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Chapter Book Shortlist

James arrives in Kalk Bay from Johannesburg to stay with the grandmother he has never met. As time passes, James learns of the shady side of the village: Faried and his uncle are known abalone poachers, but everyone seems to turn a blind eye. Soon, James finds himself in a life-threatening situation.

- NB Publishers

Teaching notes

These notes have been written by the Otto Foundation to provide teachers and caregivers with ideas to develop text comprehension and support literacy skills. They encourage deep reading of the text and illustrations, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, not just one sitting.

These notes have been written with Grade 4, 5, 6 and 7 readers in mind, but teachers and caregivers will need to adapt them to the age and experience of their readers.

Themes

- Family and identity
- Community
- Friendship
- Environmental conservation
- Courage
- Overcoming prejudice

Before reading the story

- Open the discussion by allowing the children to share their initial responses to the front cover of the book. Encourage the children to discuss what they see and their responses to it.
 - *What do you notice about the cover illustration?*
 - *What does the cover illustration make you think about?*
 - *How does the cover illustration make you feel?*
 - *What do you like most about the cover illustration?*

- Explain that the title of the book is **Marked**. Ask the children to share their thoughts on the book cover.
 - What kind of book do you think this is going to be, based on the title?
 - What do you think the word **Marked** means?
 - Who do you think the boy on the cover is?
 - Where do you think the setting of the book is? What makes you think that?
 - What do you think might happen to the boy in this book?
 - What is the unusual building behind the boy called? What is the purpose of this building?
- Read the back cover blurb to the children. Explore how they might change their ideas about the story now that they have more information.
 - How does reading the blurb change what you think might happen in the story?

Reading aloud discussion points

Chapter 1

- What is a birthmark? Do you know anyone with a birthmark?
- James's birthmark is the colour of a **dark bruise**. Describe what a **dark bruise** would look like.
- How old is James when the story starts?
- How long has James known that he and his mother are moving to Cape Town?
- Is James happy about the move? Why or why not?
- Have James's parents explained to him the reasons for their separation? How do you think this makes James feel?
- James thinks that the separation and move are all his mother, **Vivienne's**, fault. Why does he blame her?
- What is **Vivienne's** mood or attitude towards the move?
- James seems surprised and confused about his mother's mood and attitude. Why do you think this is?
- James says that his mother was **dependable**. What do you think this word means? How do you think James' would describe his mother?

Chapter 2

- What does the word **simultaneous** mean?
- Later in the story, it becomes important to know that James's parents are wealthy. What clues does the author give you about the family's financial situation?
- When James and his mother get to Cape Town, they drive on a road **lined with double-storey houses on the right and a disturbingly black stretch of nothingness on the left**. What is the **black stretch of nothingness**?
- What is James's first clue that his mother has been in Cape Town before?
- Why was the car's engine **heaving with effort**?
- What is the **surprise** that James's mother mentioned?

Chapter 3

- What is the **fresh and sharp** smell James notices?
- Why do you think that Vivienne is nervous?
- What does the word **dominated** tell you about the smell in the kitchen?
- Does Vivienne look like her mother? In what ways is her appearance different?
- Why is James's grandmother referred to as a **little chicken**?
- What language do Vivienne and her mother/James's grandmother speak? Why does this surprise James? What language did he grow up speaking?
- What is **flou tee**? How does James's grandmother make **flou tee**?
- James describes his thoughts as **dislocated, disconnected, jumbled**. What does this say about his understanding of, and feelings about, the situation?
- What is the **mystery** James is curious about?
- As James falls asleep in his grandmother's attic, he hears a sound in the distance that **ebbed and flowed** but is **somehow soothing**. What is he hearing?

Chapter 4

- What has woken James?
- The events of James's last few days are described as **topsy-turvy**. Which word matches that feeling: confusing, exciting, or tragic?
- What is another word for **lavatory**?
- Why do you think James's grandmother and Vivienne have not been woken by the noise that woke James?
- What is **Die Land**?
- At the end of the chapter, James sees what is making the loud noise. What is it?

