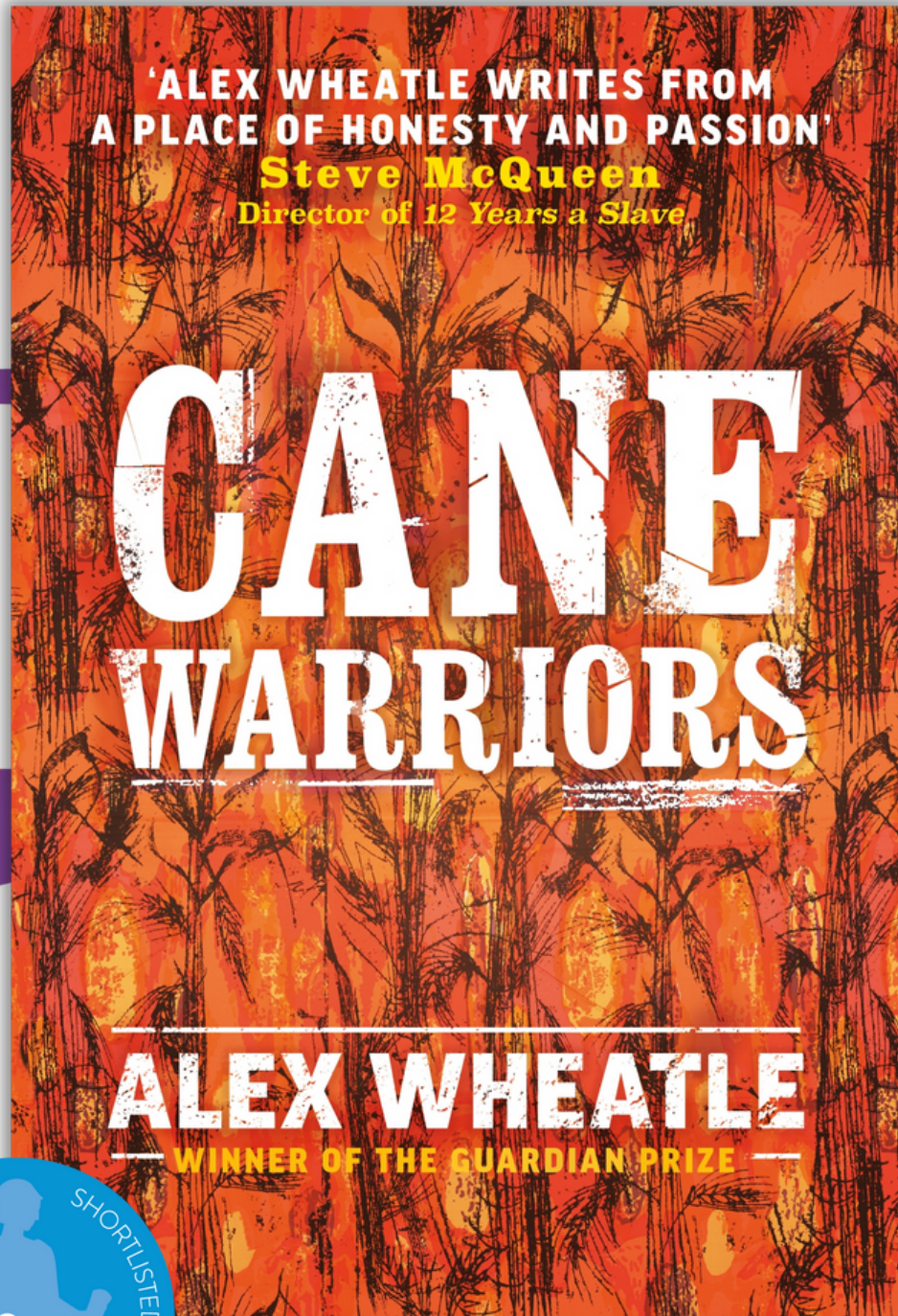


Yoto Carnegie Shortlist

2022 Shadowing Resources



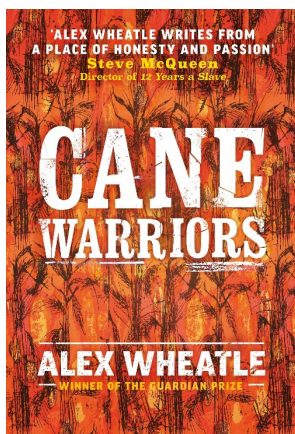
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CARNEGIE
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AWARDS



