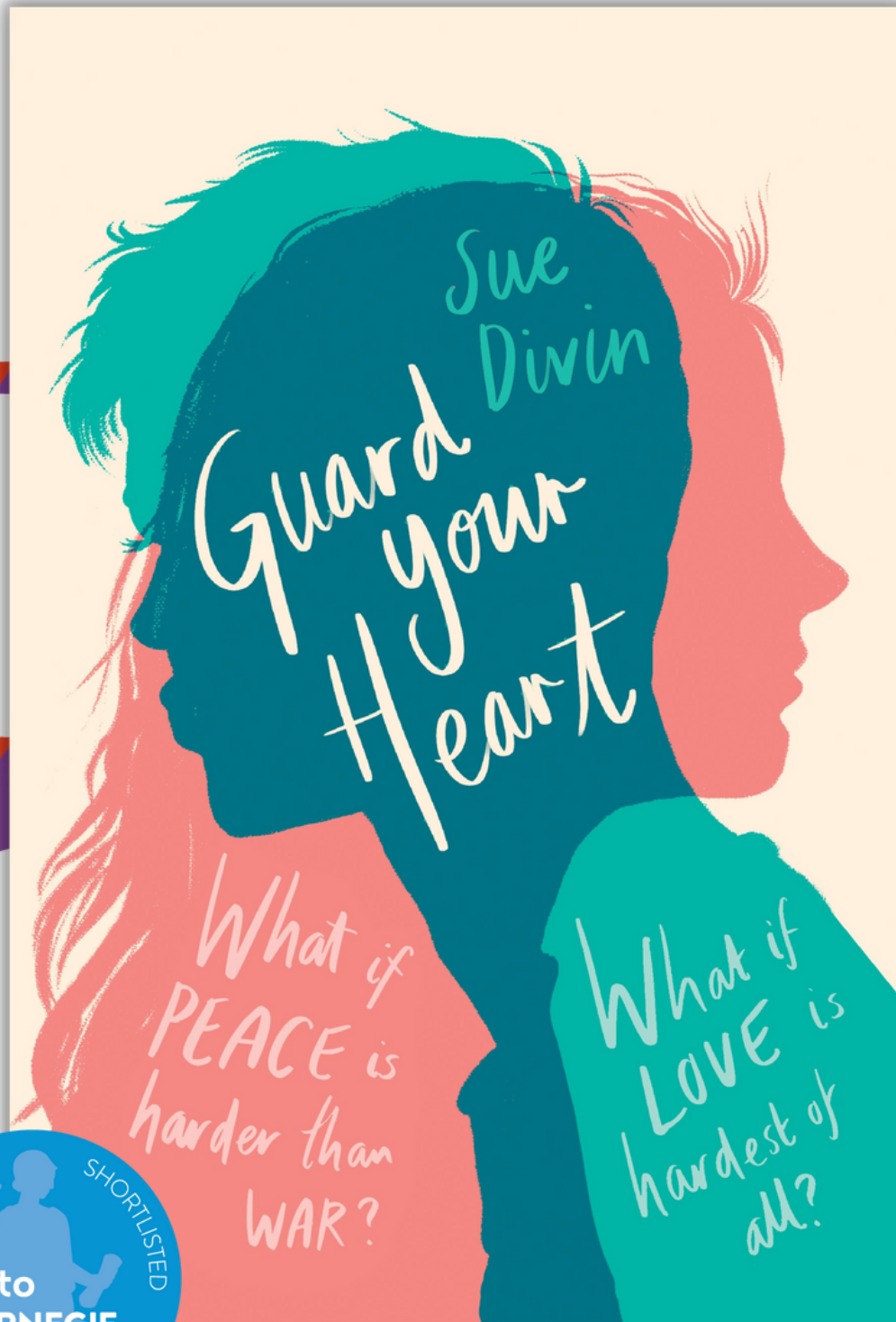


Yoto Carnegie Shortlist

2022 Shadowing Resources



yoto
CARNEGIE
GREENAWAY
AWARDS



 **EMC**
English & Media Centre

#CKG22

Yoto Carnegie Medal 2022

Activities Pack



Title: **Guard Your Heart**

Author: **Sue Divin**

Publisher: Macmillan Children's Books

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 Shadowers 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. Aidan and Iona visit scenic locations in *Guard Your Heart* like The Stone Fort of Grianán of Aileach at Inishowen in Co. Donegal. Create a scrapbook of their journey that features their destinations and include any facts you can find out about the different places. Share using the hashtag #CKG22.
2. Think about your own favourite places, take photos and create a montage or Instagram video.
3. Reimagine Aidan and Iona's first meeting and rewrite the scene.