Chapter 5

- Why is James excited to find out what is making the noises?
- Why does **Nonhle** call James **Stevie** when she sees him?
- What does **menacing** mean? Why does James think the man is **menacing**?
- What does this sentence tell you about Kalk Bay and Die Land? **The boats were sunk low in the water, heavy with the night's catch.**
- James follows **Nonhle** but he feels **unsure**. Why do you think he begins to feel **unsure**?
- **Brine** is a saltwater mixture. The tunnel is **strong and briny**. What does this tell you about where the tunnel is?
- Do you think Nugget is a clever dog? Give reasons for your answer.

Chapter 6

- What is the name of the beach James goes to?
- A pool is something you can swim in. Tides are when the sea slowly moves in and out along the shore during the day. Can you explain what a **tidal pool** is?
- In almost every chapter, James remembers something that his father has given his mother. Why do you think this is important?
- How does James know not to tell Nonhle's father about what happened on the steps?
- How do James and Nonhle pretend they have never met?

Chapter 7

- What word does James use to describe the temperature of the water?
- What is **lobtailing**? Describe it by making a similar sound with your hands or feet.
- James cannot swim. Why did he never learn?
- How does the story James shares make you feel? Have you ever been teased about something that is not your fault? How did it affect you?
- James decides to go back to his grandmother's house. He uses a **landmark** to find his way. What is a **landmark**? How can you use a **landmark** to remember where you are and where to go? What is James's **landmark**?
- James watches the whale wave a flipper and he waves back. Why does he feel like it is a silly thing to do? Do you think it is silly?

Chapter 8

- Read the first paragraph of Chapter 8. Explain what the word **indefinitely** means in this paragraph?
- James describes Nonhle as **bold**. What other words can you think of to describe Nonhle?
- Is Die Land a friendly community? How do you know? How does it compare to your own community?
- James hears Aunt Muriel greet the menacing man. His name is Yusuf. She says "**Ag, he used to be such a nice boy, but now...**" What does that tell you about Yusuf's place in the community of Die Land and his relationship with his neighbours?
- What does **no offense** mean? Why does James say "**No offense**" to his grandmother when they talk about why he is unhappy?
- What is the **secret** that James's mother kept for her **entire married life**?
- Why does James feel ashamed of his mother's behaviour?
- Why is it important that James's grandmother keeps the photo of him as a baby in her **special drawer**?

Chapter 9

- James's great-great-great-grandfather, Felix Padua, was from the Philippines. What is the word used to describe people from those islands?
- What else happened around the time that Felix Padua decided to stay in Kalk Bay?
- Read these phrases: **the slaves in Cape Town were set free** and **emancipated slaves**. What does the word **emancipated** mean?
- James's grandmother says that James takes after his grandfather (her husband), Willem Fernandez, in a particular way. In what way is he like him?
- Why does James not want to call his grandmother **Granny**, **Ouma** or **Ma**? What does everybody call her?

Chapter 10

- What is Aunt Baby cooking? Can you describe what it looks like and tastes like?
- What does **retrenched** mean?
- What worries Nonhle most about her father losing his job?
- How does Aunt Baby handle stress and upsetting situations? Is James used to this?

- The characters in the book speak a mixture of English and Kaaps. What effect does mixing the languages have on your understanding of the characters and the setting?
- Aunty Baby is Christian. Why does she greet Faried in the language of Islam? What does this tell you about Aunty Baby's personality and how she treats others?
- Nonhle gives Faried **a ferocious glare** before storming out of the kitchen. What clue does this give about her feelings towards the boy?

