

CILIP Carnegie Shortlist 2021

Shadowing Resources



The CILIP Carnegie
& Kate Greenaway
Children's Book
Awards



Title: **The Girl Who Speaks Bear**

Author: **Sophie Anderson**

Publisher: Usborne

Age: 8+



Before you begin

- You might find it helpful to read through the book and make notes using the CILIP Carnegie Medal criteria to help prompt thinking and ideas
- Keep notes of key themes, character personality and motivations

Getting Started

- Use the blurbs, first lines and covers and encourage group members to match them up, this can be a good way to provide a sense of the different books and their subjects.
- Encourage the group to write key words and ideas they associate with the book to create a word map that helps to describe each title. You might like to make the words bigger or smaller depending on the number of times each is mentioned so as to create a tag cloud
- Encourage group members to list the shortlisted books by those they are most keen and interested to read and those they are least interested in. What are their reasons for these? If you keep a record of these, it can be an interesting way to see which books have challenged expectations! You might like to create the lists by piling the books from least favourite (on the bottom) to favourite on top.
- If working virtually, you could create a PowerPoint presentation with a few words to describe the book by the side of the cover to help introduce them
- Encourage group members to use their senses to describe the shortlist – if the book was a food what would it be and how would it taste? What are the reasons for their choices?

Activities

Here are some activity ideas you might like to use with all of the CILIP Carnegie shortlisted books.

- Creating book haikus can be a way to help encapsulate the spirit of a book and different group members' feelings and perspectives on them.
- Encourage group members to think about who they would cast in a film or television version of the book, who would they pick and what would be the reasons behind their choices?

- Once the book has been read encourage group members to think about the cover, how well does it capture the feel of the book, encourage them to create a reimagined cover.
- If group members were to create a playlist for the book, what music would they use? Would particular characters and scenes have songs or pieces of music as their themes?
- Create a postcard with a scene from the book and a message from one of the characters to the reader, what kind of language would they use and what would their message say?
- You could run a **Guess Who's Coming to Dinner** introduction to the book. Have different props which relate in some way to the book. Use props for each book to describe certain characters. This idea is one which could be used physically or virtually.
- Use mood boards or mood clouds to show or describe emotions felt when reading one of the books on the shortlist.
- **Hot Seating** encourage group members to work with a partner and fire questions at each other about specific characters in the book: what do they look like, how do they speak, do you as the reader like the character, how do they respond with other characters in the book?
- Encourage group members to fill in a crib sheet detailing their hobbies, likes, dislikes, reading tastes, television taste and favourite film. Choose one of the shortlisted books based on their answers.

We have devised a number of activity ideas to tie with **The Girl Who Speaks Bear** and to encourage further exploration and thinking around the book.

- A lot of the stories in the book would have been told orally, can you retell any of the tales orally, think about where the drama, suspense and intrigue might lie to help keep your audience engaged
- Why not make a story 'quilt' group members could create a quilt square depicting one of the tales, they could use a square of paper or fabric. Include the name of the tale, a border and a representative image or words.
- Create a guide on how to look after an elk, weasel or owl
- Create playdough or salt dough models of the character
- Encourage group members to create a personal crest, what images and design will they use and why?

The Girl Who Speaks Bear, by Sophie Anderson

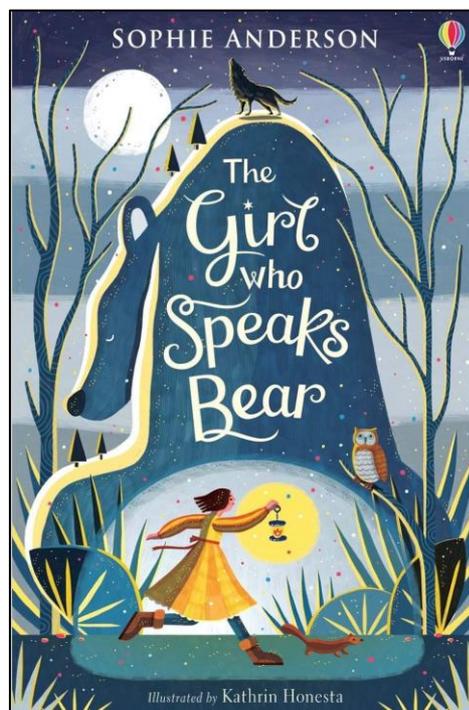
Before Reading

Making predictions

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, complete the three prediction tasks, below.
- 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.