4. Research Belfast and Derry and make a timeline of key events in the history of each city for Aidan and Iona's lifetime. They were born on the day of the Peace Agreement and are both 18 in 2016.
5. Create a playlist of Irish artists for Aidan and Iona to listen to.
6. Learn to trust each other. Form a circle around each person in turn and catch them when they fall backwards with their eyes closed.

Wellbeing Activity

Select a person to stand and talk about themselves for two minutes. If the speaker says something that relates to you - whether you share a hobby or like the same music, have the same favourite food or live in the same area - stand up. See how long it takes to get everyone on their feet!

Guard Your Heart

by Sue Divin

Guard Your Heart contains descriptions of violent attacks, gun crime and sexual references. Although these are in context and important to the story as a piece of historical fiction for young adults, be mindful of potential triggers for the young people you are reading with.

Guard Your Heart

by Sue Divin

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 *Guard Your Heart* will be about based on these extracts. You should structure your discussion around the questions and prompt 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

The first blow caught me hard on the chin and I spun off balance, tripping over the empty beer cans as the green, navy and white of the Northern Ireland tops blurred past me. A kick in the groin and a knee in my back followed swiftly as the abuse.

‘Fenian bastard!’

Is ‘Catholic’ tattooed on my head? How did they know?

Extract 2

AIDAN.

Thursday 28 July.

Pistols at dawn were no craic. Not when you couldn’t bloody find them. And what if I did find it? Leaning back on the gate, I threw the stone after the trowel, sighing. Clunk. It hit with accuracy and ricocheted towards the hedge, where the small twigs marked my digging like a geography project. This was my third trek up the back roads. I wasn’t sure if I’d crossed the border, but two things were certain – it was the right field and the clock was ticking.

Iona was all I wanted to think about, yet she’d be out my life if she knew the half of it – never mind what Shannon could spin to make it worse. Chatting about Mandela had been the perfect opportunity to tell Iona about Da, but I chickened out...

Extract 3

‘Ah, Aidy,’ she sighed. ‘She’s a keeper!’

‘You like her?’

‘She’s a wee dote, lad. A beautiful person inside and out. It would have done your grandather’s heart the world of good to see you with her.’

‘Granda Michael?’ I was perplexed at the sudden connection.

Nan closed her eyes, leaning back on the headrest. ‘I suppose you never knew, did you Aidy? Your Granda was Church of Ireland. What we went through in them days trying to convince our families, never mind the priest.’

‘Nan,’ I interrupted. Granda was a devout Catholic. I was at mass with him heaps of times. He took communion and everything. He’s buried in the chapel graveyard.’

‘Aye, indeed he is. But he wasn’t always Catholic. He converted to marry me. Was almost shunned for it, too, until his people got used to it. I forgot that Aibhlinn didn’t tell you any of that. She was always afeared of your father finding out. Truth is, I think he knew anyway. It was always awkward there, even before... anything.’

Extract 4

I was powerless to change what was going to happen to me or my brother. My best throw of the dice was to shield her. I battled to find words. I heard Ma singing me to sleep as a wean, with the old Irish air:

‘The river’s wide, I cannot cross

And neither have I wings to fly.

Give me a boat that will carry two

And both shall row, my love and I

And both shall row, my Lord and I.’

Devoid of hope, I typed my message – every letter killing 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.

▪ **Read up to page 12, the end of Chapter 1, then answer these questions.**

- What do you understand about when and where the story is set?
- A dramatic event occurs early on in the novel. What happens between Aidan and Shannon? What do you think causes this?
- What is your reader response to Aidan's actions and the attack on him? How do you feel about him as a character after the first chapter?
- Are there any aspects of the context and setting of the novel that puzzle you? Check your understanding of these terms:
 - Fenian
 - Good Friday Agreement
 - The Troubles
 - IRA
 - Protestant
 - Catholic
- How do these terms add to your understanding of the events of Chapter 1?

▪ **Read up to page 57 then answer these questions.**

- What more have you been able to find out about Aidan's family background? What do you understand about his Da, in particular?
- What are your first impressions of Aidan's brother, Seán? Do you have any thoughts about the car he has recently got, and where it may have come from?
- The final sentence of chapter 8 is 'It was the first time we touched'. What predictions do you have about Aidan and Iona's relationship? Are you able to find any further clues in chapters 7, 8 and 9?
- Draw a quick two column table with the headings 'Aidan' and 'Iona'. What are the key differences between each of the characters' lives? List them under their names in the table. Why are these differences so important in the story?
- Another few terms have emerged in these chapters that you may need to research to understand:
 - Dissident
 - New IRA
 - Sectarian

