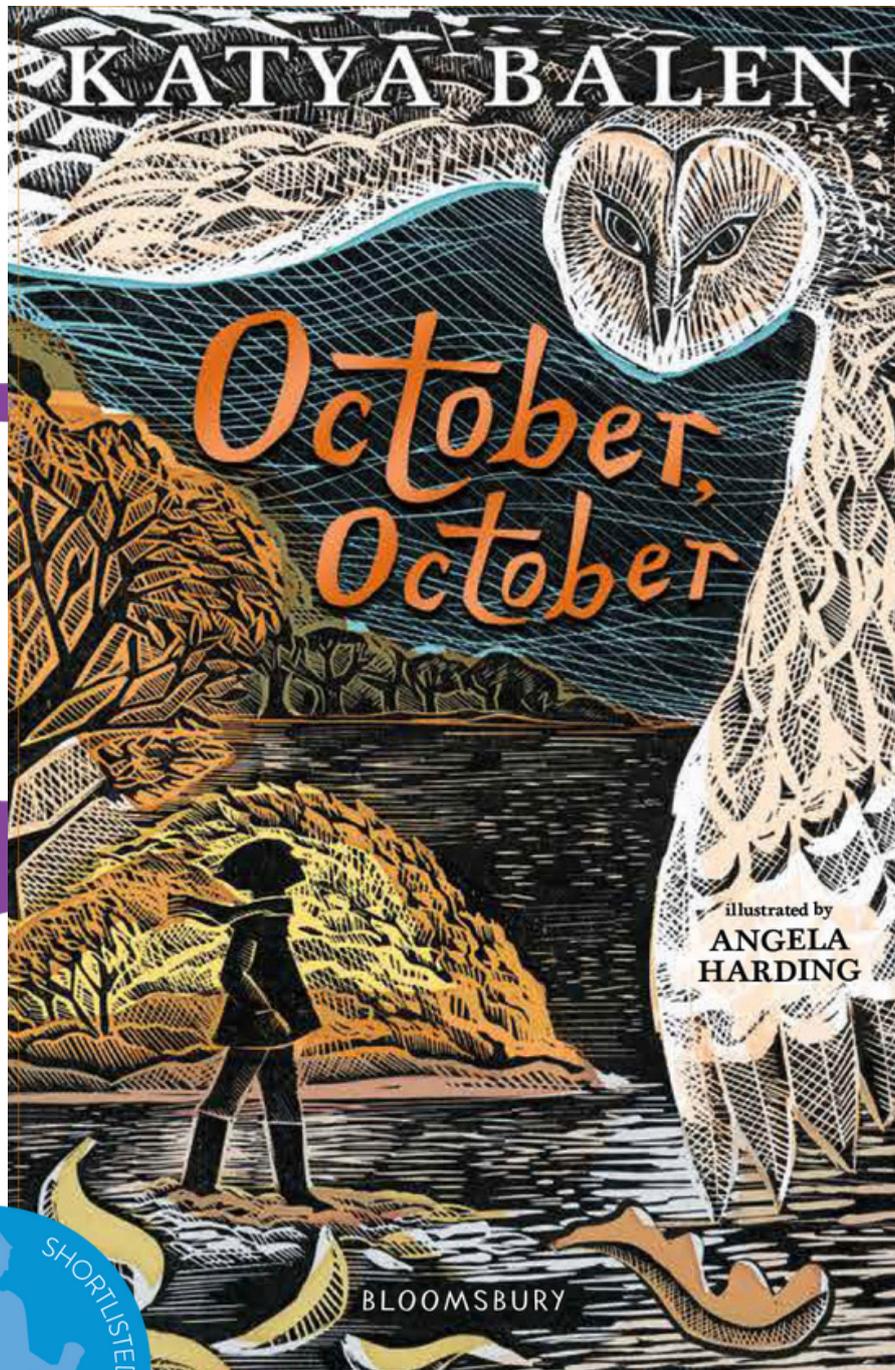


# Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2022 Shadowing Resources



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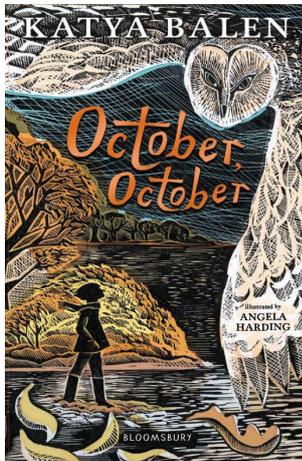


