that section and explain what makes it an effective representation of what you read

Remember to only write what you are comfortable sharing.

### For each essay question posed for Acts One to Three:


- **Discuss** the focus of the question
- **Create** a list of words that help you describe character, place and situation in relation to the question, or the ways in which the writer reveals something about character, place and situation in relation to the question – use these in your main points
- **Select** examples from the novel to support your points
- **Explain** how your examples prove your points

### Prediction activities

1. **Predict** what the novel's characters, themes and events might be based on the title: *When Shadows Fall*.
2. **Look** at the image on the front cover. **Develop** your predictions about the novel's characters, themes and events.
3. **Read** the author's message to the reader on p.3. **How** does Brahmachari describe her book and **what** does it imply? **What** does Brahmachari suggest her novel's message is? **What might** Brahmachari want the reader to think and feel as they read her novel? **What** suggests this?

## Prologue

p. 7-17

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1. Kai is the protagonist. **What** is conveyed about Kai's personality and life on p.6?
  4. **How** does Brahmachari hook the reader on p.6? **Write** a list of techniques and provide examples from the novel.
  5. On p.8, Brahmachari writes: 'If you ever get sucked into the Shadowlands remember: no matter how bleak, seasons change.' **What** do you think this *metaphor* means? In your book, **annotate** the key words with their connotations.
  6. **Make a list** of the people in Kai's life. For each character, **make notes** on what we learn about them and Kai's relationship with them. **What** would like to find out more about?
  7. **Which** themes (ideas) do you think Brahmachari explores in the prologue? **Make** a list of as many as you can think of.
  8. After reading the prologue, **what might** the reader expect from the rest of the novel and **why**?
  9. On p.6 and 16-17 there are illustrations. **How** do these help to convey the mood and atmosphere of the novel's opening? **Which** of Brahmachari's words/phrases in the opening do you think inspired Natalie Sirett's depiction of character and setting?

### Essay questions

- **How does Brahmachari create an interesting and intriguing opening to the novel?**

### Writing Activities

**Write** the opening to an account of a key moment in your life. It can be happy, joyful or difficult and painful. **Write** in the style of Brahmachari **by using direct address** and *rhetorical questions* and aim to **convey** your personality.

## Act One: Voice unbroken

### p. 18-23

1. **What** does Kai think about the role of parents and friends? **What** can we **infer** about him based on his beliefs?
2. **What** do we learn about the importance the act of writing has for Kai? **What** can we **infer** about him?
3. Brahmachari has chosen to begin Act One with free verse. **What** makes it an effective expression of the character's thoughts and feelings? **Rewrite** it in prose. **How** does it change the impact of what is written?
4. **Read** the last part of the verse on p.23. **What might** Brahmachari's general message about the key moments in an individual's life be? **Explain** what makes you think this.

5. Draw pictures to represent the metaphors in the opening verse. Label them with quotations from the novel and explain what they imply.

### Essay questions

- How does Brahmachari present Kai in the opening verse?

### Writing Activities

Write a poem about friendship or life. Use imagery and comparisons to make your language rich.

### Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE:** What do you think the role of a parent is in a child's life? What are the parents' responsibilities? Who might help them with these responsibilities, or have the responsibilities instead?
- What do you think the role of a friend is in your life? How might this change with age?
- How are your expectations of friends and family similar and how are they different?

### p. 23-30

1. How does Brahmachari's language on p.24 convey Kai's admiration for his father?
10. What do we learn about Kai's father, Dexter? What can we infer about him?
11. What do we learn about Kai's mother, Janice? What can we infer about her?
12. What do we learn about what made Kai happy as a young child?
13. Which words would you use to describe Kai's family relationships? Select words/phrases from p.24-30 to support your points
14. Why might Brahmachari have chosen to describe Kai's earliest childhood memories after presenting his life in the present? How does this develop the story?

### Essay questions

- How does Brahmachari show Kai's childhood was happy?

### Writing Activities

Write a short autobiographical piece about your earliest fond memories.

### Cross-curricular Activities

- **Art: Create** a collage of bubbles. Inside each bubble put an image or word to represent a positive wish about your future life e.g. images to represent your dream jobs, places you'd like to visit, people you'd like to meet etc. Maybe you could leave some bubbles free for future wishes. If you don't have many wishes, draw one bubble and inside that include your main wish.

### **p. 30-44**

1. **How** does Brahmachari show us that Zak and Kai are close friends? **How** does she foreshadow distance between the two characters?
15. **How** does Brahmachari show there is tension in Kai's family? **What** causes the tension? **What** does each family member struggle with?
16. On a piece of A3 paper, start a family photo album for Kai's family. You will keep adding to this, so make sure your images are not too big. **Draw** a picture to show how Kai's family were portrayed on p.24-30 and then another to show how they are portrayed now. Underneath each photo, **write** a caption or quotation from the book.
17. **Who** do you think Bow and Sula might be and **what** makes you think this?
18. On p.36, Kai's mother says 'If you don't value yourself, Dexter, no one will ever take you seriously.' What do you think this means? **Why** do you think she says this? **What** qualities does Kai's father have that should be valued?
19. On p.38, Dexter describes the way Kai and Zak play football as 'poetry in motion'. **What** does this *metaphor* suggest about his opinion of the boys' performance?
20. Brahmachari portrays the football game through verse. **How** does this form allow her to capture the game in a way that prose cannot?
21. **Revisit** the themes list you made for the prologue. **How** has Brahmachari developed these themes? **Has** she introduced any new themes? **Select** evidence to support your answer.
22. **Why** might the reader sympathize with Kai's family?

