

After Darkness by Christine Piper

1. Introduction (Plot Summary)

Christine Piper's historical fiction, 'After Darkness' deals with suppressed fragments of the past and silenced memories. The protagonist, Dr Ibaraki attempts to move forward with life whilst also trying to hide past confrontations as well as any remnants of his past wrongdoings and memories. The text consists of three intertwined narrative strands – Ibaraki's past in Tokyo in 1934, his arrival in Broome in 1938 to work in a hospital there, and his arrival in a detainment camp in Loveday (South Australia) in 1942 after the outbreak of war.

2. Characters and Development

Characters:	Relevant Quotes Linked with Characters
Ibaraki	<p>"Patients still died...greater men might be able to achieve more, but not me." This quote highlights Ibaraki's sense of self-doubt, which plays out throughout the text as well.</p> <p>Ibaraki characterised as someone who constantly contradicts himself and doubt his capabilities at the wrong time, thereby remaining silent when he should have spoken up. An example of this includes "there was no use to prove myself. To attempt to prove I was discreet would itself be an act of indiscretion."</p> <p>"I tried to hide my injuries, but blood stained the handles."</p> <p>"I was glad for the pocket of darkness that hid my tears."</p> <p>"I had begun to think seriously about finding a wife, so I was eager for more free time."</p> <p>"the house which had seemed like a mansion when I was a boy, suddenly felt small."</p> <p>"I vowed to protect her for as long as I was alive."</p> <p>"What would I say if I was writing to my wife? Something true to my feelings. I would talk about our memories, our shared lives."</p> <p>"I clenched my teeth to try to contain my feelings...I hugged my knees to my chest." Through characterising Ibaraki in this way and forcing her readers to imagine Ibaraki as child-like, it proves that remaining silent can cause one to become lonely.</p> <p>"To have been on the verge of sharing the pain, and then to have the comfort snatched away! All hope was knocked out of me." This indicates Ibaraki's ability to form a boundary between his work life and his personal life causes him to pay a lot of attention to detail and believe in the concept of having a perfect moment in order to reveal certain aspects of his life to people. Due to this, he chooses to remain silent most of the time rather than deal with</p>

	<p>confrontation as he as become accustomed to remaining secretive and silent.</p> <p>"I tried to speak, but no words came out..."</p> <p>"Despite my efforts, everything was in ruins. Why could I never do anything right?"</p>
Kayoko	<p>"the daughter of one of [Ibaraki's] father's old school friends"</p> <p>"the songs my mother sang to me as a child – songs of loss and lament" This foreshadows the defeats and damages to Ibaraki's moral compass that he is forced to endure later on in life.</p> <p>"When she played the last note, I completely forgot the unease I'd felt in her presence a few minutes earlier, and burst into applause"</p> <p>"Silence fell between us as we passed under the stone gate and into the grounds of the temple"</p> <p>"Without thinking, I said, 'Those girls should know better than to flaunt themselves like that.'"</p> <p>"Before I could stop her, Kayoko had made her way pass me."</p> <p>"Sir, these girls are just young. They mean to harm." This showcases Kayoko's readiness to defend her beliefs and justify her actions.</p> <p>"Kayoko's poise during the affray at the temple left a lasting impression on me."</p> <p>"I often thought back to our conversation about the modern girls, how she had defended them. She was self-assured, yet sensitive to others."</p> <p>"I thought someone must have helped you."</p> <p>"I was surprised by Kayoko's deftness as we guided them into place, she taking charge..."</p> <p>After receiving news of Kayoko being pregnant, Ibaraki admits that he is happy, but "surprised...[as he] hadn't noticed a change in [her]."</p> <p>"You haven't done anything wrong. I know it has been hard."</p> <p>"She brought her body closer and slipped her arms under mine."</p> <p>"I'd never seen Kayoko so angry, so willing to shame anyone – especially not in front of strangers. She was behaving like a different person."</p> <p>"The fullness of her skin, so smooth and pale yet full of life...Kayoko was my only tie to life."</p> <p>"She wore navy monpe trousers knotted above her waist and a matching coat. In the unfamiliar clothes, I hardly recognised my wife. Grey threaded her hair. Her cheeks had lost their fullness and her mouth was tight."</p>
Sister Bernice	<p>"She held it close to herself without opening it. Her eyes darted away from mine; she seemed unable to hold my gaze. Silence stretched between us." This displays the transformative nature of their friendship after Ibaraki has made a mistake.</p> <p>"I sensed something had changed...there was a coolness to her</p>