EMC  
English & Media Centre

#CKG22

# Yoto Carnegie Medal 2022

## Activities Pack



Title: **October, October**

Author: **Katya Balen**

Publisher: Bloomsbury

Age: 9+

### **Note to Group Leaders**

Shortlisted books may contain material that may not be suitable for some students. We recommend that group leaders read the books carefully before sharing or recommending them to students and/or seek parental guidance. We trust that Shadows and other young readers will be guided by their group leader, librarian, teacher or parent to help them select suitable, enjoyable and age appropriate material from the lists.

### General Activities

1. Create a HAIKU POEM of three lines using a syllabic structure [WORDS CUT UP INTO SOUNDS] of 5-7-5 to describe your experience reading each book.
  - o Example:

Fantastical shapes	(Line 1- 5 syllables)
create patterns for the eye	(Line 2- 7 syllables)
to become amazed	(Line 3- 5 syllables)

Share your HAIKUS on Social Media using the hashtag #CKG22.
2. Search for book trailers for each of the shortlisted titles online. Use these as inspiration to create your own trailer to celebrate the book you are currently exploring through shadowing.
3. Create your own playlist to accompany a shortlisted book - you might want to highlight a particular theme, tap into the geography or time period of the book or choose a character and create a playlist that reflects them.
4. Create a moodboard for the shortlisted titles. Think about materials and colour palette, texture, shape and perspective. What do you want your moodboard to suggest or represent? Why?

5. Create a cake that reflects one of the shortlisted titles. Perhaps you will make one large cake, dozens of smaller cakes or a combination of both. Don't forget to share your bookish bakes on social media, using the hashtag #CKG22.
6. Have a go at building book spine poetry using the shortlisted books. Arrange the books in different ways, with the spines visible so that the titles can be read in a certain order. Share your poems on social media using the hashtag #CKG22.
7. Play charades, using nonverbal communication to act out the title of each book.
8. Use a shoebox to create a diorama inspired by a shortlisted title. Your diorama should include key items which reflect the themes, plot, characters and mood of the book.
9. Think of some questions you would like to ask the shortlisted authors and share them on social media using the hashtag #CKG22 and tagging the author.
10. Take one of the shortlisted titles and use it as a springboard to create a recommended reading list for wider reading. Your list should include books that will enhance the reader's experience of the shortlisted title by offering further information, exploration of the subject through a different medium - nonfiction or poetry, perhaps - or a different perspective. Share your lists on social media, using the hashtag #CKG22.
11. Redesign the cover of a shortlisted book. How would your creation differ from the existing cover? What would you include and why?
12. Make a list of the new words you've learnt when reading the shortlisted titles and add a definition for each one.
13. Give each of the following elements a mark out of 5:
  - Title
  - blurb
  - opening line
  - appeal of the cover
14. Now score each book out of 20 and rank the books accordingly. You could use this exercise to determine the reading order.

## Book Activities

1. Get out of the classroom and go for a walk. Head for a park or wooded area where you will be able to gather natural objects and curiosities like stones, acorns, leaves, twigs. Sit in a circle with objects in the centre and use them to inspire your own stories. You could create individual stories or collaborate with each other to create a story together, with each person focusing on one object.
2. WILD word association. Decide who will begin - this person will set a timer for two minutes and shout the word 'wild'. Someone else must call out a word that they associate with the

word wild - for example nature/animal/storm. The words must keep moving around the group but if two people call out together, they are out and if no-one calls out, the timer is reset and the game begins again.

3. Design a map that reflects the duality of October's life - her father's woodland home and her mother's city habitat. You could use icons and symbols to show places of importance or you could draw them in detail. You could even track October's journey through the story, and show this on your map.
4. Create a collage that reflects the themes of *October, October*. Think carefully about the colour palette you will use, as well as materials, shapes and textures.
5. Think about the setting of the book and October's transition from her wild home to her mother's more traditional city house. What do you notice about October in each setting - how is she different? Would the story work if the settings were inverted and October was forced out of the city and into the woods? Why/why not? How would different settings alter the story?
6. Nature writing: head outside and note down everything you notice. What do you see? What sounds are around you? Can you smell anything? What can you taste? What textures are you experiencing? How does it all make you feel? Turn your notes into a piece of descriptive writing that allows the reader to step into your shoes and experience the outdoor environment as you did.

