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## PART ONE

Part one begins with an epigraph (a short statement or quotation at the beginning of a chapter or book).

*My name is Juliet Seven. The date is 264 PC. This year, I am going to wipe out my father and my sister. And then I will off myself. The Machine will record that I lived for fifteen years, worked as a drudge, and that my last address was Room 33, Section D, Slum City. Everything I do this year was spoken of before I existed. And it will be written in the blood of those who survive me. (p. 43)*

The science fiction genre is established immediately with the date, 264 PC (post-conflagration, or after the fire which destroyed much of the earth and its capacity to sustain the population). The reference to “The Machine” also shows the reader that the book is set in a technologically-advanced society, where people’s lives are tracked by a Machine that seems omniscient (all-knowing).

The narrative voice is first person: the speaker tells us her name is Juliet Seven and she speaks in the first person.

Finally, the mood of this epigraph is ominous (threatening, suggesting that something bad is going to happen). Juliet plans to kill her father, her sister, and herself (“off myself” is slang for committing suicide). The mention of blood in the final sentence also creates an ominous mood.

### Question

1. What is the purpose of this epigraph?

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## 1. The Monster

### Vocabulary

Flails	Wave one’s arms about in an uncontrolled way.
Breakers	Waves in the sea that form white foam on their crests (tops) and which crash down onto the beach sand (known as breaking).
Thrashing	Move one’s arms in a fast and violent way, usually without any control.
Gather their wits	Take time to think about what is happening, to make sense of it.
Glee	Great enjoyment or happiness.
Oblivious to me	Without my being noticed by anybody.
Palms (verb)	Picking up an object in a way that uses the palm of the hand to cover and hide the object; in this case it also implies so that no-one notices, in order to steal.
Bile	A bitter liquid found in the stomach, which can sometimes be tasted in one’s mouth when one is frightened or nervous.

### Synopsis

Handler Xavier causes panic on the beach so that, when everyone flees (runs away in fright), their belongings can be stolen by girls like Kitty and Juliet, who is called Ettie. A Locust attempts to stop Kitty, but Ettie distracts him by pretending to have a fit. After the curfew siren, Ettie returns to Section O in Slum City where she shares a room with Kitty. Handler Xavier takes the credits they have stolen and tells them to take the items to Cowboy in the market. Ettie hides a book she has stolen under a paver (paving stone).

## Discussion

The opening chapters of the novel form the “**exposition**” – This is the section of the novel in which the following are established:

- the main characters,
- the setting,
- image patterns,
- the main conflict,
- theme(s),
- genre.

### *The main characters*

In chapter 1, the reader is introduced to the main character, Ettie, and three other important characters: Handler Xavier, Kitty, and the Locust, who is Nicolas, the young man Ettie has a romantic relationship with later in the novel.

Certain aspects of **Ettie**'s character are clear from the start: she is quick and resourceful (she diverts suspicion away from Kitty, she deceives Handler Xavier); she is loyal and caring to those she believes are worthy of her commitment: she is grateful to Kitty for saving her many years before, and she is loyal to their friendship, even though Kitty seems to have changed. She tries to protect Kitty from danger and she watches over her as much as she can. Ettie feels no similar affection for or loyalty towards Handler Xavier because he exploits the girls and shows no loving kindness towards her. Ettie is also deeply moved by books; she describes her eagerness to read as if she were salivating for food; in books she finds pleasure and excitement. Ettie is also a survivor: she is able to deceive others and is prepared to be conniving (helping others in their dishonest actions) and dishonest to ensure her survival, and Kitty's. Ettie appears to have few morals and no conscience but the reader is aware that she does have values and acts in accordance with them and on her own terms.

**Handler Xavier** appears ruthless and self-centred. His concern for the girls appears only to involve their usefulness to him – but the reader must be aware of the constant references to masks and deceit – things are not what they seem, not even as regards Handler Xavier.

**Kitty** appears to be frivolous and self-centred; she is quick enough to steal effectively, but she attracts the attention of the Locust, thus putting herself in danger; Ettie describes her as shallow and greedy – for attention, for beautiful things, for food. However, we know that, years before, she saved Ettie, and so there must be some depth to Kitty that Ettie appears at this point to be unaware of.

