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AARTI & THE BLUE GODS

JASBINDER BILAN

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER
RESOURCES

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chickenhousebooks.com

Chapter

Comprehension Questions

Writing Opportunities

Cross Curricular Opportunities

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the epigraph: 'the clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness'. What does this suggest to you about the themes of the novel? Why is Aarti nervous of Aunt's good mood? Why does Aunt think the hard work of living on the island is worth it? Aunt says, 'an Indian princess living in the Scottish wilds'. What can you infer from this statement? Why do you think Aarti thinks it doesn't make any sense? Why did Aarti have to sleep in the woodstore and how do you think she feels about it? 	<p>Create a menu for the perfect picnic on a beach. Consider what you might have if there were no shops nearby.</p> <p>Write a diary entry detailing how Aarti feels about Aunt.</p>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think Aarti is right to think her dream is a fragment of memory? Who is Chand and how does he help Aarti? Why does Aunt insist Aarti do the fishing? And why at night? Why do you think Aarti is happier out fishing despite the bitter cold? 		<p>ART/GEOGRAPHY • Draw a map of an isolated island. What topographical features would your island have? How would you represent them?</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does Aarti promise herself, and do you think this helps her? Pick out some language the author uses to set the mood on the island as Aarti returns from fishing. Aunt is cruel to Aarti, and Aarti finds her behaviour confusing. Why do you think Aarti feels this way? Support your answer with examples from the text. 	<p>Research and write a profile of a Hindu god, including their responsibilities, powers and role in the world, and any other important information.</p>	<p>MUSIC • Think about the effect music has on mood. Can you pick out some music to reflect some of the emotions Aarti feels in this chapter?</p>



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4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do you think Aarti keeps feeling guilty about not being content with her life on the island? Do you think the locked room is important? What do you think the 'flashes' Aarti is having mean? Using the text to support your answer, describe how Chand is a companion to Aarti. 		Aarti's shrine brings her great comfort when she feels sad and lonely. Consider whether you would find a shrine useful and what you might put in it.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has Aarti learnt over the years and why? Aunt appears distressed when Aarti returns home. Can you pick out some text to support this? Why do you think both Aarti and Aunt are exhausted after each ballet session? Can you explain how Aunt's violin-playing links to her moods? 	Make an emotion map of Aarti's feelings through the day – from her time spent outdoors and at the shrine, to the evening at home with Aunt.	PHILOSOPHY • Aunt says, 'I want to give you all the best chances in life', but she has previously said there is a cruel world out there which she shelters Aarti from. What do you think about this? Are these mutually exclusive positions?
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does Aunt make it up to Aarti after the night before? How does Aarti hope her day out with Aunt will go? Aunt says it's a special occasion and marks it by giving Aarti two special gifts. What are they and how does Aarti feel about them? How does Aarti feel at the end of the day? Do you feel the day lived up to her hopes? 	Write a diary entry as Aarti, describing the events of this chapter and the previous two.	SCIENCE • Research guillemots – the various types, where they are found, how they keep safe from predators and their conservation status. OUTDOOR ACTIVITY • With an adult, learn how to build and light a fire outdoors.



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- Why does Aarti try to make herself invisible when she is woken up by the storm?
- What stops Aarti from following Aunt out of the old abbey?
- Why do you think Aarti is initially disappointed by what she's found in the locked room?
- Underline key words or phrases in the text that tell you how Aarti feels about discovering Squidgy Rabbit.

Write a story for Aarti to tell Chand. Think about what details you could add to your story if you lived on an isolated island and had never played with other children or met other people.

Write a letter back to Amalie (Aunt) from her parents, responding to her question about staying in school (for or against) and explaining the reasons for their decision.

Aarti's shrine brings her great comfort when she feels sad and lonely. Consider whether you would find a shrine useful and what you might put in it.