The front cover

- Examine the book's front cover.
 - What do you think the book will be about?
 - What is the likely audience for the book?
 - Does it remind you of any other books? Does it make you want to pick the book up and start to read?



Looking inside the book

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, flick through the pages of the book.
- What are your thoughts about the illustrations? What about the borders around some of the sections?
- Do the chapter titles tell you anything about what kind of story this will be and what it will be about?

A taster

- Read the extracts from the novel, below.
- Add to your ideas, questions and predictions about the novel, including what genre of story you might expect.

Extract 1

Once upon a time the Bear Tsarina, the strongest and gentlest creature in The Snow Forest, was asked to care for a newborn cub.

The Bear Tsarina's heart swelled with love and she promised to raise the cub as her own.

Extract 2

I go to my room and change into the skirt and my favourite pair of reindeer-skin boots. Anatoly made them from the softest, stretchiest leather, so they never pinch or rub. He always gives me a few pairs when he visits, some that fit and bigger ones to grow into. I make sure my arrowhead necklace is tucked safely inside my jumper. And before going back downstairs, I slide the wolf claw Anatoly gave me out from beneath my pillow and put it in my pocket.

Extract 3

The house approaches the end of the thick sheet of ice in the bay and skids to slow down. Its movements are large and eager, all its windows wide open. I think it would be whooping with delight if it could.

The frozen ship rises above us, glittering and brilliant, and with a massive leap the house jumps onto its deck.

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.

- Keep a journal while reading, pausing to write down your reflections at key points. Where possible, have a discussion with other readers before putting your thoughts down on paper.
- You might like to pause when:
 - A new character is introduced
 - The book moves to a different setting
 - There is a twist in the plot
 - Something unexpected happens
 - You have questions about what is going on.

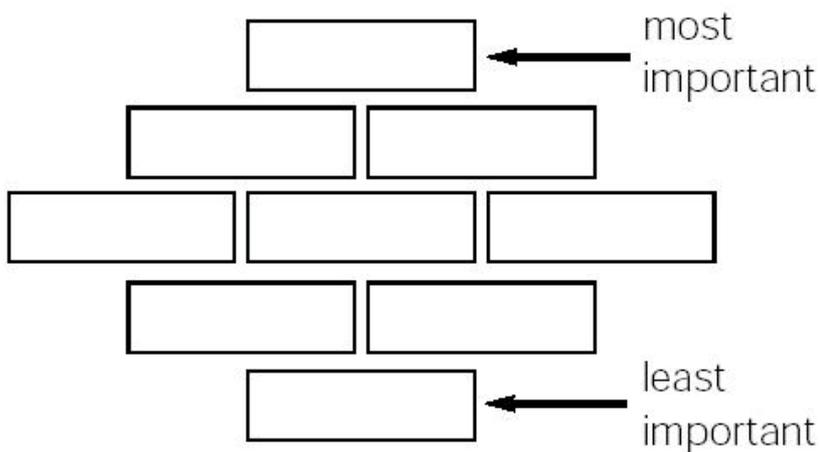
After Reading

What is the novel about?

- Below are nine suggestions for what *The Girl Who Speaks Bear* is about.
- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, rearrange them into a 'Diamond 9' formation, as shown below.
- If possible, compare your ideas with other readers and discuss any differences.

<i>The Girl Who Speaks Bear</i> is about ...		
discovering who you really are	the complicated nature of family life	the importance of friendship
how stories and real life are often interlinked	learning to cope with how your body changes when you grow up	the benefits of everyone working together for a common goal
the link between the imagination and real life	fighting your demons	growing up

Diamond 9 pattern



Yanka in the middle

Yanka is the central focus of the narrative.

- To help you remember and think about everything Yanka was involved with, and to prepare you for more substantial writing about her character, you are going to produce a diagram of her relationships in the novel.
 - Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, draw Yanka in the middle of a large sheet of paper (will you draw her as a bear or a girl?). Label the picture with words and phrases that describe her.
 - Write the names of key characters in the novel, or draw them, around the edge of the sheet: Sasha, Mamochka, Anatoly, Elena, Valentyna, the Yaga House, Ivan, Yuri, Mousetrap, Blakiston the Bear Tsarina, Liliya, Oksana, Polina, Smey
 - Draw arrows between Yanka and the other characters and write along the arrow the nature of their relationship, including key moments described in the novel.
 - Draw arrows between other characters where links exist. For example, between Mamochka and Anatoly. Write along the arrow the nature of their relationship, including key moments described in the novel.
 - If possible, compare your ideas with other readers.