	<p>now. She had closed a part of herself to me.”</p> <p>Ibaraki “thought of Sister Bernice in her white habit, her head bent in prayer, the dark line of her lashes forming two perfect crescents.” The colour white in this case symbolises her innocence.</p> <p>Due to Sister Bernice’s presence, “the Japanese hospital [became] once more as bright and airy as the landscape outside.”</p> <p>“most days would pass with only minimal verbal exchange.”</p> <p>“she in fact displayed warmth and kind-heartedness in so many ways.”</p> <p>“she readily conversed with patients in her care, her soft voice putting them at ease, sometimes lifting into laughter,” juxtaposed to when Ibaraki “didn’t have a patient to attend to,” he would have “spent [his] time consulting books and journals.”</p> <p>“Without her, my world shrunk.”</p> <p>“If only I had her talent for gentle counsel, for soothing people through talk, perhaps things wouldn’t have turned out as they did.”</p> <p>“Sister Bernice’s words open up to me. I’d clung to the ideal of discretion, when it was courage – and forgiveness – I’d needed all along.”</p>
Johnny	<p>“...the difference in his attitude; in Broome, he’d always been easy going, but here it was as if he were another man.”</p> <p>Yamada labels Johnny as “an embarrassment to [their] compound.”</p> <p>“My heart sank. It seemed that just as Johnny and I had a chance to make peace, circumstances would take him away.” This quote also links to theme of friendship</p> <p>“I’m not like everyone else here – I’m only half-Japanese, and they still collared me.”</p> <p>“...all the shit jobs that they don’t want to do. Just because we’re not like them.”</p> <p>“...only rules that suit them. This camp’s run like a dictatorship, not a democracy.”</p> <p>Ibaraki “wondered why someone who’d run a restaurant in Broome was so averse to doing chores.”</p> <p>“It should’ve been me, Doc. I should’ve been me.”</p> <p>“You have become a good friend, I only wish we had become friends sooner – not only at camp, but also in Broome. I should have trusted you earlier.”</p>
Stan	<p>“I couldn’t stop thinking about Stan.” Links in with theme of personal conscience</p> <p>“I heard Suzuki was back. I wanted to see him” This shows Ibaraki’s character transformation as he has begun to care about his patients the way he never did before, even though it has been triggered due to guilt</p>

	<p>"he always turned back to the window, seeking out the light." "Stan's slight figure took on a childlike purity." "Stan stood alone, staring at the sky...his face lifted towards the heavens..." "It is hard for me to talk about it, but my wife and I...we are separated...That is my greatest regret. So I urge you to write to this girl you like and share your feelings with her." Ibaraki opening up to Stan Acknowledges his mistakes and says them out loud rather than keeping them constrained within him – "I should've gone up to her, said something then, but I didn't. I'll always regret that."</p>
Kimura	<p>"carefully combed hair...no detail was out of place...he was every inch the military man." "his fingernails were neatly kept: think white crescents atop perfectly uniform pink ovals." "...loyalty and discretion...few...truly understand it...discretion takes time to show itself. How will a person conduct himself in ten, twenty years' time? That's what I need to know..." "Kimura was short and stocky...[his] hair was neatly parted, waxed and combed to the side, his uniform spruce, from the pleat in his trouser legs to the shine of his buttons." "Your behaviour reflected poorly on our organisation and caused me, personally, a great deal of embarrassment." "A soldier... puts aside his feelings and so must you." "Take the secret to your grave."</p>
Yamada	<p>"I was touched by Yamada's kindness in welcoming me to his tent, especially since I was a stranger to him." Illustrating Ibaraki's easy nature to be manipulated by those in higher power as he remains oblivious for a long period of time before realising Yamada's true identity. "Ever since the executive meeting, something had changed between Yamada and [Ibaraki]." "He regretted having given [the message of his brother's death] to him." Contrasting opinions between the two and shifts in thought process regarding death: Yamada attempts to comfort Ibaraki by claiming that he "should be proud...[as] he died fighting for the Emperor." He advises Ibaraki to "think of his death...as a gift." However, Ibaraki acknowledges that "it would never be anything other than a loss to [him]." Ibaraki wonders "how [he] had been so deceived by him." "He never addressed me directly in the hut or at mealtimes anymore...after Stan's death they moved to the other side of the room."</p>
Harada	<p>"He could have returned to Japan with President Kanemori, but instead he'd stayed with her. I, on the other hand, had fled Japan</p>