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- Why does Aunt initially suspect Aarti might have a fever?
- Why does Aarti decide it will be worth the consequences to admit she went into the locked room?
- Why do you think Aunt pretends as though nothing happened the night before and continues with the charade that Aarti is ill?
- Why isn't Aarti enthusiastic about taking a walk with Aunt? Can you pick out some words in the text to build a picture of what the walk looks and feels like?
- Aarti agrees with Aunt that walking in the storm is marvellous. Why does she know it's a bad idea to contradict Aunt?
- Do you think Aunt survives the fall?

Write a character profile for Aunt, including all the information you know about her already and anything you can infer from her behaviour.

SCIENCE • Aunt says she will make a soup with hyssop to help Aarti feel better. Research some herbs and their properties and decide which you would use in a similar soup.

GEOGRAPHY • Find Nottinghamshire on a map and calculate the distance between it and the furthest Scottish island you can identify.



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9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Aarti keep herself safe after Aunt's fall? • Can you think of any adjectives to describe how Aarti feels in the immediate aftermath of Aunt's fall? • Do you think Chand's company helps Aarti? • Does Aarti find anything helpful when she enters Aunt's room for the first time? 	Write a journal entry by Aarti a week after Aunt's fall. Make a note of the different feelings she may experience and how she's filled the time. Does she do anything differently?	
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what we can learn about Aunt from the items Aarti discovers in the locked room. • What can you infer from these statements from Aunt's mother's letter: 'all the awards you have been getting'; 'I know things have been hard for you'? • Is Aarti's conclusion that Aunt must have been telling the truth a reasonable one? • What are the implications of the new leak in the store? • What does Aarti ask for when she goes to the shrine? 	Add to your character profile of Aunt, including the new details you have learnt from the items Aarti finds in the locked room.	
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does Aarti start to worry about Chand after a few days? • What does she fear might have happened? • Why is Aarti apprehensive when she realizes the person she's rescued is a boy? • Discuss why Aarti is excited at the prospect of another person on the island. 	Write a journal entry about Euan washing up on the island. How would you make sense of the blue tinge on his skin and the spiral-like tattoos?	SCIENCE • Research fulmars – their lifespan, conservation status and migration patterns, and any other interesting facts.



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<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long does it take Euan to wake up? • What does Aarti think that Euan might be able to tell her? • Euan asks if Aarti is allowed to leave on her own. Why do you think he finds it unusual? • How do Aarti and Euan comfort themselves after they get upset about being on the island? 	<p>Write a journal entry by Aarti a week after Aunt's fall. Make a note of the different feelings she may experience and how she's filled the time. Does she do anything differently?</p>	<p>ANCIENT HISTORY/MYTHS • Research the ancient gods of Scotland. Who were the Druids?</p>
<p>13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Euan persuade Aarti that Aunt might have a boat hidden somewhere on the island? • How did Euan wash up on the island? What's happened to his boat? • Euan has no recollection of why he has the flute. What do you think about this? 	<p>Write a diary entry about the events in this chapter. Consider what aspects to focus on.</p>	
<p>14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Aarti recognize a storm is coming? • What helps the children work out where a boat might be hidden? • How does Aarti feel when they are able to make a proper plan to search for the boat? 	<p>Write some instructions to accompany the hand-drawn map the children find. Consider what else may be hidden on the island, if it's valuable and the circumstances leading up to concealing it. Who does the writer hope will find/need the instructions and what clues will they need?</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHY • Make a cross-section of the map you created earlier. How high are the cliffs and the mountain; how deep does the cave go?</p>