Chapter 11

- Aunty Baby says to tell Nonhle "**No charge under the circumstances**". What **circumstances** is she referring to?
- Nonhle says that Faried and Yusuf are **poachers**. James has heard the word in reference to **rhino poachers** but, in Die Land, poachers take perlemoen (abalone). Can you explain what a poacher is, and why being a poacher is a bad thing?
- The word **Strandloper** literally means "beach walker". What does that tell you about the **Khoekhoen** and how they lived?
- Nonhle explains that fishing in the days of great-grandparents and grandparents was **sustainable**. What does the word **sustainable** mean?
- Why was it **fine hundreds of years ago** for people to fish and collect eggs and shellfish? What does **unsustainable** mean? What is it about modern fishing practices that make it **unsustainable**?
- Why is it interesting that people used to eat crayfish **for breakfast, lunch and supper**?

Chapter 12

- How does Vivienne use a perlemoen shell? Why does James decide not to mention this to Nonhle?
- What does it mean when an animal or creature becomes **extinct**? Nonhle tells James that perlemoen are **facing extinction**. Why does she blame people like Yusuf and Faried for this problem?
- Different cultures have different burial traditions. Some cultures choose to bury their loved ones, while others choose cremation. What does Nonhle mean when she tells James **we scattered my mother's ashes**?
- Why did James decide **to share something personal** with Nonhle? How does sharing personal stories with people we trust and like help to make us better friends and listeners?
- Earlier in the story, James described Nonhle as **bold**. Now, she is described as **plucky**. What do you think it means to be **plucky**? Do you agree that Nonhle is **plucky**?

Chapter 13

- What does James mean when he calls his mother **the sugar police**?
- Why did Vivienne feel like a **second-class citizen** and how did she try to solve that problem?
- James describes how he is feeling as **dislodged, dislocated, helpless**. Do you think his mother, Vivienne, is feeling a similar way? Why or why not?
- The word **trudged** describes a way of walking that is slow and takes effort. It is used to describe how James walks up to bed at the end of the day. Explain how this gives us information about James's mood, rather than if he'd simply walked up to the attic.

Chapter 14

- What is the main difference between Cape Town and Johannesburg according to James?
- Auntie Baby does not ask why Mr Mooi has come to visit and simply serves him a bowl of oats. What does this tell you about Auntie Baby as a person, and the community of Die Land?
- How does James feel when he realises that his mother knows Mr Mooi?
- What is SALT? Why is Mr Mooi so happy when he talks about SALT?
- SALT is described as **exclusive**. This means that only a few children will be able to attend school there. Why do you think it is exclusive? Why can't it be a bigger school?
- Does Vivienne's reaction to news of the school match James's reaction?
- To get into the school, James would have to present a **portfolio** as **visual evidence that he had been involved in a worthy marine-conservation project**. James decides that he cannot do this. Why does he feel this is not possible for him?

Chapter 15

- James has his own phone so why does he take his mother's phone to contact his father?
- What is James's surname?
- After James leaves the message he is **immediately seized with remorse**. This expression means that he regrets what he has done. Why do you think James feels this way?
- When James runs away to get back home, he is **hyper-aware of his surroundings**. Think about the five senses (smell, sight, touch, taste, hearing) and describe how James might be experiencing the evening.
- Do you think that James's idea to follow Yusuf and Faried is a good idea? Give reasons for your answer.

Chapter 16

- What does **stalking** mean? Explain the meaning of **stalking the poachers**.
- What is **snorkelling**? Why does James not want to go **snorkelling** with Nonhle?
- James is excited to send Nonhle the photos he took of Faried and Yusuf. Nonhle doesn't react the way James expected. Why?
- When James asks if there are sharks in the bay, Nonhle replies **enthusiastically**. What does **enthusiastically** mean? What is James's reaction to this news?
- Nonhle tells James that southern right whales do not **lobtail**. Which type of whales do lobtail?
- What is **kabeljou**?
- What is Nonhle talking about when she says: "**It drives me crazy**"? What does she mean?
- Do you think that Nonhle is disrespectful towards Auntie Muriel? Why do you think she says the things she says to the community members? Do you agree or disagree with Nonhle's approach?