	<p>and lost all contact with my wife." Links to theme of personal conscience and juxtaposition in character between Ibaraki and Harada's ways of dealing with the war</p> <p>"Surely, he would have fought for her, even at the risk of shaming himself. Honour, duty, pride – Harada would have sacrificed all those things for the woman he loved." Note Harada's bravery in contrast to Ibaraki's cowardice</p> <p>"I'll miss you, old friend. You're like a brother to me. I feel like I've know you a lifetime."</p>
Ishii	<p>"Great doctors tend their country, good doctors tend people, and lesser doctors heal illnesses."</p> <p>"Ishii was tall and lean...[his] appearance, however, was unorthodox. He had thick, wavy hair about two inches long and wore heavy-rimmed glasses. The top button of his uniform was unfastened..."</p>

3. Themes

Themes	Quotes	Analysis
Silence and loneliness	<p>"Issues of duty, loyalty and prudence... discretion"</p> <p>"Confidentiality is our number-one priority."</p> <p>"You can't talk about your work to anybody – not your spouse, your parents, your friends, your children, not even to each other."</p> <p>"If I was left alone at camp without any distractions, I feared my thoughts would turn dark..."</p> <p>"I had often wondered what it was like for the divers, who had to work alone for hours on end in their subterranean world. Was the silence a comfort or a terror to them?"</p> <p>"In keeping my silence, I hadn't exercised the very quality that makes us human: our capacity to understand each other."</p> <p>"She couldn't have known its significance to me."</p> <p>"I was gripped by the feeling that I didn't belong."</p> <p>"The silence was not a suppressant, but the opportunity to renew."</p>	<p>The theme of silence is prevalent throughout the text and this notion is embodied through the character of Ibaraki. Due to this experiences at the lab, Kimura has indoctrinated Ibaraki as well as his fellow colleagues into having a mindset that revolves around keeping secrets from loved ones as "confidentiality is [their] number-one priority." Kimura has threatened Ibaraki in order to make clear that he "can't talk about [his] work to anybody – not [his] spouse, [his] parents...not even to each other." From this, Ibaraki begins to question whether he considered "the silence a comfort or a terror" every time he resorts to remaining quiet about his past. Consequently, he becomes accustomed to hiding his feelings and opinions when he was required to express them during significant confrontations with loved ones. This eventually leads to people in his life leaving him and results in him becoming lonely and "gripped by the feeling that [he] didn't belong." As such, Piper is stressing the importance of opening up to those one cares about to maintain a healthy relationship through mutual understanding and trust.</p>

