

# *Taken at the Flood*

## by Ken Catran

**A teacher's resource**  
prepared by Tania Kelly Roxborough

This resource is designed to be used with Year 10 -12 English classes. It links with the following English Curriculum Strands and Achievement Objectives at levels five and six:

- **Written Language: Reading:**
  - Personal Reading
  - Close Reading
- **Written Language: Writing:**
  - Creative Writing
  - Expressive/Personal Writing
  - Formal Writing
- **Oral Language: speaking and listening**
  - Interpersonal speaking
  - Interpersonal listening
- **Visual Language: presenting and viewing**
- **Language Process:**
  - exploring language
  - thinking critically
  - processing information

### **Reading Comprehension:**

After you have read the novel, work through these questions which will check that you have understood the key events and ideas of the story. The questions are organised chronologically.

1. Who is Gabby?
2. Describe Karen and Bruce's first meeting.
3. What is 'The Ob'?
4. Who is Prof?
5. Give a brief description of the destruction.
6. What information does Karen get from listening to the radio stations?
7. What is hanging from the rear-view mirror of the ute? Why is this ironic?
8. Describe what Karen and Bruce see on their first trip out after Gabby.
9. Why does Karen get angry at Bruce in chapter five? Is she right?
10. What causes the bleeding red sunset?
11. Describe the first 'settlement' they come to.
12. Why is Karen worried about the rats?
13. Describe what they find at the second settlement.
14. What was 'The Thing'?
15. What is the new disease?
16. Why were the man and woman after the two dogs?
17. Describe the attack on The Orb.
18. Why does Bruce feel betrayed?
19. Describe the 'deal' Karen and Bruce have with Mid-set.
20. Describe briefly what happens at McCallum's commune.
21. Why does Karen die?
22. What happens to Fleur? Mark McCullum?

23. Why does Bruce cover McCullum's body with rocks?
24. Describe what Bruce finds in the 'city'.
25. What does WARD mean?
26. Describe the state of the world.
27. What is GENEX?
28. What is Herman's plan?
29. What does Bruce decide to do at the end of the novel?

### Characterisation

1. Describe the character of **Bruce** at:
  - the start of the story
  - the end of the story
2. Describe the changes which have occurred and list the things which caused these changes?
3. Describe the relationship between **Bruce and Karen** at:
  - the start of the story
  - the end of the story
4. What changes have occurred and what has caused these changes?
5. For each of the following:

**Professor Booth      Olive                      Mark McCallum      Herman Strom**

- Write a short description of the person.
  - Explain the significance of the person to the development of the story.
  - Describe the relationship between the character and **Bruce**. Include whether there are changes in the relationship and/or whether Bruce learns important information from his relationship with the character.
  - Either draw or cut out a picture from a magazine which you believe best represents the character.
6. The back cover of the blurb says "Only the strongest will survive." To what extent is this true of the characters in the novel?

### Style

*Taken at the Flood* is written in an interesting way because:

- the narration is limited to Bruce's point of view;
- it makes us think;
- it has some very descriptive passages;
- it is set in the near future
- each chapter ends at an exciting moment;

Choose **two** of the above and in about one paragraph for each statement, explain, giving details and examples from the story, how it is true for the novel.

#### Extension activities:

1. Re-read the list of things in The Ob. Write a list of the things you would store for a survival kit. You might like to construct a survival kit with all or some of the things you have listed.
2. The author foreshadows Karen's pregnancy long before Bruce finds out. Quickly skim through chapters seven through to fourteen and list the clues he has included.
3. In what ways does the author build up a picture of life after Gabby?
4. Look closely at page 12 and answer the following:
  - Explain, providing detailed examples, how the author uses **sentence variation** to make this passage exciting.

- Identify **two sound techniques** used in this passage and explain the effects of them.
- Identify **two examples of figurative language** used in the passage and discuss their effectiveness.