### **Essay questions**

- **How does Brahmachari convey tension?**

### **Writing Activities**

- **Write** a poem in motion. It can be about an action a person, machine, animal, part of nature does. Aim to **convey** the motion through *layout* and interesting *verbs*
- **OR** Find a sports article in a newspaper and

use words from it to create a free-verse poem.

## Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE:** **What** do we value about/in other people? **Make** a class list. **What** positive traits do you have that you value? **Consider** your best personality traits, your talents, how you treat other people. **How** can/do you show people you value these aspects about yourself? **Do** you think everyone sees these qualities in you and values them? **Why/why not?** **How** can you show people you value yourself?
- On a post-it note, **write** something positive that you value about another person in your class. Try to pick someone you don't talk to that often. Try not to focus on appearance and make sure your comments are appropriate. Finish the sentence: *I value your...* e.g. *humour, dedication, perseverance, confidence, story-writing etc.*

### p. 44-65

1. **Compare** the description on p.45 to the description on p.24. **How** have things changed between Kai and his father? **What** do you think has caused this change?
23. **How** does Brahmachari show us that Orla is more confident than Kai?
24. **What** does Brahmachari foreshadow on p.49? **What** do we expect to happen later?
25. **Find** evidence that Kai was going through a difficult time in his life at the beginning of this section. **Explain** how it shows that he was struggling.
26. **How** does Brahmachari show that the Greenland wilderness is special or important to the people in this community? **Make a list** of people who have a connection to it in some way and **provide evidence** to show they think it is important.
27. **What** do we learn about Bow?
28. In this section, Brahmachari begins to interrupt the narrative with text in bold. **What** does the bold writing represent? **What** insights do these interruptions give us?
29. **Why** do you think Kai decides to clear the path by himself without his father's or friends' help? What can we **infer** about him at this point?
30. **What** do we learn about Kai's feelings for Orla?
31. **Explain how** Kai's home life changes after his mother and father announce the pregnancy. **Add** another picture to the family album you started to create and add a caption or quotation.

### Essay questions

- How does Brahmachari show that Kai feels responsible for his parents' happiness?

### Writing Activities


**Write** a description of a place your friends, siblings or cousins and you used to, or still, spend time together. It could be a den in the woods, a community centre, your street, your grandmother's back garden etc. Aim to convey its importance to you.

### Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE:** **What** signs might there be that someone is going through a difficult time in their life? Consider changes in: speech, actions, personality, interests
- Kai worried about starting secondary school and about how his life was changing. **Create** a welcome leaflet for Year 7 helping them to make the transition and settle in. You could include how the canteen system works, how to get around your school, where to go if they need help etc.
- **Write** a letter to yourself in Year 7. **What** advice would you give yourself based on what you know now?
- **Art and Design:** **Design** a bothy for you and your friends. **How** would you decorate it? **Would** it be a place for a book club or gaming? **Would** it be a place to fix up your bicycles or to run your own newspaper? **Would** it be for band practice or dance routines?

### p. 66-89

1. **List** the changes that occur in Kai's life when he starts secondary school.
32. **In what** ways is Omid a good friend to Kai?
33. **Why** do you think p69-71 are tearstained? **What** causes the tears and what helps them stop? **What** can we **infer**?
34. On p.73 Kai says 'This is the moment I realize how she sees me – my gut twists and I tune out till she nudges me.' **What** can we infer from this reaction?
35. On p.75 Orla says 'we can pretend we're with Zak, sunning ourselves in St Lucia with his family for Christmas!' and Kai responds 'I bet you wish you were!'. **Which** emotions do you think both characters were feeling about the idea and **why**? **Support** your ideas with reference to the *language* used. **What** else can you find from p.75-76 to support your explanation?
36. **In what** ways is Orla a good friend to Kai?
37. **What** does the colour yellow represent? **When** else has this colour been referenced in the novel? **What** does the colour symbolize for Kai?



38. On p.80 Kai writes 'What Dad says is true... I'm the youngest in my year, but it's like they still have to take me out in front of everyone. Like they see me as a big threat', **Who** are 'they'? **What** does Dexter suggest is the reason Kai is seen as 'a big threat'?

39. **In what** ways is the tour of the Tower of London awkward and tense?

40. On p.86 Kai writes 'If I could have known then what I know now... Maybe I would have told someone about the shadows I saw, but didn't understand, haunting my dad that day'. **Draw** an image of Kai's father, Dexter. Around the image, **draw** shadows extending from him and **label** each shadow with a **quotation** from this section which shows Kai's father is struggling.