### **Wellbeing Activity**

On a dry day, pick up your reading book and take it outside. Find somewhere to settle, sit back, relax and enjoy that fresh air whilst you read for ten minutes. How do you feel? Have you done this before? How is it different to reading in your bedroom or classroom? Are there challenges/benefits to reading outside like this?

# October, October

## by Karen Balen

All of these tasks are designed to be completed in small discussion groups. However, they can easily be done on your own too. Instead of talking about the tasks, you can write down and keep a record of your ideas.

### Before Reading

#### 10-20 minutes

- Discuss what you think *October, October* will be about based on these extracts. You should structure your discussion around the questions below.
  - What other novels do you think it will be like?
  - What genre of novel do you think it will be?
  - What sense do you get of where it will be set?
  - Identify three likely themes?

#### Extract 1

I tumble and weave and the sharks are swirling in the water and they're closing in on me and they're so near that I can feel the heat of their fish breath on my neck and their teeth are grazing my skin, but at the very last second I grab on to the tentacle of a giant passing squid and he sweeps me to safety just as my head breaks the surface.

Dad is next to me shaking the water from his hair and gasping. *It's colder than ever* he says and he rubs his hair with purple hands. We turn and look at each other and we grin through chattering teeth because the firework explosion of cold and shock is brilliant and I whoop into the October sky.

#### Extract 2

The woman with the dark curly hair and the red coat and the black shiny boots and the moonstone ring and the sparkly present is my mother.

She looks at me and she smiles a smile that explodes me and I am four and watching her getting into a silver car and everyone is crying and she's telling me soon that everything will be OK, just different but OK. And then the cough of the silver car's engine starting and the quiet rumble of tyres on the track and the feeling of my heart bursting.

I look at the woman who is my mother.

And my limbs unstick.

And I run.

#### Extract 3

I don't move for lunch and I don't move for breaktime which is when everyone goes back outside and has a biscuit and I don't move even when I'm bursting for a wee. I don't move when Mr Bennett the teacher bends down to talk to me and I don't move when he puts a worksheet on my desk. It's like the weight of what I've done is pinning me to my chair and the guilt hangs heavily in a cloud and I'm surprised no one else can see the fog around me.

#### Extract 4

She swerves in the open sky and turns and dives and loops and it's better than fireworks and snow and scavenging and bonfires and pond jumps and tree climbs. She is truly wild.

## During Reading

**WARNING: DON'T READ THE QUESTIONS BEFORE READING EACH SECTION!**

Read up to the page number listed and then answer the questions. You should spend about 5-10 minutes answering each set of questions.

*Page numbers refer to the Bloomsbury Children's Books paperback edition, 2020*

▪ **Read up to page 40 then answer these questions:**

- What are your first thoughts about October's life? How does it compare to yours? Is it a life that you would like in any way?
- October and her father think differently about whether or not to rescue the baby owl. What are the differences? Who do you agree with most and why?
- October has a powerful imagination and loves stories – both reading them and making them up. What examples of her using her imagination and making up stories stood out for you in these opening pages?
- If you have read *Stig of the Dump*, written by Clive King, then why do you think it is a story mentioned in this book? If you haven't read it, look it up. Having read what it is about, why do you think it's been mentioned in this book?
- How do you think October's father will react to her having saved the owl? Role play the scene when he finds out, or write a couple of paragraphs describing the moment.

▪ **Read up to page 78 then answer these questions**

- What are your first impressions of October's mother? Have you picked up any clues about what she is like, why she left her daughter behind, what her daughter thinks of her and so on? If so, what are they?
- October's father has fallen from a tree and is lying on the ground 'in a quiet, impossible heap of legs and arms'. What are your predictions about the direction the story will take next?

