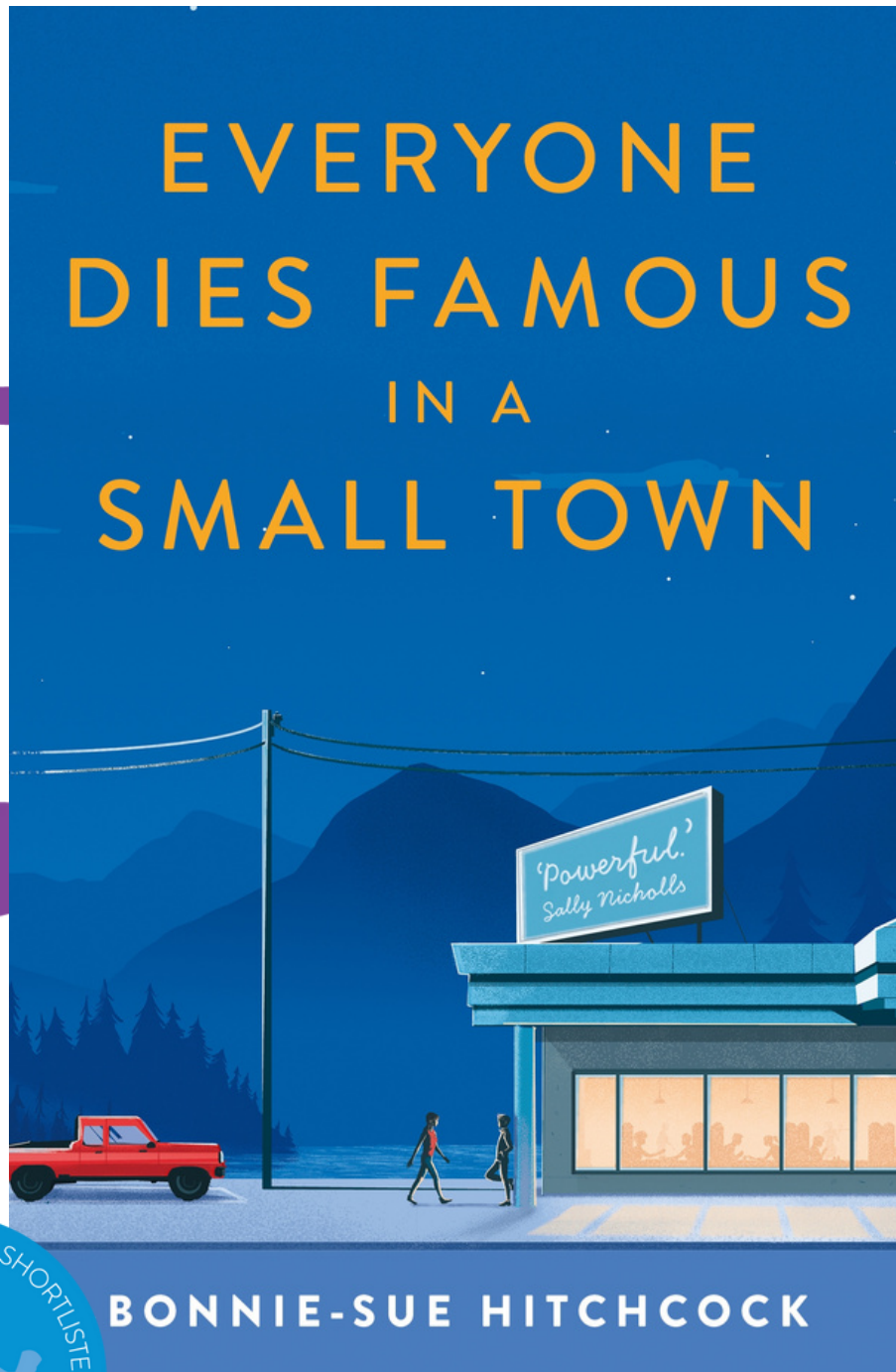


Yoto Carnegie Shortlist

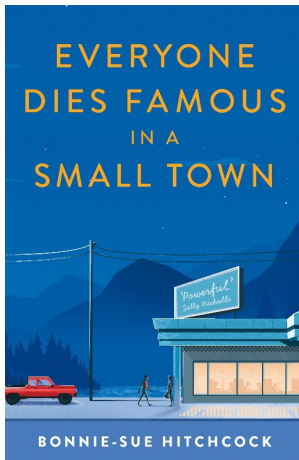
2022 Shadowing Resources



#CKG22

Yoto Carnegie Medal 2022

Activities Pack



Title: **Everyone Dies Famous in a Small Town**

Author: **Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock**

Publisher: Faber

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.