The **Locust**'s character is indicated in a few quick details: he is compassionate towards Ettie when he believes she is ill but he is intelligent enough to see through Ettie's performance and starts to track her.

### *The setting*

The setting is more than a beach where the privileged relax while wardens watch for danger from the sea. There are constant references to the heat, to blistered skin, to sunblocker, to cracked lips and eyelids. The beach setting reinforces the idea of relentless heat which people try to escape. References to ice in glasses accord with this atmosphere of heat, but we are aware that those who are privileged have the power to alleviate (lessen or reduce) the terrible effects of the heat while the majority suffer under it, and some are even worse off, for example, the Pulaks who have to pull the carriages in this suffocating heat.

### *Conflict*

The opening chapter sets up a number of tensions:

There is conflict between the privileged of this society and the majority who are restricted to the ghetto at night and are forbidden to break the curfew. This tension within society has the potential to be explosive and a number of aspects of the plot relate to the societal conflict.

The main characters are in conflict with their society: on a superficial level, they want a better life for themselves, but, as the novel progresses, we shall realise that there is a subversive movement waiting to overthrow the elite. On one level, Ettie is in conflict with her society because she resents the Mark, the fact that she is controlled by the numbers on her back. Her desperate efforts to remove those numbers are clear

right from the beginning of the book, where she is trying to burn away the numbers with acid. Ettie appears to be selfishly concerned only with her own freedom.

Ettie also is in conflict with those around her, in particular with Handler Xavier, whom she needs if she is to be even slightly better off than those who have to scrounge for food. Ettie needs to convince him of her innocence and honesty while deceiving him as far as she can. She is often in conflict with Kitty, whose apparent carelessness leads her into danger, and whose apparent superficial concern only to follow the rules and behave as she is told frustrates Kitty enormously.

Finally, Ettie is in conflict with herself: she wants not to care about Kitty but is constantly agonised about Kitty's safety. She also fights her own better impulses, often refusing even to acknowledge that they exist.

There are many ironies which the reader does not grasp at this early stage of the novel, such as Ettie's pretending that Handler Xavier is her father, and acting as she has been told a loving daughter would. Ettie has no experience of a loving family and certainly does not suspect that Handler Xavier is her father. He, too, is ignorant of their relationship.

### **Themes**

The major themes of the novel start to take shape: appearances are generally deceptive and no character can be sure of anyone else. Not only are Ettie, Kitty and Handler Xavier deceiving the victims of their games, they are also deceiving each other.

Freedom and the right to individual choice are prominent ideas right from the start. Through Ettie, the author seems to support the idea that individual freedom is critical and that being controlled is destructive and oppressive.

### **Genre**

Notice the details that fill in the background of the story and establish the science fiction genre.

An example of this is the role of the Necromunda in this society. Ettie tells us that the Necromunda are the sea scavengers. They sail out to sea and dive down to the city that once existed and which has now been covered by the rising water. We therefore conclude that the rising temperatures which we talk about now caused the polar ice to melt and that much of the world as we know it has been lost under the resulting floods. Bulbring has created this name by combining *necro* (Greek, related to corpses or death) and *munda* (Latin, world). Therefore, these people live off the dead world under the sea. The word, "scavenge" means to look through items that have been thrown away to find something useful. If we abbreviate this word, we get "scavvies". The Necromunda search in the city under the waves for anything useful, which is taken to warehouses controlled by the Mangerians and sold off. Ettie explains: "The loot is stored in Mangerian warehouses, where it is sorted and then sold to the Posh – the only ones with enough credits to buy relics from the time before the seas rose up and swallowed the world." (p. 48)

### **Questions**

1. Why is Handler Xavier given the title of "Handler"?

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2. Give some details that establish a futuristic world as the setting of the novel.

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3. What evidence is there that Handler Xavier is skilled at playing a part?

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4. Why does Ettie speak so harshly about Kitty to Handler Xavier?

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5. How do the references to “masks” and “deceit” establish a major theme of the novel?

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## 2. Cowboy

### Vocabulary

Squatting	Bending one’s knees and lowering oneself until one is supported on the bottom of one’s feet, with one’s bottom not touching the ground, but resting on one’s ankles.
Dodging	Deliberately avoiding bumping into or being caught by someone else.
Jigging the prices	Interfering with the prices by making them too low or too high.
Taunting	Teasing someone in a nasty way, usually to cause them to react.
Blurt	Say something without thinking, usually something that should not be said, such as in giving away a secret.
Blotchy	Covered with discoloured areas.