Chapter 17

- When the friends see Faried, James tries to talk to him. He then asks Nonhle whether she thinks poaching is dangerous for Faried. What does this tell you about James's personality? Do you think James is a good friend? Why or why not?

- James sees a shark for the first time at the Shark Centre. Do you think places like the Shark Centre, the aquarium or the zoo can be good for teaching children about animals? Why or why not?
- James makes a joke when he tells a boy to stop banging on the glass. What was the joke?
- What were some signs that the little girl would be **a good candidate for SALT**?
- What does it mean to be **on the right track**? Why did the money Angie paid James feel to him like **a sign that he was on the right track**?

Chapter 18

- Why is this trip on the research boat a **once-in-a-lifetime** opportunity?
- What is James learning about his mother and how she was when she was younger?
- What is a **skipper**? Who is the **skipper** on the boat?
- What is the correct word for a baby whale?
- James is **secretly pleased** that the calf has been named **Jamie** in his honour. When the calf comes to the surface, James feels even more connected with it, why?

Chapter 19

- Faried comes to talk to James and says: "**Ons issie almal so sleg nie, wie't jy**" (We aren't all so bad, you know). Why do you think Faried is talking to James, and why do you think he says this?
- What is a **confession**? What is James's **confession**? What is Faried's reaction to James's **confession**?
- Faried's uncle is sitting with **sinister** men. The word **sinister** means dangerous and scary. What do you think the men were doing with Yusuf?
- Faried changes James's attitude towards poachers. How does Faried try to explain why some people poach? How does this change the way that James feels about Faried?
- James overhears Yusuf talking to the men about **straws**. What are **straws**? Does this make you feel scared for James? Why or why not?

Chapter 20

- Why does Yusuf eventually agree to sell the drugs for the men?
- Has your opinion of Yusuf changed since the beginning of the book? Why or why not? Do you think Yusuf is able to make good choices based on his circumstances? To what extent is Yusuf's lifestyle a choice?
- What does **behind bars** mean about where a person is?

Chapter 21

- What is **strandveld**? What do Yusuf and Faried hide in the **strandveld**?
- Nonhle did not know where Yusuf and Faried launched their boats from. James solves that mystery. Explain how they do it.
- Why would the name of the boat help Save Our Oceans identify the poachers?

Chapter 22

- James's father says **the problem contains the solution**, meaning that, with enough careful thought, it is possible to solve anything. What would you have done in James's situation?
- Read this sentence: **He counted, One... two... three..., took a deep breath and stood up.** How do you think James is feeling at this point?

Chapter 23

- James is sure that he is in danger. How does he imagine his grandmother would react to what he is doing? Does this thought comfort him or make him more anxious?
- Why does James decide that he needs to be brave? Who is he being brave for?
- James **made his move just in time**. What **move** did James make and why is it lucky that he moved?
- James is making a mental note of the people's appearances. Why is this a good thing to do?
- Why does James leave his hiding place? How did it make you feel when he slid out into the open like that?

Chapter 24

- What is Faried's reaction when he sees James? Do you think Faried is angry or scared?
- The **bilge** is the lowest inside part of a boat where water collects. Why do you think the perlemoen catch is stored in the **bilge**?
- When the sailor catches James, he seems more **perplexed** than angry. What does **perplexed** mean?
- The word **magnanimous** means being kind towards someone that you should be angry with. How does this describe the sailors' reaction to James before Yusuf sees him?
- How does Faried react when the sailors throw James overboard?

Chapter 25

- Describe how James feels when he realises he is all alone in the ocean.
- How did Faried help James? What do you think Faried's uncle's reaction will be?
- Why does James take off his hoodie and t-shirt?

Chapter 26

- What happened to James's cell phone? Why is this an important detail in the story?
- Adrenaline is a chemical in your body that gives you energy when you are excited, scared, nervous, or in danger. What **aftereffects of the adrenaline** does James experience?
- Faried appears and takes control of the situation. How did Faried's plan differ from James's plan?
- Why do you think James collapses?