#CKG22

Yoto Carnegie Medal 2022

Activities Pack



Title: **Cane Warriors**

Author: **Alex Wheatle**

Publisher: Andersen Press

Age: 13+

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. Why do you think Alex Wheatle chose to tell the story of Tacky's War against the British slavers in 1760's Jamaica from the perspective of Moa, rather than Tacky himself or one of the other cane warriors (i.e., Keverton or Louis)? Develop your thoughts explaining why/why not this perspective works.
2. Tacky and his band of cane warriors pray to Akan gods, not the Christian God of their white masters. Nyame, Asase Yaa and Bele Alua are often referred to throughout the novel. Choose one to research and find out more about their significance.

3. Louis says of Tacky “him brain work quick like Anancy”. Explore the folk tale of Anancy (Anansi); which characteristics do he and Tacky share and why does Louis make this comparison?
4. Moa’s narrative, his observations and the events which take place around him, is all relayed in standard English yet the dialogue is written in Jamaican patois. As a reader, do you think this is effective and how does it affect the pace of *Cane Warriors*? Give examples from the novel.
5. “De blood remembers” is a refrain which runs throughout *Cane Warriors* and has huge meaning to Moa and his fellow field slaves. Think about how this “blood chant” might work on more than one level and discuss with your shadowing group.
6. At the end of *Cane Warriors*, Moa sets off on his journey east with Hamaya, hopefully climbing the “long hill” to safety. Chart this journey, using Alex Wheatle’s text and maps of Jamaica. Imagine what this journey was like and some of the obstacles Moa and Hamaya might face. Do you think Moa will ever be able to return for his mother and Hopie?
7. Alex Wheatle contends that Tacky and his fellow cane warriors are Jamaica’s “glorious dead” and “freedom fighters”. Organise a 10 minute shadowing group debate, arguing pro and con positions.
8. Visit the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool and record (video or audio) your impressions of the one exhibit which had the most powerful effect on you.
<https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/international-slavery-museum>
9. Alex Wheatle was directly involved when the Brixton riots that took place in 1981. Find some images of this event and research its origins. Watch Alex speak about the riots and how young black people like him were feeling at the time: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/50035769>
How do you think this might have affected his development as a writer?

Wellbeing Activity

Listen to either:

- Bob Marley’s “Concrete Jungle” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R94DgGRg7w>
- or “The Heathen” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DipcpBDFU_8

Both of which Alex Wheatle references in his Afterword to *Cane Warriors*.

How do the music and lyrics make you feel? How do you think they relate to some of the themes he develops in his novel?

Cane Warriors

by Alex Wheatle

Cane Warriors is based on the real-life Tacky's Revolt, a rebellion of enslaved people in Jamaica in the 1760s. It contains several graphic descriptions of violence, including killing and also makes references to rape. These are managed in a sensitive way but, as with any text, we strongly advise teachers to be familiar with the book before recommending it to students.

Cane Warriors

by Alex Wheatle

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 *Cane Warriors* 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

Miss Gloria wasn't smiling today. She dipped her spoon into the big cornmeal pot and served breakfast to the men. 'Me glad you're still living,' she said to Toolmon, the grey-bearded man who repaired and sharpened billhooks and other instruments we used in the field. She usually said her greeting with a grin. Not today. Maybe she missed Miss Pam too. Louis and the other elders had always instructed us not to '*leggo eye-water*' in front of the white overseers. *Nuh let de white mon see de pain you carry inside.*

Extract 2

We finished our hard labour more than thirteen hours later. Every muscle in my back screamed. I couldn't feel my arms and I believed my kneecaps were about to drop off. The sun had cooked my headtop and somebody could have made a hot drink of my sweat.