▪ **Read up to page 124 then answer these questions.**

- Aidan and Iona delete the footage of the attack on Aidan from his phone. What do you think of this choice?
- The vote on Brexit in 2016 serves as a backdrop to the story. What do you think is the significance of the story being set at that time?
- It emerges that it was Shannon who drugged Aidan on the night of his attack. Were you surprised by this revelation? What do you think of Aidan's reaction to finding this out?
- In this section of the book, Aidan is convinced that new IRA dissidents have tried to groom him. What do you understand by this? What are your predictions about how the situation will unfold?
- We find out a lot more about Aidan's family background in this part of the story. How does this change, or develop, your response to Aidan as a character?
- Aidan is often torn between Iona and Shannon in this section of the book. What do you think his choice between these two girls represents?
- Aidan and Iona both muse on how culturally different they are, and the problems this might cause. They are both frustrated that each of their family histories has an impact on their lives. Do you recognise any of these difficulties in your own lives, or those of your friends?
- At the end of this section, Shannon turns up at Aidan's house demanding he find her a gun. She says she has been threatened by new IRA dissidents because she drugged Aidan. What is your response to this turn of events in the story? What should Aidan do next?
- Another few terms have emerged in these chapters that you may need to research to understand. Think about how they fit in with the other words you have previously researched:
 - Republican
 - Nationalist
 - Unionist
 - Bigot

▪ **Read up to page 185 then answer these questions.**

- At the beginning of this section, Seán is holding a BBQ for Syrian refugees. What do you think is the significance of this event, given the activities we suspect Seán of?
- Some readers feel that the part of this section with Iona, Luke and Dylan in the sauna should be edited out, because it's too triggering and uncomfortable. What is your response to this?
- On page 142, Aidan asks himself 'Were we building peace only knowing half the war story?' What do you understand by this?
- Newspaper the Belfast Telegraph calls the novel a Romeo & Juliet tale. How do you see that developing in this section?
- What does Paddy think Aidan is involved with, and how does this link to the return of Seán's car keys?
- Aidan takes Iona to visit his Nan and she tells them that his grandad was a Protestant, like Iona. What do you think is the significance of finding this out?
- By the end of this section, both Iona's brothers know about Aidan. John, her eldest brother and a policeman, is going to try to help in order to keep Iona safe. What are your predictions about how the book will progress from this point?

▪ **Read up to page 236 'I nodded, gazing out the window at the traffic' then answer these questions.**

- Saiorse, Aidan's sister, says she's coming back. Why do you think this is, and what difference do you think it will make to Aidan's life?
- Aidan questions himself about whether hearing that his Da served time in prison for involvement in the IRA would be too much for Iona. What are your thoughts about how Iona would react? What have you learnt about her character?
- When Aidan arrives home in Chapter 32, he sees that Seán has his Da's gun, but previously he had handed it over to Shannon. How and why do you think Seán has the gun?
- The fight between Aidan and Seán is quite shocking for the reader, particularly as they are brothers who only have each other. There seems to be many factors causing the tension between them – what are these? How do you respond to this fight?
- In Chapter 33, John demands again that Iona ends her relationship with Aidan and says he is saving her skin. What does he mean?
- This part of the novel is mostly told from Aidan's perspective. Do you notice anything significant about the way it is written at this point? How might the writing style reflect the events of the novel at this point?
- There aren't many pages of the novel left now. How do you think the remaining issues will be resolved?
 - Aidan and Iona's relationship (Aidan has, at this point, sent her a message breaking up with her, then broken his phone)
 - Aidan and Iona's families disapproving of their relationship
 - Seán's arrest
 - Aidan's aunt and uncle's disapproval and lack of support
 - Aidan's possible danger from the new IRA
 - Aidan's choice about university
 - Saiorse's arrival home
- Read up to the end of the book and discuss whether your ideas were accurate and if you were satisfied with the story's ending.

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

- Discuss 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 *Guard Your Heart*, how likely are you to read other novels by Sue Divin?

Spend 15-20 minutes on this activity.

What is *Guard Your Heart* about?

- Spend a few minutes writing down a single sentence that begins: '*Guard Your Heart* 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 *Guard Your Heart* relates to your chosen statement.

***Guard Your Heart* is about...**

- Teenagers growing up
- Learning from the past
- Seeing beyond the differences of others
- Religious and cultural intolerance
- Grief and healing
- Generational trauma
- The violence and danger in young people's lives
- The virtues of a loving relationship.

Exploring the book further

Use one of more of these tasks to explore *Guard your Heart* further.