41. Look back at Dexter's reaction to the information about the ravens' wings being clipped on p.85-87. **Why** do you think he reacts so strongly? **Why might** he feel connected to the ravens in some way?

### Essay questions

- How does **Brahmachari foreshadow** that the happiness of Kai's family won't last?

### Writing Activities

**Think** of an animal you identify with because of the way it is viewed/treated by people (this can be positive) and either:

- **write** a speech defending this animal's right to live its life and try to **highlight** some of its overlooked qualities.
- **imagine** you are the animal and **write** a first person narration of what it is like to be treated in this way.

### Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE and Health& Social Care:** **What** are Kai's coping strategies as a twelve-year old? **Which** of them are good and which are not that good? **Why?** **Can** you think of any other coping strategies that might help someone dealing with the same struggles?
- **What might** be affecting Kai's parents' ability to support him emotionally?
- **Discuss** who you should talk to in school if you are experiencing racism from your peers or staff, and/or are suffering with your mental health.
- The effects of being raised in care is raised in the novel. **Explore** the information about looked after children on NSPCC's website
- **Research** local organizations that support



people who have been raised in care

- Racism against black and mixed-race people is referenced in this novel. **Research** statistics for mental health issues in these two groups of people and the link between racism and mental health – [mind.org](http://mind.org) is a good place to start. **Discuss** your findings and the implications as a class
- **Explore** the information about racism and mental health on Mind's website and **create** an information leaflet to support people who might experience racism
- **Research** local organizations that support people who experience racism

### **p. 89-118**

1. **What** do we learn about Orla?
42. **What** do you think 'We're all a work in progress' means? **Why** do you think Orla reminds Kai of this?
43. **What might** the events on p.97-98 foreshadow? **Explain** what makes you think this.
44. **Why** do you think Kai never reached out to Zak when he was younger?
45. **Who** is a better friend: Zak or Kai? **Explain** your answer.
46. **List** all of Kai's insecurities before his baby sister is born. **Where** do these insecurities appear to come from?
47. Kai tends to bottle up his thoughts and feelings. **What** effect does this have on his relationships?
48. **What** can we infer about Kai's home life from p.103 and 114?
49. **Why** do you think Orla has told Zak that Dexter has 'issues'?
50. **Add** another 1-2 pictures to Kai's family album and add a caption or quotation.

### **Essay questions**

- **How does Brahmachari explore conflict in this section?**

### **Writing Activities**

**Make** a list of personality flaws e.g. bottling up emotions, quick to anger, gossiping etc. **Create** a script of a conversation between two friends who fall out because of this character flaw.

### **Cross-curricular Activities**

- **PSHRE:** **How** might thinking 'We're all a work in progress' help us to cope with life? **Do** you think this phrase only applies to young people?

- Orla tells Kai she has a girlfriend. Coming out can be a difficult situation for many people of any age. **Research** local organizations who support young LGBTQ+ teenagers. **Create** a poster to promote their services.
- Kai said if he was an English teacher he would set his students the task to write out their own foreshadowing. **Think** about a difficult time in your life and **work backwards** to see if there were any signs that you could look out for in the future e.g. What foreshadowed you getting a detention? Your teacher warning you. What foreshadowed your food poisoning? The expiry date on the food packet was for last week. What led up to you being pickpocketed? Signs warning about pickpockets in the area. Now **think** of people you might have been able to ask to help you before the situation reached its conclusion. **Make a list** of people and organizations who will help when you think your safety, health, success might be at risk e.g. your teachers, your GP, your school counsellor, your family, a friend's parent, an organization or charity, the police etc.
- **Discuss** the similarities and differences between jealousy and admiration

### **p. 119-126**

1. **What** is the atmosphere at the bothy on p.119?
51. **Describe** how Brahmachari develops tension on p.120.
52. **Why** do you think Brahmachari switches to free verse to describe the events on p.121-123?
53. **What** does the transition to black pages for p.122-123 represent? **What** does it add to your reading experience and **why**?
54. **Why** do you think p.124-125 are blank black pages? **What** do you think they represent?
55. **Make a list** of words/phrases that convey the tragedy described on p.121-123 and **explain** why they are effective.

### **Essay questions**

- **How does Brahmachari convey the characters' distress in this section?**

### **Writing Activities**

**Describe** a scene with a calm atmosphere that changes to one of chaos. The shift does not have to involve death – it could be about a sea that becomes stormy or a sports match, for example.

