

Shadowing the Carnegie Medal



The CILIP Carnegie
& Kate Greenaway
Children's Book
Awards

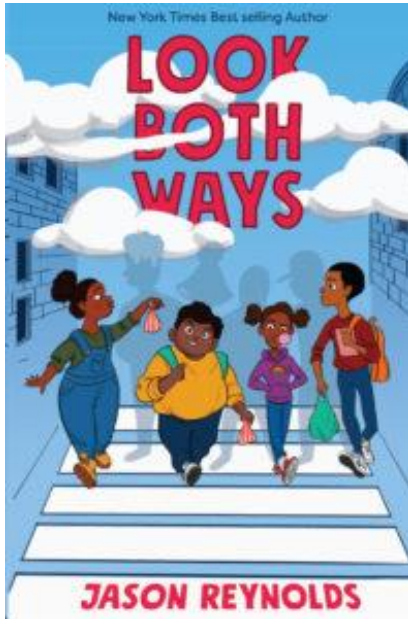
The Carnegie Medal is the most prestigious literary award for a book published for young people in the UK during the previous year. The award is judged by librarians. Running in parallel is the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme whereby groups of young people in schools across the country read and discuss the shortlisted titles and vote for their own winner.

The CSG shadowing group this year consisted of 21 keen readers from Year Seven. Being part of the group requires considerable commitment. The students had to read 8 books in as many weeks, and discuss them at our weekly meetings.

The most striking thing about this year's selection of books was that with the exception of **Look Both Ways**, all the titles had leading characters who were strong, independent women who were able to overcome whatever challenges life presented them.

All the books are listed below along with reviews from the students who took part in the scheme. They would make excellent summer holiday reading. We have several copies of each book available for loan in the school library.

Susan Green, Librarian



Look Both Ways by Jason Reynolds

This is a collection of linked short stories about children from an inner city American school and what goes on as they make their way home at the end of the day. This book was the eventual overall winner of the Carnegie Medal. The reading group members were very disappointed as it was the title they least enjoyed. As mentioned above this was the only title that did not have a strong feminist theme. The book is aimed at slightly younger readers. Some students also mentioned their dislike of short stories.

*I had an absolute blast reading **Look Both Ways**, not only because of its witty humour but also the entertaining sense of playfulness and adventure. It is an absolute joy to read as you follow a range of different characters on their way home from school embarking on all the adventures that come their way. I would definitely recommend this book to you if you were looking for an easy yet enjoyable read!*

Purdey



The Girl Who Speaks Bear by Sophie Anderson

This fantasy adventure story is based on Russian folklore. It is accessible to readers as young as 8 but has enough depth to be equally enjoyed by KS3 readers. Readers who enjoy this book will also enjoy **The house with chicken legs** by the same author which is an imaginative retelling of the Baba Yaga stories.

***The Girl who Speaks Bear** is a gorgeous novel with a great story and a wonderful main character. Yanka is an awfully curious girl who finds herself trapped in the small village which is her home. She goes on a journey to find out who she really is. This book is a great novel and Yanka the girlbear is very brave. This book is wonderful in every way and I love the whole plot.*

Shyanne

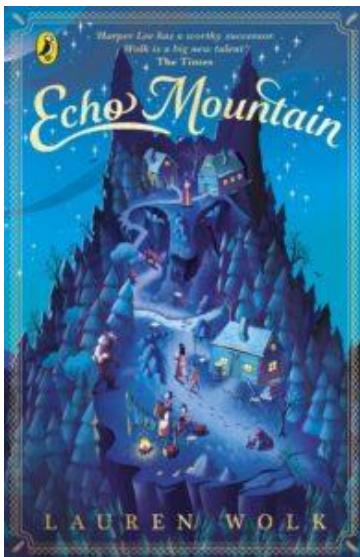
I loved this book. The plot was really interesting and it pulled me in more and more as I kept reading. I loved how Anatoly's stories helped to guide Yanka to learn about her past and also how she could talk to her cat. I loved the little details that helped shape Yanka's

story. Overall, I think it is a great book and I would recommend it to anyone who wants to read an adventure story.

