

AN EXTRA-ORDINARY BEGINNING

Guided Reading Resource 1 – Openings

Chapter 1 – Painful Memories: Alexander Almas recalls events from over 10 years ago.

Authors often give a reader clues as to what will happen in their novel and a ‘hook’ to get them interested .

- Look at *Chapter 1 – Painful Memories* again. What kind of book do you think this is going to be? What clues are you using? Support your opinion by referring to the text.
- What hooks does the author use to get you interested to read more? From the following list, which hooks does the author use: Powerful verbs, Short dramatic sentences, Dramatic vocabulary, Hints and suggestions, Clear descriptions, Complex sentences to add layers of meaning, Use of questions to draw me into the story, Use of an adverb to start the sentence to make it more interesting, Alliteration/onomatopoeia, Imagery. Give examples by referring to the text.

In a group of 3 or 4, discuss what you believe will happen in the story. Do you want to go on reading? Why? Why not? Where and when do you think this story is taking place? What tells you?

Prepare a summary of your discussion to present to the class.

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Guided Reading Resource 2 - Characters

Chapter 2 – On the Rooftops of Paris: introduces the two main characters, Eric and Ursula.

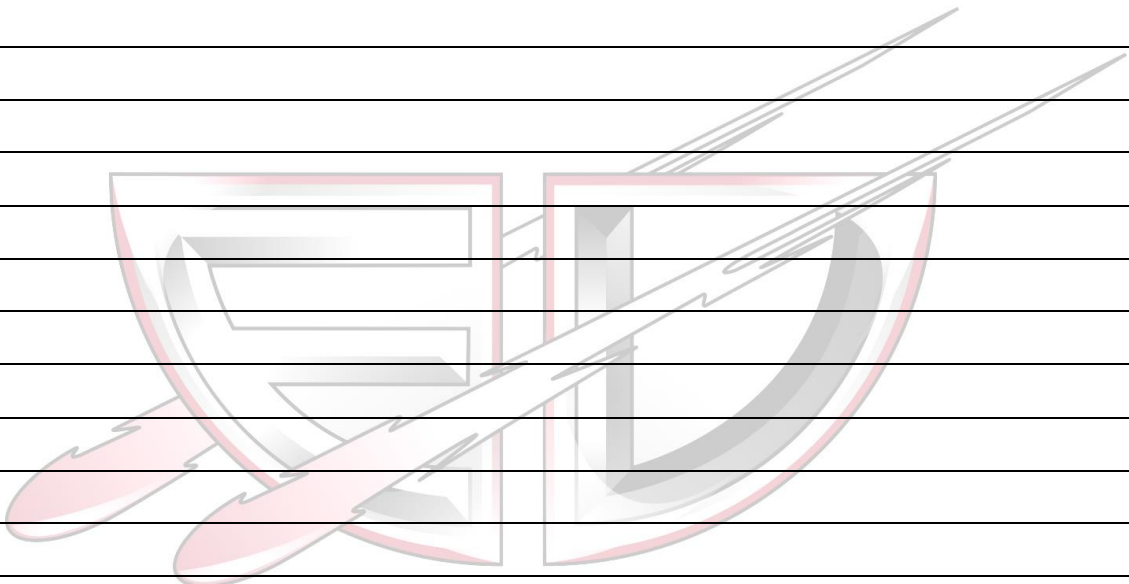
- Using what you have read, create a bullet point list for each of the main characters – Eric and Ursula. Write down all the information you have found out about them from Chapter 2.
- Create a 'Wanted' poster for one of the main characters. On the poster write down aspects of their appearance of personality that would help people to recognise them.

Use your ideas about the Eric and Ursula to create 'freeze frames', showing different things that happened to them.

Working in groups of four or five, try to pick up to three episodes that you can use to show different characters and what they have done. The can be in time order (chronologically) or an order you decide, but you must explain your choice.

Present your 'freeze frames' to other groups. Discuss the similarities or differences in your presentations in the way the characters or events have been chosen.

