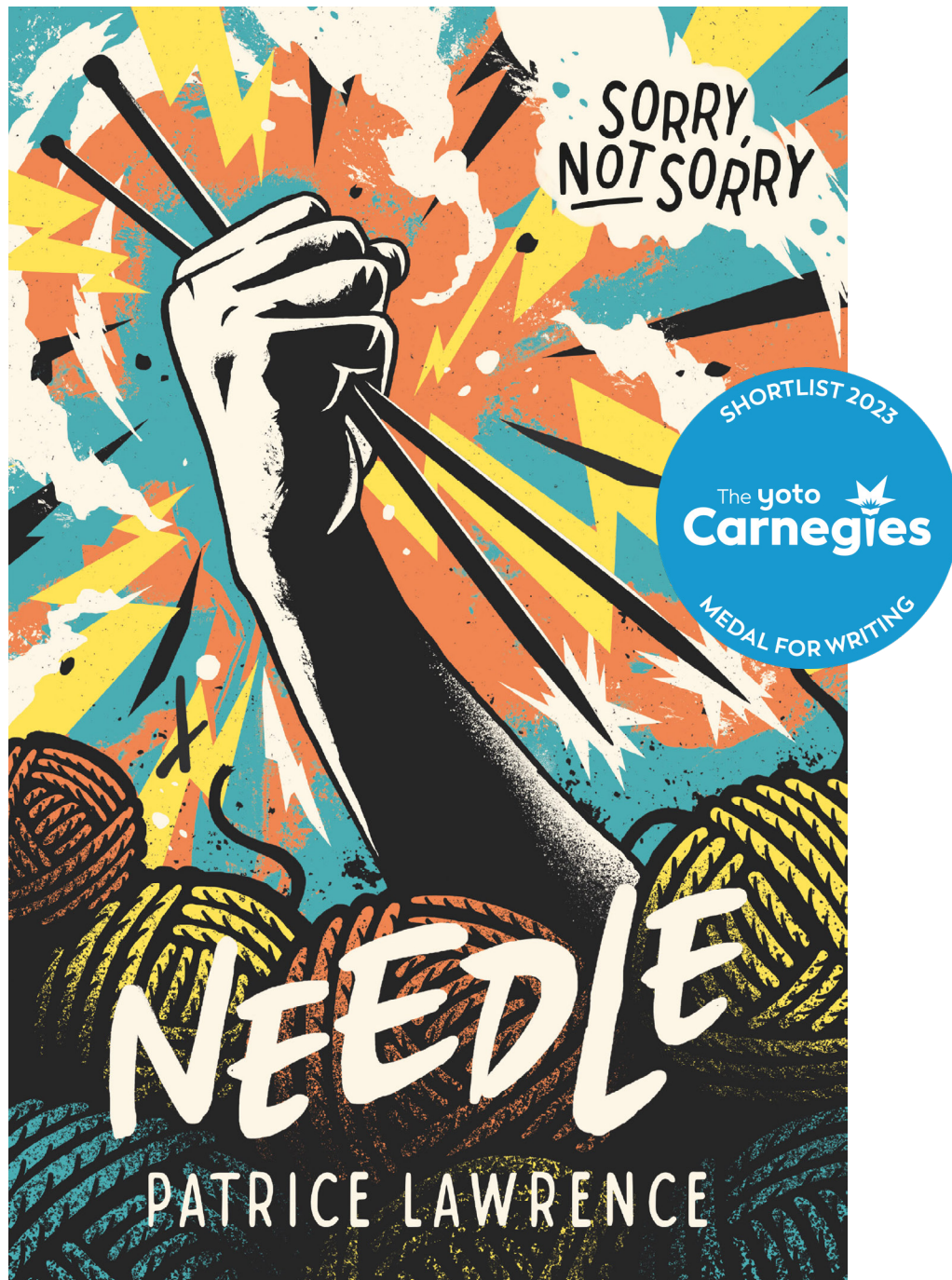


# The yoto Carnegies



## The Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2023 Shadowing Resources

## Activities for *Needle*

**Author:** Patrice Lawrence

**Publisher:** Barrington Stoke

**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.

### Warning

Contains content relating to violence, racism, grief

## 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. Create a collage/moodboard using different coloured wool. You could create a series of moodboards to reflect different characters or different points in the story.
2. Think about the phrase "I'm sorry, but..." Is this a good way to start an apology? What effect does the word 'but' have on the rest of the words in the phrase?
3. Think about somebody in your life to whom you feel you owe an apology. Write the apology down or think through it in your head. You do not have to share the details of your apology with anyone. Are you ready to deliver your apology to the relevant person? If not, what might be stopping you? How can you overcome it?
4. If you were to create something special for a sibling or friend as Charlene attempted with Kandi's dinosaur blanket, what would you make? Maybe your brother loves football or your best friend loves Anime films. If you have time, you can make your dream a reality and share your thoughtful creation with the rest of your shadowing group. You could even share with shadowing groups on social media by using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies23**
5. Have a debate about the needle incident. One team should speak from Charlene's corner whilst the other team tries to see things from Blake's point of view. Was Charlene provoked or did she lash out? Can you see things from both sides?
6. Taking the title of the book as your starting point, create an acrostic poem based on the themes dealt with in the book. Acrostic poems take all the letters in a word or phrase and use them as the first letter in each line. For example:

**N**obody

**E**ver really

**E**xpects the

**D**rama - not even me! But

**L**ook what happens

**E**very. Single. Time.

### **Wellbeing/mindfulness:**

Find a tutorial online and have a go at knitting or crochet at the start of the session - you could each add a few stitches to the chain whilst discussing the book. As you grow more confident, perhaps you could all contribute to a project like this **Rainbow of Hope** <https://youtu.be/h9HljOglpdl>

### **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**

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.