	<p>"My silence had been weak." "there is something the Japanese people should know."</p>	
Friendship	<p>"I just wanted to say thanks. You really helped us out." "He held out his hand. His palm was rough against mine." "I appreciated Johnny's kind words – especially after Yamada's insensitivity." "Although I was mindful of Nagano and the other men watching me, I couldn't help but smile back." "I relaxed in the new setting, surrounded by others who were relative outsiders, like me." "I began to spend much of my time with Ebina and several others in my hut from the baseball team. At night, we played hanuda and talked until the lights were out." "With Johnny, Martin and Andy gone, my friendship circle dwindled." "As I turned the corner past the last hut, I saw Martin, Johnny, Charlie and Ernie standing near the vegetable garden, smiling." → "'We thought you could do with some help,' Martin said."</p>	<p>Piper asserts that through the power of friendships formulated in one's life, it makes undergoing the touch circumstances much simpler. This is exemplified when Ibaraki discovered that his brother passed away and he gave Yamada the telegram notifying him of the situation; however, Yamada's response to try and comfort Ibaraki made matters worse since Ibaraki internally notes that his brother's death "...would never be anything other than a loss to [him]." On the other hand, Johnny approaches Ibaraki's news with a sympathetic outlook and also shares that he understands what it's like to lose a family member. By doing so, Ibaraki "appreciated Johnny's kind words" as opposed to "Yamada's insensitivity." As a result, Piper indicates to readers that friends do not come together because of a similar race and upbringing, but instead, it is due to the abilities for them to understand one another on an emotional level and provide the support they deem necessary.</p>
Past vs. Present Concept of Time	<p>"I couldn't help but think back to my first few months in Broome, when my senses were keen to the strangeness around me and everything appeared brighter, sharper and crisper, as if a veil had lifted." "Despite everything I had been through in the previous eight years, it seemed I had returned to the point at which I'd begun." "...I would be drawn into that enclosure with its own rules of movement, breath and time." "Thinking back to the state I had been in when I'd left Japan, I realised how far I'd come." "Time heals all wounds, you'll see."</p>	<p>The dichotomy of past and present is encapsulated through the passing of time in the text mirrored with the three narrative strands and transformations in the environment as well as characters. Ibaraki is depicted to be someone who is unable to learn from his past mistakes and apply his understanding to the present situation, and he internally acknowledges this by thinking "despite everything [he] had been through in the previous eight years, it seemed [he] had returned to the point at which [he'd] begun." Piper alludes to the idea that the present moment is impacted by the past experiences an individual endures, especially if they are unable to reflect and continue moving forward in life, but rather remain stationary and stuck in their past.</p>

	<p>“At the time, you wonder how any human could go on living after such suffering. And then, years later, you look back and understand.”</p> <p>“Time seemed to collapse, pulling all meaning into it.”</p> <p>“Time entered a new dimension – not exactly slow, but a state in which I sensed everything more keenly...I observed how the shifting light at dawn and dusk seemed to hide more than it revealed.”</p> <p>“I remembered how bare it had been when I’d first arrived...warmth filled the room through the personal touches that had accumulated over time.”</p> <p>“I tried to memorise them, but no matter how hard I tried I knew I wouldn’t be able to truly recall them later – they’d be filtered through my memory and warped by time.”</p>	
<p>Personal Conscience Regret, shame and guilt</p>	<p>“something hardened within me to see them so carefree...”</p> <p>“I began to tremble with regret. Stan had opened up to me, and I hadn’t listened. I was horrified to think my insensitivity could have led to his death.”</p> <p>“...his gaze seemed absent of reproach – and that realisation almost made me weep.”</p> <p>“I now felt ashamed I had so strenuously defended Yamada, and was apprehensive about confronting Johnny again.”</p> <p>“A feeling of shame came over me. My past failings as a doctor became clear...”</p> <p>“I had been wrong to leave the kindness of the human touch to Sister Bernice and others.”</p> <p>“I began to see that the blame lay at my feet. I had overreacted when she innocently asked about the tag.”</p> <p>“I became depressed at the thought</p>	<p>Personal conscience is a prominent theme in the text that humanises the regrets and mistakes one can make in their life. Ibaraki forces himself to adapt to the conditions placed upon him in his work environment which has consequently transformed his mindset and sheltered him from properly dealing with conflict. Piper characterises him as a “hardened” man who needs to continue to push people away in order to realise that it makes the feeling of guilt and pain return. He doesn’t allow people to enter into his life and it is only after he has established a boundary between himself and those around him that he feels the “shame come over [him].” After a series of hostile interactions with his colleagues and patients, he becomes aware of the “stain” has been caused by his association with the wrong people, thereby affecting his mental state in a negative manner which damages every type of relationship he tries to preserve. Moreover, Piper proves the necessity for one to speak their mind when a problem arises as the detriments that could occur afterwards can cause guilt and shame to last a lifetime.</p>