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Guided Reading Resource 5 –Characters (asking questions)

Chapter 5- Au revoir : Ursula says goodbye to her grandparents

- Ursula does not leave the apartment block by the stairs or lift. How does she leave? Why does she leave this way? Why has the author made her leave this way? What effect is the author after?
- Meme is feeling a mixture of emotions as Ursula falls to the ground past each floor. What are these emotions? Why is she feeling a mixture of emotions?

Write down five true things about your guided reading book and five lies. Can you trick your friend?

Work with two other people. The last line of Chapter 5 is *“Behind him, lurking in the shadows, a sineny figure wheezed expectantly.”* What does this mean? Draw and label what you think this character looks like independently and then compare with your friends. Discuss how your sketches are similar or different.

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Guided Reading Resource 6 – Setting and Atmosphere (See images)

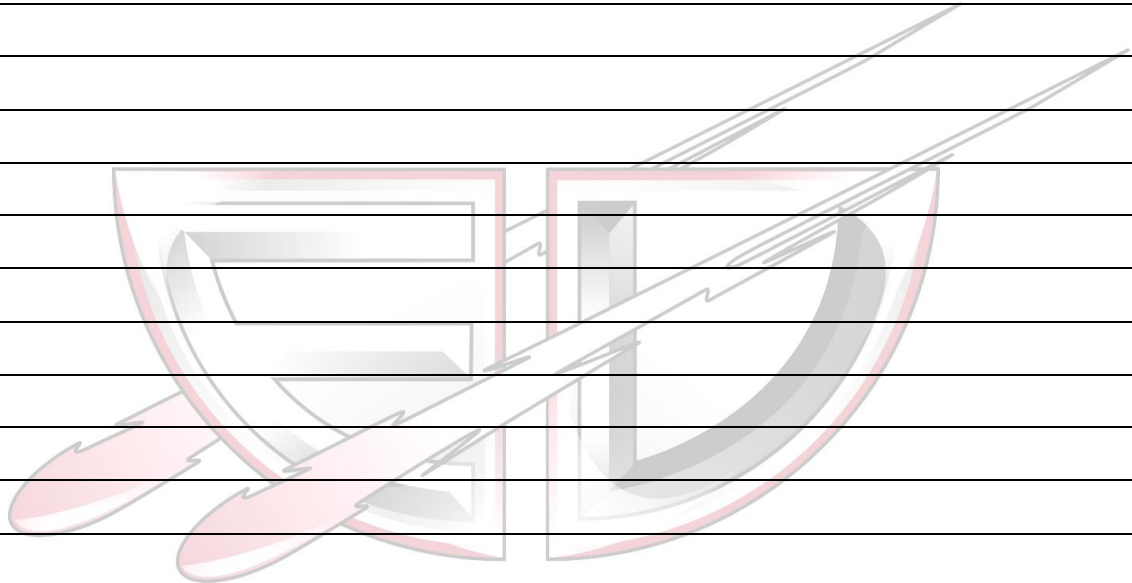
Chapter 6 – Finding the Treasure: Alexander finds the missing pod but so does Mihai and the OSS.

- Draw a map of the setting for this chapter. Label it and add descriptions for the places. Try to be as accurate as possible and add anything to your map that you think is missing.
- Use your map and imagine taking a holiday in this area of the world. Explain why you would (or wouldn't) like to have a holiday there.

Work in a group of four. Can you picture what is happening? Can you describe these images to the others in your group? Are your visions different to other readers? (Use your map)

What do you think has been found? Do you think it is empty? If you think it contains/contained something, what do you think it contains/contained? Discuss these in your group?

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Guided Reading Resource 8 – Style and Language

Chapter 8 – The Meyer’s Cellar: Eric traps Ursula in the cellar.

- During this chapter Eric reveals a fear he has and Ursula is trapped in the cellar. How has the writer wanted me to feel? How has he achieved this? Give examples of text from the chapter.
- “*The cellar is out of bounds,*” said Andrea and closed the door between them. Why do you think the cellar is out of bounds in the cellar? What is been kept secret. Draw and label.
- BBB.

With a partner, pretend to be real estate agents and give each other a tour of the cellar. Use your imagination!

As you are preparing your tour think about the style and language you are going to use. For example, if you decide that the cellar is a scary place your style and language will be very different than if you think the cellar is a great place to have parties.

