



# AIRLOCK

## TEACHER GUIDE

**Brick, a young thief, is terrified of outer space. But they're forced to escape Earth when a warrant goes out for their arrest.**

There's nothing left for them on the dusty, barren wasteland of Earth anyway. Brick stows away on a cargo ship headed for the moon. They reluctantly allow a local teenage enforcer named Amar to tag along. But the ship ends up containing unusual cargo and the crew members may not be who they appear to be.

Suddenly the spaceship is taken over by pirates, who imprison the crew in the airlock. Brick and Amar come up with a plan to rescue the crew. The only problem is that, in order to succeed, Brick must venture out into the deep darkness of space.

### PREREADING IDEA

LGBTQ+ individuals have faced oppression and violence throughout history. Brainstorm words, phrases and celebrities connected with transgender identity. Discuss the issues trans people may face in modern society, and have faced throughout history. Trans women of color (TWOC) are the group most likely to be victims of directed violence. Ask why TWOC are such a disproportionately oppressed group. Ask students to think of examples of how we can help make society safer for trans individuals, and be good allies.



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## CONNECTING TO THE WORLD: WRITING AND RESEARCH IDEAS

- Climate migration is devastating lives. *Airlock* is set in a future where climate change has been allowed to destroy living conditions across Earth, and the rich have fled to space. Imagine losing your home or livelihood due to a flood, going hungry because of a failed harvest or drought, being forced to flee your home due to rising sea levels or a lack of drinking water. This is the current reality for millions and millions of climate refugees who live on the frontlines of the climate crisis. As global climate change increases, the number of climate migrants will continue to grow. Divide students into table groups and have them discuss the following questions: 1) Who are climate refugees? 2) How many climate refugees are there in the world right now? 3) How can we help climate refugees?
- LGBTQ+ people are underrepresented in the media. Ask students how many trans people they can name. Then ask how many trans fictional characters they can name (TV, movies, books, comics, etc. all okay). Organize the names into trans women/trans femme people vs trans men/trans masc people, then organize into subcategories of white people vs People of Color. Compare the numbers of each group to see who is most represented. Then have the students pick a fictional or real trans person and prepare a short, one-minute speech on their chosen person.

## CONNECTING TO THE TEXT: ELEMENTS OF THE NOVEL

### Character

Choose one of the supporting cast. Brainstorm what you know about the individual (suggestions: Amar, Owasu, Captain Lakshmi, HARPOR) from textual evidence—make notes on the character’s appearance, behavior, history or personality. Next, refer back to your brainstorm and identify which of the traits/descriptions you generated are inferred (information you have gathered based on evidence) and which are direct descriptions from the text. Draw a quick sketch of the character, and put directly quoted material on the outside of the character and inferred qualities on the inside of the character. Provide supporting quotes for as many of the inferred qualities as you can.

### Point of View

*Airlock* is written from Brick’s point of view. We are inside their head, hearing their thoughts, experiencing their feelings. How would the story be different if it had been written from a different perspective? Put students into pairs and have them work on rewriting one of the scenes from one of the other character’s perspectives.

### Plot

Plot is the sequence of events in a story and generally builds toward a conflict. The story’s plot includes four stages: exposition, rising action, climax and falling action. Provide students with an image of Freytag’s pyramid and label the stages. Divide students into groups of three and ask them to identify what occurs in each stage. Ask groups what they think happens after the end of the story. Have each group partner with another small group and share their insights.



## CONNECTING TO THE STUDENTS: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some of the problems that Brick faces in their day-to-day life?
- Why do you think the story is called *Airlock*? How does the title relate to the story?
- Why does Brick take Amar with them?
- What assumptions does Brick make about the crew of the ship they stow away on?

## WRITER'S CRAFT

### Vocabulary Enrichment

Split the students into table groups, and provide each table group with a dice. Give them 20 minutes as a group to discuss the following words and look them up if necessary. When a student takes a turn, they should pick a word from the list (and not tell anyone) and then roll the dice to find out what their task is. The other students must guess the word they are trying to communicate. If no one gets the word, the student should reroll the dice and try a different technique.

1= define/describe the word

2= use it in a sentence

3= provide a synonym

4= provide an antonym

5= act out the word

6= free pass!

### Word List

stowaway, barren, suffocating, paralysis, humanoid, capacity, momentum, feral



Photo by Johana Jucutan

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Tash is a Welsh Canadian author, activist and educator. Their publications include *No One Left But You* (Soho Teen), *The Psionics Series* (Nine Star Press), and the Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selections *Blood Sport* and *Sink or Swim* (Orca). Tash is a recipient of the Shoot for the Moon fund for trans writers and a founding mentor with the Gender Generations Project.

When they're not writing or reading, you can probably find Tash in a lake, lying on the carpet thinking about monsters, or getting a new tattoo. They enjoy regular cups of tea, existential philosophy, and sharp objects.