Extract 3

I followed him through the door and we made our way to a tall tree. We sat down, resting our backs against the trunk. The insects in the fields were mighty loud this night. Strange birds squawked their squawks. Louis looked here and there before he spoke. We heard the distant crunching from the millhouse. 'Moa,' Louis started. 'Your body good?'

'What do you mean if me body good?'

'You cyan't bruk out if you cyan't run good or if you cyan't kill ah white mon when you need to.'

Extract 4

Swelling hills, open fields and untamed grass lay ahead of us. Only a wide thin arch of the distant western sky hadn't been touched by the rising sun. Louis took the lead, his musket poised in front of him. Tacky was next, followed by Midgewood. Led by the tones of Scallion Mon, we hummed another Akan spiritual. I felt blisters forming on my soles and my neck was stinging fierce where Misser Donaldson's lash had ripped into me.

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.

The page numbers are based on the Anderson Press edition (2020)

- **Read to the end of page 22**

- What is interesting or surprising about the book so far?
- Which characters does Moa meet and talk to in the opening chapters? What different roles do they have in his life and the life of the plantation? What roles do you think they will play in the rest of the novel?
- What's it like to read the dialogue that is written in dialect? Can you understand it? What does it bring to the experience of reading the book?

- **Read to the end of page 42**

- Moa is told by Louis that he has to kill Misser Donaldson. Do you think he will go through with it? What are your thoughts about YA fiction that features young people killing others? Do you know of any other YA novels where this happens and, if so, how is this handled by the writer?
- How has life for the enslaved people living on the plantation been presented up to this point? What particular injustices and hardships have been mentioned and how are they presented by the writer?
- How do Moa's mother and father react to the news about what he is planning to do? Would you take the point of view of the mother or the father? Why?

- **Read to the end of page 56**

- All of the overseers at the plantation are killed in this chapter. What is your impression of what happens? Do they deserve to be killed? Do the enslaved people have any other choice? Is this suitable material for a YA novel?

▪ **Read to the end of page 73**

- How are Tacky and Midgewood presented in the novel? What qualities do they have that might make them good leaders? How do they treat Moa?

▪ **Read to the end of page 93**

- How does the descriptions of violence at the Trinity Plantation compare to descriptions of violence earlier in the novel? What are your feelings about reading material like this?
- *Cane Warriors* is based on real events, but written as a novel. This means that events are shaped in particular ways. What do you think will happen next based on how events have been shaped so far? Will the rebellion be successful or not? Have you spotted any clues to suggest it will go one way or the other?

▪ **Read to the end of page 139**

- What have you found most interesting about the last few chapters? Have you noticed any differences between these chapters and previous ones? For example, in tone, in the attitude of the main characters, and so on.
- The men sometimes chant, 'DE BLOOD REMEMBERS!' Why do you think that they do this? What do you think it means?
- The escapees spend some time on a beautiful beach by the clear sea. Why do you think the writer chose to write this section? How does it contrast to other parts of the novel?

▪ **Read to the end of page 165**

- It looks at this point as if the rebellion has been defeated. Moa and Keverton have escaped, but lots of their comrades are dead. What are your thoughts about this?
- What are your thoughts about Keverton leaving Moa behind?
- What do you think will happen to Moa next now that he is on his own?

▪ **Read to the end of the book**

- What are your thoughts about the ending of the book? What do you think the prospects are for Moa and Hamaya? Is Moa right to let Hamaya come with him?
- How would you describe the tone at the end of the book? Is it downbeat, because the rebellion has failed, or can you detect a note of optimism?

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 do you like best and why?
 - Which other novels does it remind you of and why?
 - How gripping do you find the story?
 - What are your thoughts about the way it is written?
 - What are your thoughts about how the difficult subject matter is handled?
 - Based on reading *Cane Warriors*, how likely are you to read other novels by Alex Wheatle?

What's *Cane Warriors* about?

- Spend one or two minutes writing down a single sentence that begins: '*Cane Warriors* 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, 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 *Cane Warriors* relates to your chosen statement.

