

# A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

## TARANTULA TIDE by Sharon Tregenza



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### Themes/issues addressed in this book

Friendship, exotic creatures, island life, Shetland, coping with the death of a parent

### Book Summary

Shetland should be a great place for a holiday, but Jack is harbouring a secret, and he's less than enthusiastic to be there. When he meets Izzie and her exotic pets, things start to liven up. They find a tarantula underneath the fridge and after that, they start to notice all kinds of odd things happening around them. Who is loitering on the beach at night? Are the well-dressed professor and the scruffy tramp really the same person? And where exactly does Sheila, the vet, fit into the picture? This award-winning novel mixes humour, drama, and a fantastic location to create a thought-provoking adventure which centres on the lucrative smuggling of exotic creatures.

## BEFORE READING

### Group Activities

- Discussion: talk about Shetland and its Viking past. Do you feel more like a Viking or a Scot or a bit of both?
- Discussion: what type of creature is a tarantula? How do you feel about spiders?
- Discussion: what do you know about smuggling? Do you think that islands like the Shetlands would be a good place to operate a smuggling ring? Why?

## AFTER READING

### Individual Work

- Write a paragraph on the thoughts and feelings you had when:
  - a) Jack came face-to-face with the tarantula (chapter 1/chapter 2)
  - b) The Eigg man told Jack & Izzie about the smuggling (chapter 5)
  - c) You found out that Jack's father is dead (chapter 10)
  - d) You found out that Sheila is behind the smuggling (chapter 11)
- Draw or paint a picture of one of the following:
  - a) A Mexican red-kneed tarantula like Octavia
  - b) A chameleon like Karma
  - c) An Oriental Fire-Bellied Toad like Bombina
- Write at least four paragraphs on the mini 'Up Helly Aa' that Jack uses to say good-bye to his father. Do you think this helped Jack come to terms with his father's death? How? Why do you think Jack lied about his father's death?
- Imagine you are writing an email to a friend on the mainland who doesn't know what 'Up Helly Aa' is. Tell them about it – how it started, and what you do.

### Group Activities

- Class project: what kind of creatures might you find in the wild in the Shetlands? Using the Internet and your school library, try to find twenty different types of creature – birds, insects and mammals – and create a fact-file about them. You might like to include facts such as: what characteristics they have; where you might find them in the islands and when; how long their life span is, and so on.
- Group discussion and activity: how do you think someone like Jack would adapt if he had to move from a city like Edinburgh to Shetland? What do you think he'd miss? Write a list of ten pros and cons of living on the Shetland Islands.
- Class project: visit the Clickimin Broch for inspiration and make a broch settlement display for your class. Take some photographs and write down anything you notice that you think might help you with the project. Using a variety of materials (papier-mâché, plasticine, stones, grass etc) create a complete broch and a little community around it. You can even include people and animals!

### Vocabulary

- Check you know what the following words mean:

antibiotic	didgeridoo	galley	Norse	satellite	tier
broch	expedition	hysterical	paranoid	silhouette	venom
circumstantial	frantic	illegal	quarantine	stereotypical	Viking

## KELPIES

### Series Summary

The award-winning Kelpies series is Scotland's favourite collection of children's fiction. Floris Books took over the list in 2001, republishing classic works by authors such as Kathleen Fidler and Allan Campbell McLean. Since then, we have continued to add to the series with a range of highly successful new Scottish novels for children. Of these, *Chill* by Alex Nye won a Royal Mail Award in 2007 and *Hox* by Annemarie Allan was nominated for a Royal Mail Award in 2008.

## CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS COVERED

### 5–14 Curriculum, Scotland

Years: P4-P7

#### Listening:

Listening in Groups  
Listening for Information, including instructions and directions

#### Reading:

Reading for Information  
Reading to Reflect  
Awareness of Genre

#### Talking:

Talking in Groups  
Talking about Texts  
Talking about Experiences, including feelings and opinions

#### Writing:

Functional  
Imaginative