### **Cross-curricular Activities**

- **PSHRE: Research** support for people who are bereaved and **create** an inspiring blog post to help

people cope after a loved one has passed away

- **Music:** **Find** a piece of music or song that reminds you of a family member you are really close to. **Describe** how this piece of music makes you feel and why it reminds you of the person you love **OR** **Compose** a piece of music or lyrics in tribute to a family member you have a close relationship to
- **Learn** jazz scales or a piece of jazz music to play on your instrument **OR** **listen** to a few pieces of jazz music and think about how they make you feel and why

### **p. 127-155**

1. **Create** a table of each character's way of coping and/or grieving after Sula's death. **Provide** examples and explain what they **convey** about each character.
56. **In what ways** does Kai become isolated?
57. **What** do you think the references to shadows and shadowlands are a *metaphor* for?
58. **How** are the community trying to support Kai? **Does** Kai recognize help when it is given? **Explain** why you think he doesn't accept help.
59. **What** are the signs that Kai is struggling to cope at this time?
60. **What** can we infer about Dexter from his interactions at the football match on p139-147?
61. **Create** a Venn diagram to show the similarities and differences between Kai and Zak. **Look** at their differences. Kai thinks these are reasons they can't be friends. **Discuss** whether it is actually these differences or the way Kai perceives these differences that is getting in the way of their friendship.
62. **How** does Brahmachari create sympathy for Kai's mother, Janice? **List** the ways and provide examples.
63. **In what ways** is Kai being self-destructive?
64. **Look** at the images on p154-155. **How** do they make you feel and why? **How** do they relate to the story so far?

### **Essay questions**

- **How does Brahmachari explore isolation in this section?**

### **Writing Activities**

**Imagine** you are one of the other characters at the football match on p139-147 e.g. Janice, Dexter, Zak, Zak's mother, the other football coach. Write a monologue or diary entry from their perspective of what took place. **Aim** to include references

to their thoughts, opinions, feelings and what evokes these.

### Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE:** Kai wants to keep his family life private from the community. **Discuss** why. **In what ways** does this attitude prevent him from receiving help? Your privacy is important and so is your mental health, so **how** can you ask for help *and* limit who you talk to about private matters? E.g. you can call helplines anonymously, ask your tutor if you can speak to a school counsellor, ask your GP etc. This is an opportunity to discuss your school's safeguarding policy.
- **Research** signs of depression and poor mental health. Which of the characters in the novel display these signs? **Create** a child-friendly information poster on how to spot the signs and where to go for support in and out of school. **Explain** where you would display it and why.
- **Geography and RE:** On p.130 Orla's mother, Holly, pays her respects by *keening*. This is an Irish tradition. **Research** this tradition and traditions from three other cultures from around the world. **How** are they similar or different? **Create** a blog post about funeral and mourning traditions around the world.

### p. 156-177

1. **Draw** a picture of Kai from Omid's description on p.156. **What** does this *metaphorical* description suggest about what Omid notices about Kai from the balcony?
65. **What** do we learn about Omid and his aunt, Gisou? Make a **list** and **provide** examples from the novel.
66. **Why** do you think Aunt Gisou wants the teachers to call Om, Omid? **Why** do you think she refers to Omid as his 'true name'? **What** do you think Brahmachari might be trying to say about names?
67. **Why** do you think Omid was drawn to Kai? **Support** your answer with examples from this section.
68. On p.166-169 Omid describes Kai's behaviour. **Do** you think there is anything wrong with the way Kai acts? **Why/why not?**
69. On p.172 Kai paints with the colour yellow. **What** has yellow previously *symbolized* in the novel? **How** is this different to what the colour *symbolizes* for Omid? **What** do you think Brahmachari was trying to achieve by presenting this contrasting opinion?
70. **In what ways** is Omid a good friend to Kai throughout Year Eight to Year Eleven?

### Essay questions

- **How does Brahmachari show the struggles refugees face?**

- **How does Brahmachari show that Omid is perceptive?**

### Writing Activities

**Research** what your name means – it might have a different meaning in other languages/cultures. If your name is made up, **consider** why people choose to create new names. If you can, **ask** the person that chose your name why they chose it.

**Draw** your name and decorate it with pictures that represent it's meaning and/or the inspiration behind your name to use as the title for a blog about your name.

**Write** a short blog piece about what your name means in general, what inspired the person who gave it to you and what it means to you. You can include the other names you are known by and nicknames too.

### Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE:** On p.174 Omid says 'It is hard sometimes for boys to speak, isn't it?' To what extent **do you think** this is true? **What** might hinder boys from talking about their feelings? **Are** these the same obstacles for all genders?
- **Research** males and mental health. **Are** there common causes of poor mental health in males?
- **PSHRE and Geography:** **Why** do you think some people don't like having their name shortened? **Why** do some people shorten other people's names? **Why** do some people shorten their own name? **Do** you like your name being shortened? **Why/why not?** **Do** you correct people who mispronounce your name? **Why/why not?** **Why** is your name important? **Why** is it a good idea to ask someone if they mind you shortening their name or giving them a nickname?
- **Geography and history:** **What** do the words 'refuge' and 'refugee' mean? **What** do some people associate with refugees? **Discuss** the negative perceptions some people have of refugees and why this is unfair. There is a long history of people seeking refuge in the UK. There is also history of people from The United Kingdom and Ireland seeking refuge in other countries. **Research** a crisis that caused people to seek refuge in the UK **or** a crisis that caused British and Irish people to seek refuge in other countries. **Consider:** **What** were the refugees trying to escape? **What** struggles did they face on their journey to the UK? **What** struggles did/do they face in the country they sought/ seek refuge in? **Discuss** why it is important to help refugees. **Write** an article to raise awareness about a crisis that caused a mass migration of people to seek safety in another country. **Aim** to create sympathy in your reader by using *emotive language*.
- **Research** organizations that help refugees. **Create** a leaflet explaining how people can help to support refugees.