### 5. Word Bank:

Use a dictionary to find the definitions of the words listed below:

magnetosphere	incandescent	auroral	tendrils
pyrotechnic	serried	cynical	subsided
tentative	facade	cupola	erratic
detonating	tectonic disturbance	epitaph	capricious
projectile	psychopathic	mavericks	sardonic
vociferous	ablation	receded	tremulous
shroud	oxides	implacable	illusory
putrescent	malicious	indelible	restive
dendrochronology	exclusivity	nacelles	

For **ten** of the above, write a sentence of your own using the new word.

## Themes

1. Write your own definition for the following words:

**Commune      Scavenge      Survival      Leadership      Power**

2. Then, write down the dictionary definition for each word.
3. Either on your own, in pairs or in a small group, display your definitions. You can use magazine pictures, words, symbols, illustrations, collage.
4. Below are a list of quotations from the novel. For each of the following quotations explain:

what is happening at that moment in the story;  
the importance/significance of the statement;  
your personal response to the statement.

- Prof had said it would come too fast in the end, that nobody would be ready. pg 6
- Free-market skills in survival mode, Bruce. Your family will make it because you know how to get the edge. 20
- The cold dull edge of pain already cutting at him; also panic, a realisation that everything ahead was a hideous unknown pg 21
- Legends are sometimes like symptoms, Bruce, and when, all around the world, they say the same thing..." pg 33
- The world needs a survival plan it hasn't got time to make. Because we are commerce-gearred and there's no profit in scaring people. pg 34
- Scavenging, thought Bruce, but we'll be doing a lot of that from now on. And at least the old world will be a fat corpse. pg 41
- Everything's up for grabs.....we have to learn to live again. pg 49
- If people don't help each other, there will be nothing left. pg 55
- We've stopped living off the old world, he thought. One rabbit and the clock goes back half a million years. We are hunters again, by necessity. pg 100
- Life is here to laughed at and, when it gets bad, we just have to turn cartwheels and laugh louder - right? pg 112
- When those other comets hit, people must have thought as we do. End of the world. But there had to be a beginning, Things better than before. pg 159
- *We caused destruction, Bruce. World-wide ecological damage and we didn't care too much. I wonder if our new world will repeat the pattern.* pg 160

- *Maybe we need GABBY to remind us of what real values are. Of how little we need to be happy* - . pg 160
- Some people never lose sight of power, he thought. pg 168
- *There is a tide in men's fortunes when, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune...* pg 169
- He had been to the extreme of despair and tragedy; now, swinging to the other end, a golden time beckoned, full of power and all the creature comforts he ever wanted. pg 172

## Written Language: Writing

### 1. Creative Writing:

- Re-write the first meeting between Karen and Bruce and the next few days from Karen's point of view. How does this change your perception of her?
- Write a different epilogue for *Taken at the Flood...* Explain why you wrote the ending this way.
- Write a short story about a character who must survive after a major natural disaster.

### 2. Expressive/Personal Writing:

- Imagine you are Bruce. Write a letter to Karen's mother or Fleur explaining how you felt about Karen and what happened to her.
- Write a letter to the author Ken Catran saying what you think of the novel. He can be contacted at c/- Random House, 18 Poland Road, Glenfield, Auckland, New Zealand

### 3. Formal Writing:

- Write a formal book review for the novel. Include comments on the language used, the treatment of the topics and the appropriateness of the novel for teenagers.
- Write an article, for a school newspaper, on the things people do in preparation of Gabby.
- Write a formal essay on one of the ideas presented in the statements in the theme section.

## Visual Language: Static Images

A static image is an image that does not move. When you create a static image you need to consider these questions:

- why do you want to make this static image? (the purpose);
- what do you want to say? (the message);
- who do you want to say it to? (the audience);
- and, how will you get it across? (techniques).