### **Needle**

The title of the book is *Needle* and there are quite a few things this might make people think of. Some associations with the word are listed below. Discuss which of these you think are most likely to appear in a book for young adults, which are least likely and what makes you think this.

- Sewing
- Drugs
- Medical injections/vaccinations
- Knitting
- To 'needle' someone can mean to annoy them deliberately
- Tattoos
- Acupuncture
- Sutures (stitches to help a wound to heal, for example after an injury or surgery).

**Take up to 10 minutes for this activity.**

## **Sorry Not Sorry**

On the cover of the book, as well as the title, is the phrase 'sorry not sorry'. The main character gets put into a situation where she feels that her actions are justified, but other people think she should say sorry. If she doesn't say sorry, she is going to make trouble for herself.

Think about a time when you experienced a similar situation. Discuss the questions below:

- What does it feel like when someone tries to force an apology out of you? Why do other people (often adults) do this?
- Do you think it's sometimes better to apologise and keep the peace?
- Have you ever apologised when you didn't mean it because it wasn't worth getting into trouble?
- If you felt someone had wronged you, would you rather receive an insincere apology than no apology?

**Take up to 10 minutes for this activity.**

## During Reading

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

You might like to 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. Alternatively, you can use the questions for discussion prompts alone and then move on to the next bit of the book.

### Chapter 1

- Why does Charlene knit?
- What do you learn about Charlene in the first chapter?
- What do you learn about Annie? And about Blake?
- What do you think about Bash and Skye's behaviour?

### Chapter 2

- How does Patrice Lawrence help us to understand and sympathise with Charlene in the history lesson? What does the reader know that she can't or doesn't share with the adults involved?
- What do you think about the way the different adults handle the incident in the history lesson?

### Chapter 3&4

- What do you think about the way the different adults handle the incident in the history lesson?
- Why do you think Blake behaves the way he does?
- What do you notice about the difference between the lawyer, Roberto's, way of talking to Charlene compared to Vera's?
- Is Charlene able to explain her actions? If you were explaining things on Charlene's behalf, what would you say? Do you think her final action was justified?

### Chapter 5&6

- Charlene guesses very accurately what the emergency foster carer is going to say. What does this tell you about Charlene?
- What's the effect on Charlene of the phone call with Skye? Is Skye a good friend to Charlene.
- What did you think about the incident at Kandi's house? Charlene behaves in a way that she knows will get her into huge trouble – do you have any sympathy with her?

### Chapter 8&9

- How is Charlene's new placement and school different from what she's experienced previously? Does it seem like a good fit for her?
- Were you surprised that Annie came to visit? Do you think she gives good advice to Charlene?
- Why do you think Shelley is able to have an impact on Charlene? Is it because she takes a different approach, or has Charlene changed?
- At the end of the book, do you feel hopeful for Charlene?



## After Reading

### Initial Thoughts?

*Needle* deals with some powerful and emotional events.

Take a moment to think about how you feel about this, before thinking about some of these questions.

- What do you like about the book?
- What do you dislike about the book?
- Which moments most stick in your memory?
- Do you think *Needle* does a good job of presenting difficult emotions (like grief and anger)?
- Who do you think should read this book?

**Take up to 20 minutes for this activity.**

## Exploring the book further

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

### **A character who is dealing with a lot of loss and anger**

- Think about the questions below and either make some notes for yourself or discuss with others:
  - How do different characters in the novel respond to Charlene when she gets into trouble?
  - Who seems to help Charlene, and who makes things worse?
  - Why do you think Patrice Lawrence chose to write from Charlene's point of view?
  - How has Charlene changed by the end of the novel?

**Take up to 10 minutes for this activity.**

### **An interview with Patrice Lawrence**

In an interview with Patrice Lawrence for Write On Magazine, Issue 13, she shared that, for the first four years of her life, she was privately fostered by a white family in Brighton. She said:

*I went back to my mum when I was four and the way we bonded was through stories. Having said that, all the books I read growing up were by white authors, usually dead white authors writing through Colonial times. What I observed up until my 30s was that people like me don't write books and aren't in books unless they're a hideous stereotype. You know that internalisation that we aren't in books? I'd absorbed this to such a degree that I always wrote white characters!*

*I'm passionate about pushing through stereotypes and believe we can do that as writers.... I'm angry about social injustice and I'm also angry about the lack of money and support for children in care, but we can use our words to try and talk about these broken systems... Black girls are often not seen as children, but as adults. *Needle* looks at this."*

**<https://pentoprint.org/write-on-interviews-author-patrice-lawrence/>**

- Discuss how Patrice Lawrence's passionate beliefs, anger and desire to change things have affected the way she wrote *Needle*.
- If you were interviewing Lawrence, what would you want to ask her? Think of two or three questions. If possible, ask a partner your questions and let them answer in role as the writer.