Chapter 27

- James calls himself a **freak**. Why does he do this? Do you think he is a **freak**? What do you wish you could tell James?
- A social worker has been called in to help Faried. Do you know what social workers do? How do you think Faried could be helped?
- How has James's opinion of Cape Town, Kalk Bay, and Die Land changed since he first arrived with his mother?
- What does James do that makes Aunty Baby happy?

Chapter 28

- Nonhle often calls James a **slowcoach**. What does it mean to be called a **slowcoach**?
- Explain why James has been shown the video by the SALT board? Why have the SALT board asked to see his birthmark?
- All his life, James has felt shy about his birthmark. Why do you think he decides to take off his shirt to allow the board to identify him?

Chapter 29

- When Aunty Baby walks into the room, she says: "**What a gedoente!**" (a fuss or commotion). Explain how this word sums up what is happening in the room.
- Why is Nonhle **jumping up and down like a mad jack-in-the-box**? Choose a word that describes how she's feeling: sad, nervous or excited. Why is she feeling this way?
- James describes his dad as "**The best person in the family**". What does that tell you about how much James misses his father? Does it explain his reaction to seeing his dad at the beginning of this chapter?
- Vivianne says: "**Yes, yes, I am from here**". What has been healed inside Vivienne? Do you think it will positively affect James?

Chapter 30

- James gives Nonhle a compliment. What does he say?
- James explains to Nonhle how Faried jumped out of the boat. What does this tell you about Faried as a person?
- Nonhle tells James that he **might as well learn to swim** now. What does she mean by this?

Chapter 31

- What kind of person is Mr Mooi?
- Other than SALT, why does Vivienne decide to stay in Kalk Bay with her son?
- What is a **scholarship**? Phillip turns down the **scholarship** and says that he will pay for James's schooling. Why does he do this?
- Why do the SALT board members cut the meeting short?
- What does Mr Mooi say about Aunty Baby to explain his decision?

Chapter 32

- What is James's idea for the SALT scholarship?
- Faried's father has passed away, and he was living with his uncle, who will be going to jail. Where will Faried live while he finishes school?
- An **epiphany** is an excellent idea that comes to you suddenly. What **epiphany** does the SALT board have?
- Why do you think Aunt Baby is invited to be on the SALT board? Do you think that this is a good idea? Why or why not?

Topics for discussion after reading the story

- Explore with your children:
 - Who would you rather be in this story, James, Nonhle or Faried? Why?
 - What do you think will happen next for James?
 - Is there anything you particularly liked or disliked about this story?
 - Has anything that happened in this book ever happened to you?
 - What is something you have learnt from this story?
 - If the author asked you what could be improved in the book, what would you say?
 - What would you tell your friends about this book?

Activity ideas for after reading the story

- Ask your class to answer the following prompts and share their responses in small groups:
 - One thing I learnt from reading Marked
 - Two things I liked about reading Marked
 - Three things I want to learn more about after reading Marked
- A strong message in this book is to be proud of who you are and where you come from. Ask your class to contribute reasons they are proud to be themselves. Write their ideas as a mind map titled 'Reasons to be Proud'.
- Play this YouTube video with your class: [How to draw Abalone](#)
 - Watch the video with your class
 - Hand out pencils and paper with the video playing again for your class to follow along and draw
 - Create an abalone collage as a display

Please see the following pages for Grade specific CAPS aligned skills covered in these teaching notes.