	<p>that my careless behaviour had driven Sister Bernice away...she consumed my thoughts.”</p> <p>“Her abrupt departure continued to play on my mind.”</p> <p>“But as much as I tried, I couldn’t forget.”</p> <p>“I trained my thoughts on washing myself clean and soaking in a hot bath when I got home.”</p> <p>“...with the feeling of guilt, the pain returned.”</p> <p>“They gave the briefest of answers and hardly met his gaze. I sensed their reticence was due to their knowledge of the nature of our work. I felt stained by my association with the laboratory.”</p> <p>“Memories disturb my subconscious, like the beating wings of a dove.”</p>	
<p>Racism vs. Nationalism</p>	<p>“the girl...faired skinned...her eyes flashed...the woman grabbed her daughter’s hand and dragged her towards our carriage. She came so close I could see a mole above her lip. she spat. A glob landed on the window in front of my face...’Bloody Japs’...eyes narrowed, mouth tight – her features twisted with hate.”</p> <p>““His courage and devotion fuel the prosperity of our great nation and Greater East Asia,’ Kanemori said, but he omitted this sentence in English.”</p> <p>“I felt sorry for them – they’d been living in Australia so long that they had little in common with many of the other Japanese.”</p> <p>“...the Emperor, his kind eyes full of light. Looking at him, my heart swelled with devotion.”</p> <p>“We got Australia again. Blasted all their planes.”</p> <p>“These Australian fools with their fat bellies and their rusty guns could soon be our prisoners, and they’ll be</p>	<p>Through characterising the woman and daughter as narrow-minded people, it physicalises the fear and paranoia that resulted in the institutionalisation of internment camps for those who identified as being “enemy aliens.”</p> <p>Nagano “pointing a gnarled finger at Johnny’s team” for being top 1 so far of the baseball competition. He even admits that it’ll be “a shame – to lose to these fools.” → Japanese hatred for half-castes as they blur the line and division for the two races, Japanese and Australians, therefore, they are never truly accepted by either category</p> <p>This is juxtaposed to Ibaraki’s friendship with Sister Bernice who informs him that “Christmas is an Australian tradition, not a Japanese one, so you need never buy me anything,” suggesting that she respects the cultural differences they have and does not expect him to assimilate into Western culture (also links to theme of friendship and sacrifices. Similarly, Ibaraki “remembered the difference in [their] traditions: westerners liked to open gifts in the presence of the giver.”</p> <p>“Our camp formed one section of a roughly circular larger camp that had been divided into quadrants...there were Italians and Germans in</p>

	<p>begging us for mercy.” “Today’s victory reminds us of the strength and skill of our great nation.” Yamada asks Ibaraki “Aren’t you glad we got the bastards who arrested you?”</p>	<p>the other two compounds. A fenced-off divide separated each of the four camps, so although we could see each other, we had limited contact.” → segregation</p>
<p>Hope</p>	<p>“That was the flowers. They open for the first time at night, as if they have a secret. And they don’t last long – only one or two days. But they’re beautiful and have the most wonderful perfume.” “I was reminded that God watched over me, even in places as distant as Broome. So I decided to stay.” “For the first time since I’d arrive in Broome, I felt as if a weight had been lifted, releasing me from the past.” “For the first time, I realised that Broome was my home.” The dirt in Loveday “was much finer than the earth in the gardens, and brighter than the dull reddish-brown earth I was accustomed to at camp. In the pre-dawn light it seemed to shimmer.” “Its symmetry and iridescence suggested a human touch...the transience of life. And how, with just one ill wind, everything could change.”</p>	<p>Piper postulates that hope can be a significant guiding force for an individual when they encounter difficult circumstances in life. She portrays Ibaraki as someone who follows the signs given to him by his surroundings and superstitions. This is made evident as he wakes up from sleep and he observe the dirt that has crept under the door. He comments that it “was much finer than the earth in the gardens, and brighter than the dull reddish-brown earth [he] was accustomed to at camp. In the pre-dawn light it seemed to shimmer.” In this case, the dirt symbolises growth which foreshadows Ibaraki’s shift in character and intentions in life after affiliating with people who motivate him to be a better person such as Johnny and Stan. By doing so, Piper alludes to the notion that some people require extra support and encouragement from those around them to be able to overcome obstacles in their life.</p>

