

Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2022 Shadowing Resources



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#CKG22

Yoto Carnegie Medal 2022

Activities Pack



Title: **When the Sky Falls**

Author: **Phil Earle**

Publisher: Andersen Press

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.

○ 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. Several pivotal relationships are developed in *When the Sky Falls*, including the growing bond between Joseph and Adonis. Why do you think Phil Earle chose this name for a gorilla and is it significant in any way to the plot?
2. In a moment of painful self-analysis Joseph observes that "For a long time, he'd been a knot that other people had tied, a knot so complicated and off-putting that no one stuck around long enough to unpick it." What examples of this can you find in the novel?

3. The reader learns many things about Joseph as *When the Sky Falls* unfolds, one of which is that he is dyslexic. He explains that when he tries to force his eyes upon words, “they [dance] and [swirl] around the page.” Think about your own experiences of reading and how they have evolved. Is there a particular teacher/librarian, or a book, which made reading a more positive and enjoyable activity for you?
4. Joseph is badly bullied throughout much of the novel, particularly by Bert and Mr. Gryce who label him as “thick”. Do you have any thoughts or suggestions which might help Joseph cope? Write these to him in a letter.
5. Mrs. F’s abiding love is for the zoo and caring for its animals; she is also a keen amateur primatologist and has patiently built a relationship with Adonis. One of the world’s foremost primatologists was Dian Fossey, who dedicated her life to the study of mountain gorillas. Find out more about her work (there are excellent documentaries about her life and research; also, the 1988 feature film, “Gorillas in the Mist”).
6. *When the Sky Falls* is set in 1941, at the height of the Blitz bombing raids which took place during the Second World War. How do you imagine Joseph’s life might have changed by VE Day in May 1945, in terms of both his relationships with Mrs. F and Syd and his daily life? (You can view VE Day photographs and find out more on the Imperial War Museum website: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/10-photos-of-ve-day-celebrations>)
7. Do you think an animal is capable of an act of bravery (during wartime or otherwise) and can you find any historic examples? In your opinion, is Adonis’ protection of Joseph a heroic act? Explain why/why not.
8. Should animals be kept in captivity (in a zoo or nature reserve)? Organise a ten-minute shadowing group debate, arguing pro and con positions.

Wellbeing Activity

Listen to the song “Vane Tempest” by The Lake Poets, which prefaces *When the Sky Falls*, and reflect upon its relevance to Joseph’s story and to the narratives of other key characters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yooouushNys>

When the Sky Falls

by Phil Earle

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 *When the Sky Falls* 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? (Think about time and place for this question)
 - Identify three likely themes?

Extract 1

It may have been the time he'd been spending at the zoo, but the second he saw them Joseph couldn't help but see them in animal form, as the animals they were. There was a slyness to their movements, and a pack mentality that made Joseph think instantly of the wolves, those these two were marginally better fed, and undoubtedly more dangerous.

Extract 2

'The point, Joseph, is that if things don't ever get talked about, then they never get out, and things have a way of burrowing down inside you. And as they do that, they spread, they spread and they fester without daylight or air. Sometimes, without you ever realising, it's reached every part of your body, so every step, every breath, every decision you make, it's made of that thing, that thing that was horrible to talk about in the first place. It takes you over.'

Extract 3

'How many times do I have to tell you?' the old woman yelled at Joseph. 'The answer is no. Do you honestly think I can spare you any veg?'

But Joseph would not stand down. 'Please, Missus. It's not even for me, or my family. It's for my gorilla.'

Extract 4

Joseph watched as a milkman approached a destroyed house with a full, creamy bottle, scratching his head, trying to work out whether to leave the milk or not. He put it on the step and stared at it, before realising it was ridiculous. If anyone had been in there when the bomb dropped, they'd have no need for milk any longer.

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 up to 5 minutes answering each question or set of questions.

All page numbers refer to the Andersen Press edition, 2021.

▪ **Read to the end of the first chapter, page 9, then answer this question:**

- What are your first impressions of Joseph and of Mrs F? What clues are we given about what they're like?

▪ **Read to the end of page 43**

We are told this about Joseph: 'He was angry. In fact he was more than that, he was furious, and to his mind he had every right to be.'

- Why is Joseph angry in this moment? Why is Joseph angry in general? What clues have we been given about his background that helps to explain why he behaves as he does? What other emotions and interesting aspects of his character have been shown so far?

▪ **Read to the end of page 56**

- During the bombing raid, Joseph finds Mrs F standing in front of Adonis's cage, holding a rifle. What do you think she is doing?

▪ **Read to the end of page 74**

- What are your first impressions of Syd? In what ways is she similar or different to Joseph?

▪ **Read to the end of page 98**

- What similarities are there in this chapter between Joseph's behaviour and that of Adonis? What parallels is the writer drawing between the boy and the ape?

▪ **Read to the end of page 146**

- What are your thoughts about how different relationships are developing at this stage? For example, between Joseph and Mrs F, between Joseph and Syd and between Joseph and Adonis? What are your thoughts about how these relationships will develop as the novel goes on?

▪ **Read to the end of page 225**

- What are your thoughts about the description of school life? Does it remind you in any way of your own experience of school? What do you think of Miss Doherty? And what about Mr Gryce?

▪ **Read to the end of page 234**

- What shocking news does Mrs F tell Joseph? Were you expecting something like this to happen or did it take you by surprise? How do you think this information will change what happens in the novel from this point on?