Remember, not everyone can afford to give money, so include a range of ways to give effective support.

### **p. 177-189**

1. **Why** do you think Brahmachari includes Omid's viewpoint at this point in the novel? **How** does it add to our understanding of Kai's story? **How might** the impact of these details change if they were told from Kai's perspective?

71. **List** the poor choices Kai has been making and explain why you think they are poor. **What** might the reader think and feel about Kai now and **why**?

72. On p.180 Orla says 'It used to be so sunny here'. **Draw** a series of pictures showing the changes in the bothy since Kai discovered it. **Label** them with details from the novel. For each label, **explain** what we can **infer** about the bothy and Kai from Brahmachari's *language*.

73. On p.183 Omid says 'some secrets are too poisonous to keep'. **What** does the word 'poisonous' connote? **What** does it imply about the secret Omid has been keeping?

74. **How** do people view Omid? **How** does the way people treat Omid make him feel and **why**?

75. **Why** do you think Zak doesn't see what Orla and Omid see when they read the newspaper article about the new housing estate?

76. **How** does the news about the new housing estate become 'an opportunity out of difficulty'?

77. **In what ways** has Omid tried to help Kai cope with his struggles?

78. **Predict** what you think might happen next.

### **Essay questions**


- **How does Brahmachari explore the theme of friendship?**
- **How does Brahmachari show us that Omid feels responsible for Kai?**

### **Writing Activities**

On p.186 Omid says 'I woke to the cold, bright blue-sky morning of hope and it made the flame in me burn stronger'. **Think** about how Kai's story might turn around. **Write** the next 1-1.5 pages of Kai's story from his point of view. **Begin** with the same *imagery* Omid uses and **explore** the themes of hope and strength.

### **Cross-curricular Activities**

- **PSHRE: Describe** a place that you like to go to for peace



and quiet when your life feels chaotic, or you feel troubled. It's okay if you do not have a place like this. Many people meditate by going to a quiet place in their mind. **Create** a place in your imagination that can be a place you think about when you are on the bus, or brushing your teeth to help you feel calm about life.

- **Which** types of secrets are too poisonous to keep? **When** should we tell our friend's parents about something that is happening in their life, even though they might not want us to? **If** we cannot tell their parents, who can we tell? **Why** is it important to seek help from a responsible adult when you realize you cannot cope? **Is** it fair to ask your friends to keep secrets about your own self-destruction?
- **Art: Create** a piece of art that represents a place you feel is home.

### **p. 190-209**

1. On p.190, Orla writes 'Whatever thorny paths we've had to clear we've done it together'. **What** do you think she literally means? **What** do you think she *metaphorically* means?

79. **What** does Orla's first account reveal?

80. **Why** do you think Brahmachari places this account after Omid's and not before? **Use** details from the novel to support your ideas.

81. Through Orla's account Brahmachari creates sympathy for all of the characters. **List** all of the characters mentioned and next to their names **explain** why the reader might sympathize with them.

82. **How** has Kai's behaviour affected those around him?

83. **What** tells us on p.197-199 that Kai feels hopeful?

84. **What might** Brahmachari be trying to tell us about trauma and its effects?

85. **What** tears the community apart and how do they try to come together again?

### **Essay questions**

- **How does Brahmachari present the theme trust?**

### **Writing Activities**

**Imagine** you are Orla. **Write** a persuasive letter to the council to try to convince them not to allow the new development. Aim to be *formal* and include five different *persuasive writing techniques*.

### **Cross-curricular Activities**

- **PSHRE: Discuss** why you think Aunt Gisou and Orla's mother tried to keep Omid and Orla away from Kai

while he self-destructed and whether you think they were right. **Consider** it from a guardian's point of view and then from a teenager's point of view. **How** could Aunt Gisou and Holly have handled the situation differently?

- Zak felt he had to tell his mother what was happening with Kai and Faith felt 'duty-bound' to tell the school. **Discuss** why they made these decisions and whether you think they could or should have done things differently? **What** might have happened if they didn't tell anyone? **Would** things have been improved or not? **Why** do you think Kai's mother, Janice was so angry about the letter? **Is** her anger justified? **Why/why not?** **Why** do you think Orla was so angry with Zak and Faith? **Was** her anger justified? **Why/why not?** **Do** you think the school made the best decision to support Kai? **Was** Kai better off at home or at school? **Justify** your opinions with evidence from the novel. **Could** the school have been supportive in another way?

### **p. 209-233**

1. **Revisit** your discussion/list of the responsibilities of parents and guardians. At this moment **which** parents and guardians are able to handle these responsibilities? **Which** ones aren't able to and why?

86. **What** plans do Kai and his mother make on p.214?

87. **Why** does Kai take drugs? **Do** you think he enjoys smoking marijuana? **Justify** your answers with quotations.

88. **What** do we learn about Tax and Zig?  
**What** can we infer about them?

