

CONSPIRACY365 Black Ops 3: Endgame

Shadow Island's volcano is erupting! Cal and Ryan are trapped on the island with the evil Damien Thoroughgood, who will stop at nothing to fulfil his deadly plan. After surviving in the jungle and outwitting his enemy for so long, Cal risks losing his brother and everything he's worked towards.

Will Cal agree to a criminal mission to save his brother's life? Or will he stop Damien from unleashing earth-shattering evil?

The clock is ticking. Any second could be his last.

Teacher Notes

- The submersible boat that Cal and Ryan make their getaway on is damaged by the water pressure when they take it under the water. How does water pressure work? Why would water pressure destroy the glass on the boat? You might also consider water's surface tension. What makes something float? Why was there a limited number of people that could get into D'Merrick's rescue boat? What makes an object sink?
- Read Cal and Ryan's encounter with the shark, starting on page 155. What is the purpose of this encounter? Can you consider it a plot device? A plot device is something that advances the plot of the story. Is it a dramatic device, designed to inject excitement into the story?
- Certain types of books, especially thrillers like Conspiracy 365, often employ writing that is almost 'cinematic'; that is, the narrative style encourages the reader to imagine the action like they are watching it on a movie screen. Cal and Ryan's encounter with the shark might be considered an example of this. Do you agree? Why/why not? Discuss the pros and cons of cinematic narrative styles. For example, a pro could be that it helps the reader willingly suspend disbelief and engage with the story, while a con could be that the author relies too heavily on the cinematic style and therefore does not spend enough time fleshing out characters or plot details.
- What sort of public image do sharks have? What is your general feeling about them? Why do you think you feel this way? Why might sharks have a positive or negative reputation? Research news reports about sharks online. What sorts of stories are commonly reported about sharks?
- As an extension exercise, watch the following clips from the BBC *Planet Earth* series.
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftdoiKTWSPO>
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D17j8AYF9H4>How does the first clip make you feel towards the shark and the seal, respectively? How does the narration, film techniques and music contribute to this feeling? Now watch the second clip. How does this help you understand what you see in the first clip? How do researchers respect both predator and prey?
- The Conspiracy 365 series is told mostly through Cal's eyes, but we can develop an understanding of the other characters despite this. Go back over the other two books in the

Black Ops trilogy, *Missing* and *Hunted*. What is your impression of Ryan's character? What do you think drives him? What are his biggest fears and anxieties? How would you describe his relationship with Cal? Consider things like why he joins the Paradise People Resort in the first place, his reaction to Cal's arrival on Shadow Island, and the way he works with Cal against Damien Thoroughgood. Now, with this information, turn to page 86 and reread the part when Ryan finds out that Cal has been investigating Damien without him. Why do you think he reacts in this way? If you were in the room, how would you explain Ryan's behaviour to Cal?

- Cal has what is known as a 'hero complex', where he feels compelled to protect and save the people around him. This is a common way to characterise the lead protagonist in many stories. Why do you think this is? How does a hero with a hero complex drive the story in a way that a more passive hero might not? What are the benefits of such a character? What are some possible negative implications of the hero complex (you might consider how Cal's hero complex impacts upon his brother)?
- Cal and Ryan are not the only brothers in the Black Ops trilogy. It could be argued that the story is as much about the relationship between Damien and Jeffrey Thoroughgood as it is about Cal and Ryan. How has Gabrielle Lord balanced the relationship between the two sets of brothers? Can you see aspects of Cal and Ryan's relationship in Damien and Jeffrey and vice versa?
- What is CERN? Investigate this international research organisation and its laboratory. Who built it? When was it built? Why was it built? What work is being conducted there? What organisations conduct research there? Why is this work valuable? What discoveries have already been made there (hint: the CERN laboratory in Switzerland is the birthplace of the World Wide Web)? **For advanced students:** What is the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN? What is its function? What are scientists trying to discover using the LHC?
- Research the history of humanity's technological and industrial development, starting around 300BCE with the architectural pioneering of the Classical Greeks. Divide into seven groups, with each group taking one of the following time periods:
 - 300BCE to 500CE
 - 500CE to 1066
 - 12th Century to 15th Century
 - 16th Century to 18th Century
 - 19th Century to 1945
 - 1945 to 2001
 - Post-2001

Each of these periods is marked by at least one major event or technological discovery that changed the way the known world worked, such as Archimedes's discoveries in the field of physics, the sacking of Rome, the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution. Begin by identifying these markers and consider how they impacted upon the known world. What other markers can you find? How are they significant? Construct a class timeline, indicating the discoveries and developments that you think had a lasting impact on our history. Consider also how the periods above become shorter and shorter. What does this indicate about humanity's technological development? **For advanced students:** consider how the sudden acceleration of scientific and technological discovery has impacted, both negatively and positively, upon our species and upon the world environment as a whole.

- Damien's plan to extort money from around the world is based on a common narrative thread in many post-apocalyptic science fiction stories; that is, the fear that in our technologically-dependent world, any massive technological crash would result in total anarchy. In groups, discuss the various elements that contribute to this narrative thread:
 - Are we a technologically-dependent world? Why/why not? If you answered yes, what do you think has led to our dependence upon technology?
 - What aspects of technology would you be able to live without? Why? What aspects do you think are completely essential to your life? Why?
 - What technology does society rely upon? Consider things such as food production, law and order, healthcare and infrastructure. Which of these factors could survive without technology? Why?
 - What emergency measures are necessary to provide for our species in the event of a technological catastrophe?

Having discussed these elements as a group, now decide whether you think this post-apocalyptic narrative thread is plausible. Why/why not?

- Like Mordred and Arthur, Grendel is another mythical figure who is mentioned in Black Ops. Who was Grendel? Why do you think Damien names his monster Grendel?
- Paddy is eventually revealed as Damien's mole in SI-6. What clues were given throughout the Black Ops trilogy that he was the traitor? **For advanced students:** if we return to the story of Mordred and Arthur, how is Paddy and Georgia's betrayal foreshadowed by the story of Mordred and Arthur?