Halima

This is my favourite book in this challenge so far. Great adventure and well thought out plot. I would recommend this to all ages if you are looking for a book with twists and turns and intriguing adventures.

Sanae



Echo Mountain by Lauren Wolk

This is an historical adventure about a family from Maine, USA who lost everything during the Great Depression. They move to a remote mountain where they build a shack and survive by subsistence living.

*I read **Echo Mountain** expecting a magical tale centred around a young girl, a classic fairy tale but set in the great depression. It was actually nothing of the kind. This book was very beautifully written and had hundreds of amazing quotes. Ellie goes through so much and has unimaginable stress to bear but somehow I felt like I was with her throughout the book. I would*

rate this book a 7.5/10 and recommend it to 10+ or maybe even a bit younger.

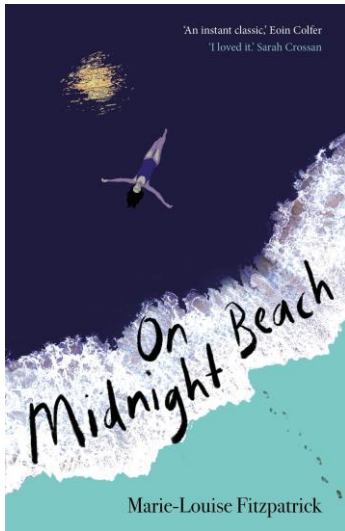
Quinn

I enjoyed this book very much. I especially enjoyed the relationship between Ellie and her older sister Esther. My favourite character was the “hag”, because she is a knowledgeable and kind person, but she is also quite complicated and distressed. Some downsides of the story was that I think the ending lasted a bit too long. I understand that there were still some plot points to be wrapped up. I also think the character of the father was a bit underdeveloped, although as he was unconscious for most of the story, and there wasn't much development to be done in that respect! All in all, I very much enjoyed this story, and would recommend it to a friend

Leia

*I think that **Echo Mountain** gave an interesting view of the Great Depression. It is a really gripping book and made you want to keep on reading. I also think that although it was in first person, it gave really good descriptions of all the different characters and made you want to know more.*

Aisha



On Midnight Beach by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick

A coming of age story set in Donegal, Ireland during the famous hot summer of 1976. It involves “hanging out” with friends, first love, a dolphin, an Irish legend and rival teenage gangs.

On Midnight Beach is a lovely book at first, a town by the sea with a Dolphin called Rinn. It's beautiful, magical and terrifying all at once! Towards the middle, the story begins to build up, action packed and gripping. I think it could be less romantic and more about Rinn. I also think it could have a happier ending, especially as it had such an exciting start.

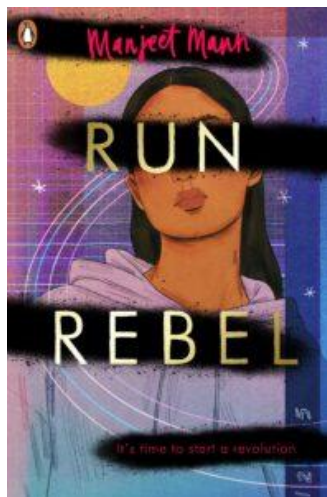
Cosima

*I think that **On Midnight Beach** was very gripping and hard to put down. I enjoyed Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick's writing style and how she switched between each character so we could see the arguments from two very different perspectives. I also liked how the happy beginning, meeting the dolphin Rinn and Dog, contrasted with the sad ending. I would recommend this book to readers aged 11+ because although the book is very good, I think some scenes are inappropriate for younger readers. Overall, I enjoyed the plot and thought the book was amazing.*

Sidra

I loved this book so much. I feel that I really connected with the book because of the setup in Ireland. I also loved the way that it alternated between two different characters in different chapters. Apart from the sad ending, I feel that this book was a very good read and would definitely recommend it to other readers.

Eireann



Run, Rebel by Manjeet Mann

Three of the titles on this year's shortlist were written in blank verse, a format currently much in vogue in teenage literature. **Run, Rebel** is about Amber, a girl of Indian heritage and promising athlete who lives in fear of her domineering and abusive father. This book was the overall favourite of the group. It also was voted the best book by students from across the country, winning the parallel award.