○ 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. Story maps - place your own name in the centre of a sheet of paper. Around your name, write the names of all those people who have an immediate impact on your day to day life - parents, siblings, close friends etc. Further out, add in the names of people who have an impact on your life but who you may not see every day - teachers, cousins, friends, people who go to the same clubs or play on the same sports teams etc. Further out again, write in the names of people who have an impact on your life but are not directly involved in it - distant relatives, friends you had when you were younger, people who inspire you etc.

2. Work through the book and pick out vocabulary that reflects life in a small town. Use these words to create a word cloud. You can do this by hand, digitally, or you can get creative with scrabble tiles and magnetic letters. Be as wacky as you like!
3. Home is... Through discussion, mind mapping or a bullet-pointed list, note down all the things that spring to mind when you think about the concept of 'home.' Use these ideas to create your own poem using the refrain 'Home is...'.
4. Thinking about the individual stories, did you feel there were any which stood out as being stronger? Why do you think this? What common themes did you notice throughout the collection? How do you feel about the way the book opened and concluded? Why do you think the author has written a short story collection instead of a novel? Are there any advantages to this approach? Disadvantages?
5. Consider the significance of each story's title - how well does the title fit the story? How do the titles reflect the themes of the book, individually and as a collective?

Wellbeing Activity

Spend some time talking to somebody new. This could be a classmate or a friend of a friend, someone in another class, a teacher, or even a relative you don't know as well as you'd like. Ask them about their hometown and what it was like to grow up there. Find out if they visit often and what kind of effect that place has had on their life. Connecting with others is a great way to boost your own wellbeing and you never know - you might even make a new friend!

Everyone Dies Famous in a Small Town

by Bonnie Sue Hitchcock

Many of the characters in Everyone Dies Famous in a Small Town are coming to terms with grief and trauma and the book contains references to child sexual abuse, drugs, mental health issues, death and a child kidnapping. 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.

Everyone Dies Famous in a Small Town

by Bonnie Sue Hitchcock

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.

The epigraph

An epigraph is a short quotation or saying which appears before the beginning of a book, a chapter or a poem. An epigraph links to the main themes of the text. The epigraph of *Everyone Dies Famous in a Small Town* is:

To those who do not know that the world is on fire, I have nothing to say.

Bertolt Brecht

- Think about what the quotation might mean and what themes you might expect in a book with this as an epigraph.
 - If possible, discuss your ideas with other readers.
 - Keep a note of your ideas so that you can refer back to them as you read.

Take up to 20 minutes to complete this activity.

The setting

The book is set in Alaska, a state in the far northwest of the United States.

- Read this information about the setting and then answer the questions that follow.
 - What types of stories and characters might appear in a novel set here?
 - Why might a writer choose to set a novel in a wilderness area like this?

Some facts about Alaska

- Alaska is the largest American state and also the most sparsely populated. Large areas are many miles from even a small town.
- Alaska was occupied by various indigenous peoples for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. The indigenous population of Alaska is over 15 percent, proportionally the highest of any U.S. state.
- Alaska's per capita income is among the highest in the United States. It's economy mainly depends on its plentiful natural resources, especially fish, natural gas, and oil. Tourism is also important.
- Being such a large state, Alaska has several different climate zones from areas where the weather is a bit like Scotland to areas with severe winters with deep snow and extreme cold.
- More than half the state is federally owned public land, including many national forests, national parks, and wildlife refuges.

During Reading

We recommend working through the book without pausing too often, then doing some more substantial work afterwards. The stories do offer lots of opportunities to pause for reflection, particularly about the different relationships described and the issues raised.

- Keep a journal while reading, pausing to write down your reflections about each of the points below. Where possible, have a discussion with other readers before putting your thoughts down on paper.

The whole book

- Although this is a collection of short stories, there are lots of connections between them. As you read, notice some of the following elements which repeat across different stories:
 - The spread of the wildfire (wildfire is an unplanned, unwanted, uncontrolled fire starting in a rural or urban area, spreading into vegetation)
 - Coyote Jones and his radio show
 - The disappearance of a 6-year-old girl
 - How this story fits under the title of the collection – ‘everyone dies famous in a small town’
 - The role of the Catholic Church
 - The way characters, places and events from one story pop up in a different story, often from a different perspective.

