



Out of Shadows

Jason Wallace

DISCUSSION GUIDE

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Zimbabwe, 1980s

The fighting has stopped, independence has been won and Robert Mugabe has come to power offering the end of the Old Way and promising hope for black Africans.

For Robert Jacklin, it's all new: new continent, new country, new school. And very quickly he learns that for some of his white classmates, the sound of guns is still loud, and their battles rage on. Boys like Ivan. Clever, cunning Ivan. He wants things back to how they were – and he's taking his fight to the very top.

ABOUT JASON WALLACE:

Jason Wallace was born in Cheltenham but moved to London after his parents split up. Aged 12 his life was turned upside down when his mother remarried and the family emigrated to Zimbabwe. It was this experience in a tough boarding school during the aftermath of the war for independence that formed the foundation of his incredible debut novel, *Out of Shadows*. And he did actually meet Robert Mugabe when he visited his school.

Out of Shadows went on to win the Costa Children's Book Award, UKLA Book Award and the Branford Boase Award.

Jason now lives in London with his partner and son.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Before reading *Out of Shadows*, did you know anything about Zimbabwe in the 1980s and Robert Mugabe's rise to power?
2. Do you think your knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of Zimbabwe's history influenced your reading in any way?
3. Read the opening line of *Out of Shadows*. What atmosphere does it establish and did it make you want to read on?
4. In chapter four, how does Leboule react to learning Jacklin's first name? Why does he react in this way?
5. History lessons are often the highlight of the week for Jacklin and his classmates. Ivan claims that history is 'In the past. You can't change it.' How does history affect all the characters in this book?
6. Ivan is the leader of a gang at Jacklin's school. In what ways do you think Ivan is similar to Robert Mugabe?
7. Does Jacklin regret his decision to stop Ivan in his plan to take down Mugabe? If you were in Jacklin's position, would you have stopped Ivan too?
8. Did you feel pity for Ivan at any point in the book? Ultimately, do you believe Ivan got what he deserved?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

9. Read the following passage from the book:

'If I stood in front of a man, pressed the cold metal of a gun into your palm and told you to squeeze the trigger, would you do it?'

'No, sir.'

'Are you sure?'

'Of course, sir. No ways!'

'What if I told you we'd gone back in time and his name was Adolf Hitler? Would you do it then? Would you?'

Discuss Ivan's answer and what your answer would be.

10. If you've read *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, discuss any similarities with *Out of Shadows*.

11. Many reviewers have described the book as 'memorable'. Do you agree?

12. Judges at the UKLA Children's Book Award wrote that 'Whoever reads *Out of Shadows* will be transformed in some way. One inevitably knows more about the world and about yourself as a result of reading it.' Do you feel 'transformed' having read this book?

Encounters

Jason Wallace

A brand-new powerful novel from multi-award-winning author, Jason Wallace. A group of children claim they've witnessed an alien landing in Zimbabwe. Is it just mass hysteria? Or did something really happen that day?

Zimbabwe, 1994.

A group of children spot peculiar lights in the sky over the grounds of their school. From this moment on, six young people's lives are changed forever.

Gary hides the anguish he feels now his mum's left, acting out in fury and hatred. Chloe has no words for the thing she fears most every day. Karl is the headmaster's son, now fallen from grace. Tendai knows he can never live up to his grieving father's ideals. And Sixpence watches all, knowing he'll never be like these other children. All of them have seen something they can't explain.

In amongst these tangled, tortured lives, comes a group of paranormal investigators to verify the spookily similar claims of every witness. Their daughter, Holly, can tell there's more to it than just aliens or mass hysteria - can she reveal the dark truths that haunt them?

Inspired by true accounts, this is the long-awaited new novel from Costa Award winner Jason Wallace.