4. Narrative Conventions/Literary Devices

Symbolism:

- ‘a mallee tree’
 Aboriginal word for water which symbolises purity, source of life “if it’s hit by bushfire it grows back from the root with lots of branches, like all the others here. It’s a tough tree. Drought, bushfire...it’ll survive almost anything...I was struck by the ingenuity of the tree in its ability to generate and create a new shape better suited to the environment.”

- The tag with “the character ko...[with] its loop of yellowed string...The knot at the end had left an impression on the page behind it: a small indentation, like a scar.”

Simile/Imagery:

- “Felt like hell on earth”
- “The hollow trunks of dead trees haunted its edges like lost people”
Can also link to the landscape narrative convention
- “The scene was like a photograph, preserving the strangeness of the moment.”
Description of the hospital atmosphere where the patient next to Hayashi laid
- “Only the windows were missing, leaving dark holes like the eyes of an empty soul”
- “The photos reached me first. I leafed through the black and white images: swollen fingers, blistered toes, blackened faces, and grotesque, rotting flesh that shrivelled and puckered to reveal bone. The final photo depicted a child’s chubby hands, the tips of the fingers all black.”
Also foreshadowing death of his and Kayoko’s child

Pathetic Fallacy:

- “That afternoon, the sky darkened, and the wind picked up...making the world outside opaque.”

Allusions:

- Middlemarch (book) which symbolises Ibaraki and Sister Bernice’s friendship as Bernice was left behind
- Robinson Crusoe

Irony:

- “Being able to conduct research in this way has delivered unparalleled knowledge, which we’ve already passed on to the army to minimise further loss of life.”

Language:

- “You haafu fools don’t deserve the Japanese blood in you!”
- “You bloody racist!”
- “You fucking Emperor-worshipping pig—”
- ‘Haafu’

Derogatory, racism term used to define those who are biracial (half Japanese):

- An interpretation of the language use throughout the text could be Piper’s way of humanising the Japanese people to her readers and notifying them that they also have their own culture and form of communication

- Another interpretation of the language use is to show that both the Australians and Japanese are just as cruel as each other because they show no respect to one another and use language in such a brutal way
- Ibaraki represents that divide where he can speak both languages, yet still, cannot voice his own opinion or stand up for himself (link to theme of silence)

Personification:

- “The void seemed to have a force of its own, drawing the meaning of the words into it.”
- “The engine coughed into life.”

Foreshadowing:

- “snow was falling as I walked home from the station – the first snow of the season.”
Foreshadowing the storm about to come in his life
- “A black silhouette against the fallen snow.”
Foreshadowing Kayoko’s death

5. Sample Paragraphs

Prompt: “But as soon as you show a part of yourself, almost at once you hide it away.”
Ibaraki’s deepest flaw in *After Darkness* is his failure to reveal himself. Do you agree?

- Introduction

Christine Piper’s historical fiction, *After Darkness* explores the consequences that an individual will be forced to endure when they choose to conceal the truth from their loved ones. Piper reveals that when a person fails to reveal themselves, it can eventually become a great obstacle which keeps them from creating meaningful and successful relationships. Additionally, Piper asserts that it can be difficult for an individual to confront their past and move completely forward with their present, especially if they believed their actions were morally wrong. Furthermore, Piper highlights the importance of allowing people into one’s life as a means to eliminate the build-up the feelings of shame and guilt.