Angry Starfish

- Right from the beginning of the story we sense the tension between Gina and Poppy. As you read, think about:
 - Why Gina resents Poppy
 - Why Poppy has an imaginary friend, and why this makes Gina impatient
 - How their relationship develops through the story
 - One reader said ‘Gina is so whiny and unfair to Poppy. She really annoyed me.’ How far do you agree by the end of the story?
 - When you have finished reading the story, think about why it’s called ‘Angry Starfish’.

Pigeon Creek

- The first few pages of the story are in the third person, but from Ruby’s point of view. How do you get a different perspective on things when the story shifts to Jake’s viewpoint?
- If Martha Hollister arrived at your school, how do you think the other students would react to her?
- Who do you feel most sympathy with by the end of the story? Ruby, Jake or Martha?
- What are some of the ways the story would have been different if the writer had decided to make the car crash a fatal one?

Sea-Shaken Houses

- Would you like to grow up in Sea Shaken? Why/why not?
- Do you think Jane and Martha would still be friends if they lived in a bigger place with more people their own age?
- How does this story change your understanding of Martha Hollister? What do you think about the way Martha describes her new life to Jane versus what you know about it from the previous story?
- Imagine what might happen in a story about:
 - Ben receiving Conrad's postcard
 - Jane going to visit Martha and Zoe.

Parking-lot Flowers

- The phrase 'a moth attracted to the flame' means someone who is drawn to things that will be dangerous for them. Notice how this image comes up several times in this story and think about why the writer has done this.
- What has been the impact of Jane posting Conrad's postcard to Ben?
- The story about the priest is pretty shocking. Take a moment to consider how it makes you feel. Some people might think this plotline is too dark for a young adult book. What do you think?

The Right Kind of People

- Delia clearly has quite a privileged life and her parents buy her anything she wants. How do your feelings about this change as you learn more about her?
- Who are the 'right kind of people' in the story? How does this way of thinking about people affect the way Delia's parents deal with what happens to her?
- Why is the gum chain so important to Delia?
- If Delia had told her story to Ben, what might have happened in 'Parking-Lot Flowers'?
- People often think that getting revenge will make them feel better but find that it doesn't help in the way they hoped. Do you think this will happen to Delia, or will her actions help her to heal?

Basketball Town

- What do you think is the biggest factor in Kelsey not enjoying basketball?
- What's your opinion of Kelsey's mum's parenting, for example refusing to allow them to enter the game because of the racist mascot and signing Kelsey up to work to pay back for the Snicker's bar she stole?
- How does Kelsey's view of her parents change as the story progresses?
- Do you think, if someone has an amazing talent, they owe it to themselves to make good use of it?

Alaska Was Wasted On Us

- As a reader, we see Fiona's intentions as well as her actions. For other characters who don't know her intentions, how might her actions seem?
- How do different characters react to the bear? Does anyone surprise you?
- What brings Amy and Fiona back together after falling out?
- In this story we meet Poppy again. What do we find out that helps us to understand her character in Angry Starfish?

The Stranger in the Woods

- What does Jenny say about how strangers are viewed in a small town?
- How has Jade's brush with the stranger in the woods affected her and the other members of her family differently? Why does the umbrella seem like an important find to Jenny?
- How does Nate seem similar or different from his twin brother (Finn in 'Alaska Was Wasted On Us').
- Why do people have so much faith in Coyote Jones?
- Do you think Jenny will get in touch with Nate? Why/why not?

There's Gas in the Tank, Louise!

- Why do you think Louise has the phrase 'Sisters shouldn't leave their sisters' stuck in her mind?
- After reading the story, think back to the descriptions of the dioramas in shoe boxes – who do you think made them and why?
- Look back through the story and see what clues you can pick up about Louise's mental state.
- Do you think this is a good final story for the collection? If yes, why? If no, which other story do you think would be better as the final one?

After Reading

Critical reading tasks

Structure: individual stories

Put simply, most narratives follow a similar structure, explained below:

- Exposition (the situation at the start of the story)
 - Rising Action (events in the story which lead to the climax)
 - Climax (the turning point of the story)
 - Falling Action (events which follow the climax).
- Choose one story.
 - Now try to map the key events of the story you have chosen onto the story structure, above.
 - Consider the following questions:
 - Does this story follow a similar structure to the conventional one? If not, how is it different?
 - How do short stories differ from full-length novels? How might this change the way writers structure short stories?

