Introductory worksheet

Schools
1. Why are some schools called “academic schools” and others are called “vocational schools”? What is the difference?

2. What do you think of the idea of schools giving you only vocational training?

3. What might a learner be studying if he or she were destined to be a:
   a) Drudge?
   b) Pleasure worker?
   c) Drainer?

Setting
1. Explain what is meant by the “setting” of a novel.

2. Discuss how the novel’s epigraph establishes the setting of this novel.

Narrative point of view
1. Explain what is meant by the “narrator” of a story, and the narrator’s “point of view”.

2. Refer again to the epigraph and consider:
   a) Who is the narrator?

   b) What is the advantage of choosing such a narrator?

   c) What could be a possible disadvantage of such a narrator?

   d) What is the purpose of this epigraph?
PART ONE

Chapter 1: The Monster

1. Why is Handler Xavier given the title of “Handler”?

2. Find evidence that establish the setting of this novel as futuristic. (Give at least 5 examples.)

3. How do we know that Handler Xavier is skilled at playing a part (pretending)?

4. Give a reason why Ettie speaks so harshly about Kitty to Handler Xavier.

5. Explain how the references to “masks” and “deceit” establish a major theme of the novel.

Chapter 2: Cowboy

1. Why does Cowboy constantly choose a different position in the market?

2. Who patrols the market? What makes them recognizable?

3. What is the purpose/effect of the descriptions of the flies?

4. Find evidence in the first two chapters to suggest that Ettie does not like to be touched.

5. Why do you think the author, Edyth Bulbring, chooses to have her characters play a game called “Extinct Species”?

6. Discuss the significance of the allusion in the question “Could she be the one?”
   
   (allusion = an indirect reference to some well-known story, event, person or object – used to make a comparison in the reader’s mind)

7. Referring to this chapter, and the novel as a whole, critically comment on Ettie’s behaviour in the room with the cots.

8. From the evidence in the novel so far, is the reader meant to agree with Ettie when she asserts, “I do not believe in anything”? Motivate your answer.
Chapter 3: Drudge school

1. How can people in Slum City reach Mangeria City after the curfew?

2. What is the purpose of the numbers that are branded at the base of everyone’s spine?

3. Explain how Ettie's silent interpolations as the lessons continue show her attitude to her classes.

4. Discuss the techniques used to condition the children into accepting their role in society.

Chapter 4: Reader

1. What indications are there that this society has only a veneer (a superficial appearance, a covering) of democracy?

2. How does this society deal with people no longer considered useful? Give evidence to support your answer.

3. Comment on Ettie's response to the irony of Reader's situation – that he is “surrounded by books he can no longer read”.

Chapter 5: Posh Trouble

1. What is the reason why Ettie needs to “thank a Locust”?

2. Explain why Kitty would not drink the medicine Ettie wanted to give her when she was a child.

3. Explain in detail how Handler Xavier deceives the crowd.

4. Comment on Handler Xavier’s choice of plastic characters.

5. Discuss the effectiveness of the sentence, “My generous mask sits square on my face” (p. 96) in the context of the chapter.

Chapter 6: The Festival
1. Look at the following words on page 99: “hogs”, “pout” and “simper”.
   1.1 Using your own words, explain each word in context.
   1.2 Using a thesaurus, give TWO synonyms or synonymous phrases for each of the words.
   1.3 Comment on how the diction creates a specific impression of Kitty’s character.

2. Why does Kitty’s attitude to the Festival of Fate-mates upset Ettie?

3. Contrast what is meant to happen at the Festival of fate-mates with what happens on this occasion.

4. Discuss the effectiveness of the word, “Yes!” (p. 109) in the context of the relationship between Nicolas and Ettie so far.

Chapter 7: The Riot

1. Do you sympathise with Kitty for being frightened of big fires? Give a reason for your answer.

2. Look at the metaphor on p. 113: “the tears of my trees weeping into the skies”.
   2.1 Discuss the effectiveness of this metaphor.
   2.2 Identify another figure of speech evident in these words.
   2.3 How does Ettie feel about the prisoners who are accused of burning the trees? Explain your answer.

3. Are the traders justified in their looting and burning? Discuss.

4. Comment on the nickname, Cockroach.

Chapter 8: The Experiment

1. How does Ettie reach her vantage point?

2. Why did the Locust warden allow the prisoners to be killed? Discuss briefly.

3. What is the main purpose of The Laboratory? Discuss briefly.

4. Discuss the TONE of the final sentence of this chapter. Justify your answer.

Chapter 9: Graduation

1. Discuss the justice of the Drainers’ disposing of the Pulaks at the dumps (p. 131).

2. Look at the line “I long for the smell of dry plastic,” on page 132.
   2.1 Explain the irony in this sentence.
   2.2 When did Kittys stop holding Ettie at night?
   2.3 What reasons can you give for the change in Kitty?