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Guided Reading Resource 9 – Plot and Structure (Relate to the social, historical and cultural background)

Chapter 9 – Return to Roswell: Professor Schwarzkopf returns to Roswell with Agent Angel and there are recollections from years ago.

- Three new characters are introduced in this chapter. Write 5 keywords about each character– Professor Schwarzkopf, Professor Larsen and Agent Angel.
- Professor Schwarzkopf recalls memories from when he arrived in America. In reading these do you think the author made them up completely or based them on fact? What makes you think this? Give reasons to support your answers.

In Chapter 9 is the following sentence, *Behind him (Professor Schwarzkopf), Major Marshall sniggered, "Broads, I'll never understand them."* Is this a sexist comment? Was it a sexist comment when it was made over sixty years ago. **Discuss this in a group of three?**

There was an incident at Roswell in 1947 when a UFO is said to have crashed and alien bodies found. Some people believe this really happened. Other believes it is a hoax and never happened. What is your opinion? Have aliens visited Earth? Do aliens exist? **Discuss these questions in your group.**

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Guided Reading Resource 11 – Plot and Structure (Rationalise what is happening)

Chapter 11 – Opening: Professor Schwarzkopf is working back at Roswell. He manages to open the pod.

- Professor Schwarzkopf is old and retired, so why do you think he is helping the OSS? Give reasons to support your answer.
- Why is it important for the OSS to open the pod? What are they hoping to find?
- Do the OSS and Professor Schwarzkopf have different motives for opening the pod?

In a group of four

Professor Schwarzkopf is old and Jean Kurtz is young. Their opinions are different. How are they different? Why are they different?

Think of adults in your life. How is your generation different from theirs? (e.g. music, hobbies, clothes, food, social life, use of computers)

Act out a play that shows the differences between your generation and your parents' generation.

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Guided Reading Resource 14 – Plot and Structure (Reread)

Chapter 14 – Recovery Time: Eric and Ursula fall asleep after their fight and sleep for eighteen hours.

- You are now approximately half-way through ‘An Extra-Ordinary Beginning’. Scan back through the book. Reread the best bits, check your suspicions and enjoy it again.
- Write about your favourite part of the book and explain why you like it.
- Write about your least favourite part of the book and explain why you didn’t like it.

In a group of less than six, prepare a summary play of the book so far. You must include parts of the plot that your group feels are most relevant and your summer.

Your play must be no longer than two minutes in length.

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Guided Reading Resource 16 – Author’s voice and intentions

Chapter 16 – Breaking News: On the news it is reported that the yacht, which Eric’s parents were on, has exploded and his parents have been killed.

- The author’s voice change has changed in this chapter as he writes as a news reporter. How has it changed? Think about language used and style employed.
- Write a short newspaper article based on the events in the chapter. Remember to change your style and language to reflect the purpose of your article.

In a group of three, prepare your own breaking news story on the explosion in the gulf.

You can use the text from the book or rework the scene to make it more individual to your group. You can include interviews with people at the Dubai harbour or the crew of the ‘Gulf Steam’.

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Guided Reading Resource 17 – Author’s voice and intentions (Predict what will happen)

Chapter 17 – Reporting Back: The OSS announce that Eric is missing. The chapter is really short.

- Why do you think the author kept this chapter so short?
- Why do you think the author uses capital letters when Agent Angel says “Put out a warrant, use Interpol, do what it takes, but FIND THAT BOY!”
- Can you work out where the story is heading? Don’t worry if you’re wrong. Sometimes the author wants to trick you. Think about what will happen to each of the main characters (e.g. Eric, Ursula, Andrea, The Benjamins, Professor Schwarzkopf, Agent Angel) and the events that surround them.

Share your expectations **with a partner**. If you think it is necessary (ie they have convinced you what they think will happen), revise your expectations for the book.

In a **group of four**, prepare a trailer for the movie version of the book. Base it on what you know so far from the book. Remember that trailers tease you to watch the film but they do not give the end away.

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Guided Reading Resource 18 – Style and Language

Chapter 18 – Return to Saint Denis: The Christmas holiday comes to an abrupt end and the main characters travel back to Saint Denis in Paris.