89. Taz calls Kai 'mate' on p.217. **To what extent** is Taz a good friend? **Why** do you think Kai says 'I'm not your mate!'?

90. Shadows are a repeated motif in the novel. On p.221 Taz and Zig are referred to as Kai's 'shadow mates'. **What** do you think this *metaphor* means? **How** is it similar or different to other references to shadows in the novel?

91. **What** does the phrase 'the further he gets his feet under the table' mean? **What** is Kai worried about? **What** other evidence tells us this?

92. **In** what ways is Kai's way of thinking a barrier to his own progress? **How** does he allow his fears to hold him back?

93. **Add** another 1-2 pictures to Kai's family album and add a caption or quotation.

94. **What** does Omid's account add to both Kai's story and his own? **Why** do you think Brahmachari ends act One in this way?

### **Essay questions**



- How does Brahmachari explore mental health?
- Some might say that Kai is selfish. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

### Writing Activities

**Write** a script that focuses on the next conversation between Kai and his mother. Start with a reference to the conversation about Frankie and the slap and end with a positive resolution.


### Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE:** **Think** of a time you thought you were misunderstood. **What** do you think contributed to this situation? **What** emotions did you feel? Now **think** of a time when you have wanted to ask for help but didn't. **What** held you back? **What** might have encouraged you to reach out for help?
- **Discuss** how trauma can have a physical, mental, social and emotional strain on people.
- **Research** the statistics for sectioning and suicide for males. **Discuss** as a class. Create a poster to raise awareness and encourage people to seek support. **Explain** where you think these posters should be displayed.
- **How** might your age affect your experience of poor mental health? **What** might be the strains on the family and friends of someone with poor mental health? **Do** you think mental health is viewed sympathetically by society? **Do** you think society generally views teenagers like Kai sympathetically? **How** can society be more supportive people with poor mental health?
- **Art and Art History:** **What** is art and why do people create it? **Do** you have to be good at drawing or painting to create art? Omid says on p.172 'in art we found the way to see ourselves and each other' and on p.233 he says 'I will draw you so you see yourself'. **Create** a piece of art that you can see yourself in. It can be a sculpture, collage or abstract piece. You can use any medium.
- **OR research** self-portraits of different artists from different cultures and time periods. **Research** what was happening in their lives at the time they created their self-portrait. **What** do you think they are expressing about themselves through the portrait?

## Act Two: Raven Cries

### p. 236-260

1. **What** do we learn about Kai's home life at this time in his life? **What** can we infer?
95. **Which** parent does Kai seem to identify with more? **Why** do you think this is?

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96. **What** role do the ravens play in Kai's life at this moment? **What** makes you think this?
97. **Compare** your opinions of Kai's connection to the ravens to Omid's perception of this connection in Act One.
98. **What** do you think Brahmachari wants the reader to understand about depression?
99. **What might** readers think about Faith after reading the description of Kai bumping into her before school? **Why** do you think she reacted to Kai the way she did?
100. **Both** Kai and Dexter feel a connection to the ravens. **What** in Rain and Bow's sections do you think Kai and his father *might* connect with? **Explain** why you think this and make links to other parts of the novel.
101. Return to your previous inference about Taz and Zig. **Were** you right? **What** implies that they are dangerous?
102. Most of this section is written in verse. **What** do you think Brahmachari is trying to convey about the way Kai sees/feels about the period of his life that he is writing about?

### Essay questions

- **How does Brahmachari present depression?**

### Writing Activities

**Imagine** you are one of Kai's friends. You can choose to be Zak, Orla, Omid or a friend that isn't mentioned. He won't open the door to you, so you decide to write a letter and post it to him instead. **Write** a letter to Kai to show that you are his friend and that you support him. Think about the tone you will use and how you can encourage him to believe in himself again.

### Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE:** **Discuss** Kai's deteriorating mental health from Y7 until this point in his story. **What** external triggers worsened his mental health? **Which** internal thoughts have resulted from these triggers? **How** does Kai's depression make it difficult for him to turn things around?

### p. 261-291

1. **What** do we learn about the pressures Kai's friends are facing?
103. **What might** readers think about Taz and Zig after reading the description of Orla's first meeting with them?
104. **In what ways** is Orla facing similar struggles to Kai?
105. **How** is Zak treated by his friends? **Why** do you

think this is? **What** do you think about this and **why**?

106. On p.273 Orla describes a dream she has as foreshadowing later events. **What** do you think her dream foreshadows?

107. **What** differences can we see between the characters Taz and Zig?

108. **List** all of the words/phrases that suggest Taz is a dangerous character. **Explain** the connotations of each and how they show that he is dangerous.

109. **List** all of the words/phrases that suggest Kai is scared.

110. **Find** 3 descriptions of Kai and his flat and **explain** how they show his vulnerable state.

111. **In what ways** has Orla proved herself to be a good friend to Kai? **What** else could she have done?

112. In a three act story, the second act brings the story to a *climax* – when things reach their worst for the protagonist. What makes Kai's situation at the end of Act Two the lowest point for Kai so far?