CAPS skills covered in teaching notes

Listening and speaking

Grade 4

- Predict what a text could be about
- Identify characters
- Name characters correctly
- Listen for main message and specific details
- Describe events
- Identify specific details
- Discuss main ideas and specific details
- Express feelings in relation to events
- Express thoughts and feelings about a story/characters/setting or theme of a text
- Relate to own life experiences
- Answer oral questions based on the text
- Participate in group discussions
- Take turns to speak
- Share ideas, opinions and participate in the discussion
- Ask relevant questions
- Keep to the topic
- Maintain discussions
- Respond to others' ideas with empathy and respect

Reading and viewing

Grade 4

- Pre reading: Make predictions for the title and cover of the text
- Predict from title and discuss related themes/content
- Make predictions
- Identify and explain central events
- Identify and comment on the plot, setting and characters
- Discuss characters
- Give reasons for the actions of characters
- Give and explain own feelings about the text
- Express emotional response to text read
- Identify and discuss values in the text
- Use reading strategies: Make predictions and use contextual cues
- Use contextual cues to make meaning
- Discuss message/moral of the story
- Reflect on text read
- Infer meaning of unfamiliar words and images
- Use reading comprehension strategies: Visualisation and making connections
- Determine the impact of visual techniques
- Discuss new vocabulary from the text
- Understand vocabulary

Listening and speaking

Grade 5

- Make predictions
- Describe events
- Identify and explain cause and effect
- Comment on social, moral and cultural values
- Ask critical questions
- Express and justify own opinion with reasons
- Use information from the text in response to questions
- Identify main ideas and specific details
- Identify central idea, plot, setting and characters
- Relate text content to own life
- Discuss and give own opinion
- Express thoughts and feelings about the storyline
- Participate in group discussions
- Ask relevant questions
- Justify own opinion
- Maintain discussion
- Take turns to speak
- Respond to others' ideas with empathy and respect

Reading and viewing

Grade 5

- Pre reading: Predict from title and pictures and discuss related themes/content
- Comment on choice of pictures in text
- Share ideas and offers opinion using speculation
- Use reading strategies: Contextual clues and prior knowledge
- Discuss characters
- Give reason for actions of characters
- Discuss the central idea, plot, characters and setting
- Discuss cause and effect in the story
- Identify and discuss feelings expressed in text
- Express own feelings and opinion
- Identify and explain how central events and characters relate to own life
- Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and images
- Discuss new vocabulary from text

Listening and speaking

Grade 6

- Predict what will happen in a story
- Discuss main ideas and specific details
- Identify themes
- Discuss characters
- Discuss plot, conflict and setting
- Discuss messages in text
- Discuss responses to text
- Discuss social, moral and cultural values in text
- Relate ideas to own life experiences
- Ask relevant questions and respond appropriately
- Stay on topic
- Explain logically
- Interact positively during group discussions
- Respond to others' ideas with empathy and respect

Reading and viewing

Grade 6

- Pre reading: Make predictions based on title and/or graphics and related themes/content
- Make predictions about the text
- Ask questions about the text
- Make inferences about the text
- Visualise parts of the text
- Identify and explain the central idea
- Interpret and discuss the text
- Discuss plot, theme, setting and characters
- Discuss suspense and twist
- Critically discusses cultural and social values in the text
- Relate events and characters to own life
- Show understanding of the text and relationship to own life
- Identify and discuss feelings expressed in text
- Express emotional response to texts read
- Identify different perspectives
- Give own perspective based on evidence in the text
- Infer meaning of unfamiliar words and images
- Invent or describe preferred results or endings

Listening and speaking

Grade 7

- Make predictions from cover page and blurb
- Confirm predictions
- Identify main and supporting ideas
- Make inferences
- Share ideas and experiences to show understanding of concepts
- Share ideas and opinions
- Identify characters
- Identify main and supporting ideas
- Use appropriate language
- Answer questions

Reading and viewing

Grade 7

- Make predictions
- Make connections
- Identify key features of a text such as characters, plot, setting, conflict, theme and message
- Discuss main ideas and themes
- Discuss fact or opinion in text
- Infer meaning of unfamiliar words
- Infer meaning and conclusions
- Visualise parts of the text
- Identify formal/informal language in the text
- Answer questions based on text