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15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euan starts feeling upset when he talks about his family. How does Aarti help him feel better? • How is Aarti able to work out how long she's been on the island? • What else does Euan do in addition to all the chores before Aarti wakes up? • How are Aarti's memory fragments changing? 	<p>Write your own story about the blue men of the sea. Think about what they do, how they feel about humans, and if and where they sleep, eat and drink. Are they friendly or scary? What powers would they have?</p> <p>Make a sensory map of Aarti's memories using all her senses – sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.</p>	
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does Euan think Aunt and Aarti are unlikely to be related? • Why is Aarti worried when she wakes up to find Euan is not in the abbey? • Aarti is thrilled and horrified at the suggestion that Aunt may have lied about her parents' deaths. Do you think Aarti's feelings about what Aunt was capable of have changed? Support your answer with examples from the text. 	<p>Write an article about the links between the Druids and the holy men of India. Consider the evidence for this.</p>	<p>FOOD TECH • Find a recipe for Scottish tablet and make some.</p> <p>RE • Euan tells Aarti about Awen, the symbol of the Druids. Research what symbols are associated with Krishna. Discuss the use of motifs in religion.</p>
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Euan's flute-playing make Aarti feel? Contrast this with how she felt when Aunt played the violin. • What stops Aarti from letting Euan know she witnessed him playing on the beach? • How does Euan explain what Aarti has seen? 	<p>Turn the scene on the beach into a script for a musical.</p>	<p>DANCE/DRAMA • Consider the music and the choreography needed to bring this scene to life. How would you recreate the shimmering lighting?</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Aarti feel about Euan not believing her? • What does Aarti eventually resolve to do and how does she break the ice after their disagreement? 		
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think Euan’s confidence falters when they get to the cliffs? • How does Aarti reassure him? Which of her skills convince him to carry on? • What does ‘trepidation’ mean? • Aarti’s memories become stronger when she is able to hold a significant object – earlier when she was reunited with Squidgy, and when she touches the boat in this chapter. Discuss why this might be the case. 	Write this chapter from Euan’s point of view. What would be important to him and not necessarily to Aarti?	There are many traditions around boats and going to sea. Research some of these and how they might have come about.
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do Aarti and Euan leave the cave? • What do you think Aarti is feeling as they make their way back to the abbey? Can you identify some phrases that show this? • Why do the children think they don’t need to be so careful about conserving food any more? • What do the children need to do before they can leave the island? • Why does Aarti feel a pang of guilt? 	Aarti is not sure if not knowing the truth is the worst thing. Debate this topic. Write your points for or against the motion.	



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- Why is Aarti a bit sad at the realization she's leaving the island?
- Why is Aarti relieved to see the boat?
- What does Aarti compare sailing to? What do you think of the comparison?
- What causes Aarti to lose balance and topple into the sea?

Write this chapter from Euan's point of view. What would be important to him and not necessarily to Aarti?

GEOGRAPHY • Create a map showing the migration route of swallows. Include the time of year and any other useful information.

21

- How does the author describe the sensation of losing breath? Highlight some of the descriptive language used.
- Why do you think Aarti hears a flute playing as she is drifting further into the depths of the sea?
- Aarti is not sure Euan is himself – and marvels at the almost superhuman strength with which he pulls her out of the water. What do you think of this?
- Why do you think Aarti wants a day to say goodbye to the island?
- Euan instinctively understands Aarti's attachment to the island. Why does he think it won't change?

Predict what might happen next in the story.

22

- The children are silent as they walk through the forest. What do you think Aarti is doing?
- What does 'tranquil' mean?
- How do Aarti and Euan enjoy their day out?
- Why does Aarti think it is a bit strange that it's Euan who discovers the

Write an article exploring the history of the island. Consider the stone circle and why it might have been built. Be as imaginative as you wish.