### Essay questions

- **How does Brahmachari explore the theme loyalty?**
- **Explore how Brahmachari conveys danger.**

### Writing Activities

**Write** what you think happens next in prose or verse. Remember, Act Three should resolve the *climax* in the second act. Aim to use what you know of the characters and their personalities to create a believable progression of Kai's story so far.

### Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE: Discuss** Janice asking Orla to tell Kai that she is going away for a few days. Orla says 'how dare she put that on me!'. **Do** you think her anger is justified? **Why/ why not?** **What** do you think of Janice's actions? **What** is understandable about them and what do you find more difficult to understand about them? **What** advice would you give Janice at this time?

- On p.272 Orla describes different types of love. As a class **discuss** the different types of love you can have for the people in your life and what it means to have love in your life. what is the importance of giving and receiving love? **Is** love enough to be happy? **Discuss** what you think the three most important qualities are for a healthy relationship with another person whether they are family, romantic interests, or friends.

- Orla does what she thinks is right but there are some things she should have done to help Kai that she didn't do. **What** did Kai

need at this time that Orla neglected to focus on? **Why** do you think she neglects these things? **Does** this make her a bad friend?

- Taz and Zig once referred to themselves as Kai's mates. **Discuss** as a class what makes this friendship unhealthy. **Discuss** what abuse is and how it can take form in unhealthy relationships, including friendships. **Consider** the speech and actions of Taz which can be considered forms of emotional, psychological and physical abuse.
- **Art:** Create monochrome pieces of art to show key moments from Act Two.

## Act Three: Fly, Kai, Fly

### p. 292-319

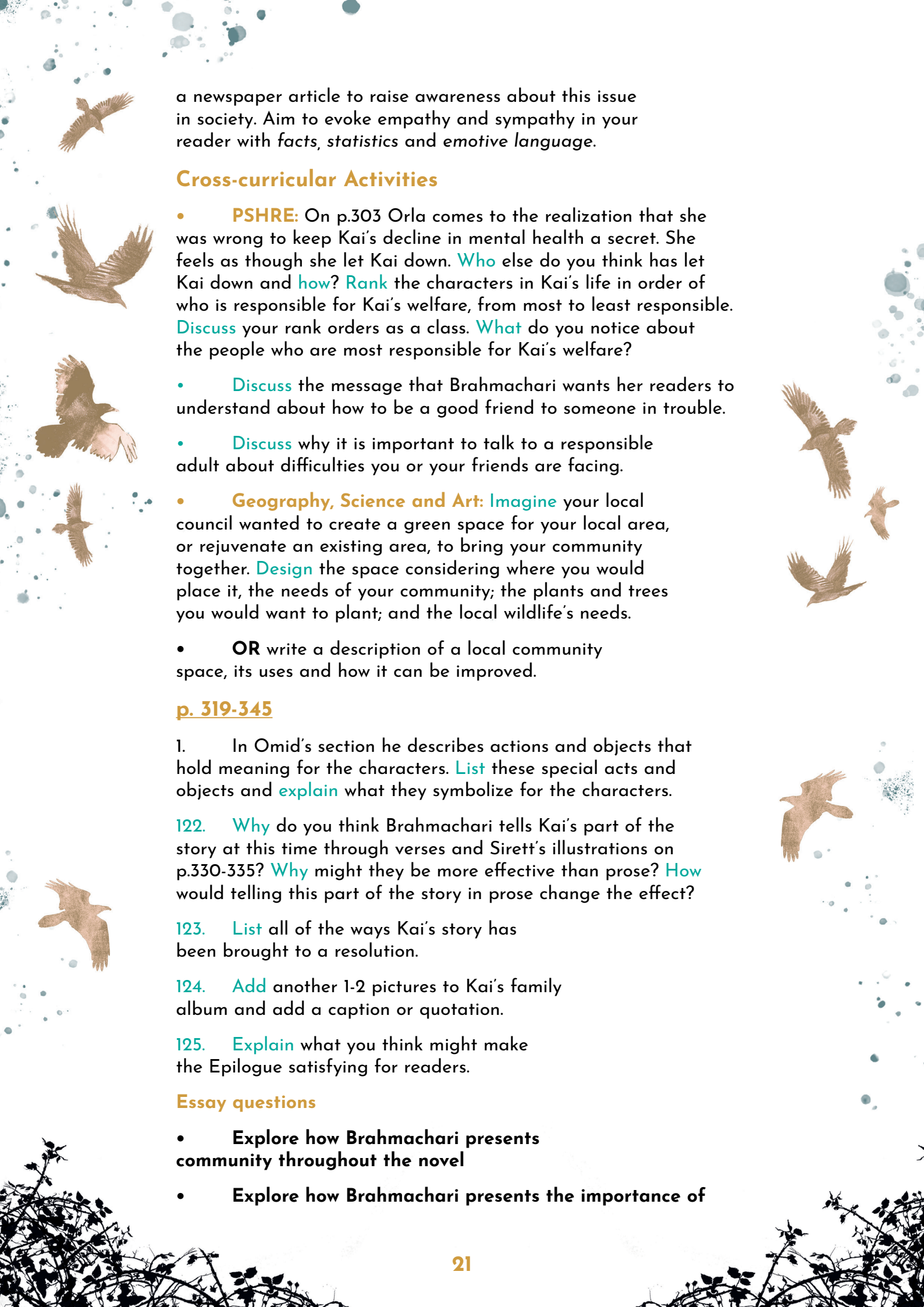
1. **What** makes the opening to Act Three dramatic?
113. **How** does the illustration on p.296-297 make you feel and **why**?
114. On p.197 Orla says 'that word child broke me because we were still children then'. **Describe** an idyllic childhood. **How** does this differ to the lives the teenagers in this novel have? What does Brahmachari show us about the lives of teenagers?
115. **What** do we learn about Kai's story through Orla and Omid's accounts?
116. **List** the examples of demonstrations of love displayed in this section.
117. **Why** does Orla show sympathy for Taz on p.308? **What** do you think Brahmachari would like her readers to think about?
118. **Why** do you think Omid says that Kai won't be found 'with that tough image of the tough boy with frozen eyes'? **Why** does he suggest drawing a picture of Kai based on how he looked on the night he left? **Why** might it be more effective in helping find Kai?
119. **In what ways** does Kai's disappearance bring other characters together? **Why** do you think it brings them together?
120. **Add** another 1-2 pictures to Kai's family album and add a caption or quotation.
121. **What** do the illustrations tell us that the narration doesn't? **What** effect do they create?