Take up to 20 minutes to complete this activity.

Structure: big picture

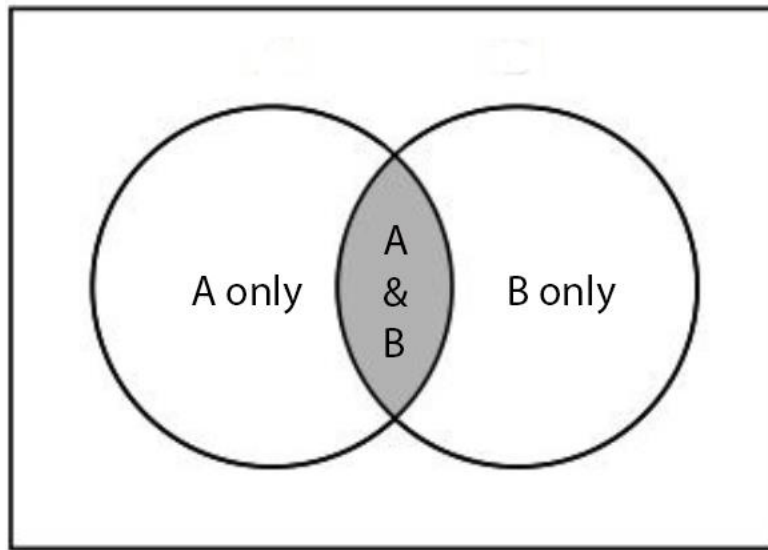
During reading you were asked to look out for some elements which repeat across different stories:

- Coyote Jones and his radio show
 - The disappearance of a 6-year-old girl.
 - How this story fits under the title of the collection – ‘everyone dies famous in a small town’
 - The role of the Catholic Church
 - The way characters, places and events from one story pop up in a different story, often from a different perspective.
- Choose one of these elements and do some exploratory writing about it. The idea of this is to use writing to explore and develop your ideas. You don’t have to follow any particular format or structure but the following questions might help you to get started:
 - What do you find interesting about this repeating element?
 - Why do you think Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock chose to repeat this element in different stories?
 - Could each story stand alone? Or do you need to read all of them to fully understand each one?
 - Do you think the stories have to be read in the order they are presented in the book? Why or why not?
 - If you think a reader would need to read all the stories to fully understand them and that the stories need to be read in order, does this make the book a novel?

Take up to 30 minutes to complete this activity.

Take two

- Choose one or two of the pairs listed in the table below to compare.
- Make notes about similarities and differences between the two on a Venn diagram, like this:



Pairs	For example:
Two friendships	For example: Kelsey and Lillian ('Basketball Town'), Martha and Jane ('Sea-Shaken Flowers')
Two families	For example: Louise's family ('There's Gas in the Tank, Louise!') and Delia's family ('The Right Kind of People')
Two characters who leave and the effects on those they leave behind	For example: Conrad ('Sea-Shaken Houses' and 'Parking-Lot Flowers') and Lillian ('Basketball Town' and 'Alaska Was Wasted on Us')
Characters we see very differently by the end of a story	For example: Finn ('Alaska Was Wasted on Us') and Louise ('There's Gas in the Tank, Louise!')
Two romantic relationships	For example: Ben and Conrad ('Sea-Shaken Houses' and 'Parking-Lot Flowers') and Ruby and Jake ('Pigeon Creek')
Two outsiders	For example: Andrew ('Alaska Was Wasted on Us') and Martha Hollister ('Pigeon Street')
Two sibling relationships	For example: Delia and Silas ('The Right Kind of People') and Jenny and Jade ('The Stranger in the Woods')
Two characters who are changed by the events in a story	For example: Gina ('Angry Starfish') and Ruby ('Pigeon Creek')

Take 30-40 minutes to complete this activity.

Discussion tasks

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.

A world on fire

Before reading you thought about the epigraph:

'To those who do not know that the world is on fire, I have nothing to say.'

Bertolt Brecht

At the end of the book, in 'About the author', Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock is quoted as saying:

'When the world is on fire, we need each other more than ever.'

