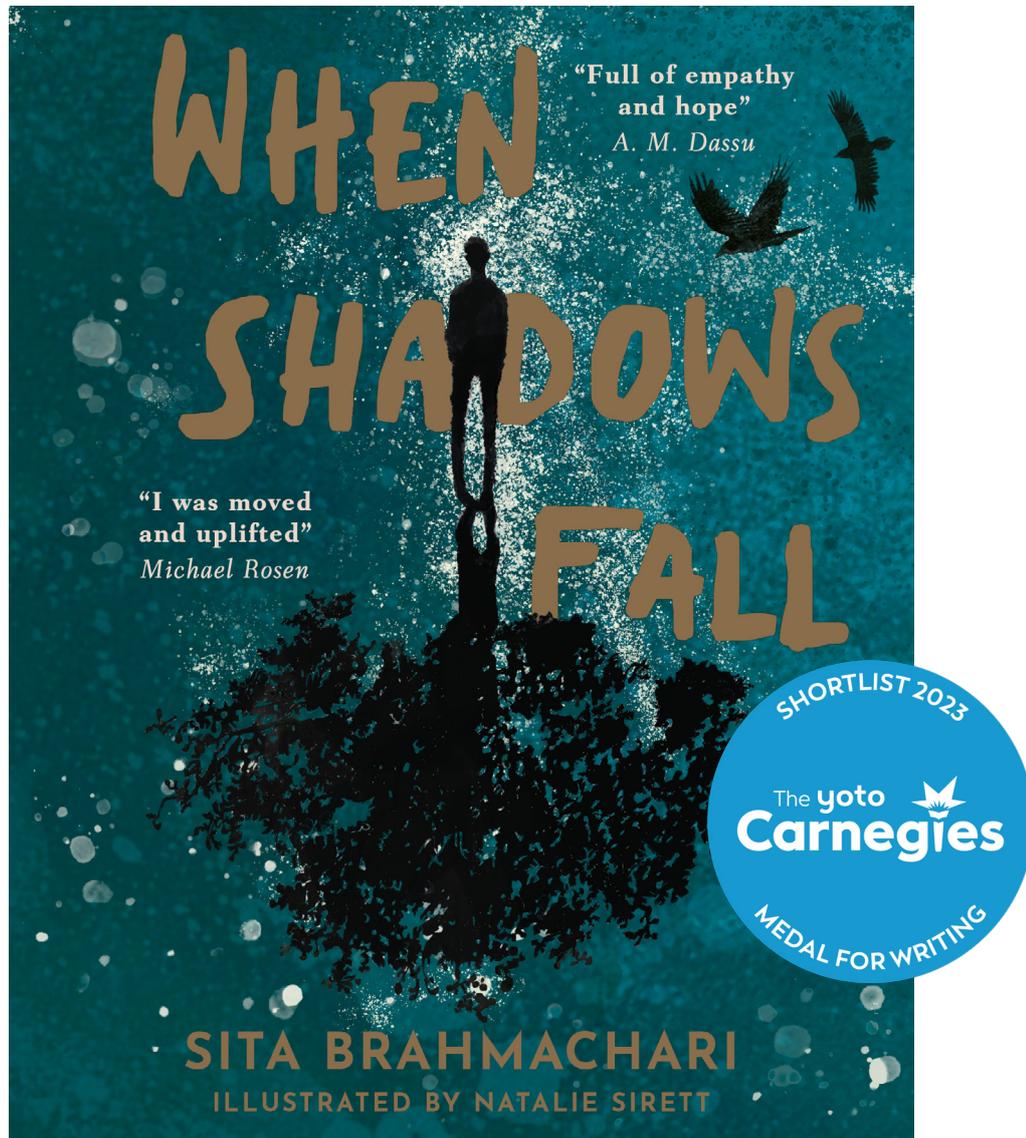


The yoto Carnegies



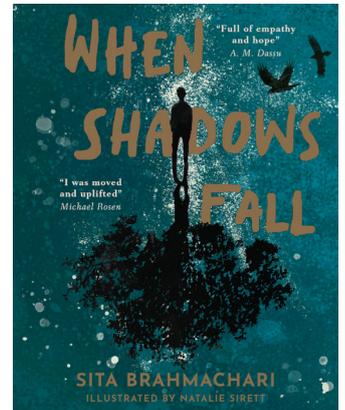
The Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2023 Shadowing Resources

Activities for *When Shadows Fall*

Author: Sita Brahmachari

Publisher: Little Tiger 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.