### Synopsis

After Ettie has handed over the stolen goods to Cowboy, she buys fruit and water for herself and Kitty, before she collects medicine from Witch. Having delivered the medicine to the orphan warden, she checks the cots. Back in her room, she applies cream to the numbers on her spine and reads *Peter Pan*. Kitty returns after sunrise.

### Discussion

#### *Filling in the background*

The background is constantly filled in:

Firstly, Savage City is the place where convicted prisoners are sent, and no prisoner escapes: they either serve their sentence, or they die.

Secondly, we learn that food is supplied from The Laboratory – a term which indicates that food is manufactured by a chemical process. The conditions required for food production from the soil no longer exist.

Thirdly, there is some explanation of how the world described in the novel came to be. In describing Witch and Nelson, Ettie explains:



# Exemplar Examination Questions

## Novel – essay question

Edyth Bulbring has created a main character who is both devious and appealing.

In an essay of 300-350 words, discuss the above statement.

Plan thoroughly, paying careful attention to the structure of your essay, your thesis statements, and to the language conventions of the literature essay.

[25]

OR

## Novel – contextual question

Read the following TWO extracts from *The Mark* by Edyth Bulbring and answer the set questions.

1	I run as far as I can, without stopping to put on my nose shield. The hot wind buffets me; sand coats my face; black gob fills my nostrils. I stop when I can no longer breathe.	
2	Locusts question me at the boom before I cross the bridge to Mangeria City. "I'm going to the pleasure quarter," I say.	5
3	A Locust grabs my arm. "No, you must stay with me." He pushes me against the boom, his breath foul on my face. "I'll show you pleasure like you've never had before."	
4	I soften my slap on his glove with a giggle, and pull away. It is not yet curfew. He has to let me pass. Locusts jeer as I race in the direction of the clubs where the Posh drink and laugh themselves silly.	
5	People from Slum City party here too. Handler Xavier and the market wardens shake hands with the Posh, making deals that the Locusts turn blind eyes to for a cut of the credits.	10
6	If Kitty was with me, she would have pointed out her favourite places in the quarter. She likes to hang out here when she is not at school or playing the game with Handler Xavier. The men chase her like rats after a piece of meat in the sewers.	15
7	I am not headed for the clubs for a good time. My destination is the beauty parlour, one of many that service the Posh wanting a makeover before hitting the clubs. But I do not want my hair straightened or my face stretched tight, pinned to my skull so that my eyes appear like slits. I would rather have big eyes and Savage hair than look like a Posh.	20
8	Traders bustle me off the pavement and I walk in the street, avoiding the Drainers who are elbow deep in waste from the gutters. I dodge sweating Pulaks pulling fat Posh to shops where they buy the food people like me cannot afford and are not meant to eat. I leap over potholes, and three blocks on I reach the Beautiful Like Me Beauty Parlour.	
	Chapter 4	

1. Explain how the heat is used to help create the science fiction setting for the novel. (3)

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2. Suggest how the description of the Locust illustrates the nature of authority in this society. (3)

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3. Account for Ettie’s reaction to the Locust. (3)

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4. Discuss how the portrayal of Handler Xavier in this extract influences your reaction to him. (3)

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5. Comment how the traders fit into the social structure of society. (3)

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**AND**

1	The X names stare at me and I see the handler’s name. I pause. If only I did not have to do this. He does not deserve it. But he is one person Kitty is sure to be going around with. If he is not safe she will be at risk. My finger stabs the screen and I assassinate my father. Officially deceased.	
2	I find my sister. Larissa Third-Family. I remove the tracking number and kill my sister. You can now choose to be free, to be a Savage if you wish, Little Miss.	5
3	Voices grow louder outside the room, and I look for J. My name is easy to find. Juliet is not a popular name in Slum City. I delete my tracking number and alter my status. I am dead. I wait to see if I feel different. I do. It is as though an invisible piece of wire has been snapped from my spine. Chapter 20	10

1. Account for Ettie’s pausing. (line 1) (3)

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