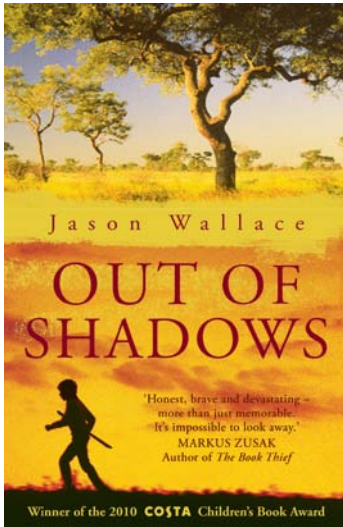


# TALKING POINTS

## CILIP Carnegie Medal Shortlist 2011



The CILIP Carnegie  
& Kate Greenaway  
Children's Book  
Awards



## OUT OF SHADOWS

by Jason Wallace

1

The book begins in Zimbabwe in 1983. Why is this a significant moment in the country's history? What sort of backdrop does this provide for the book?

Why is the time and date also significant for Robert?

2

Although the book is a work of fiction, there are some real life political figures that feature in the novel. Why has the author mixed the factual and the fictional in this way?

What does this tell you about the author himself? Do you think he had firsthand experience of this type of school? Where would you say his sympathies lie?

3

Does Robert Jacklin want to go to Haven School? Is he happy being in Zimbabwe? Why is he there?

Are there parallels between Zimbabwe and Haven School? What kind of attitude tends to dominate at the school? How do the staff and pupils react to the change in government?

4

Robert's first friendship at school is with Nelson; they pledge to look out for each other 'like brothers'. Do they succeed in this?

What barriers are there to their friendship?

Does Robert's father encourage him to make friends with Nelson? Is this why the relationship is doomed to failure?

5

What does Robert first make of Ivan Hascott when he meets him? Are they very different from each other? Are there any ways in which they are similar?

Would you call Ivan a bully?

Why is Ivan such a dominant figure in Robert's life? To what extent does he dictate Robert's friendship group?

Has Robert any choice in becoming Ivan's friend? What would you have done in the same circumstances?



6

What kind of school is Haven School? Is there a strong culture of violence?  
Is it right, for example, that the seniors beat the younger boys?

Who are the Mess Police? What do they do to their victims?  
When Simpson-Prior falls victim to the Mess Police, what is your reaction?

Does it change the way you feel about Robert?

7

To what extent is the relationship between Robert and Ivan a struggle for power?  
Although the story is narrated by Robert, it is also Ivan's story to a large extent. If Ivan had narrated it, do you think you would have sympathised more with him?

Does it reflect the power struggles taking place in the country as a result of the war?

What is Robert's rescue of De Klomp such a key moment in his relationship with Ivan and his gang?

8

*'The war doesn't come back Jacklin, because it never goes. It's part of us.'*  
Can Robert really ever understand what effects the war has had on those who lived through it? Will he always be an outsider in Zimbabwe?

Has the war affected everyone in the same way? Has life improved for the black population as a result?

9

What kind of a teacher is Mr van Hout? Why does Robert describe him as 'a shining light'?

Why is it relevant that he used to be a pupil at the school too?

How do the boys react to his dismissal?

10

Was Robert right to stop Ivan in his attempt to assassinate the Prime Minister? Does he regret his actions in later life?

To what extent does Mr Van Hout's question come back to haunt Robert?

*'If I stood you in front of a man, pressed the cold metal of a gun into your palm and told you to squeeze the trigger, would you do it?'*

*'What if I'd told you we'd gone back in time and his name was Adolf Hitler. Would you do it then?'*

How would you answer the question?

