



DOGS OF THE DEADLANDS ANTHONY MCGOWAN

Chernobyl, 1986.

Natasha's world is coming to an end. Forced to evacuate her home in the middle of the night she must leave her puppy behind and has no idea if she'll ever return.

Some time later, growing up in the shadow of the ruined nuclear power plant, pups Misha and Bratan have to learn how to live wild – and fast. Creatures with sharp teeth, claws and yellow eyes lurk in the overgrown woods. And they're watching the brothers' every move...

But will the dogs survive without humans? And can humans live without them?

A tale of courage, companionship and hope from the Carnegie award-winning author of *Lark*.

Teaching resources created by Scott Evans TheReaderTeacher.com

 **@TheReaderTeacher**

Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross-Curricular Activities
Front cover, blurb and historical note (found before the Prologue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the cover, what do you think the book will be about? Who do you think the main characters will be? Where do you think it will be set? What do you think the title means? Does it give you any ideas as to what the book will be about? Now, read the blurb. Does it confirm your thoughts, or has it changed your mind? Why? Look at the 'Historical Note' found before the prologue. Why do you think the author has decided to include this? 	<p>Complete an OWI grid:</p> <p>Observe – What can you see? Remember to look at the foreground and background of the cover.</p> <p>Wonder – What questions do you have? Children could start their sentences with 'I wonder if ...'</p> <p>Infer – Start your sentences with 'I think ... because ...' Can children explain why they think what they do?</p>	<p>ART • After reading the book, decide what elements you'd like to highlight and design your own alternative cover.</p>
Prologue (pages 1-4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a prologue? Read to the end of the prologue. Why do you think this story has one? What is its purpose? The first words are 'The young wolf looked up sulkily at the moon.' Which word is used as an adverb in this sentence? How does author Anthony McGowan set the scene in the prologue? What do you learn about the wolf and his relationships with his family members and other animals? Predict who you think it has seen at the end of the prologue. 	<p>Write your own short prologues that introduce the reader to a story of your own, with its characters, and/or themes. Consider how it should be able to stand alone, with its own separate story with a beginning, middle and end.</p>	<p>SCIENCE • Teach children about the different phases of the moon, why they happen, and how the moon changes shape depending on what part we can see.</p> <p>SCIENCE • Learn more about wolves by creating a fact file about them containing key details.</p>
Chapter 1: A Moon and a Star (pages 5-13) and Chapter 2: Abandoned (pages 14-21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why was sleep impossible for Natasha Taranova on the morning of her seventh birthday? What name does Natasha give to her new puppy that she has received? Explain why Natasha feels a range of emotions in Chapter 1 from excitement and delight to anger and upset. What does Natasha overhear in the conversations between her father and his friends? What significant event happens at the end of Chapter 1. Why does this change the mood of Chapter 2? Summarise how Natasha feels in one word at the end of Chapter 3. 	<p>Write a first-person diary entry from Natasha's perspective detailing the events of these chapters. How would you feel if you were her?</p> <p>Learn more about the legendary traditional tale from Russian folklore about the witch Baba Yaga. Read books like <i>The House with Chicken Legs</i> by Sophie Anderson to provide retellings, and write your own.</p>	<p>SCIENCE/MATHS • Compare and contrast the characteristics of dogs and wolves using a Venn diagram to show their similarities and differences.</p> <p>HISTORY • Research what happened at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986. Create a timeline of events and what happened afterwards. Using your research, write a report and include important information such as dates and places when and where events took place.</p>

Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross-Curricular Activities
Chapter 3: The Brothers (pages 22-25) and Chapter 4: First Adventures (pages 26-29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are Misha and Bratan? How do you think they will affect the story later on? What type of animal is the intruder? Why do you think there is an illustration included on page 27? Find a word on page 28 that means the same as 'to have fed a baby, especially a baby animal, with milk from the organ in the mother that produces milk.' (suckled) How does Mother feed Misha and Bratan with the fish, mouse and worm she has already eaten? What do we call this? (<i>Regurgitation</i>) 	<p>Write down five questions that you have about Zoya, Natasha, Misha, Bratan, Mother and the story as a whole so far.</p>	<p>SCIENCE • Discover how regurgitation can be very important to some animals and that it is used by a number of species to feed their young, such as birds for example. Write a scientific explanation of why this happens when the young is in its nest or home and the parent hunts for food.</p>
Chapter 5: Water (pages 30-34) and Chapter 6: The First Hunt (pages 35-40)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why would Mother have a mouthful of worms for the pups 'especially after rain'? Why does Mother become harsher in her punishments towards the pups? Why are some of the words in Chapter 5 written in italics? What does this show? How does Misha show that he is maturing by catching his own food? Which capture of prey does Misha spit out and why? 	<p>The experience of the first hunt is an unusual one for Misha. Write an explanation about what you would do if you woke up and found that you were a wild dog for the day. Make sure to include your feelings as well as explaining what you would do and why.</p>	<p>SCIENCE • During these chapters, there are descriptions of the pups going out hunting for food. Investigate food chains. What is a predator? What is prey? Using paper chains, make food chains showing examples of predators and prey.</p>
Chapter 7: An Ancient Enemy (pages 41-48) and Chapter 8: Everything Is Food (pages 49-54)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a dictionary to define what the word 'ominous' means on page 41 and use a thesaurus to find synonyms to replace this word with words of your own to show your understanding. How does Misha react to the sight of the juvenile brown bear? What does Mother do to Misha to prevent him from being in danger of the mother bear? Act out how the bear was 'gambolling' towards them on page 43. How does the atmosphere change when Mother realises that Bratan and the juvenile bear were playing, not fighting? How is the tension diffused in this situation? Find evidence from the text to explain your thinking. What skills do the pups pick up from Mother when out and about in the woods hunting? Why do they look for bigger animals? List all of the animals that they consider. 	<p>Write a character profile for Mother, including all that you know and can infer about her so far.</p> <p>Create an emotions graph to plot the pups' changing thoughts and feelings throughout the last chapters. Refer to events such as: Misha going hunting with Mother and leaving Bratan behind, catching grasshoppers, the arrival of the bear and its mother, and seeing the other animals.</p>	<p>SCIENCE • The story has mainly taken place in the woods. Identify and classify a range of trees, using classification keys. Label parts of a tree using scientific vocabulary.</p> <p>OUTDOOR LEARNING • Complete an environment walk in the school grounds or local area. Can you identify and classify the different types of tree?</p>

Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross-Curricular Activities
Chapter 9: Hard Lessons (pages 55-59) and Chapter 10: Bad Times, Good Times (pages 60-65)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where do Natasha and her family spend the time of three days that they have been evacuated away from their home? What news is broken to Natasha by her father about the town? Why does this mean that they can't return there? Who do they now go and live with? What is your first impression of Aunt Valentina? Where do they go after that? How is Bratan a different kind of hunter to Misha? Would you say that one is better than the other? Can you find a foreboding tone or warning in the descriptions of the woods towards the end of Chapter 10? Pick out key words and phrases. 	The children in Natasha's new school bully her with a song. Write an article for your school website/blog emphasising the importance of showing each other kindness and reporting bullying. Give examples of how you can be a good friend and the positive impact kind actions have.	DRAMA • Work in small groups to act out the exchanges between Natasha, Papa, Mama and Aunt Valentina during them living together, and Natasha and her classmates in school. Think about body language, expression and tone to convey emotion. Freeze frame at different points and reflect on what each character is feeling.
Chapter 11: Papa (pages 66-72) and Chapter 12: Cross-Face (pages 73-77)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain what you think has caused Natasha to grow up to become a 'quiet, determined, hard-working girl, who seldom smiled and never laughed'. What job does Natasha want to have in the future? How does the solving of scientific and mathematical problems make her feel? How does Natasha recognise that her father is changing mentally and physically? Why is he having chemotherapy? When does Papa die? What is different about Mama after Papa's death? What threat arrives in front of Misha and Bratan? How do they deal with it? How does Chapter 12 end on a cliffhanger? 	<p>Research and write a non-chronological report about wolves. Do they still exist in the UK? If not, why? Include this in your report.</p> <p>We have learned about the contamination of the city of Pripjat and the illness of Papa. Create a table to list the effects of the Chernobyl disaster as you read on.</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHY • Learn about the abandoned city of Pripjat in northern Ukraine including its background and what has happened to it in post-Chernobyl years. Compare it to the city of Kyiv in terms of size, population and other facts and figures.</p> <p>HISTORY • Find out more about the fall of the Soviet Union and what caused its collapse.</p>
Chapter 13: The First Fight (pages 78-83) and Chapter 14: The Red Forest (pages 84-90)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does a 'guttural, rolling snarl' sound like on page 78? Who helps Misha and Bratan in the face of danger? How does Cross-face show that she was beaten for now? Which of the brothers do you think fills Mother with hope? Which of them has she always held back some of her care for? Why? How does Anthony McGowan use the environment at the end of Chapter 14 to reflect mood and tone? What is this technique called? Do you think the description of the 'deadlands' is an accurate term to use? 	Write an animal's view of the deadlands using descriptions from Chapter 14. Include the different sights and sounds, including reference to the 'Danger: Keep Out' signs.	ART • From the description of the deadlands provided, draw what you think they look like.

Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross-Curricular Activities
Chapter 15: A Refuge (pages 91-96) and Chapter 16: The Roebuck (pages 97-101)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where do the dogs find a place of refuge? Why does Mother remember 'a little girl' on page 93 in this house? How does the author use humour at the end of Chapter 15 when he describes the bedroom echoing to the sound of canine flatulence? What is a roebuck? Why do they choose to hunt this roebuck? What about it has caused it to become weak? Why do the dogs fall asleep next to the deer? 	Write the events of the chapter from Mother's perspective. Think about the different emotions she experiences such as the remembering of the little girl at the house and her interactions with different characters.	SCIENCE • Research different species of animals that have been mentioned in the woods so far and how they are adapted to their environments. How are their differences in diet, habitat, and activity reflected in their anatomy?
Chapter 15: A Refuge (pages 91-96) and Chapter 16: The Roebuck (pages 97-101)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where do the dogs find a place of refuge? Why does Mother remember 'a little girl' on page 93 in this house? How does the author use humour at the end of Chapter 15 when he describes the bedroom echoing to the sound of canine flatulence? What is a roebuck? Why do they choose to hunt this roebuck? What about it has caused it to become weak? Why do the dogs fall asleep next to the deer? 	Write the events of the chapter from Mother's perspective. Think about the different emotions she experiences such as the remembering of the little girl at the house and her interactions with different characters.	SCIENCE • Research different species of animals that have been mentioned in the woods so far and how they are adapted to their environments. How are their differences in diet, habitat, and activity reflected in their anatomy?
Chapter 17: The Toys (pages 102-104) and Chapter 18: The Assassin (pages 105-106)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is 'feasted' an effective verb on page 102 to describe the way that the dogs have eaten the deer? Do you sense a change in the character of Mother in Chapter 17? Why do the brothers Misha and Bratan leave Mother lying on the bed and go and find other places in the house to sleep? What is a lynx? Why does the lynx not eat the deer? Who is it really after? 	Write a monologue from Mother's perspective. How does she feel when lying with her body curved protectively around the toys?	SCIENCE • The sense of smell has been mentioned a lot as the dogs use it to assess their surroundings and communicate. Find out more about how their keen sense of smell helps them domestically and in working roles to act as guide dogs for the blind, detect explosives, find drugs, and search for people after earthquakes, avalanches or other disasters.
Chapter 19: Cat and Dogs (pages 107-112) and Chapter 20: The Long Pursuit (pages 113-120)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was different about the morning? Identify the verbs that show the fast-paced action in this chapter (snarling, lunging, biting). Why are they often listed one after the other? What effect does this have? What advice does Mother give to Misha and Bratan in Chapter 19? Why do the woods feel familiar to Mother in Chapter 20? Can you find a phrase or description of Mother that shows her contentment towards the end of Chapter 20? (...and she felt a flood of warmth) 	Create an emotion graph or map of Mother's feelings. What vocabulary would you use to describe the emotions she feels?	<p>SCIENCE • Discuss the changes that happen between seasons, e.g. life cycles, evergreen/deciduous trees, weather, etc.</p> <p>SCIENCE • Research different ways in which animals adapt to the changing climate during the seasons, e.g. Which animals hibernate? Why do they hibernate?</p>

Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross-Curricular Activities
Chapter 23: Natasha Becomes Nataliya (pages 132-136) and Chapter 24: The Farm (pages 137-144)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the first paragraph, summarise the character of Natasha in three words, and then explain your choices. Why did she pretend to be happier than she was? Is this a good thing to do? Why does Natasha stop herself from thinking about getting a new puppy? Do you think the puppy that she saw on the streets was real or fictitious? What mode does Bratan adopt when he sees the dogs at the farm? What does this show about him? How does Bratan show he is submissive towards the farm dogs? Why do they end up touching noses? 	Write a character profile for Natasha. What are her personality traits, her strengths and her weaknesses? Include key quotes and descriptions from the text.	DRAMA • Create a 'Conscience Corridor'; half of the class stand on one side of the room, persuading Natasha that she should get a new puppy. The other half stand on the other side, persuading Natasha not to get a new puppy. Take turns walking through the corridor in-role as Natasha. How does it feel?
Chapter 25: The Pack (pages 145-149) and Chapter 26: Slim Pickings (pages 150-154)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has the farm changed since the disaster? What were the army instructed to do to the animals that were left behind? What has caused Shepherd to start drooling? Using what you have read so far, can you work out what the word 'carrion' means on page 148? Which of the dogs is reluctant to accept Misha and Bratan? Why do you think Chapter 26 is called 'Slim Pickings'? 	The author describes Saluki as being 'as fast as a thought' on page 149. Can you write a simile of your own to describe each of the main the characters in the story so far?	SCIENCE • In this chapter, the pack is described in detail. Learn more about why wild dogs and wolves live in packs so they can work together as a team. Find out about the hierarchies within one, and how they are often led by an 'alpha'.
Chapter 27: Riches (pages 155-163) and Chapter 28: Saluki (pages 164-167)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did it take to get inside the farmhouse? How is the weather used in Chapter 27 to create tension? What type of food does Misha find suspended from the ceiling above him in the cellar? Describe the reaction of the dogs when they discover the sausages and hams. Which dog stayed apart from the rest? 	Using Anthony McGowan's example on page 156, create a scene in which the weather is personified to reflect the mood and feelings of the characters in the scene.	PSHE • Consider the theme of bravery in the book so far. What is bravery? Who is brave?
Chapter 29: Conflict! (pages 168-173) and Chapter 30: Two Heads (pages 174-177)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has the discovery of the food done for them? How has it changed their lives for the better? Which dog is the biggest cause of unrest in the pack? What does it mean if someone is 'ever-vigilant', as Terrier is described as being on page 171? How has life in the wild changed Misha and Bratan? Why do the dogs now feel small and weak and few and frightened? 	Write a short summary of how Misha and Bratan have changed from the start of the story. What have they discovered about themselves, and the world around them?	PSHE • What are the behaviours of a bully? List the reasons why Laika can be considered a bully in these chapters of this story.

Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross-Curricular Activities
Chapter 31: An Answering Howl (pages 178-183) and Chapter 32: The Battle Begins (pages 184-194)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the dogs know what was coming? Why do the dogs mark trees and fence posts? Pick out Anthony McGowan's sensory description of the sounds heard in the forest (the hoot of the owl, the distant bellow of a bison, etc.). Misha describes his brother as a thinker more than a doer on page 184. Is this an accurate representation? What wolfish virtues do you need to become an 'alpha'? 	In Chapter 32, it is said that to become the 'alpha', you need all the wolfish virtues: strength, speed, intelligence but also that willingness to put your teeth where the battle is fiercest. Write what virtues and values are important in your school.	<p>MUSIC • Compose a short tune to sound like wolves howling. What instruments would you use?</p> <p>ART • Show the action-packed events of these chapters in sequence using a storyboard to capture them through text and illustrations.</p>
Chapter 33: Cavalry (pages 195-198) and Chapter 34: Family (pages 199-206)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which animal has returned at the start of Chapter 33? How do the wolves react to the appearance of Sokha? How does Sokha fight back against the wolves? Why is this surprising to them? Find a word on page 198 that means the same as 'a situation or state of confused movement or violent turmoil.' (maelstrom) How many times had the wolves been surprised and by what? What does Misha recognise upon the death of Laika? 	On page 197, the author uses a range of vocabulary to describe movement going from 'walk, to jog, to canter, to gallop'. Write your own progressions for verbs showing greater intensity.	LITERACY • Consider the important themes in the novel so far, e.g. hope, home, family, disasters. Can you add any more? Create a 'Theme Sheet' to record any ideas as you read.
Chapter 35: An Old Friend (pages 207-211) and Chapter 36: Escape! (pages 212-220)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a 'commotion'? And, how would a character be distracted by it? How does the author show that Bratan is exhausted on page 207, rather than tell the reader? List at least two examples. Why has Bratan tempted the bear back to the farm? What would a 'cacophony of barking and snarling' sound like on page 215? Who has returned for revenge towards the end of Chapter 36? 	Showing the emotions of characters rather than telling how they feel creates mental pictures in the reader's mind. Write your own 'Show Not Tell' sentences, focusing on describing body language, senses and using strong verbs.	PSHE • What is grief? How is it explored in these chapters, and the story so far? Make a note of the different emotions Misha feels, his memories and how he finds ways to feel closer to Bratan and the other dogs.
Chapter 37: Everything Changes, And Stays the Same (pages 221-224) and Chapter 38: The Monster (pages 225-229)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why was the Institute in Moscow all that Nataliya had dreamed of? Would you describe Nataliya as being 'weird and unfriendly' like the other students began to say? Why does Nataliya resign from the Institute? What job does she go on to do next? Why was this especially hard for her? Who is 'the monster'? What is the effect of the word 'monster' being repeated in different forms throughout Chapter 38? Which animal does the monster want to eat next? 	Using your research, write a report about the different types of fossil fuels and renewable energy.	SCIENCE • Nataliya's area of special interest was renewable energy. Research fossil fuels and renewable energy to find out more about these sources, including nuclear energy. Debate some of the issues surrounding renewable energy generation, and the advantages and disadvantages.

Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross-Curricular Activities
Chapter 39: Misha's End (pages 230-232) and Chapter 40: A Bucket and a Spade (pages 233-236)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain in your own words what it means if someone is 'delirious'. What was Misha's last sight in Chapter 39? Why were the fishermen really keen to catch catfish? How would someone react if they were going from feeling bewildered, to horrified, to excitement, to galvanised? How did Katerina Sobal rescue Misha from the clutches of the catfish? 	Write your own ending to the story predicting what you think will happen.	MUSIC • Think about the effect that sound has on mood throughout the story. Can you pick out some of the sound effects that have been used to reflect some of the emotions? LITERACY • Identify and discuss the relationships in the book. Why are they important?
Chapter 41: Misha Learns How to Be a Dog (pages 237-242) and Chapter 42: The Last Light of the Long, Long Day (pages 243-247)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On what does Katerina Sobal take Misha back to her house? List at least three ways in which Katerina Sobal takes care of Misha. What does it show about Katerina Sobal when she lets Misha off the rope on page 241? How does Misha react to it? Why would a wolf-dog be not entirely tame? What happens to Katerina at the end of Chapter 42? 	Using speech marks, write the conversation that Misha might have back with Katerina if he could talk, when she speaks to him about her life, her childhood, her experiences and her loneliness.	PSHE • Explore the theme of togetherness in the story. What does Misha learn about Katerina, and vice-versa? LITERACY • Based on all you know about the dogs and their connections with the Sobal family, draw their family tree.
Chapter 43: Wolf Song (pages 248-254) and Chapter 44: The Wolf Life (pages 255-262)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why does Misha howl with full-throated passion on page 248? What does Misha do the day after realising he is a lone wolf? What does it feel like to be 'famished' on page 250? How does Misha act more like a wolf in Chapter 44? Summarise how Misha and Bratan feel about seeing each other again in a sentence. 	Misha mentions on page 249 that he feels freedom. Write an acrostic for the word 'FREEDOM'. What does this word mean to you?	PSHE • On page 256, Misha talks about an instinct to 'flee or flight'. Write about a time when you have experienced the fight, flight, or freeze effect.
Chapter 45: Vadzim Lost and Saved (pages 263-267) and Chapter 46: A Friend, and Hope (pages 268-272)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is Vadzim Kornilov? What is his significance to the story? What does it mean to 'neuter' a dog on page 264? How does the author describe Katarina's loneliness in Chapter 46? Why is this effective? Who is the only person that Katarina has human contact with, other than that of the pupils she teaches? With whom does Nataliya let her guard down? What does she learn from Tanya about the animals left behind? 	Write the newspaper article that Tanya gives to Nataliya about the animals left behind. What would it say?	SCIENCE • At the end of Chapter 46, it mentions the radioactivity of the area of Chernobyl. Learn more about the different types of nuclear radiation (Alpha, Beta and Gamma) and their different properties and effects.

Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross-Curricular Activities
Chapter 47: The Return (pages 273-281) and Chapter 48: Two Stories (pages 282-291)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What new job does Nataliya have at the site of Chernobyl? What is the area called with the highest rate of radiation? What is it like there compared to the rest of the forest? What is the name of the structure that has been built around Reactor Number 4 to limit radioactive contamination? What struck Nataliya as she wandered around the site? How do Nataliya and Vadzim Kornilov cross paths? 	After watching videos and viewing photographs of the Red Forest, imagine you have visited it. Write a diary entry of your experience there, including how it feels to see wildlife still living there.	ART • Based on your research into the Red Forest and after looking at pictures of the area, sketch what it looks like, adding colour blending to show that the trees became reddish-brown.
Chapter 49: Nataliya Becomes Nastasha Again (pages 292-299) and Chapter 50: You'll Know The Angels When They Come (pages 300-303)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does Kurt mean when he says they 'should cut him in half and count the rings' when referring to Misha's age on page 292? Act out how you think Misha is watching Nataliya 'with love' on page 294. How does Nataliya have a soulmate with Misha? Can you find a description of Nataliya that shows her happiness in meeting Ludo in Chapter 49? What simile is used to describe Nataliya and Misha's love for each other at the end of Chapter 50? Why is the closing image of Nataliya and Misha so powerful? 	<p>Write a book review, including your own reflections and why you think others should read the book too.</p> <p>Compare your predictions from earlier – were any of them correct?</p> <p>Write a continuation story about what happens to some of the characters.</p>	<p>LITERACY • For each character in the story, write a short paragraph to show how they've developed or changed.</p> <p>LITERACY/PSHE • How is the theme of resilience explored in the story? Give five examples of times when Willa has shown resilience. Think about why resilience is an important quality and how you can show it in your own life.</p>