▪ **Read to the end of page 245**

- This novel seems to draw lots of links between the characters. Several of them have had very similar experiences. What links can you find between Joseph, Syd and Adonis? How do these links add to or take away from your enjoyment of the novel?
- Does Mrs F have similar links to the other characters? If not, then do you think some might emerge by the end of the novel? What might they be?

▪ **Read to the end of page 255**

- What are your thoughts about Joseph entering Adonis's cage? You might like to think about:
 - Joseph's impressions of being inside a cage
 - How the writer creates a sense of tension in this section of the book
 - What you were expecting to happen and what did happen
 - Why you think the writer chose to include this section
 - Whether or not you think a human could really get this close to a gorilla.

▪ **Read to the end of page 264**

- What do we learn about Mrs F in this chapter? How does this alter your perception of her? Why do you think the writer waited until near the end of the book to reveal this information?

▪ **Read to the end of the novel**

- What are your thoughts about the end of the novel? You should consider:
 - The relationship between Joseph and Adonis
 - What happens to Adonis
 - Joseph's emotions and behaviour at the very end.

After Reading

Reading activities

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.

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 *When the Sky Falls*, how likely are you to read other novels by Phil Earle?

What's *When the Sky Falls* about?

- Spend a few minutes writing down a single sentence that begins: '*When the Sky Falls* 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 *When the Sky Falls* relates to your chosen statement.

When the Sky Falls is about...

- Learning to trust other people
- The similarities between humans and animals
- The terrible consequences of war
- The strength of the human spirit in times of adversity
- The importance of talking about things
- The importance of helping others
- Standing up to bullies
- Learning to cope with loss.

Exploring the book further

Use one or more of these tasks to explore *When the Sky Falls* further.

Relationships

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

- Role-play or script a conversation between Joseph 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:
 - Mrs F
 - Syd
 - Miss Doherty.

Spend 10-15 minutes on this activity.

Shared experiences

On the surface Joseph, Mrs F, Syd and Adonis don't seem to have much in common. But as the novel progresses, it becomes clear that they have several shared experiences.

- Discuss how each of these words relates to each of the characters and how:
 - Lost
 - Caged
 - Angry
 - Comforted
 - Supportive.

Spend 10-15 minutes on this activity.

Getting the balance right

When the Sky Falls is written for young people. As such, it tries to present events and ideas in ways suited to the age range of its audience.

- Discuss how well you think the book balances the need to write for a young audience with the need to present events and ideas realistically for each of the following.
 - **War** – how well does the book get across the horror of war without traumatising its younger readers?
 - **Zoos** – how is the zoo presented? Does the book raise any issues about whether or not it is right to keep animals like Adonis in captivity?
 - **Corporal punishment** – the headteacher, Mr Gryce, canes Joseph. This was legal at the time. How is corporal punishment (the use of violence as a punishment) presented in the novel?
 - **Humans and animals** – Joseph becomes friends with a very dangerous animal. How is this presented in the novel? Is this a realistic or responsible thing for the writer to do?

Spend 10-15 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/when-the-sky-falls>

Give yourself up to an hour to complete this activity.

A. What an incredible book. A fantastic and interesting main character, with so much depth. A story that has you hooked from the beginning, making it hard to put the book down. Incredible descriptions and development what an ending!

Lauren Stewart, www.goodreads.com

B. A moving account of a boy's struggles during World War II when he is sent to London to stay with Mrs F, a zookeeper in London trying to maintain what is left of her depleting animal stock. This had so many good themes within the story surrounding not only Joseph but Mrs F who has secrets of her own. My only reason for giving this 4 stars was the rather abrupt end to the story instead of resolving some of the storylines offered.

Kerrie Jones, www.goodreads.com

C. I really wanted to love this book because I'd seen good things about it but it just fell a little bit flat for me. The concept is great but the execution doesn't quite pay off for me because I feel for about 75% of the book we get Joseph who is quite an unlikeable character and it isn't until the last 25% of the book that he really begins to change. Yes I realise he is a child in awful circumstances but the way he acts to those around him is just painful to watch. Because it took so long for me to warm up to him the ending just didn't really work for me; I think if there was more of a 60/40 split in his personality it would have been better because I would have liked him more as a character and could have appreciated his development more. Instead it just feels like a bit of an abrupt ending.

reviewer, www.amazon.com

D. This is a really clever book. Not only does it have a really great storyline, it also addresses really important areas of life, like dealing loss, helping others, standing up to bullies and making difficult decisions. What I liked best was our it explored these ideas in different ways through an interesting set of characters, brought together by loss and by war – Joseph, Syd, Mrs F and even Adonis the gorilla!

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 *When the Sky Falls* further.

You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.

Imagine that Syd kept a diary over the time period covered by the novel.

- Write her diary entry for one day's events.

Re-read pages 249-255, which describe Joseph entering Adonis's cage to feed him.

- Note down interesting words and phrases from the pages as you read them.
- Use these words and phrases as the basis for a poem about Joseph and Adonis.

Imagine that when the war is over Joseph returns to live with his grandmother.

- Write a letter from Joseph to Mrs F. In the letter you might like to write about:
 - His memories of his time with Mrs F
 - How he is doing now – his health, school, general emotions
 - What he wants to do in the future.

- Write a story that shows the bond that exists between humans and animals.

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