4. In the novel, Bulbring uses a limited first person narrator.
   4.1 Explain what is meant by “a limited first person narrator”.
   4.2 Discuss how this technique of using a limited narrative voice adds to the impact of the novel.
4.3 What does Ettie think makes Kitty tremble on the morning of the graduation?
4.4 In your opinion, why does Kitty tremble? Explain clearly.

Chapter 10: The Plan

1. At the hotel, Kitty tries to prevent Ettie being part of the game that day.
   
   1.1 Briefly sum up the excuses Kitty makes to accomplish this goal.
   1.2 What further tactics does she use at the hotel to try to protect Ettie?

2. Suggest a reason why Nicolas knows where to find Ettie.

3. What are Ettie’s possible motives for tearing up her precious books?

4. Describe how Bulbring creates atmosphere in the last paragraph of Part One.

PART TWO

Chapter 11: The Drudges

1. By carefully examining the first six paragraphs of the chapter, describe Ettie’s attitude to Dora.

2. Explain the ambiguity in Ettie’s reply to Dora’s comment: “Adorable. I could just squeeze the breath out of them,' Dora says. I tell her I have had the same thoughts on occasion.” (p. 152)

3. At page 157 Ettie refers to the tree that is still alive.
   
   3.1 Why is it unwise for Ettie to mention this tree?
   3.2 What significance can you see in the use of “my” by Mistress and Ettie respectively when referring to the trees?

4. What indications are there that Dora will be an enemy to Ettie?

5. Evaluate the relationship between Master and Mistress, as introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 12: The Party

1. By referring to at least one extract from this chapter, describe Ettie’s conflict with:
Chapter 13: The Trial

1. How does Madam Merriem try to comfort Mistress?
2. Do you agree that Ettie is “not really lying” (p. 107)? Justify your answer.
3. Describe Kitty’s appearance when she enters the courtroom.
4. Describe the tone in Ettie’s words, “I am back in the game. But this time, I play alone” (p. 179). Justify your answer.
5. Considering the chapter as a whole, discuss to what extent corruption can be seen at all levels in this society.

Chapter 14: Porridge

1. Describe and account for Ettie’s mood at the beginning of this chapter.
2. How does she deliberately sabotage the porridge?
3. With whom do your sympathies lie in this chapter? Motivate your answer.

Chapter 15: The Laboratory

1. Discuss examples of conflict between Master and Mistress in this chapter.
2. Why does Ettie “taste power” (p. 152)?
3. Briefly summarise the main events of the visit to the Laboratory.
Chapter 16: Apple Juice

1. Outline all the characters that have secrets from one another, and state what those secrets are.

2. Why does Little Miss never leave the house?

3. Conflict is a key feature of a literary text. Consider the following lines:
   “We will do the procedure next month.” (p. 208)
   and
   “Well, she won’t have her seat in parliament for much longer,” Master says, smirking.” (p. 210)

   Explain how Bulbring creates conflict in the extract.

4. Which major themes are developed in the following extract?
   ‘Nicolas sighs. “Because I am not a Locust. And I never can be a Locust. I’m not sure who I am yet, but I don’t want to be what The Machine tells me I am.”’ (p. 214)

5. How does Ettie react to Nicolas’s invitation? What answer does she give? Why?

Chapter 17: Deathbed confession

1. Describe Mistress’s unsettled response Handler Xavier.

2. From the information gained in this chapter, describe Mistress’s past relationship with Handler Xavier.

3. Account for Ettie’s response to the information about her parents.

4. How does the story prepare the reader for further interaction between Ettie and Reader?

Chapter 18: The Procedure
1. The structure of this chapter follows the pattern of the structure of a novel as a whole: exposition, rising action with conflict, climax, and falling action. Discuss.

Chapter 19: Golden Goose

1. In this chapter, the story has a number of ironic twists. Explain.

2. Discuss the appropriateness of the chapter’s title.

Chapter 20: The Machine

1. Why does Ettie agree to remove all of the names on Handler Xavier’s list when she promised, in the previous chapter, to throw the list away?

2. Describe how Ettie keeps calm in a crisis. What tactics does she use to avoid detection?

3. How does this chapter fulfil the words of the epigraph?

Chapter 21: The Journey

1. What significance does Ettie see in Nicolas’s comment: “It’s the way they control us”? (p. 257)

2. DO you think Larissa is right to blind Princess Fanny? Justify your answer.

3. To what extent do you agree with Ettie when she says that she sees her mother “clearly”?

4. What future storyline in a sequel is hinted at in the final section of the novel?

Epilogue

1. On what note does the narrative end? Discuss.