

Creased up



Tickled pink



Gobsmacked



Swept away

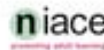


Quick Reads

Get hooked on books.



Blackwater Conn Iggulden



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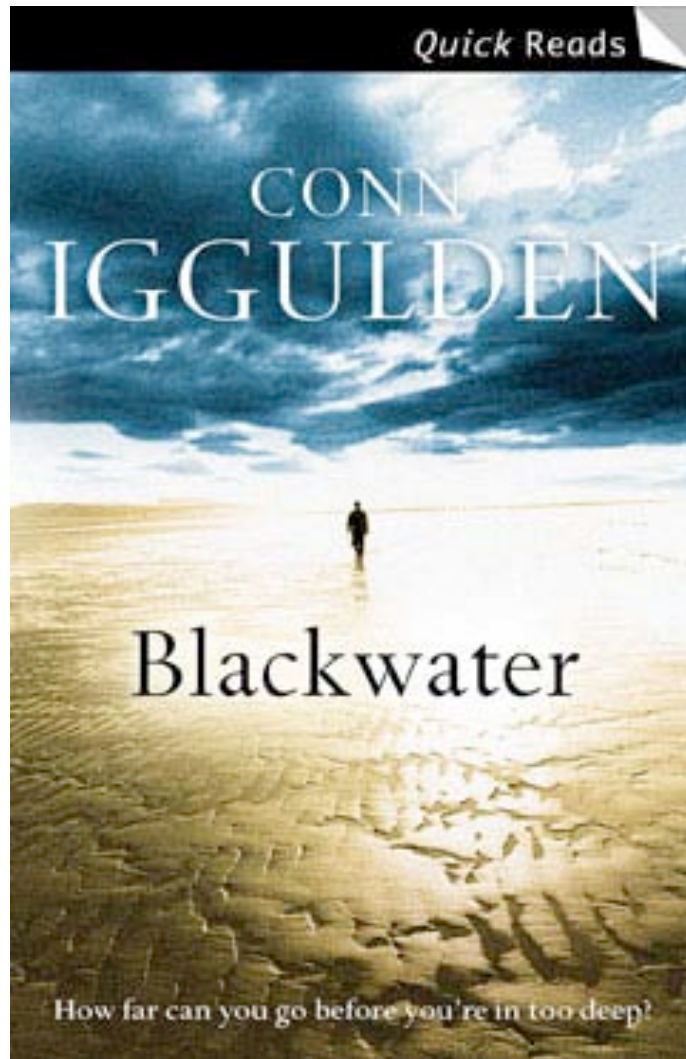
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Acknowledgement

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**The
Vital
Link**

www.vitallink.org.uk



Blurb

Davey has always lived in the shadow of his older brother. But when Denis Tranter comes into Davey's life, how far will they go to get him out of it? Can you really count on your brother to watch your back?

Synopsis

All his life, Davey has been shielded by his older brother, a smiling sociopath who will stop at nothing to protect himself and his family. But when the shadowy figure of Denis Tranter forcibly breaks into Davey's life and threatens his marriage, how far will their bond stretch? The two brothers devise a plan to get rid of the brutal Tranter and his vicious bodyguard, taking care to arrange the evidence so that the police will believe their cover story. Even so, events take a surprising turn at the end...

The suspenseful story is told in the first person by Davey, who takes the reader step by step through the crucial events that lead to his final moments of revenge. The book includes several violent scenes.

Readability

10/11 Level E3

Conn Iggulden

Conn Iggulden was born in London, and studied English at London University. He worked as a teacher for several years before becoming a full-time writer.

His first novel, *The Gates of Rome*, was an instant bestseller. It was also the first novel in his 'Emperor' series, in which he interweaves history and adventure to recreate the epic story of Julius Caesar. There are now four titles in the series.

Conn Iggulden has always loved historical fiction. Listing his favourite authors, he says that they all share 'a love of a good tale'.

He is married with two children, and lives in Hertfordshire.

To find out more about Conn Iggulden and take a look at his Emperor novels, visit his website:

<http://www.conniggulden.com>

Activity 1

What's in a name?