Lessons for Yanka

- Drawing on the previous activity, write a journal entry in the voice of Yanka, reflecting on what she learned from her experiences. Before you write, identify four or five areas of focus and brainstorm ideas around each. For example:
 - Her feelings about her family
 - Her feelings about her friends
 - Her feelings about being part bear.

Discussion questions

Use one or more of these questions to consider some of the ideas arising from the book. If possible, share your ideas with other readers.

- Why do you think the writer chose to have Yanka turn into a bear? How well do you think she did this? What does it add to the story?
- What are your thoughts about the fairy stories within the main story, that start 'Once upon a time'? How do you think these link with the main story? How well is this done?
- What are your thoughts about the book's setting? Which of the places described is your favourite? Is the setting totally fantastical or does it remind you of a real-world location?
- Which of the different animal characters is your favourite? What are your thoughts about talking animals in stories?
- What are your thoughts about the Yaga house? What does it add the story as a whole?
- Towards the start of the novel, Yanka mentions the possibility of flying in a plane to a hospital. This seems very out of step with the fantastical elements in the rest of the novel. Why do you think the writer chose to add in this detail? Do you think she should have put it in or left it out?
- Are there any big messages in this book? For example, about the nature of friendship, or about growing up? If so, what are they, and how well does the book deal with them?
- Do you think Yanka made the right decision at the end by remaining part-bear. What do you think the writer might be suggesting by having her come to this decision?

Defending the novel

Imagine that your school has decided to ban *The Girl Who Speaks Bear* from its school library because the headteacher thinks it is too far-fetched. ('Kids need books about the real world, not this fantastical nonsense,' were their exact words.)

- Write a letter to the headteacher challenging their decision, explaining to them why this is a book that should be made available to your school's students.

Editing the book

Imagine that the editor of the book has suggested rewriting the ending of the book so that Yanka decides to live only as a human and to lose the bear part of her identity.

- In role as the writer, Sophie Anderson, write an email to your editor, explaining why your original version has Yanka deciding to stay part bear and whether or not you agree that this should be changed.

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.

This was a wonderful modern fairy tale about finding the places that you belong, in a world/society that doesn't seem to have a place for you. I found Yanka's story very heartwarming and I really loved the cast of characters that we got to meet along the way, especially Mousetrap and Yuri. I think there was a slight slowing of the pace around the half way mark but it definitely picked up again in the third act.

Vee, www.goodreads.com

Couldn't get into this story, I kept picking up the book and putting it down after a few pages. I didn't especially like the main protagonist and the little tales scattered throughout the book kept putting me out the main story-line. The part that I enjoyed the most was how the book was connected to the previous novel [*The House with Chicken Legs*] and we got another glimpse into the Yaga world.

I think it's a case of "It's me, not the book", the story just didn't resonate with me at all but I can see how other people will really enjoy it.

Elena, www.goodreads.com

A gorgeous retelling of many folkloric tales, carefully woven together by the silvery thread of Yanka's own journey. It sparkles with forest magic and the power of fairytales, but has its heart very much in the real world.

Cerrie Burnell, author of *The Girl with the Shark's Teeth*

Michelle Harrison described this book as 'bewitching'; I couldn't agree more. From the outset, the heady, poetic descriptions of the forest setting (sights, sounds and smells) created a backdrop to a narrative rich in ancient tales and folklore. Just like the wonderful 'The House with Chicken Legs', this is a hopeful and uplifting story, strangely magical and full of beauty!

Fooskul, www.amazon.co.uk

This delightful journey through Russian folklore features the story of Yanka and her adventures in the Snow Forest. The timeless fairy tales featured within the main story all weave into Yanka's quest to find where she belongs. I see her acceptance of herself as an allegory of our own constantly changing bodies: how we must adapt and appreciate the special gifts these transformations give us. I also love the idea of always hanging on to a thread of our own ancient and wild nature.

I couldn't resist the tiny (but brave) weasel and his elaborate war dances. I also loved the friendly puppy-dog personality of the house with chicken legs in this story.

Colette, www.amazon.co.uk

Cards for Literary Analysis

These cards have been designed for use with any short story or novel. You can select a particular card to work with or rely on your teacher to give you a particular area of focus. You could then work through the bullet points on your card or select a few that seem most interesting or relevant for a particular text.