Run, Rebel is an immensely gripping book based around a 16-year-old girl called Amber Rai. Her name is supposed to mean strength and courage, but she is trapped by her father's strict rules and his expectations of her as a young Asian woman. Her mother is abused by her cruel father and her sister is somewhere else, married to a man she had no choice in marrying, with a child she didn't plan to have. The plot line is easy to follow, compelling, and you always want to read further. This book is really good considering it is Manjeet Mann's first book. I highly recommend it.

Kitty

As soon as I read the first page, I couldn't stop turning the pages. The author has described the emotions and personalities in detail, and that's just one of the reasons that make this book so great. I enjoyed reading in blank verse, but it did get a little confusing sometimes. When the words were scattered over the page, I didn't know where to start and go next! Run, Rebel is one of the most inspiring books ever. It has taught me that everyone can achieve what they want, if they work hard for it. There will always be a way out, even in the toughest of situations.

Melissa

Run Rebel is a whirlwind of emotions, it has an intriguing, gripping plot and its writing style (in verse) adds to the story immensely. The main character is a young teen, trapped in an abusive household. In the book, we follow Amber (the main character) and her desperate struggle for freedom. This unfortunately happens to too many young girls, so this book not only provides a gripping read, but spreads awareness and hope. The plot was incredibly intense. We really sympathise with the characters and get to know them, which I think is incredibly important for a novel like this.

Annabella

I think that this book is a great view on a girl's life that you perhaps would not have known about. It is also really interesting to see a different style of writing than you would usually see in a book like this, I think personally it helps the idea of us seeing into her mind, as you wouldn't say full paragraphs in your head. I think to understand and get connected to the characters in this book you would have to be aged 11+ as some bits might be a bit overwhelming for younger readers. Overall this book is truly amazing and I would recommend it to anyone who can get their hands on it.

Eden

One student responded by writing her own poem

Run Rebel Poem (written from Amber@s point of view)

*I sit here and listen to all the shouted words
Being shouted over my head
The words in my brain flying all around like birds
I couldn't anymore take this threat*

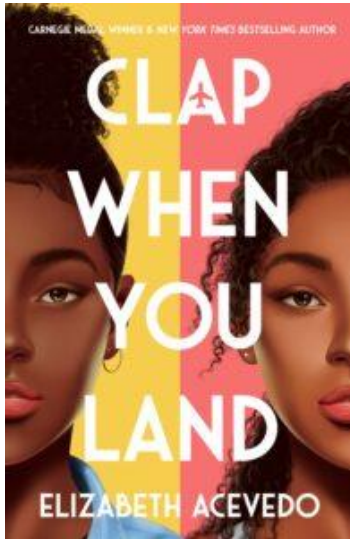
*I decide to get up and fight
Against all words and people
Stood with my mum with all my might
When I thought I was needful*

*I would be free and so would my mum
Just like we had dreamt
She would not be a hopeless victim
He left a big mark, a big dent, this is what he meant*

*I could do whatever I wanted with no fear of spies
I felt like the me I was always supposed to be
There were no more shouts and cries
It never felt better to shout 'This is ME'*

We RAN because we were REBELS

Donya



Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo

Another novel written in blank verse. Camino lives in a poor neighbourhood in The Dominican Republic. Yahaira is a chess prodigy living in New York. It is not until their father is killed in a plane crash, that the girls find out about one another.

Clap When You Land is about the lives of two step sisters who didn't know each other until late in the novel - one of them lives in the Dominican Republic whereas the other one lives in New York. The contrast of their rich and poor lives and their reactions to their father's death are really interesting. I liked

this book until the two sisters met - when it became difficult to understand who was talking. I also thought that the ending was too simple; a fairy tale, happily-ever-after type of ending. I would have preferred something more complicated. I think that a death, a sad, emotional ending or a cliff hanger would have been better.