### Essay questions

- **How does Brahmachari explore the theme loss?**

### Writing Activities

**Research** charities that help homeless teenagers. **Write**



a newspaper article to raise awareness about this issue in society. Aim to evoke empathy and sympathy in your reader with *facts, statistics and emotive language*.

### Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE:** On p.303 Orla comes to the realization that she was wrong to keep Kai's decline in mental health a secret. She feels as though she let Kai down. **Who** else do you think has let Kai down and **how**? **Rank** the characters in Kai's life in order of who is responsible for Kai's welfare, from most to least responsible. **Discuss** your rank orders as a class. **What** do you notice about the people who are most responsible for Kai's welfare?
- **Discuss** the message that Brahmachari wants her readers to understand about how to be a good friend to someone in trouble.
- **Discuss** why it is important to talk to a responsible adult about difficulties you or your friends are facing.
- **Geography, Science and Art:** **Imagine** your local council wanted to create a green space for your local area, or rejuvenate an existing area, to bring your community together. **Design** the space considering where you would place it, the needs of your community; the plants and trees you would want to plant; and the local wildlife's needs.
- **OR** write a description of a local community space, its uses and how it can be improved.

### p. 319-345

1. In Omid's section he describes actions and objects that hold meaning for the characters. **List** these special acts and objects and **explain** what they symbolize for the characters.

122. **Why** do you think Brahmachari tells Kai's part of the story at this time through verses and Sirett's illustrations on p.330-335? **Why** might they be more effective than prose? **How** would telling this part of the story in prose change the effect?

123. **List** all of the ways Kai's story has been brought to a resolution.

124. **Add** another 1-2 pictures to Kai's family album and add a caption or quotation.

125. **Explain** what you think might make the Epilogue satisfying for readers.

### Essay questions

- **Explore how Brahmachari presents community throughout the novel**
- **Explore how Brahmachari presents the importance of**

green spaces in urban environments throughout the novel

### Writing Activities

- **Write** a review of the novel for a school newspaper. **Explain** why you would recommend it to others.
- **Write** a letter to the author explaining the impact *When Shadows Fall* has had on you. Include what it has made you think about and why you think her novel is important.

### Cross-curricular Activities

- **PSHRE:** Read the Author's note. Discuss Brahmachari's inspiration and motivation to write this novel. Discuss the novel's importance.
- **Art:** Create the pieces of artwork that Omid describes on p.323-324.
  - Create a collage of your best experiences and all the things you love. You can add concert tickets, train tickets, theme park leaflets, lyrics from a favourite song, photos, images, drawings etc. Put it somewhere in your room to remind you of the joy in your life. If you think you don't have enough, add wishes for the future. What would you love more of?
- **Film:** Storyboard or film one of the dramatic moments from the novel. Consider how you will use *camera shots, lighting, sound and the appearance of the actors* to heighten the drama of the scene.

### Final Thoughts

- Throughout the novel you can see Natalie Sirett's illustrations. **How** do the images affect your experience of reading Kai's story? **How** do they help to shape your understanding of characters and situations?
- Throughout the novel Brahmachari slips in and out of verse. **What** do you think the use of verse adds to the story? **How** does it help to convey Kai's state of mind?
- The novel is split into three parts. How would you define the narrative arc? **How** do the characters develop over the three parts?
- Brahmachari does not section the novel into chapters. **What** do you think of this? **Why** is this an effective way to tell Kai's story? **How** might regular chapters have changed the telling of Kai's story?
- Brahmachari switches narrators and interrupts the telling with comments characters make in the present. **What** do you think of this? **Why** is this an effective way to tell Kai's story? **How** might a single narrator have changed the telling of Kai's story?