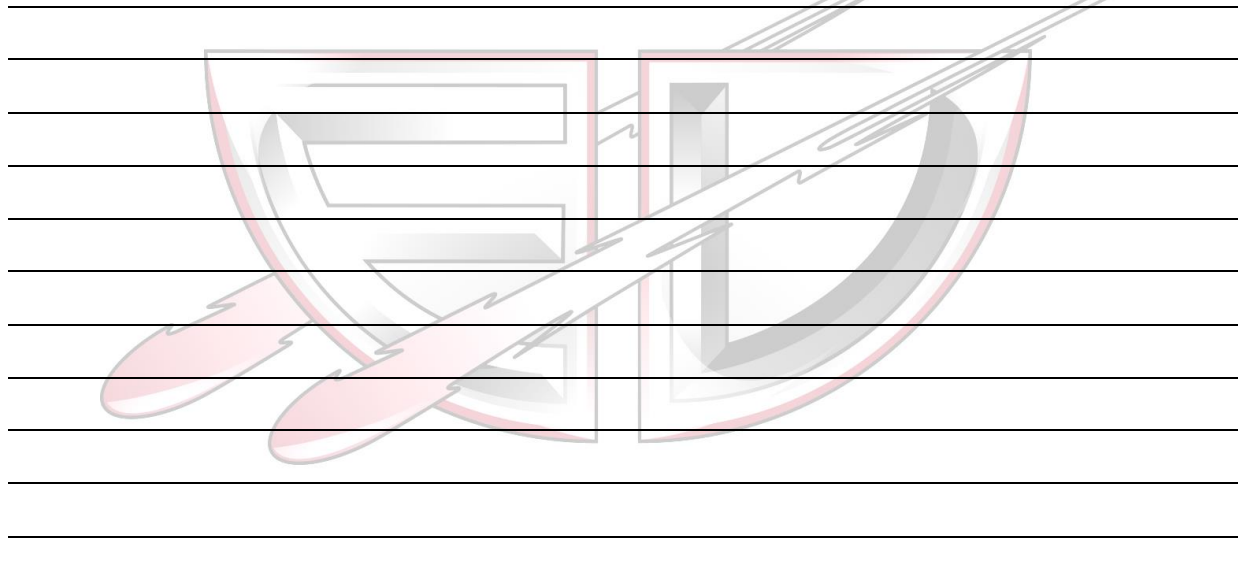
Storytellers sometimes rely on your previous reading experiences to make connections; they use structures which tease your understanding, they lead you down alleyways, they trick you. As a reader, you should try to infer and deduce the patterns by trying to make sense out of the seemingly random nature of events.

- In this chapter, an American car pulls out behind their car and follows them out of the village. In your opinion is the car important? Is the writer trying to trick you? What do you think is the significance of this car, if any?
- Is ‘An Extra-Ordinary Beginning’ similar to any other book/s you have read? If yes, in what ways is it similar? If no, do you think this ‘An Extra-Ordinary Beginning’ is really this unique? Justify your answer.

With a partner, discuss if there are there any other points in the story when you thought, ‘I wonder why the author wrote that.’ Think about characters and events; try to answer your own questions.

Discuss similarities between ‘An Extra-Ordinary Beginning’ and other books you have read. Using your previous reading experience, discuss with your partner, what you think will happen? Will this book have a similar plot line to other book or will it differ in some way?

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Guided Reading Resource 22 – Style and Language

Chapter 22 – Professor Larsen’s Story: Professor Larsen explains how Eric and Ursula were ‘born’.

- When Professor Larsen tells her story, does the writer’s style and use of language change? Can you give examples? If you don’t think it changes, what would you suggest to make Professor Larsen sound more authentic?
- Did you expect this to happen (Eric and Ursula being ‘born’ in space)? If yes, what clues had the author given you? If no, what did you feel when you found this out.