<p>Purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ To help readers make an informed choice when selecting books to read. ➔ To encourage readers to think about the way vivid and expressive language contributes to our understanding and enjoyment of a book.
<p>Resources</p>	<p>Copies of <i>Blackwater</i> Handout 1: Extract from Chapter 1 Genre descriptions – you can find descriptions of genre elements on several internet websites, e.g. Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genre_fiction Flipchart</p>
<p>Activity</p>	<p>The title is one of the main ways that a potential reader makes an initial choice of book. The simple single-word title <i>Blackwater</i> may conjure up different images, depending on what personal knowledge and experience each reader brings to the book.</p> <p>Before reading the book, ask the group to say what this title suggests to them: what body of water is referred to (sea, lake, river...)? What atmosphere will the book have (light, funny, serious, mysterious...)? Looking at the title and the cover; what kind of story is it (adventure, love story, mystery...)? Invite them to record their ideas on the flipchart.</p> <p>Read the first two paragraphs of the book (see Handout 1), either as a group or individually. What do we learn about the mood of the narrator here that adds to the mood conveyed by the title? Ask readers to speculate about what has led the narrator to this situation. In light of this discussion, ask for suggested additions or amendments to the list on the flipchart.</p>

continued ➔

<p>Reflection</p>	<p>Using the genre descriptions, invite readers to decide which genre <i>Blackwater</i> might fall into from the information they have gleaned so far.</p> <p>We often make judgements about reading materials very quickly, using titles, visual clues and reading a short passage at random to see if the book 'hooks' us. How reliable is this? Have readers ever persevered with a text that did not immediately seem to appeal, and been pleasantly surprised? What other factors can help in book selection, e.g. reviews on radio/TV/magazines; personal recommendation from friends; books of a similar type to ones already enjoyed; library recommendations.</p>
<p>Development</p>	<p>The title <i>Blackwater</i> also suggests the names of the individual lakes in the Lake District. Some readers may have visited these or other large lakes or oceans. If so, you might want to develop an activity around 'atmosphere and mood': What is the lake like at different times of day, or in different seasons and weather?</p> <p>This could be done in pairs at first, with different pairs focusing on specific moments. Collect descriptive words and phrases on a flipchart for all to use. Readers could write an atmospheric description of a body of water they have visited.</p>

Activity 2

Follow the clues

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → To develop readers' skills in reading sub-text. → To introduce readers to some of the stylistic techniques a writer uses to build an effective story.
Resources	Copies of <i>Blackwater</i>
Activity	<p>This is a suspenseful book. As well as telling an exciting story, the relationship between the two brothers is tense and edgy. Throughout the book the reader is kept guessing about what will happen, and some of the real answers are surprising.</p> <p>Ask the readers to read chapter one – or read it together as a group.</p> <p>Describe Davey and his brother. What do we know about each of them?</p> <p>What does the author tell us about the relationship between the two brothers? How does Davey feel about his older brother?</p> <p>Readers should start this activity individually and then compare their ideas with another member of the group. Share the findings as a group to build clear pictures of the two men and define their characteristics and qualities. As they continue reading the book, suggest that readers continue to refine these pictures and add to them or adjust them. Ask them to make a note of words and phrases that support their views.</p>
Reflection	<p>There is an unforeseen twist at the end of the story. Davey does something surprising and events do not turn out as the reader was expecting.</p> <p>When everyone has finished the book, have another look at the first chapter. Ask readers if they can find any clues to the outcome in this first chapter. Do the words and phrases they have been highlighting throughout their reading link to any of these clues?</p> <p><i>continued</i> →</p>

<p>Reflection <i>continued</i></p>	<p>Do readers think Davey will get away with his plans?</p> <p>Now that they have finished the book, what do they think is the significance of the title?</p>
<p>Development</p>	<p>It could be said that Davey has a love/hate relationship with both his brother and his wife. What does the reader know about each of these characters that would support this view? How do these relationships help to explain his behaviour towards them at the end of the book?</p> <p>The synopsis describes Davey's brother as a 'smiling sociopath'. What does this mean? How does this knowledge prepare the reader to believe in his current behaviour?</p> <p>Davey's wife, Carol, is like the 'devil woman' of Country and Western songs, who brings chaos into the male world. Is she a sympathetic character? Do readers recognise their relationship?</p> <p>One review has commented on the 'maleness' of the book. What do readers think is meant by this interpretation? Do they agree? Why, or why not?</p>

Activity 3

What happened next?

<p>Purpose</p>	<p>→ To encourage readers to reflect on their reading and develop critical responses.</p> <p>→ To encourage readers to develop their own creative writing skills.</p>
<p>Resources</p>	<p>Copies of <i>Blackwater</i> Paper and pens</p>
<p>Activity</p>	<p>Although at first it seems that events unfold in chronological order, there is a point, after Davey writes to his brother, when the reader is taken back to the first chapter of the book.</p> <p>Ask the readers to find this point. Have they noticed this device on their own? Why has the author done this? Does anything change after this point?</p> <p>As a group, go back to the beginning of the book and read the first few pages again, up to the sentence 'You never really know when a story starts, do you?' What does the author mean by this statement? When do readers think this story starts?</p> <p>This activity should make for lively discussion. If appropriate to the group, readers can then be encouraged to write up their own views.</p> <p>Suggest that they imagine a friend who is not keen on thrillers and thinks they are all the same, with complicated plots and too many characters who get involved in misleading red herrings to confuse the reader. Once you have worked out 'whodunit', there is nothing else of interest. Ask readers to write a letter telling this friend how this book is different from that stereotype and why they consider it a 'good read'.</p>