Aidan's da

Aidan's father is physically absent in the events of the novel, but he plays a very present part in Aidan's understanding of his identity.

- Write a letter from Aidan to his father after the events of the novel. Your letter should look back on what happened in the novel, exploring the events of the novel, the lessons Aidan has learnt and how he feels about his father now.

Spend 20-30 minutes on this activity.

Setting and context

The events of this story are intertwined with its setting and context, but one critic said:

'It has a timeless Romeo & Juliet quality that transcends place and time.'

- Using your own life experience and other stories you have read, write a plan for a story about two characters that overcome the adversity of their situations to be together.
- Share and compare your plans, reflecting on how far you agree with the critic's opinion above.

Spend 20-30 minutes on this activity.

As the author

In interviews, the writer Sue Divin has been asked the following questions:

- Tell us a little about *Guard Your Heart*.
- What inspired the book?
- Are you a plan, plan, plan writer, or do you sit down and see where the words take you?
- The Northern Irish setting of the book is crucial to the narrative and the characterisation of your protagonists. What came first – the setting or your characters?
- Did you have any worries about publishing *Guard Your Heart*?
- Practise answering these questions in role as the writer, developing your interpretations as you do.

Spend 20-30 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/guard-your-heart>

Give yourself up to an hour to complete this activity.

A. This book is so beautifully written, with so much love and emotion. The characters are fantastic, lifelike and get under your skin. Their story is realistic and heartfelt and complex.

This is like a study in what makes a person's character, their choices and upbringing, religion and culture. It questions how and why people change and seeing both sides to a story.

I adored this book and everything about it including its message about who we are and why, the people around us and what community really means

Anonymous, waterstones.com review

B. The book alternates from both of the main characters' points of view, giving us an insight into their thoughts. I found this writing style particularly gripping, as I could understand the opinions of the two protagonists from their perspectives throughout the book. I really enjoyed the way that this book was written and the language used. It is very modern and realistically portrays what a teenager would do and say...

Anonymous

C. ... the third thing that comes to mind is the history of religion and the troubles in particular. Sue Divin mentions multiple events that occurred during the troubles throughout her book, such as Bloody Sunday and Good Friday. As an English citizen, I don't, personally, know very much about the troubles, but this book has sparked an interest in me and makes me want to research and learn more about this important part of Great Britain's history. The troubles ended in 1988, however we see that the history of Ireland has had a long lasting effect on its people. Although peace has been declared and a national apology was made these are still harsh opinions that haven't evolved over time in Aidan and Iona's story we see that both sides are as bad as each other when thinking about 'them' and 'us'. Physical conflict with guns and violence had ended decades ago however, Sue Divin implies that there is still a very apparent divide between the two religions and that the fight hasn't quite finished yet. Here the author is trying to teach readers a lesson about how history effects our modern world.

Zara, review on sevenoaksbookshop.co.uk

D. This book made me feel seen. I was born two months after the signing of the GFA and grew up at exactly the same time the two characters in the novel did. The book does a fantastic job of representing both sides without being offensive, and in my experience, it is completely accurate. Many of the questions Aidan asks throughout the novel are questions I myself have asked growing up in a post-conflict society. The attitudes, cultures, history and mindsets are freakishly accurate.

Rebecca Hughes, [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com/user/show/123456789)

E. It does so much, and yet, I found myself wishing it was trying to do a little less. In 300 pages a significant amount of contentious plot points are covered. By the two thirds mark I felt like they were being rushed. I would have been happier to read a longer book or one with less going on that allowed the author to explore these important topics more slowly and in a way that felt a little less preachy.

Jesika, [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com/user/show/123456789)

Writing activities

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

You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.

1. An additional chapter

Aidan's brother Seán plays a very significant role and is a complex character in the story, but his voice is not one we hear first-hand, like Aidan and Iona's.

- Flick through the book and choose a place where it would improve the story to hear from Seán. Write an additional chapter in his voice.

2. A story from a saying

The book is full of sayings that mean a lot to Aidan.

- Write a story that includes one of the sayings from the novel:

Anger is only one letter short of danger.

Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life.

It is in the shelter of each other that people live.

3. An opinion piece

The writer Adrian McKinty has been quoted as saying:

'Every publisher or agent I've ever met told me the same thing – that Irish readers don't want to read about the bad old days of the Troubles; neither do the English and Americans...'

- What do you think of this? Write an article sharing your views about reading stories like *Guard Your Heart*.

ALCS



yoto
CARNEGIE
GREENAWAY
AWARDS

Let's get Quizzical!

Take part for your chance to win:

**£500 for your school plus tickets
to the CKG Winner Ceremony!**

alcs.co.uk/quizzical

#CKG22