Warning

Contains content relating to mental health, suicide, grief, drug taking, gang violence.

General Activities for the Full Shortlist

1. Imagine each of the shortlisted titles as a dessert! Do you think the book you read is a Lemon Sorbet with a light and tangy plot or a Sticky Toffee Pudding with a complex, multi-layered narrative?
2. Take the last line of one of the shortlisted books and use this as the opening line for your own story or poem.
3. Taking each of the shortlisted books in turn, think about the characters and the way they navigate the plot and various subplots. If you were going to wake up inside each book, which character would you choose to be and why?
4. Imagine that two characters are sitting on a bench. Only two people can sit on that bench at any given time, so when a third person arrives, the first person has to make up a reason to leave. Shadows should think carefully about the different characters from their chosen book; what reasons might they have for being near to or sitting on a park bench. They must then become the character and interact with the other person/people on the bench. You could base this activity on a single title or have some real fun by using characters from across the shortlist. What will happen when characters from different worlds collide?
5. 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 create a playlist that reflects a particular character.
6. Play charades, using non-verbal communication to act out the title of each book and get the rest of your group to guess which book you are presenting.
7. Think of some questions you would like to ask the shortlisted authors and share them on social media using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies23**
8. Redesign the cover of a shortlisted book. How would your creation differ from the existing cover? What would you include and why? Explore colour, shapes and themes.
9. Think about who would play the main characters in a film or TV adaptation of one or more of the shortlisted titles. Create a cast list and explain your choices.
10. Create your own book trailer for one of the books, or work together to make a trailer for the entire shortlist. This could be a TikTok style 'sell' of the book or a more traditional thematic video.
11. Take the first line from each of the shortlisted novels and create a poem or story by combining them with words and phrases of your own.

Book Activities

1. Ravens feature prominently throughout the novel. Research their behaviour and the meanings and symbolism surrounding them. Can you guess the correct collective noun for a group of ravens?
2. Using found materials, make a model raven. You could take this a step further and build a mobile featuring both Rain and Bow. Share your creations with other shadowing groups on social media using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies23**
3. Make a three dimensional model of the Wilderness and/or Bothy.
4. Imagine you had to leave home quickly and with little warning as Om did. What three things would you carry with you into your new life?
5. Choose one of the poems from the novel. Illustrate the poem or make a model to represent it. Think about why you chose this poem and why/how you have connected with it.
6. This novel is illustrated throughout. Take some time to explore the images and consider the contribution that they make to our understanding of the story.
7. Amnesty International endorses this novel 'because it upholds human children's human rights'. As a group, discuss the ways in which the novel does this. Does it remind you of any other novels in the way that it approaches this theme?

Wellbeing/mindfulness:

Design a mural to decorate the walls of the Bothy. What would you include, and why? Go outside once in the morning, once in the afternoon and once in the evening. Can you hear any birds? How many different types can you hear? Are you able to identify the different calls? How do the different melodies make you feel? Is there one that you prefer? Why might this be?

About these resources

All of these tasks are designed to be completed in small discussion groups. However, they can easily be done individually. Instead of talking about the tasks, students can write down and keep a record of their ideas.

Before Reading

10-20 minutes

- Discuss what you think *When Shadows Fall* 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 and when it will be set?
 - If you had to identify three likely themes, what would they be?

Extract 1

It's summer now, though there was a time that felt like eternal winter. If you ever get sucked into Shadowlands remember: no matter how bleak, seasons change.

So here I am, sitting on our Green Hill, writing this...

There is a green hill far away without a city wall.

Strange how you think you're doing the writing then lines from songs bombard your mind and write into you.

*There is a green hill, far away,
without a city wall.*

Extract 2

'In the Bleak Midwinter.'

How did it even go?

That song Dad used to play.

These legs, heavy as stones,

Trudging through snow.

First steps, Kai.

First steps.

Extract 3

Strange how all our friendship bonds together are somehow connected to the Bothy and our little bit of Greenlands wildness. I was thinking the other day ... it's like this bit of land keeps trying to bring us together and help us grow. Like it's always had our backs. Weird how, when the news came of the plans for a road to run through it, it gave us a problem but for a moment it gave us an answer too, of sparking the life in you again, bringing you back to us. But it was a such a fleeting moment.

Extract 3

I must tell what I witnessed. What I felt. People did not take us for who we are, did not see the potential in what we could be here in this country, and I had anger in my heart when you looked at me, but it made me stronger. I thought, *Let them learn who my Aunt Gisou is when her shadows lift and she has English Language to show them.*

I too will show them. These were my thoughts on the day I watched you and Orla and your mothers planting one small tree. The sight of you brought shadow memories of my older brother Ishy and my mother and father too.

During Reading

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

Read up to the section listed and then answer the questions. You will probably need to spend about 5-10 minutes answering each set of questions. You can use the questions in a number of ways. For example, you might like to:

- Discuss them in small groups
- Role play answering them in pairs, with one of you asking a question and the other answering as an expert reader
- Keep a personal reading journal to record some of your responses

The page numbers are based on the Little Tiger hardback edition of the book, first published in the UK in 2021.

Read the Prologue (pages 7-14)

- Why do you think the writer reveals that Kai has survived a difficult experience right at the start of the book?
- Why do you think the writer chooses to use a Prologue in this book?
- What important details is the reader given in the Prologue?

Read Act 1 to the top of page 44

- How is Greenlands Hill described? What is its significance? What does it mean to Kai?
- What do we learn about Kai's Dad, including his job and his home life?
- What do you notice about the way the book is written at this point? Do you have any thoughts about why there are different font styles and what effect they have?
- How difficult is it to keep track of the story being told in this range of forms, fonts and styles? What are your thoughts about it?

Read Act 1 to the middle of page 120

- How does the writer present Orla in this section of the book? Focus on when Kai first meets her and how that presentation develops.
- How does the writer present Zak in this section of the book? How is Kai's relationship with Zak different to his relationship with Orla?
- What more do you learn about the 'shadows' of the book's title? How is the word 'shadows' used in this book?
- In this section, Orla reads Kai's journal – the book you're reading. What are your thoughts about this way of telling the story?
- What is the role of the ravens in this section of the book?
- Based on this section, what do you think will happen next? What clues in the novel helped you to make your predictions?



Read to the end of Act 1 (page 153)

- What is your response to Kai's tragedy?
- What do you think of the way other characters respond to the tragedy and Kai's family's suffering? What do you think of the way Kai responds to those characters?
- How does the relationship between Kai, Zak and Orla develop in this section? What are your thoughts about this?
- What are your thoughts about the illustrations in this section, including the black pages from page 122-125 and the smaller illustrations on some of the pages? Why do you think these are used?
- What do you notice about the writer's use of the verse novel form from pages 121- 123 and 143-153 (in parts)? What effect does this have?

Read Between the Acts up to Act 2 (pages 156-233)

- In this section, parts of the book are narrated directly by Orla and Omid. Why do you think the writer chooses to do this? What is the effect of this choice?
- What do you notice about Omid's narrative voice? What is the effect of this voice on you as a reader? You might like to think about how Omid's own experiences are presented.
- How do the illustrations in the book change for Omid's sections and what does this show us?
- How does Omid help Kai in this section? How does Kai help Omid?
- How do Omid's sections of the book help us to better understand the refugee experience?
- Omid's language use is often poetic, particularly linking to his experiences as a refugee. For example, '...we found the way to see ourselves and each other beyond the border of language.' Pick a few of your favourite parts of language in his section of the book and explain what you like about them. What do they show about the refugee experience?
- What does Greenlands mean to Kai, Omid and Orla? What does it mean to Zak?
- What does Orla's section show about how difficult experiences can affect others?
- How does Kai's Dad react to his family's tragedy and how is this presented? What effect does this have on Kai?
- By the end of 'Between the Acts', what are your feelings about each of the characters in the book?

Read Act 2 from page 236 to page 246

- This section is mostly written in verse form. Why do you think this is? What is the effect on you as a reader?
- By this point in the book, you have encountered the raven characters a number of times. What do you think they represent? What role do they play in Kai's experiences?

Read Act 2 from page 247 to page 260

- In this part of the book, we hear the narrative voices of ravens Rain and Bow for the first time. We know Kai is the creator of these voices. How do each of the ravens' voices differ? What is the effect of creating voices for them?
- Parts of the ravens' sections focus on how others perceive them. How might you link this to the experiences of other characters in the book so far?
- Kai refers to writing down his experiences as a healing process several times in the book. What role do the ravens play in this healing process? What do you notice about the advice they give him?



Read from page 261 to the end of Act 2 (page 290)

- Omid tells Orla to 'stand by when shadows fall'. What do you understand by this, in relation to the characters' experiences in the book?
- In Orla's section in this part of the book from pages 261-273, she is furious with Faith, Zak's mum, because she believes that Faith let Kai down. What do you think about this idea of Kai being let down? What about the other adult characters in the book?
- What role do the characters of Zig and Taz play in the book?
- What different traumatic experiences has Kai suffered by the end of this section? How do they link together? How is everything he has gone through presented by the writer?

Read to the end of page 37

- What do you notice about the way the story is told?
- What are your thoughts about the different narrators: Zofia and Tom? What can you tell about their characters? How are they different? What feelings do you have about them?
- Zofia lives in a cottage by the beach. What do you think about the writer's choice of setting? How is the beach and sea presented?
- As a reader, what questions do you have after reading this part of the novel? What do you think will happen next?

Read Act 3 (pages 291-341)

- Why do you think the writer chose to use so many illustrations in this section? What is their effect on you as a reader?
- Why do you think that Kai returns home? What influenced his decision?

Read the Epilogue

- What does the letter from the old man's daughter mean for Kai and the Greenlands Guardians?
- What do you think is the purpose of the Epilogue?
- What is the effect of Kai's dedication to his family and friends at the end of the Epilogue?

Read Sita Brahmachari's poem to the reader at the very beginning of the book

- Summarise the poem's message in one or two sentences
- What do you think are the main messages of this book?

After Reading

Initial Thoughts? **10-15 minutes**

Spend time discussing some or all of the questions below.

- What are your overall impressions of this novel?
- Which moments stick most in your memory and why?
- Which characters do you like best and why?
- Which other novels does it remind you of and why?
- How gripping did you find the story?
- What are your thoughts about how the book was written?
- Based on reading *When Shadows Fall*, how likely are you to read other novels by Sita Brahmachari?

What's *When Shadows Fall* about?

- 15-20 minutes
- Spend one or two minutes writing down a single sentence that begins: '*When Shadows Fall* is about ...'
- If you are working in a group, 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 ideas, from the one you agree with most to the one you agree with least.
- Finally, decide on the idea you agree with most. It can be one from the list or your own. Write down a few ideas about how *When Shadows Fall* relates to your chosen idea.

***When Shadows Fall* is about...**

- Growing up and learning who you are.
- The importance of the natural world.
- The reality of life for some people.
- Friendship and learning who your true friends are.
- Getting through different difficulties.
- The lives of three distinctive characters.
- Moral lessons for the reader.
- The importance of hope.

Exploring the book further

Use one or more of these tasks to explore *When Shadows Fall* further.

Allow about 20-30 minutes for each task.

Illustrations

- Use the ideas in the statements below to discuss your thoughts about the illustrations. Flick back through the book to remind yourself where and how they are used.
 - The shading of the pages varies depending on what is happening at that point in the book.
 - The writer draws attention to certain presences in the novel by using illustrations repeatedly.
 - The illustrations suggest some characters find it easier to communicate through art than speaking or writing.
 - Some of the illustrations are more abstract than others depending on who is speaking and what they have to say.
 - Overall, the illustrations emphasise a sense of despair and isolation.

Complete one or more of the activities below to explore the illustrations in the book further.

- Choose a favourite illustration from the book. Use it to inspire a piece of writing of your own.
- Choose a part of the book that hasn't been illustrated but which you feel should have been. Create your own illustration to represent that part of the book.

Forms, styles, fonts and layouts

Here are three different forms used in the novel:

- Journal
- Verse novel (written as poetry)
- Play

Discuss with your group:

- Where and when each form is used
- Which form you liked best

Discuss the statements below about the effect of the different forms in the novel.

Select one that generated an interesting conversation and feed back the details to the whole group or class.

- Using different forms makes for an enjoyable reading experience – you are waiting for what comes next and have to adjust the way that you read depending on whether the writing is in the form of a journal, verse or a play.
- Organising the book into acts rather than chapters makes it feel more like a play than a novel.
- Verse tends to be used when the book explores difficult, emotional experience – writing in poetry gives these experiences more power.
- The writer wants us to be conscious that we are reading a first-person journal to connect us to the characters and ensure we invest emotionally in them.
- The use of different forms draws attention to the writing process. This novel wants to make it clear that writing can be a soothing and healing process.
- The first-person voices of the ravens give the book a slightly weird feel. They give us an insight into Kai's mind.

In role as the writer

In the podcast 'In the Reading Corner – *When Shadows Fall*', Nikki Gamble speaks to Sita Brahmachari about some of her ideas behind the book.

In a small group, take it in turns to answer the questions below in role as Sita:

Next listen to Sita's responses on the podcast and compare her ideas to your own – what interesting similarities and differences are there?

You can find the podcast here: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1571905/9696832> and the timecodes below indicate when in the podcast each question is answered.

- What is the story about? (01.05-02.48)
- Why do you include Kai's friends as narrators? (02.48-03.36)
- Why is the story written in so many forms? (03.36-03.55)
- Why is Zak such a different character to the others? (03.56-04.44)
- Why did you choose this title? (15.20-16.40)
- What did you want to show about young people's lives in the story? (19.30-22.01)
- Do you think this is a story for everyone? How and why? (22.00-22.55)

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://yotocarnegies.co.uk/?post_type=books&p=12662

Submit your reviews to the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme website. This can be accessed at: https://yotocarnegies.co.uk/?post_type=books&p=12668

Give yourself up to an hour to complete this activity.

A. I loved the setting of this piece. The dichotomy between the urban and natural was so starkly presented, which made this feel so relevant to the ecocritical voice that seems to have emerged so strongly this century.

Waterstones review by Bryony Hart

B. This is an empowering story but it is also packed with difficult themes such as mental illness, death, grief and refugee trauma and experiences. These themes were conveyed authentically and carefully by the author. Nevertheless, the words packed hefty emotional punches at times. I had to pause and take a break before I continued on because these words had the power to make me feel deeply.

Waterstones review by Micky

C. There are developments in the novel I did not find quite so convincing. The campaign to defend the local recreation ground, and the final revelation that seems likely to save the rec, seems to belong to a different novel. But the way in which passion, poetry, prose and illustration work together is marvellous.

booksforkeeps.co.uk

D. Interestingly, I related much more to the characters of Orla and Omid than Kai, the main character of the story. I felt really sympathetic for Omid's situation – he's a refugee from a war-torn country and has lost many of his family members. This, I think, made me more frustrated with Kai as a character, because I felt Omid had so much more cause to 'fall' in the way Kai does. Unexpectedly, Omid supports Kai more than Kai supports Omid.

But I suppose that this really isn't about comparing the difficulty of our experiences, rather learning about what we can do to help when shadows fall on our friends, whatever those shadows are. And Orla and Omid really come through for Kai when his shadows fall – they are sympathetic, loyal, careful and patient. I think it's these qualities that made me enjoy the characters so much.

Review by Lucy at English & Media Centre

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 Shadows Fall* further.

You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.

Writing in Kai's voice

- When something difficult happens to Kai, one of the other characters takes over telling the story.
 - Choose a part of the book that is not narrated by Kai. Write it in Kai's voice, from his perspective. You might, for example, choose to focus on:
 - Sula's death
 - Kai's disappearance.

A letter to the writer

- Read the Author's Note at the back of the book in which Sita Brahmachari writes about the influences on her writing *When Shadows Fall*.
- Identify 3-4 key influences and make a note of them.
- Write a letter to Sita Brahmachari explaining which of these influences, in your opinion, came across most strongly in *When Shadows Fall* and why.
- You might also like to tell her:
 - What you enjoyed about the book
 - Its effect on you as a reader
 - Anything you were dissatisfied with as a reader
 - What you might like her next book to be about.

Thinking of the reader

Books that deal with difficult, traumatic experiences can be emotionally challenging to read.

- In a small group, read the statements below and discuss how they relate to you as a reader in general.
- Next, apply them to your experience of reading *When Shadows Fall*. (If you would rather work alone, you could choose one of the statements as the beginning of a piece of exploratory writing to add to a personal journal or notebook.)
 - Reading about difficult experiences helps me to feel sympathy for the characters in a book.
 - Reading about difficult experiences helps me relate to others in the real world.
 - Reading about difficult experiences is very sad but important.
 - I like to read books like this that teach me more about what others go through.
 - Reading about difficult events makes me feel anxious about bad things happening to me.
- How would you encourage others to read *When Shadows Fall*, even though it is dark and sorrowful at times? Write a Foreword for the book in which you offer reassurance and highlight the positive aspects of reading the book. No spoilers, though!

Blogging

- Write a blog entry with the title: 'What *When Shadows Fall* can teach us about hope.'