Tia

This is not a book that I would choose to read. I found it depressing. Though there are many twists and turns, it is quite predictable. The pace of this book is inconsistent, as at the beginning of the book it is fast but quickly loses that and slows down to the point where you have to read 80 or so pages for anything interesting to happen. The downside of having Spanish intertwined with English is that a large number of readers will be deterred and stop reading or continue and not fully understand what is happening. Overall, I would not recommend this book unless you enjoy slow, sad reads.

Sukie

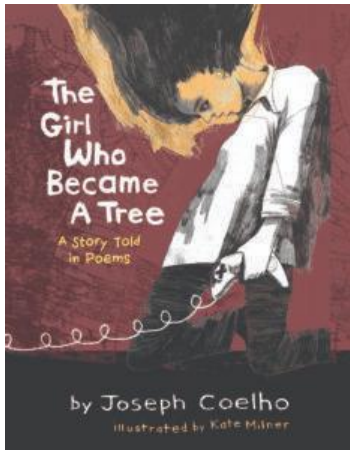
***Clap When You Land** was an interesting book that included different cultures and languages. I enjoyed it because although these sisters had never met before, they had a powerful connection and though they lived far apart, they eventually joined together and were a family. I liked the occasional lines of Spanish. The poetic layout was interesting, but sometimes it was a bit confusing. The way it switched between the characters' point of view was slightly confusing too. Overall, I really enjoyed this book and recommend it.*

Amy

I thought this book had a very interesting plot. However, it is quite slow paced. It includes different cultures and languages. The two main characters are both quite

different so it creates nice contrast. The most interesting parts of the book happened at the end and I would've liked it to be a bit more spread out as the beginning was a bit boring. I would recommend this book to others as the use of culture and the good plot makes it nice to read

Nilima

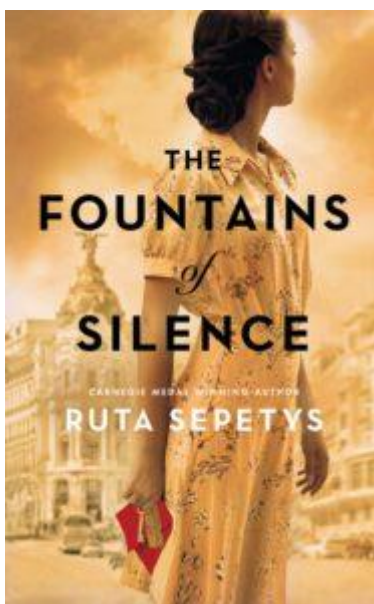


The Girl Who Became a Tree by Joseph Coelho

This proved to be a “marmite” book. Some students loved it, some hated it. This is yet another book written in blank verse but here, the writer has paid more attention to poetic form. The story is about a girl coming to terms with a bereavement and is part reality, part fantasy. It is based on the Greek myth about Daphne being transformed into a tree.

This book is written in a unique style that challenges the traditional way of writing stories. I personally like the way it references the myth of Daphne and adds a very interesting twist to the story. The characters are quite realistic, especially the way Daphne shuts herself away from the world in the library at the beginning. The style of the artwork is simplistic, but helps the reader visualise without anything too fancy.

Selina



The Fountains of Silence by Ruta Sepetys

This long, impeccably researched and absorbing historical romance is equally suitable for teenagers and adults. It is set in Spain during Franco’s dictatorship, a period in history that is often forgotten. Ruta Sepetys is an acclaimed author of historical fiction for teenagers. Also, in the library and well worth reading are 2 books set during World War Two.

Between Shades of Grey is about the genocide of people from the Baltic States and **Salt to the Sea** is about refugees fleeing from East Prussia in 1945.

I recently read this book and I really enjoyed it. The author was able to give you information about the historical background of the story without making it boring. I did think that it started to come together more toward the end, so you

have to keep on reading, since it is definitely worth it. The book demonstrated that you must follow your passions no matter what, even if others don't believe in you, which I found very inspiring. I loved how at the end the pieces of the puzzle began to come together which was very satisfactory and something which most writers seem to have had troubles doing. I would definitely recommend this to anyone who is trying to expand their knowledge of the history of Spain or to almost any person who is willing to keep reading until the end!

Loveday