

Year 8 English Autumn Term

Exploring Young Adult Fiction: *Maggot Moon*

<u>Plot</u>	<u>Key Characters</u>	<u>Key Quotations</u>	<u>Key Themes</u>
<p>In an alternate 1950s, Standish Treadwell is growing up in a Britain dominated by the dark, ruthlessly oppressive forces of The Motherland. Life is hard, but Standish struggles onwards - until his best and only friend Hector is taken away from him, and events take a new and more dangerous turn. Gradually, Standish comes to realise that it is down to him and his grandfather, together with a small band of rebels, to make a stand against The Motherland. In a desperate effort to protect the people he loves, Standish sets out on a heroic mission to expose the truth about a planned landing on the moon.</p>	<p><b>Standish Treadwell</b> - the dyslexic hero of the novel  <b>Hector Lush</b> - Standish's best friend who goes missing  <b>Gramps</b> - Standish's grandfather &amp; only family  <b>Mr &amp; Mrs Lush</b> - Standish's neighbours in Zone 7 &amp; Hector's parents  <b>Mr Gunnell</b> - Standish's fierce teacher  <b>Mr Hellman</b> - Standish's brutal head teacher  <b>Miss Phillips</b> - a kind teacher at Standish's school &amp; secret girlfriend to Gramps  <b>Little Eric</b> - Standish's classmate who Mr Gunnell beats to death  <b>Hans Fielder</b> - Standish's other classmate &amp; one-time enemy  <b>The Man in the Black Leather Coat</b> - secret agent for the Motherland  <b>The Moon Man</b> - the astronaut who mysteriously turns up in Standish's basement</p>	<p>"You see, the what ifs are as boundless as the stars."                    "It had struck me that the world was full of holes, holes which you could fall into, never to be seen again. I couldn't understand the difference between disappearance and death. Both seemed the same to me, both left holes. Holes in your heart holes in your life."                    "I collect words--they are sweets in the mouth of sound."                    "There are train-track thinkers, then there's you, Standish, a breeze in the park of imagination."                    "In another country where the buildings don't stop rising until they pin the clouds to the sky."                    "I am driving us home to Mrs. Lush in her shiny kitchen with a checked tablecloth in a house where the grass looks as if it's been Hoovered. You see, only in the land of Croca-Colas does the sun shine in Technicolor. Life lived at the end of the rainbow."</p>	<p>"I had been doing a lot of research on the first and the second world wars when I came across the 'what if' history. It's a simple idea - you take a momentous piece of history and ask what would have happened if things had turned out differently. Two good examples are to be found in the stories of Churchill, who was nearly killed by a car on Fifth Avenue, and Hitler, who was run over in Berlin before he rose to power. What would history look like if one of these men had not survived their accident?                    The trigger for <i>Maggot Moon</i> was inspired by the Battle of Britain. There is no doubt we fought bravely, but if Goring had decided on the 29th December 1940 to send the last of his fighter pilots over, London I believe would have become an inferno, such as Dresden was to do at the end of the war. If that had happened I personally doubt that we would have held out. What saved us was something that no man has the power over - the elements. The wind changed that day and Goring worried that his pretty boys might not make it back; so he didn't send the last of the bombers over.</p>
<p><u>Context</u></p> <p>Sally Gardner grew up amongst the drama of London's law courts, as both her parents were lawyers. Having been branded 'unteachable' by some and sent to various schools, Sally was eventually diagnosed at the age of twelve as being severely dyslexic. Sally is now an avid spokesperson for dyslexia; she sees it a gift, not a disability, and is passionately trying to change how dyslexics are perceived by society. She has been nominated for the Dyslexia Action Award.</p>			<p>More than that, behind the book is the notion that democracy and freedom are both very delicate plants that need constant tending to if they are not to be trampled into the ground by the ideals of one man or one movement. We must try to be vigilant. The motherland could be anywhere where dictatorships rule by brutality alone. I didn't want to name the country or the state or the how it came about. I think throughout the world there is more than enough examples of what can and does happen when fear becomes our rulers.                    The character of Standish Treadwell, who is at the centre of the story, became almost complete when I found his name. I knew then who he was. I wanted to have a main character who was dyslexic like me, except I wanted to portray him not through bad spelling, as is so often done in literature, but through the way he thinks, and how he sees the world slightly off key. Bad spelling is, after all, only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to being dyslexic. Standish is a character that seemed so natural to write, he almost wrote himself. He is one that I love dearly". (Sally Gardner)</p>