**Take up to 20 minutes for this activity.**

***Why knitting?***

Discuss what you think knitting symbolises in the book. What does it mean to Charlene? You could think about the following incidents:

- Charlene is trying to make something for Kandi.
- Annie helps Charlene to put her knitting right when she drops some stitches because she is stressed. Charlene says 'I don't let many people touch my knitting. I learned that the hard way. But Annie knows what she's doing.'
- Blake demands that Charlene knits something for his girlfriend.
- Blake pulls apart Kandi's blanket.
- When she doesn't have her needles and wool, Charlene tries imaginary knitting to keep calm.
- Annie buys Charlene some yarn to make something new.
- Charlene starts on a new project with the wool Annie gives her. It is 'like a blue sky'.

***Take up to 10 minutes for 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://yotocarnegies.co.uk/?post\\_type=books&p=12662](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](https://yotocarnegies.co.uk/?post_type=books&p=12668)

**Take up to an hour for this activity.**

A. *Needle* is one of the best books I have ever read! The story was short but felt full of drama and action - I can't tell you details as I don't want to spoil it.

I really enjoy realistic books and this was definitely realistic - it felt it could be real. The story is about a teenage girl living with a foster mum and all she wants is to see Kandi her younger sister, but as things go on it seems like that could never ever happen. I could really understand Charlene's feelings about missing her sister as I really really love my little sister and I don't know what I would do without her, so I really empathized with Charlene.

It was a really sad book and the whole situation feels so unfair. I don't think kids get a strong enough voice in situations like this, none of the bad stuff would have happened if the adults had just seen it from Charlene's point of view. People are too quick to judge.

I feel like there needs to be a part 2 as I just want to see what happens to Charlene and if things work out.

**12 year old reviewer on <https://toppsta.com/>**

B. Patrice Lawrence's new book for Barrington Stoke is heartrending and thought-provoking, a taut first-person narrative that many will find themselves reading in one sitting. 15-year-old Charlene is struggling to stay in control of her life. She's been in care since her mother died two years ago and desperately misses her little sister, who is living with her own father. Knitting is Charlene's therapy, the click, click, click of the needles helping her find calm, but the pressures she faces at school and outside are overwhelming. An act of cruelty against her leads Charlene to rage and violence. As the security she has known unravels, readers will understand her despair and frustration, particularly at the constant demands on her to be sorry. Written to be accessible to all readers, *Needle* lets us see through someone else's eyes, highlighting the restrictive effects of society's expectations of individuals. Vivid, powerful and unforgettable.

**<https://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk>**

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<https://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk>

C. Told in a first person narrative Charlene's voice has a powerful intensity coupled with a heartbreaking neediness hidden beneath the surface which is utterly compelling. *Needle* is a book that I opened standing in the kitchen, wandered to a chair to read further and did not look up until I had finished. The writing makes you care and want things to be better for Charlene. There were times when I felt frustration at some of the choices she made, however when you look at her back story her choices are understandable. She has lost the security she craved and her life feels out of control. The characterisation is excellent, both of the young people involved and the adults making the decisions on their behalf.

This would be an excellent book to use from Year 8 upward to provoke conversations and thoughtful discussion about our criminal justice system, social care and society's expectations and attitudes.

<https://alibrarylady.blog>

D. The introduction and how the story started was really interesting and got you hooked straight away. However also right off the bat the writing and incorrect grammar really bothered me, I know this will have been an intentional choice to write like that however I found it off putting and felt like it kept pushing me out of the story because it was so noticeable.

By the halfway point the writing style wasn't as jarring and I was involved in the story and what was going on. It was really interesting being in Charlene's head and knowing what she was thinking not just what was happening on the outside.

The second half of the book was great and flowed so well, I loved where the story took us and how everything ended up. The ending was great, not everything was concluded but it was hopeful and realistic at the same time.

I will say at the start it didn't seem very believable to me that she was 15. As the book moved on it read more as immaturity rather than being the incorrect age, I'm just unsure if a character who had gone through everything Charlene had would be as immature.

**Heather on Goodreads.com**

## Writing Activities

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

***You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.***

Flick back through the book to find some of the sections written in italics. Use these as the basis for writing a poem.

Write a letter to the author, Patrice Lawrence, explaining how her book affected you and why you are glad she wrote it.

Write a short story with the title 'Sorry Not Sorry'.

Write a short speech to give in assembly about something you feel passionately about related to the book. Some ideas to get you started:

- forced apologies
- the care system
- racism
- stepfamilies
- how adults should respond when teenagers act out.