The last question is divided into two sections:

**The visual techniques**, for example:

colour                      dominant image                      layout                      symbol                      contrast  
lettering

**And language techniques**, for example:

alliteration                      rhyme                      pun                      cliché                      hyperbole                      simile  
listing                      imperatives                      jargon                      rhetorical question                      metaphor

A static image is successful if it achieves its purpose.

### TASK ONE:

Look at the cover (back and front) of *Taken at the Flood*.

- 1) What is its **purpose**?
- 2) What is the **message**?
- 3) Who is the image aimed at? (the **audience**)

- 4) What visual techniques are used to get the reader's attention?  
 5) How effective is the cover? Give reasons for your answer.

### TASK TWO:

Design your own front cover for the book.

### TASK THREE

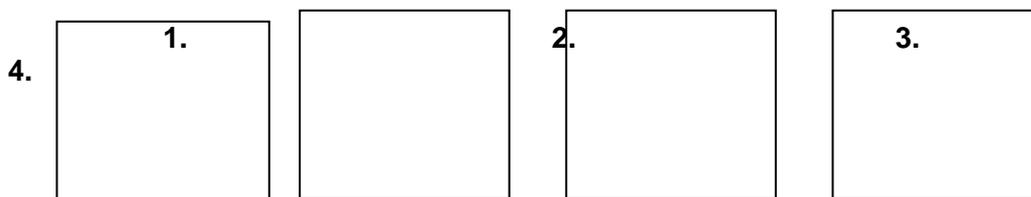
Create a new settlement. Design the physical layout (either on a poster or in 3D); create the rules the community will abide by; consider its belief system and its laws and leadership. Explain why you would like to live in a settlement like this one.

## Film/Video

Making a video or film of your own scripted version of a scene from the novel also enables you to understand the characters in a deeper way and search for techniques and special effects to enhance the message of the story.

Ensure you are familiar with the following terms:

- shot
  - jump cut
  - extreme close-up
  - long (wide) shot
  - high-angle shot
  - tilt
  - point of view shot
  - voice-over
  - cut
  - close-up
  - medium shot
  - low-angle shot
  - pan
  - zoom
  - FX (special effects)
  - frame
- Prepare a story-board from a scene in the novel



shot \_\_\_\_\_

dialogue \_\_\_\_\_

FX \_\_\_\_\_

music/sound \_\_\_\_\_

- Filming
  - When you have finalised your story-board with the list of shots, dialogue, any special effects and music, you are ready to film it.
    - Rehearse the whole thing two or three times until your group is satisfied with the piece.
    - Set up the first shot; practise again.
    - Shoot your first shot.
    - Continue this way until you have completed the whole sequence.
- Editing

If you don't have a editing suite at your school, you can still easily do the same thing by using two video recorders. Transfer the shots you like from the tape you filmed with, to another tape. Using the audio dub control you can add sound effects, music or voice over.

## Extra Activities

### Research:

The following ideas are mentioned in the novel:

Armageddon  
 Genesis  
 Exodus  
 Radiation sickness  
 Tsunami  
 Volcanic eruptions  
 Pacific Rim  
 Bubonic plague  
 Cholera

Using an encyclopaedia, find out what each of these mean and, in a 250 word essay, explain their significance to the ideas presented in *Taken by the Flood*.

### Essay Topics

1. Describe the setting of the novel and explain, using detailed examples and explanations, why this setting is important to the story.
2. Describe an important moment in the novel and explain the significance of that moment to those characters involved and to the rest of the story.
3. Explain how and why the beginning or end of the novel is effective.
4. Describe a problem a character has and how he or she tried to overcome the problem.
5. Explain, giving detailed reasons and explanations, why the title of the novel is appropriate for the story.
6. Describe a relationship one important character has with another. Why is this relationship important?
7. Explain, using detailed examples and explanations why other teenagers should read this novel.

### FURTHER READING:

*The Tribe* series

other books by Ken Catran

*Children of the Dust* by Louise Lawrence

*Rocco* by Sheryl Jordan