continued →

Reflection	The most successful crime and mystery novels provide psychological insights into their characters. Is it more successful when the characters themselves reveal the story, or when readers gain insight from events or characters' relationships? Which are likely to be truer?
Development	<p>As well as asking when this story started, we might also ask 'when does the story end'?</p> <p>At the end of the book, there are many unanswered questions. Ask readers to work in small groups to develop a plot for the final chapter, revealing what happened next. Suggest that they imagine they are making the story into a film and must create a simple storyboard for this. A framework for the essential elements of the plot – characters, setting, actions, result – will help with this.</p>

Handout 1

Activity 1: What's in a name?

Chapter 1

I STOOD IN THE water and thought about drowning. It's strange how the sea is always calmer at night. I've walked along Brighton beach a hundred times on cold days and the waves are always there, sliding over and over each other. In the dark the water is smooth and black, with just a hiss of noise as it vanishes into the pebbles. You can't hear it in the day, over gulls and cars and screaming children, but at night the sea whispers, calling you in.

The swell pulled at the cloth of my best black suit, reaching upwards in the gentle rise and fall of unseen currents. It felt intimate somehow, as if I was being tugged down and made heavier. Even the icy Brighton wind had grown easy on my skin, or perhaps I'd just gone numb. If I had, it was a welcome numbness. I'd spent too much time thinking and now there was just the final choice of walking into a deeper dark.

Further development – more reading

March title	Author	ISBN
The Thief	Ruth Rendell	0091796865
Woman Walks into a Bar	Rowan Coleman	0099492288
Blackwater	Conn Iggulden	0091907039
Star Sullivan	Maeve Binchy	0752879545
Hell Island	Matthew Reilly	0330442325
The Book Boy	Joanna Trollope	0747582114
Don't make me Laugh	Patrick Augustus	1902934466
Someone Like Me	Tom Holt	1841494461
Screw It, Let's Do It	Richard Branson	0753510995
How to change your life in 7 steps	John Bird	0091907039
Chickenfeed	Minette Walters	0330440314
The Team	Mick Dennis with the Premier League	0552153729
May title	Author	ISBN
Danny Wallace and the Centre of the Universe	Danny Wallace	0091908949
Desert Claw	Damien Lewis	0099493535
Cleanskin	Val McDermid	0007216726
Name You Once Gave Me	Mike Phillips	0007216718
Grey Man	Andy McNab	0552154334
I Am a Dalek	Gareth Roberts/Dr Who	0563486481
Poison in the Blood	Tom Holland	0349119643
I Love Football	Hunter Davies	0755314700
Winner Takes All	John Francome	0755329481
The Dying Wish	Courtia Newland	0349119635
Secrets	Lynne Barrett-Lee	1905170300
The Corpse's Tale	Katherine John	1905170319

See www.quickreads.org.uk for information on these and future Quick Reads

See First Choice library booklist at www.firstchoicebooks.org.uk for mainstream books selected against criteria for their suitability for emergent readers

Audio version of the Quick Reads are available from W F Howes Ltd as part of their Clipper Emergent Reader programmes (www.wfhowes.co.uk/cerp/)

Other publications for emergent readers include those from Sandstone Press (www.sandstonepress.com) and New Island's Open Door series (www.newisland.ie)

Adult Core Curriculum References

Activity 1

What's in a name?

Rt/E3.1, .2, .4, .7, .8
 Rt/L1.1, .2, .5
 Wt/E3.1, .2
 Wt/L1.1, .2, .4, .5
 Rs/E3.2
 Rs/L1.1
 Ws/E3.1-.3

Ws/L1.1-.3

Speaking and listening

SLIrE3.1-.6
 SLc/E3.1-.4
 SLd/E3.1-.3
 SLIr/L1.1-.6
 SLc/L1.-.4

Activity 2

Follow the clues

Rt/E3.1-.4, .7, .8
 Rt/L1.1-.3, .5
 Rs/E3.2
 Rs/L1.1

Speaking and listening

SLIrE3.1-.6
 SLc/E3.1-.4
 SLd/E3.1-.3
 SLIr/L1.1-.6
 SLc/L1.-.4

Activity 3

What happened next?

Rt/E3.1, .2, .4, .7, .8
 Rt/L1.1-.3, .5
 Wt/E3.1-.4
 Wt/L1.1-.6
 Rs/E3.2
 Rs/L1.1
 Ws/E3.1-.3
 Ws/L1.1-.3

Speaking and listening

SLIrE3.1-.6
 SLc/E3.1-.4
 SLd/E3.1-.3
 SLIr/L1.1-.6
 SLc/L1.-.4