▪ **Read up to page 101 then answer these questions:**

- How does October react to her father being in hospital and to her mother looking after her? What are your thoughts about this?
- What are your predictions about how the story will progress from this point? What, for example, will October think about London? How will her relationship with her mother develop?

▪ **Read up to page 138 then answer these questions:**

- October keeps calling her mum ‘the woman who is my mother’? Why do you think she does this?
- What was your reaction to learning that Stig had been taken to an owl rescue centre? Were you expecting this? Do you think it was the right thing to do?
- October has lots of extreme reactions to difficult situations. Which ones up to this point stand out for you? Why do you think she reacts in this way?
- What are your predictions about how the book will progress from this point?

▪ **Read up to page 199 then answer these questions:**

- What kinds of things do October and Yusuf do together and why do you think they get on so well?
- October and Yusuf go mudlarking. This means they look for left-behind objects in the mud of the River Thames. What other examples are there in the novel about people finding things and finding out about things?

▪ **Read to the end of the book then answer these questions:**

- When October gets cross with Yusuf because he is playing with his other friends, he says quietly to her: ‘we don’t have to be in a pair all the time you know’. What are your thoughts about how their friendship changes? Is one being a better friend than the other? What do you think the writer might want you to think?
- ‘The world is jumbled up and things don’t always end up where they’re supposed to be.’ Kate, the Tide and Thames club leader, says this to October. What has just happened when she says it? How do these words link to the novel as a whole?
- We never find out why October’s mother left her and didn’t see her for years. What do you think about the writer’s decision not to tell readers what happened? What do *you* think happened?
- At the very end of the book, October writes: ‘Being wild and free is different for every person and every thing and it can be folded into the woods or whirling through the city.’ To what extent do you agree with her? What about your own personality? Are you wild? If so, are you wild in the woods or in the city?

# After Reading

## Initial Thoughts?

- Spend 15-20 minutes discussing some or all of the questions below.
  - What are your overall impressions of this novel?
  - Which moments most stick in your memory?
  - Which characters did you like best and why?
  - Which other novels did it remind you of and why?
  - How gripping did you find the story?
  - What are your thoughts about the way it was written?
  - Based on reading *October, October*, how likely are you to read other novels by Katya Balen?

## What's *October, October* about?

- Spend one or two minutes writing down a single sentence that begins: '*October, October* is about ...'
- Share your different sentences and discuss.
- Next read the sentences below that give further ideas about what the novel is about.
- If you are working in a group, spend 5-10 minutes sorting the sentences out, from the one you agree with most to the one you agree with least.
- Finally, decide on the statement you agree with most. It can be one from the list or your own. Write down a few ideas about how *October, October* relates to your chosen statement.

## *October, October* is about...

- The wildness that lives inside all of us.
- Learning to understand that people are all different.
- Understanding how different aspects of life can link together.
- Finding out the truth.
- The difference between life in the city and life in nature.
- Discovering how to have fun whatever your circumstances.
- How storytelling can help us make sense of life.
- Healing.
- A young girl learning to understand both of her parents.

## Exploring the book further

Use one or more of these tasks to explore *October, October* further.

### Relationships

October's relationships with the other key characters in the story develop and change as the novel goes on.

- Role-play or script a conversation between October and one of the characters listed below. Your conversation should look back on what happened in the novel, exploring the feelings and memories of both characters:
  - October's father
  - October's mother
  - Yusuf.

***Spend 20-30 minutes on this activity.***

### Mudlarking

This extract comes from a 13-year old boy who worked as a mudlark. He is talking about his work to a writer called Henry Mayhew in 1861:

I generally rise in the morning at six o'clock, and go down to the riverside with my youngest brother you saw beside me at the barges. In the winter time we do not work so many hours as in the summer; yet in winter we generally are more successful than in the long days of summer. There are generally thirteen or fourteen mudlarks about Limehouse in the summer, and about six boys steadily there in the winter, who are strong and hardy, and well able to endure the cold. Some of the mudlarks are orphan boys and have no home. In the summer time they often sleep in the barges or in sheds or stables or cow-houses, with their clothes on. Some of them have not a shirt, others have a tattered shirt which is never washed, as they have no father nor mother, nor friend to care for them. Some of these orphan lads have good warm clothing; others are ragged and dirty, and covered with vermin.