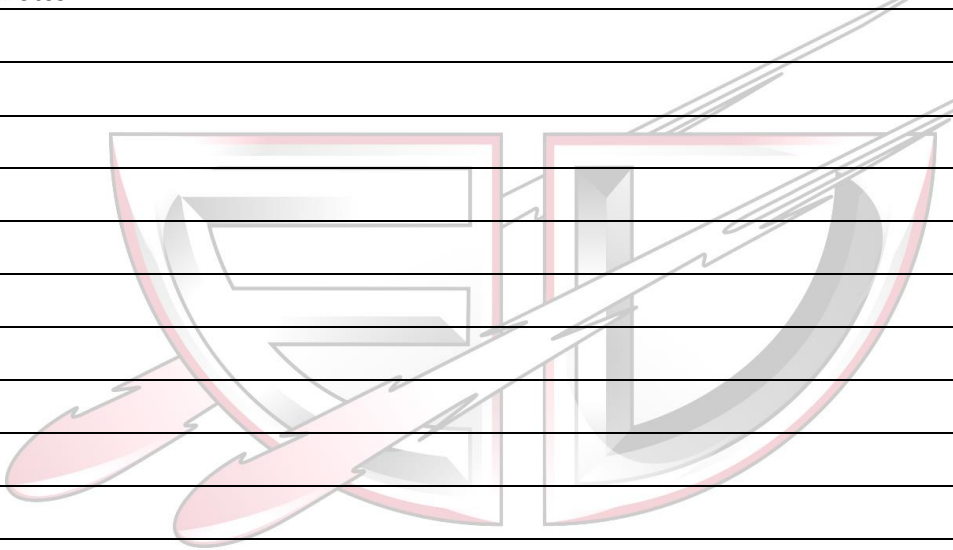
‘What’s that in the sky? It looks like a UFO or maybe it’s a jet plane.’

With a partner, take the above sentences and re-write them as if the following characters were saying them;

- Eric
- Ursula
- Professor Larsen
- Andrea
- Granddad Benjamin
- Agent Angel

For each of the above characters, add another sentence that this character may say.

Your notes:



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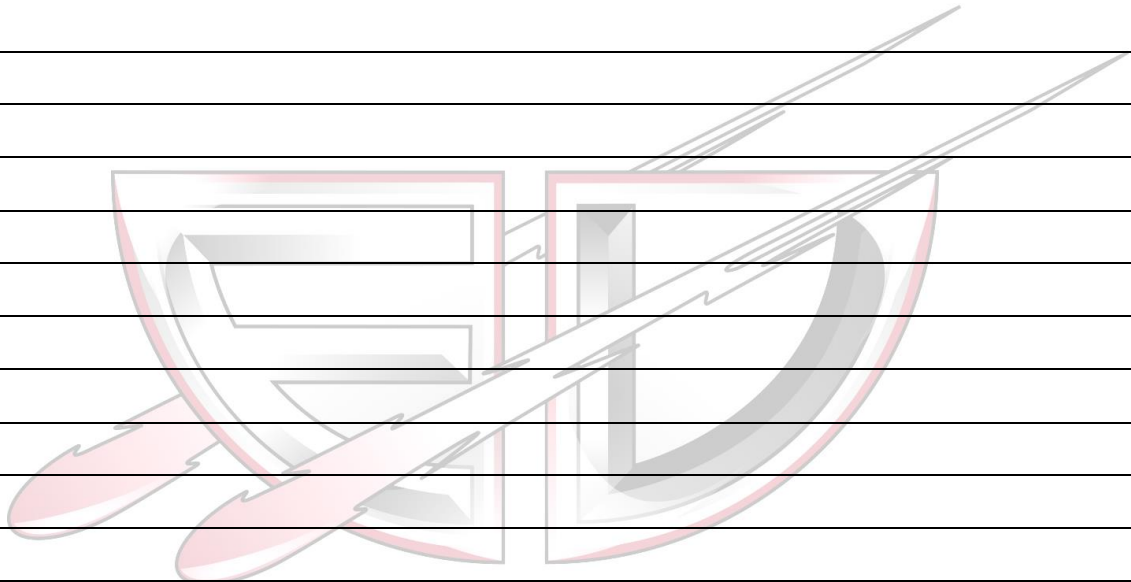
Guided Reading Resource 24 – Setting and Atmosphere

Chapter 24 – House Arrest: Eric is stuck in the Meyer Villa with Alexander. They plan how they are going to retrieve the pod.

