Alexandra Palace Children’s Book Award

BIBLIO-BUZZ

Reader Guide

Orion Lost
by Alastair Chisholm

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Dear reader,

This educational resource pack is based on Alastair Chisholm’s stunning novel Orion Lost and is an ideal guide for children in Key Stage 2 & 3. It includes sneak peeks from the text, with corresponding reflection questions and activities to keep you excited and eager to read the book. Featuring themes of ‘Faith’, ‘Space Adventure’, ‘Leadership’ and ‘Human Intervention’, this pack is the perfect guide to enhance your reading in the classroom or at home.

We hope you enjoy working your way through this pack.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The transport ship Orion is four months out of Earth when catastrophe strikes - leaving the ship and everyone on board stranded in deep space.

Suddenly it’s up to thirteen-year-old Beth and her friends to navigate through treacherous and uncharted territory to reach safety. But a heavily-damaged ship, space pirates, a mysterious alien species, and an artificial intelligence that Beth doesn’t know if she can trust means that getting home has never been so difficult...
It looked similar to Earth, though the colours were different. Eos was a dwarf star and its light was redder, giving the scene an orange cast. The grass was slightly blue, genetically altered to cope better with the alien light and soil. It stretched across the world under orange blue skies and soft clouds.

Right now, she knew, the colony point at Eos five was covered in hundreds of machines, robots and terraformers: planting the seeds, carving rivers, encouraging soil microbes, preparing the land. It would be years, decades, centuries, perhaps, before the whole planet was transformed.

"Cool!"

The crew of the Orion are on their way to a new world, which is being made ready for human habitation. Can you imagine a planet, which is different from our own, and how it might be made ready for people? What kind of a sun does it orbit? Is its sun closer or further away than ours? Does it have a moon? Several moons? Will you be seeding plants to create an atmosphere? Will there be water? Does anything live there already?

Either: Write a passage describing the planet before human intervention, and then tell us what changes will be made for people to live there.

Or: Draw a planet before human intervention, and then a second version showing the changes that have been made for people to live there.
It was like no human ship ever built. Long, thin tendrils wafted out behind its hull, like a jellyfish floating through space. The tendrils were many times the length of the Orion. It was lit up all over in some way, as if fluorescent, with a pale, pinkish blue glow.

The humans assume a lot of things about the mysterious Videshi, most of which are wrong. Can you imagine any other alien species which could be completely misunderstood? Fill in the table below to show the characteristics of your aliens, and how these could be wrongly perceived by humans.

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Beth and the others are forced to take on adult levels of responsibility, and it is frightening for them. They all react in different ways, but Beth repeats a mantra which Ship has given her:

"I am the master of my own ship. I do not control the seas. I CANNOT CONTROL THE WIND. But I am the master of my own ship."

Can you think of any real life situations in which this might be a useful mantra? Write down any examples you can think of.

Leadership

Beth says, describing Vihaan:

"He’s good at command, but he’s not a good leader, because he doesn’t care."

What do you think makes a person a good leader?

Technology

Lauryn designs an app which works out who people are by scanning their faces and matching them to their pre-flight profiles.

Can you design an app which might be useful to you on a spaceship? Draw the home screen for the app and show what the controls are for.
You’ve now reached the end of this pack for Orion Lost.

We hope these notes have proved to be a useful and fun introduction to the themes and ideas found within this book.

We would love to see examples of any work created as a result of this pack, so please do email them over to us at: learning@alexandrapalace.com

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