- Read the extract and then spend five minutes discussing or writing down your thoughts in relation to the statement below:

**We're meant to feel sorry for October because her father is badly hurt and she was abandoned by her mother at a young age. But really she has an easy life. Mudlarking for her is fun, when only 150 years ago it was a horrible matter of life and death for children her age.**

***Spend 20-30 minutes on this activity.***

### **The city versus the countryside**

*October, October* begins in the wooded countryside, but then much of it takes place in the city of London. The language used by the narrator, October, is different depending on whether she is describing events in the wood or in the city.

- Read the passages indicated below and discuss how they present the city and the countryside. How is the language and tone different depending on what is being described?
- How do descriptions of the city later in the book compare to ones earlier on? How does October's attitude towards the city change? What do you think the writer wants to suggest about city life to her readers?
  - Diving into the pond for her birthday (pages 18-21)
  - The hospital (pages 85-86)
  - Travelling by underground train (pages 121-123)
  - The River Thames (pages 170-172)
  - New Year in the city (pages 236-237)

***Spend about 20 minutes on this activity.***

## Reading the reviews

The extracts, below, are all from reviews of the book.

- Read all of the reviews and discuss which comes closest to your own view of the book.
- Working individually, write your own paragraph to express your views about the novel. You can draw on the review extracts you have read if you wish.
- Share your reviews with a group.
- Submit your reviews to the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme website. This can be accessed at: <https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/books/october-october>

**Give yourself up to an hour to complete this activity.**

A. This is what language can do – tell a story that burns with intense, furious passion, and yet be so disciplined that one never doubts, not for one moment, the emotional truths driving it. This song of the wild and of our most profound human longings is deeply moving, deeply satisfying, and it's my children's book of the year.

Kevin Crossley-Holland, author

B. What an absolutely gorgeous story, beautifully written and captivating for anyone who loves tales of living in nature and going through family changes. It hit quite close to home so naturally had me in tears at the end. It's narrated with such a calm and engaging voice, introducing younger readers to high-quality writing and effectively chosen vocabulary; the opposite of the jarring, over-simplified style that so many authors use for middle-grade fiction. I would recommend this for readers of 8+, but it also lends itself well to any adult's bookshelf. Thank you Katya Balen, for sharing such a powerful and thought-provoking story.

Lizzie, amazon.co.uk

C. At first I found this book a little slow and a bit jumbled, making sense of October and her world in the woods with her father. However, as the story goes on and evolves it becomes a wonderful story of many other stories that build up this 'wild' life that October lives. I love the fact that this book is filled with such contrasting things. There are contrasts between scenes (woods and London), settings (school and the woods), characters (October and her mother, October and Yusuf), and even between vocabulary (especially adjectives) to describe all these things that are sometimes even used in the same sentence. It really is a brilliant book and I found it fascinating how October and Stig kind of swap places in the sense that October really finds her grounding and that she can be wild wherever she is, but in a controlled manner. However Stig really does become wild.

Jessica, goodreads.com

D. I think there was a bit too much going on in this novel. It started as a story about a young girl, October, rescuing an owl. But then her father was badly injured and it became a story about a young girl moving from the countryside to the city, leaving her father behind and living with her mother for the first time in many years. Yet we were never told why her mother left her in the first place. October was also a very troubled girl when she lived in the countryside, shown by her fast temper. Yet life in the city, which she really did not prefer, somehow cures her of this. Confusing!

Anonymous

## Writing Activities

On your own, or with a partner, complete one or more of these writing activities to help you develop your thoughts about *October, October* further.

***You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.***

- Write a story that includes this line from the novel:

‘Sometimes it’s a kindness to let something go even when you love it very much.’

October gives Yusuf a story when she leaves London to live with her father again. She writes that ‘It’s about a wild boy in the wild city jungle and how he finds a whole new world beneath his feet in the twists and tunnels of London.’

- Have a go at writing this story yourself.

- Imagine Yusuf is looking back on his time at school with October one year after she has returned to live in the woods. Write a few paragraphs exploring his memories.

- Write a description of what it feels like to jump into an ice-cold pond. When you have finished compare what you have written to October’s description that you can find on pages 21-23.

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