- The Meyer Villa is a prison to Eric and Alexander. In your own words, describe this prison and describe the atmosphere inside it.
- Would you like to stay in such a prison? Give reasons to support your answer.

Eric's family are rich so the Meyer Villa is a luxury prison. If Eric and Alexander had to spend time in a real prison how could the author describe the setting and atmosphere? **With a partner,** write a paragraph describing Eric and Alexander's first day in a real prison. Focus on the setting and atmosphere rather than just what they do.

Your notes:



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Guided Reading Resource 26 – Setting and Atmosphere (Seeing images)

Chapter 26 – Under Observation: The OSS are watching Eric and Ursula but the children manage to lose them.

- Can you picture what is happening? Write down what you can see in your head. If it helps, draw a plan of the area too
 - Imagine you are OSS agent watching the scene. What would your report back to Agent Hoover?

Work in a **group of 4**. Can you describe the images above to the others in your group? Are your visions different to other readers'?

The writer Dan Brown wrote ‘Angels and Demons’ which is set in Rome. If you visit Rome you can go on the ‘Angels and Demons’ Tour. During the tour, you visit locations from the book. If you were running a tour for ‘An Extra-Ordinary Beginning’, which locations would you choose to visit and what you would say about them. Prepare your tour guide speech **with a partner**

Your notes:

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Guided Reading Resource 27 – Style and Language (Feel involved)

Chapter 27 – The Missing Pod: Ursula find disc 5, but then she, Eric, Andrea and Alexander, are involved in a car chase up Mount Vesuvius.

- During this Chapter, how has the writer wanted you to feel? List your emotions and why you felt this while reading.
- How has the writer achieved this? Give examples from the text.

With a partner, pretend that you are Sports Commentators. However, you are commenting on Ursula, Eric, Andrea and Alexander's attempt to flee the OSS. Use language that commentators would use, such as superlatives and comparatives. For example, “he is driving brilliantly and he took that bend better than a Formula 1 driver.”

Present your commentary to another pair.

Your notes:

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Guided Reading Resource 28 – Characters (Asking questions)

Chapter 28 – Rendez-vous: Eric and Ursula are chased down Mount Vesuvius as they try to reach the airport. They realise that they can ‘beat’ the OSS agents.

- It is unusual for children to fight adults, especially trained agents, why do Eric and Ursula do this? What effect does it have on you as the reader? How does your feelings, or perception, of Eric and Ursula change?
- During a tense escape from the OSS, Ursula decides that she needs the toilet. Why has the author presented Ursula like this? What effect, or reactions, is he after?

In a group of 4, imagine that you are the family of Eric and Ursula. You are watching their escape from the OSS on a screen. What conversations would you be having with the rest of your family regarding Eric and Ursula’s exploits? If you wish to do this in character, please be Ursula’s Grandparents or Eric’s parents.

Your notes:

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Guided Reading Resource 30 – Plot and Structure (Re-reading)

Chapter 30 – Reunion: Ursula, Eric, Andrea and Alexander get back to the Benjamin’s apartment and find disc 5.

- Write down ten keywords that are important to your guided reading book. They may include characters, setting, what happens.
- Design a new book cover for the book. Include a picture, title, author and also a short blurb.

Work **with a partner** to create a timeline. Using pictures explain the order of events in your guided reading book. Label each picture.

Your notes:

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Guided Reading Resource 31 – Author’s intentions (predicting what may happen)

Chapter 31 – Disc Five: On Disc 5, Professor Larsen tells her three fears. These are: firstly, Aliens are looking for a new home; secondly, an army of Identical Hybrid Beings will be created by the OSS; thirdly, Eric and Ursula will not live beyond 13 or 14 years old.

- In this chapter, the author is presenting three possible story arcs for future books based on Professor Larsen’s fears. For two of the fears, write what you think may happen in the future books ie what do you think are the author’s intentions.

Discuss your story arcs in a **group of 3**. How are your ideas similar or dissimilar to other members of your group?

In your group still, imagine that Professor Larsen says she has four fears. What could this additional fear?

Your notes:

