

The yoto Carnegies



The Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2023 Shadowing Resources



Activities for *The Comet*

Author: Joe Todd-Stanton

Illustrator: Joe Todd-Stanton

Publisher: Flying Eye Books

Age: 3+



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 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. Shadowers 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. Find out which constellations are visible now in the sky near you at this time of year and report your findings to the group.
2. Play Emotions Charades! Think about the emotions felt by the characters in the story at different points in the story and get your group to guess the emotion based on your facial expressions or body language.
3. Would you rather live by the sea or in a city? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages about living in an urban environment or a rural environment.
4. Create a soundscape for each of the environments that Nyla calls home, using only your voices. What sounds would you include to evoke the atmosphere of the seaside? What about the city? Experiment by layering both soundscapes together. What effect does it have?
5. Retell part of the story from the point of view of Nyla's cat or her dad. Would they see and feel things differently to Nyla? You could retell the whole story or a particular scene.

Get crafty and make your own comet with a decorative trail like Nyla's for your room or library. Take a look at NASA's activity here for inspiration: <https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/comet-stick/en/> You could use black paper and chalk or glow in the dark paint, or simply draw an intricate pattern with coloured pencils. Share your designs on social media using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies23**

Wellbeing/mindfulness:

Go stargazing! Settle down outside or by a window with a hot drink and spend some time looking at the stars. You could listen to some of The Planets orchestral suite by Gustav Holst while you gaze.

These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools and settings with ideas to develop comprehension and extended provision around the Yoto Carnegie-shortlisted picturebooks and illustrated texts for children of all ages. They build on our work supporting teachers to use high quality texts to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. We hope you find them useful.

This book is particularly suitable for children aged 5-11.

Reading the book and close reading of illustration:

- Look together at the front cover and invite children to share their first impressions of the character and the setting. *What do you think you know from looking at the illustration? How does the cover design make you feel? What makes you feel that way?* Children might draw responses from the shifting colours in the swirls of leaves, flowers, etc. coiling around the girl, the buildings and the title. They might note the young character's facial expression, body language.
- Now invite them to respond to the text on the cover. *What do you think the title refers to? Have you ever seen or heard of a comet? Have you read or seen any other books by this writer and illustrator? What does the use of gold foil on the cover suggest? What do you like about this cover?*
- Turn to the inside, pausing at the front endpapers and the title page to invite children to respond. Then, read and explore the first double page spread (up to **"...saw a comet once!"**). Ensure children can look closely at the illustration, taking the time to draw out the small details that might offer insight into Nyla and her experiences. *Where are we? How does this place make you feel? What do we learn about Nyla – and her family - from this image? What would we like to find out? What does it suggest about what is important to Nyla and living here?*
- Read the next two spreads and then pause to discuss what more children have learned about the characters and their relationship. *What further information do we glean from their activities and from her clothing or her bedroom, for instance the Earth poster, space themed bedding and bag, pens, books, lamp and décor? How would we describe their relationship?*
- Read aloud up to **"...so we have to move to the city."** *How do you think Nyla feels at this moment? How does the illustration use composition and light and colour to help us understand this change?*
- Pause on the next spread. Note any similarities and differences between the illustration of the old house on the first spread and this first depiction of the new apartment.
- Read aloud up to **"...and there are no sounds of waves to fall asleep to."** Compare this spread with the spreads depicting Nyla's life before the move. *What is the difference in layout? Why might Joe Todd-Stanton have used these shorter wider panels in this new spread? How does it affect our response? What is similar? What is different? What is missing for Nyla?*

- Continue to read aloud, pausing where necessary for discussion, until “**It feels like I am home.**” *Is this what you expected to see? Why/why not? What is Nyla feeling and experiencing? Why do you think Joe Todd-Stanton has chosen to depict Nyla multiple times on this spread?*
- Read aloud and respond to the rest of the book. *How do you feel about the ending? What do Nyla and her father realise by the end? How is this represented in final spread and in the endpapers?*
- After reading, look back through the book at favourite moments and spreads. Discuss how Joe Todd-Stanton uses techniques normally seen in video games, film, graphic novels and comic books to show action or highlight changes in location, thought process or shifting emotions. The children might draw out his use of panels, his technique of drawing a character multiple times in the same environment, or replicating the same layout and composition across multiple spreads. *How do these techniques support the storytelling? How do they influence our understanding of the narrative?*

Engaging in illustration:

- Look back at how Joe Todd Stanton portrays the comet on the spread where it begins to grow, and the next double-page spread as it swirls around the sky. Revisit their initial response. *How would they describe their feelings as well as Nyla's feelings in this series of moments? How does the illustration influence our response? How does he suggest the motion and energy of the comet? Look at his use of line, shape and colour.*
- Compare this comet with other works of art and photographs of astrological or meteorological events. For example, they might compare this with Van Gogh's [Starry Night](#), the [comet](#) depicted in the Augsburg Book of Miracles, or A Comet by [John Everett](#). *How does the artist portray the awe, speed, movement, intensity of the stars, a comet, a shooting star or meteor shower? What is similar about each? What differences can you see? Do you have a preference?*
- Provide children with large sheets of navy or black paper and crayons or chalk or oil pastels with which they can begin to draw their own comets creating a path around the paper. They might want to emulate the leafy trail in the wake of the comet as depicted by Joe Todd-Stanton or they might imagine it differently.
- Afterwards, you could invite the children to add smaller depictions of special memories to their comets. They might want to sketch a few ideas in their writing journal first to support them in deciding what is most important to depict in the simplest graphic. *How is this achieved in the spread from the book? What does the body position and interaction between the characters tell us about this moment even when we can't see facial expressions?*
- Display the children's art prominently, encouraging them to look at the similarities and differences in their work and talk about the different scenarios chosen, how they have been represented and how we are left feeling about them and their work.

This sequence of activities was designed in partnership with CLPE. CLPE is a UK based children's literacy charity working with primary schools to raise the achievement of children's reading and writing by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, putting quality children's books at the heart of all learning. Find out more about their work, and access further resources and training at: www.clpe.org.uk