Questions and activities for Chapter 1

1. Dora opens her narrative by telling us that London and Budapest are two cities which are divided by a river. Why does she open with this image? How does it foreshadow the novel’s dominant themes and images?

2. Dora’s narrative style is very conversational. What techniques does she use to create this effect?

3. Many of Shakespeare’s plays dramatise father-daughter relationships. Dora and Nora have grown up without a father figure. What kind of family do they create at Bard Road?

4. In Chapter One, Dora presents us with a very complicated family history. Create a family tree for the Hazards and the Chances. As you read the rest of the novel, update the family tree, using different colours to indicate the changes that occur.

5. Chapter One presents many different forms of entertainment that stretch from the era of Ranulph and Estella to Tristram and Tiffany. Identify these and discuss how the entertainment industry has changed.