Cane Warriors is about...

- The importance of rebelling against extreme oppression.
- The value of sticking together.
- How violence only leads to more violence.
- The inhumane treatments of enslaved people in Jamaica.
- The impossibility of extinguishing the human spirit.
- How young people can adapt to the adult world.
- How it is better to try and fail than not to try at all.
- The importance of freedom.

Exploring the book further

Use one or more of these tasks to explore *Cane Warriors* further.

Reflections on Moa

The whole novel is told in the first person voice of Moa. He plays an important part in the lives of lots of the other characters. Write a sentence or two in the voices of 3-4 of these characters, expressing their thoughts and feelings about Moa.

- Hamaya
- His father
- His mother
- Keverton
- Miss Gloria
- Tacky

Spend 10-15 minutes on this activity.

Turning history into fiction

Cane Warriors draws on actual historical events that took place in Jamaica in the 1760s. These events have come to be known as *Tacky's War*, *Tacky's Revolt* or *Tacky's Rebellion*.

- Read the Wikipedia entry about the actual events https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacky%27s_War
- Did you learn anything new from Wikipedia? Was there anything missing from the novel that surprised you? Did the novel include additional material not in the historical summary? If so, what was it?
- Discuss these statements, exploring your view about turning history into fiction.

I don't think you should turn history into fiction. People get confused and then think that events happened exactly as described in a novel.

I think you can learn more about real life events from a novel than from a history book. Novels are written to be memorable, so the important history really sticks in your mind.

*I think that fictionalised versions of real history are a really good starting point for more exploration. Now that I've read *Cane Warriors* I want to go away and read more about Tacky's War.*

To make a good novel, a writer might make some changes to real events and I can't see any problem with that. If the reader wants historical facts, they should read a historical account, not a work of fiction.

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/cane-warriors>

Give yourself up to an hour to complete this activity.

A. An interesting and informative book based on true events which, before reading *Cane Warriors*, I didn't know anything about. Although I liked the protagonist and was rooting for him throughout the entire book, I thought that the overall plot was a bit lacking. Nevertheless, I'm glad I read it and learnt about something that I didn't know about before.

Rebecca, www.goodreads.com

B. This was so easy to read despite the heavy subject matter, and each page is gripping with tension and conflict. I generally shy away from slave narratives, fictional or non-fictional, because I have to be in the right headspace to read about the horrors of enslavement and black people suffering. I'm quite familiar with North-American chattel slavery, but this is my first time learning about some West Indian/Caribbean enslavement. It's always so *interesting* how we hear so little about slave rebellions and uprisings.

Anyway, this was a great read! The brotherhood between Keverton and Moa and the loveliness of Hamaya broke my heart.

D.T. Henderson, www.goodreads.com

C. For me this was too violent to justify it being published as a YA novel. I understand that it portrays important historical events that young people need to know about, but I think this can be handled better in history books than by turning real events into gory and traumatising subject matter.

Anonymous

D. This story was the perfect history lesson needed to understand the struggles of those who fought bravely for Jamaican people's freedom. So proud of this work.

Anonymous reviewer, www.amazon.co.uk

Writing Activities

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

You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.

- Write a poem that focuses on the bravery of Moa and the other freedom fighters.

Imagine that you are the writer of *Cane Warriors*, Alex Wheatle.

- Write a blog giving your thoughts about dealing with extreme violence in a book for young people. You might like to write about:
 - Your thoughts about young people knowing the truth about a significant slave uprising.
 - The language you used when describing violence.
 - How you described your characters' responses to their own violent acts.
- Write a diary entry in the voice of Hamaya, expressing her thoughts and feelings while Moa and the other freedom fighters are away. You might like to write about:
 - Her hopes and fears for them
 - Her feelings for Moa himself
 - Her wish to join the rebellion
 - What life is like back at the plantation.
- At one point in the novel Moa sees the sea for the first time. Write your own description about seeing the sea or any other natural wonder for the first time. You can base this on a real experience or draw on your imagination.

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