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	<p>Awen symbol?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think about Aarti's theory that the island may have been a Druid island in the past? • Do you think it is significant that Euan never takes his flute from around his neck, despite being adamant that he can't play? 		
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe Aarti's emotions as they prepare to leave the island. • Euan gets upset at the thought of his mum knitting an ever-lengthening scarf. How does Aarti soothe him? • What rituals do they come up with to smooth their path? 	Write your own poem about our connection to nature and the environment. What figurative language can you use to bring it to life?	
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do the children become worried about first? • What then adds to their worry and unease? • When Euan goes into a trance, what helps Aarti make a connection to the times she's noticed he is not himself and doesn't recollect things? • How does the author build the tension in this scene? 	Put yourself in the children's position. What thoughts would go through your mind? Write a short journal entry about it.	
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can Aarti tell Euan is himself again? • Why does she doubt what she has witnessed/experienced? • Describe Aarti's emotions when she realizes that no one else can see Euan and he seems to have gone into another trance. 	Write a front-page article about the rescue mission in the local paper. What would your headline be? How sensational can you make your article?	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think only Aarti can see Euan? • Why do you think Aarti holds Squidgy Rabbit close? • Why do you think the storm clears up shortly after Euan disappears? 		
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does Aarti think she won't be believed about the island and Aunt? • Do you think Aarti copes well with the world beyond the island – the noise, baths, phone and landlines, and TV? • Why do you think Aarti is crying? 	Write a character description of Beth.	Create a freeze-frame/comic strip of Aarti and Beth's conversation. How is each character feeling? What do you think Beth is thinking?
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information does Aarti give to Jim and Beth to help them identify her and her family? • Do you think this is useful information? Why do you think so? • Why do Jim and Beth exchange a glance when Aarti asks what a 'TV appeal' is? • Describe Aarti's emotions as she waits to find out what her future holds. 	Write the script for a TV appeal for more information about Aarti and her family. Consider what information only her family would know to include to make sure Aarti stays safe.	
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight words and phrases in the text that tell us how Aarti is feeling – about her parents being alive, Aunt kidnapping her, and things she was told for many years. 	Make another emotion map for Aarti and compare it to the first one. How have her emotions	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you think Aarti feels about the prospect of meeting her parents? 	<p>changed as the story has unfolded?</p>	
29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aarti is initially stiff when she is reunited with her parents. What deep memory helps her recognize her mum and relax into her embrace? How does Aarti's dad help her make the final link to the name Chand and why it felt so right to give the name to her fox friend? Why does Aarti give Aunt's brooch to Beth? What is it to be used for? How do you think Aarti feels about Aunt now? What memory does Aarti's first sight of Lantern Hall unlock? 	<p>Compare your predictions from earlier – were any right?</p> <p>Write this scene from Amman's point of view. Consider what he notices first, what he remembers and whether Aarti is anything like he imagined.</p>	<p>Create a case file on Aunt, detailing all the evidence that can be found about her motivations and what she was doing in Nottinghamshire when she came across Aarti.</p>
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What signs can Aarti see in Lantern Hall to show she was in her family's thoughts all the time Aunt had her? What is Aarti most relieved about never having to experience again? Do you think what Amman says to Aarti about their parents noticing him now is fair? Does Aarti have to be vigilant about enjoying a lovely day, as she was on the island with Aunt? 	<p>Research and write an article exploring whether memories can truly be forgotten or whether they just need aids to bring them back. What do you think?</p>	<p>ART • Create a collage of things that are important to Aarti.</p>



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31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Amman help resolve the mystery of Euan's disappearance? • Do you think the information Aarti and Amman find out about Euan helps explain his trances, the blue spirals and his eventual disappearance? • Do you think the link Aarti makes between Chand, Euan and Krishna is right? 	Write a letter from Aarti to Euan's family telling them about how much he loves and misses them, and how kind he was to her.	
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aarti thinks for a moment that the fox in the garden might be Chand. What makes her realize this is not the case? • List some of the changes at Lantern Hall since Aarti's return. • How do you think Aarti adjusts to not having every action impacted or constrained by extreme weather? Discuss your answer. • What are 'ghungroos'? • Do you think Aarti is happy now? 	Research and write an article exploring whether memories can truly be forgotten or whether they just need aids to bring them back. What do you think?	MUSIC • Create a playlist of Indian flute music. Can you identify any common elements such as rhythmic patterns or chords?
33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were Euan's family as he remembered them? • Do you think Aarti is right to go back to the island? • Do you think Euan was right when he told Aarti, 'You are strong – you have everything inside yourself to take you forward'? • Do you think Aarti was right to find out the truth? 	Write a book review including your own thoughts about the story and its themes, and why others should read it.	Create a timeline showing some of the major events in Aarti's life. Reflect on the ways reading <i>Aarti & the Blue Gods</i> has affected you.