- Body Paragraph

Piper acknowledges that some people will find it difficult to open up to others about their past due to them accumulating a large amount of regret and guilt over time. This is the case for Ibaraki as he was involved with the ‘experiments’ when he was working in the ‘Epidemic Prevention Labatory,’ in which Major Kimura sternly told him to practise ‘discretion and not talk ‘about [his] work to anybody.’ The inability to confide in his wife or mother after performing illegal and mentally disturbing actions causes him to possess a

brusque conduct towards others, afraid that they will discover his truth and 'not be able to look at [him] at all.' His failure to confess his past wrongdoings shapes the majority of his life, ruining his marriage and making him feel the need 'to escape' from his losses and 'start afresh.' He eventually lies to his mother by making her believe that he 'had gone to Kayoko's parents' house' for the break, avoiding any questions from being raised about his job. As a consequence, he fails to tell his family about his horrid past suggests that he has accepted that '[his] life had become one that others whispered about.' Juxtaposed to Ibaraki's stress relieving methods, Kayoko confides in her mother after she receives news of her miscarriage, highlighting that when one willingly shares their pain with loved ones, it can release the burden as well as provide them with some assistance. In contrast to this, Ibaraki's guilty conscience indicates that he will take 'the secret to his grave,' making it extremely difficult for people he encounters to understand him and form a meaningful connection with him. Nonetheless, Piper does not place blame on Ibaraki as he was ordered to keep the 'specimen' business hidden from society, thereby inviting her readers to keep in mind that some individuals are forced by others to not reveal their true colours for fear of ruining a specific reputation.

- Conclusion

Throughout the journey in *After Darkness*, Piper engendered that remaining silent about one's past events that shapes their future is one of the deepest flaws. She notes that for people to understand and form bonds with one another, it is extremely important to reveal their identity as masking it only arises suspicions. Piper postulates that for some, memories are nostalgic; whereas, for others it carries an unrelenting burden of guilt, forcing them to hide themselves which ultimately becomes the reason as to why they feel alone in their life.

6. Some additional prompts or analysis questions to consider

- ✓ Analyse the role of silence in *After Darkness*. Compare the ways in which the characters in the text utilise or handle silence. What is Piper suggesting about the notion of silence?
- ✓ Discuss the importance of friendship in the text. What is it about friends that make the characters appear more human? How can friendship bolster development in one's character?
- ✓ Racism and nationalism are prominent themes in the text. How are the two interlinked? Explore the ways they are shown throughout the text and by different characters. Is Piper indicating that the two always lead to negative consequences?
- ✓ Analyse some of the narrative conventions (imagery, simile, metaphor, symbols, motifs, landscapes, language, etc.) in the novel and what they mean to certain characters and to the readers.
- ✓ Explore the ways in which the text emphasises that personal conscience can oftentimes hold people back from revealing their true thoughts and feelings.

- ✓ Character transformation (bildungsroman) is prevalent throughout the text. What is Piper suggesting through Ibaraki's character in terms of the friendships and acquaintances he has formed and how have they impacted him? How have these relationships shaped him as a person in the past and present? Were such traits he developed over time beneficial for himself and those around him or have they caused the destruction of once healthy relationships?

7. Tips

- ✓ Be sure to read as many academic articles as you can find in relation to the text in order to assist you with in depth analysis when writing your essays. This will help you to stand out from the crowd and place you in a higher standing compared to your classmates as your ideas will appear much more sophisticated and thought-out. 😊
- ✓ Being clear and concise with the language choices is such a crucial factor. Don't over complicate the ideas you are trying to get across to your examiners by incorporating 'big words' you believe will make your writing appear of higher quality, because in most cases, it does the exact opposite. Be careful! It is best that your examiners know what you're talking about and have a lower vocabulary level than a high vocabulary level, but your examiner has no clue what you are writing. But if you can, try to find that balance between the two.
- ✓ If there is a quote in the prompt, be sure to embed the quote into analysis, rather than making the quote its own sentence. You only need to mention this quote once in the entire essay.