- Discuss the way fire is used to link all the stories. You could think about:
 - The wildfire that is spreading across the region and how that affects the characters
 - How the fire was really started and who gets blamed for it
 - The fire as part of the plot, for example, bringing characters together or keeping them apart
 - What fire might symbolize in different stories and across the collection. To think about this, first consider some of the positive and negative connotations of fire, for example: destructive; dangerous; keeps you warm and brightens the darkness; a metaphor for being inspired or passionately in love.

Take 20-30 minutes to complete this activity.

Pick a favourite

Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock writes some great sentences.

- Flick through the book and pick out a couple of favourites and explain why you like them to a partner. For example:

'He stared straight ahead, like a man going to his own funeral.'

This made me laugh but also gave me a good impression of how Jake has got himself into a very difficult position by cheating on his girlfriend and has no idea how to get himself out of it.

Take up to 20 minutes to complete this activity.

Writing for pleasure task

Write another

- Write another story for the collection following some of Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock's patterns for example:
 - Take a character who is mentioned in passing in one story and then write a new story with them as a main character
 - Use the wildfire as part of the story
 - Weave in one or two elements from the plot of a different story but seeing them from a different perspective (e.g. a child with an imaginary friend).
 - Set the story in a small town with a character who is defined by one thing which they are trying to escape (such as a talent, something they did, something that happened to them, who their parent is).

Take up to an hour to complete this activity.

Reading the reviews

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

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, consider which reviewer 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.
- If possible, compare your ideas with other readers.
- Submit your reviews to the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme website. This can be accessed at: <https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/books/everyone-dies-famous-in-a-small-town>

Take up to an hour to complete this activity.

A. An exploration of grief, coping, trust, and the way girls are so often blamed for their own trauma and left to work through its effects on their own, *Everyone Dies Famous in a Small Town* hit hard on the impact trauma has on kids at a very young age. From a six-year-old who invents an invisible mermaid friend to cope with the loss of her best friend's disappearance, to the fracture of families and friendships that come with moving away, to (a lot) of child sexual assault, Hitchcock illustrates the depth that can lie beneath the surface of just about anyone you meet. Throughout the book, we see the havoc wreaked on characters who are not believed, who are left to sort out their traumatic experiences on their own. But we also see the healing that comes with relationships when friends and camp counselors and stepparents step up and show up for kids, and that was a beautiful message for me.

Leah on Goodreads

B. I really do think that this book was well-written. It managed to connect the characters who mostly had nothing to do with one another in really creative ways, while also weaving in various social issues in a way that never felt blatantly intrusive.

That being said, I think that the reason this book is rather dull is because of the sheer amount of stories that were being presented. Each of the characters were individual and almost completely different from the others, living in different circumstances and experiencing different things. As a result, not one of the

stories or characters was extremely developed, making the book and its individual characters rather forgettable. It also made the book feel like it was dragging on, despite how short it is.

'Human' on Goodreads

C. 'Small-town trust is the backbone of small-town living. But it was unravelling.' This is the line, towards the end of 'The Stranger in the Woods', the penultimate story of this brilliant collection, that finally convinced me I was reading something very special indeed.

Trust is indeed the glue that binds us humans together, and for so many of the teenagers in these nine stories, the glue has perished and failed – welcome to the world of small-town western America, as seen and heard through the eyes and voices of these stricken teenagers.

I read these interlinked stories with increasing levels of anxiety for the characters and a growing sense of admiration for the author, as she charts the lives of the girls and boys involved as they try to navigate their way through a succession of crises not of their own making.

<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk>

D. [Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock's] books are wonderfully quirky and thoughtful, and no one can title better. This book is more an anthology, and how I was able to care so deeply about every last character (so much so that the mentions in later stories made me squeal with delight) is beyond impressive, frankly.

So, yes it's an anthology, but it's a connected anthology, so all the stories have at least one tie to one of the other stories. Which is kind of brilliant. Also, we get introduced to so many different people in so many small towns in America. And some of these stories are straight up heartbreaking, no question. A lot of them are attempts to rebuild after said heartbreak. It's definitely an emotive book, but also really charming and thoughtful, so you won't be drowning in misery. Yes, there are dark situations, but there is also tons of light.

I loved how the stories connected to each other, and how the characters often had impacts on each other without always knowing. It's thoughtful, it's lovely, and it's definitely worth reading.

<https://itstartsatmidnight.com/2021/04/1reviews-in-a-minute-april-20/#famous>

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