Setting

- In which different settings does this story/novel takes place? What part does each setting play? Which setting is most significant and why?
- How important is setting to the story/novel as a whole? Does the setting have a particular impact on the story/novel, or could it be set almost anywhere?
- What difference would it make if this story/novel was set somewhere else? E.g. another country, a rural rather than urban setting, in space!
- How effective do you think the writer has been in creating a sense of place? Are there any particular examples of setting you think are particularly well written? If so, why?
- Is there anything particularly interesting or special about the way setting is used and presented? In what ways is it similar or different to stories/ novels that explore similar themes and ideas, or that are written in the same genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about setting. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Characters

- Who is your favourite character, and why?
- Who do you think is the most important character, and why?
- Who are the other significant characters? What different roles do they have?
- What is special or unusual about the way one or more of the characters is presented?
- Which character would you most like to be friends with, and why? Which character might significant adults want you to be friends with, and why?
- Are characters paired or grouped in any particular ways? E.g. friends, rivals, etc. What ideas are raised by these pairs or groupings?
- Are the characters typical of ones found in this kind of story/novel? Are they distinctive and individual, or stereotypes? Explain your answer.
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about characters. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Form and structure

- What do you think is interesting about the way this story/novel begins?
- What were the key moments in this story/novel? How did they shape the story/novel as a whole?
- If you had to describe the path of this story/novel, what would it be? E.g. journey from childhood to adulthood, from grief to happiness etc.
- What did you notice about the end of this story/novel? Was it what you were expecting? Did it tie up loose ends, or leave some things unresolved?
- Does this story/novel belong to a particular genre? If so, how does it fit in with other stories that you know in the same genre?
- Does the story/novel use just one form or does it include more than one E.g. letters, diary entries, poems, newspaper reports
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about form and structure. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Themes and ideas

- What, to you, are the five most important themes and ideas in this story/novel? If you had to narrow your list down to one theme or idea, what would it be and why? In what ways is this theme presented? E.g. if the theme is love, what exactly does the story/novel have to say about love?
- Does this story/novel deal with big issues that affect the whole world, or small ones that affect individual lives? Give reasons for your answer.
- Does this story/novel contain any themes or ideas that have made you look at the world in new ways? If so, what are they, and how have they changed your views?
- Does this story/novel contain any themes and ideas that explore how people should act and behave? If so, what are they and do you agree with how they are presented?
- Are the themes and ideas presented in ways similar or different to other stories you have read, including stories of the same type, or in the same genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about themes and ideas. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Language

- Identify one or two of your favourite passages in the story/novel where language is used particularly well? Explain how it is used.
- How would you describe the language used in this story/novel overall? E.g. poetic, plain, chatty etc.
- Would you say the language in this story/novel is original or creative in any particular way? If so, how?
- Are there any patterns in the language used? If so, what are they, and what is their effect? Are there any other patterns, such as of imagery and symbolism?
- How is dialogue used in the story/novel? Do characters, for example, speak in particularly distinctive ways?
- Is the language similar to how it is used in similar kinds of stories/novels? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about language. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Narrative

- How does the writer try to capture and keep the reader's attention? How successful are they in doing this?
- Is the narrative told in order from beginning to end (a linear narrative), or does it move backwards and forwards in time? What is the effect of the order in which events are told?
- Can you think of any other ways the story/novel could be told? For example, by a different character, or in a different order? How would this affect your experience of reading?
- Would you say that this story/novel is told in a particular original or creative way? If so, how?
- Is this story/novel told in a way that is typical for its genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about narrative. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Point of view and voice

- Through whose eyes do we see the events of the story/novel? Do readers get just one point of view or several?
- What do you find interesting about the point or points of view presented?
- If the story/novel is told from different points of view, how does the writer do this?
- What would the story/novel be like if told from someone else's point of view? Whose point of view would you choose, and why?
- How would you describe the tone of voice used to tell the narrative? Does the narrative draw attention to itself by using a particular tone, or is the tone pushed to the background? What is the effect of the choice made by the writer?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about point of view and voice. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Audience and overall personal response

- Who do you think this story/novel was written for, and why? Are there any other groups of people who you think should read it?
- What was your experience of reading this story/novel?
- What would you recommend about this story/novel to other people?
- Which parts of this story/novel did you most enjoy? Were there any parts that you didn't enjoy?
- Do you think this story/novel could be improved in some way? If so, how?
- What other stories (or films, TV, plays etc.) does this story/novel remind you of? In what ways?
- Who do you think should read this book and why?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about personal response and audience. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?

