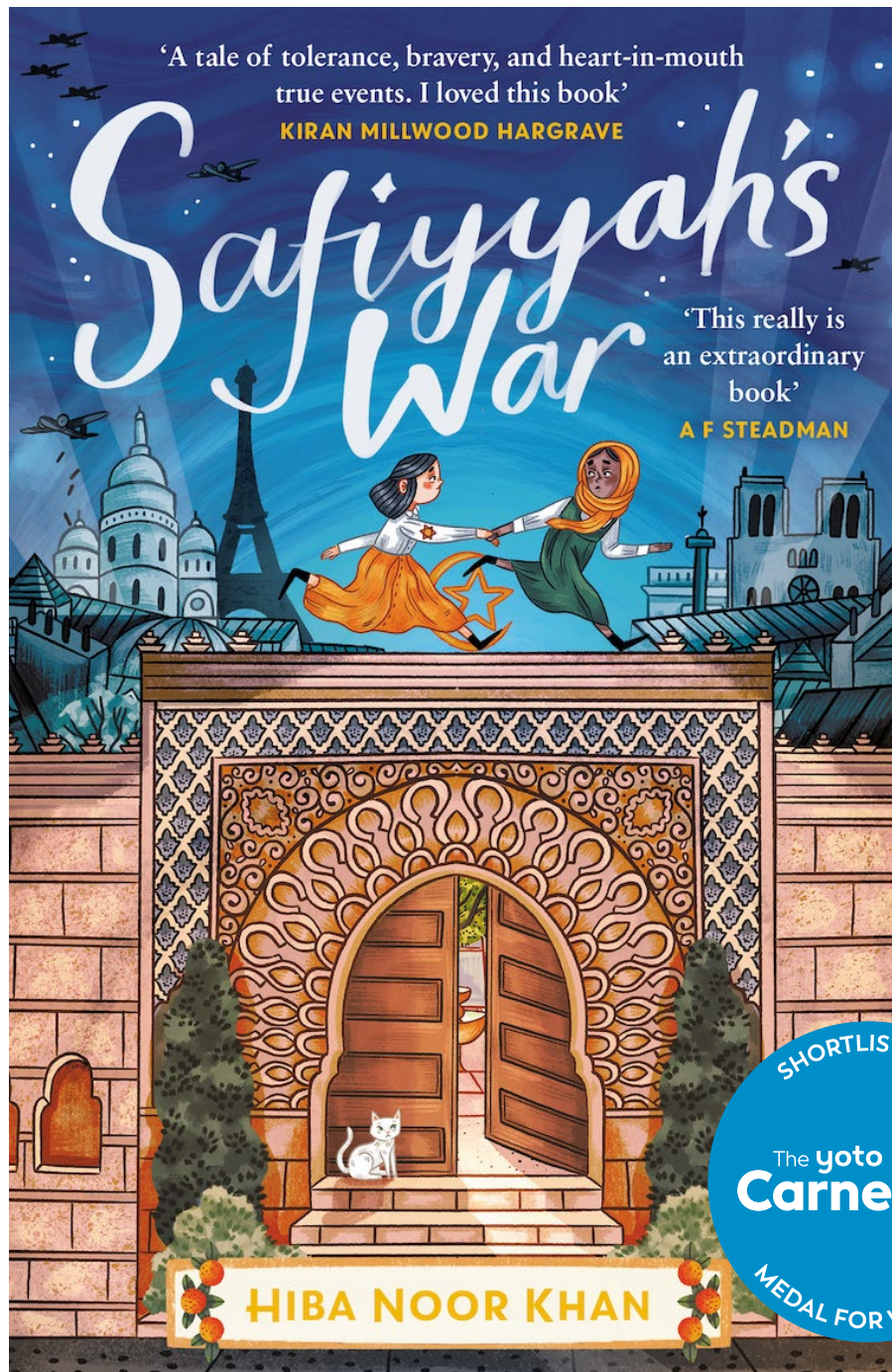
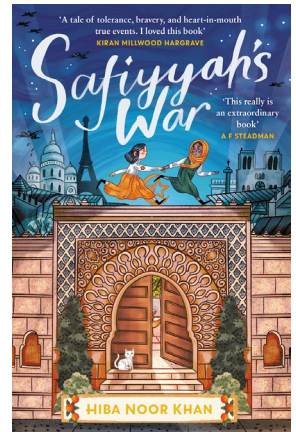


The yoto Carnegies



The Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2024 Shadowing Resources

Activities for Safiyah's War by Hiba Noor Khan



Content warning

Contains references to antisemitism, war, death.

General Activities for all books

- Lego Fun: Create a scene from one of the books using Lego or other building materials/toys.
- Shadowing Scrapbook: Document your journey through the 2024 Shadowing period. This can be used to record books and activities discussed in each session, as well as offer a creative space for reviews, reflection and anything else you might like to add.
- Take the title or first line from each of the shortlisted books and create a poem or story by combining them with words and phrases of your own.
- Carnegie Washing Line: Cut out shapes of clothes (e.g. socks, tops, trousers etc) using cardboard and write quotes from the Medal for Writing books and pictures from Medal for Illustration and hang on a washing line with pegs to display. Group members could do this as an activity in the session if time allows or asked to do at home and then to bring to the next session.
- Think of some questions you would like to ask the shortlisted authors and share them on social media using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies24**
- When Worlds Collide: Select two characters, each from a different shortlisted book. Imagine what they would say to each other, if they met. How would they behave? You could improvise this, or write a script or short story that describes the encounter. E.g, Erik from Crossing the Line meets Growls from Steady for This.
- Carnegie Touch and Taste:
 - Touch: Curate a selection of items inspired by the shortlists, place them into a drawstring bag and have shadowers try to identify each item using touch. As time goes on, and shadowers become more familiar with the shortlisted books, you can expand the game to include guessing the title of the book based on the collection of items in the bag.
 - Taste: Mine the shortlisted titles for references to food and use this to spark discussions about food they like and dislike. You could encourage everyone to bring a snack each week, focusing each session around one of the titles. Alternatively, you could throw a shortlist celebration party and have everyone contribute a dish inspired by one of the shortlisted books. and then offer them to try different foods from the shortlisted books. Make sure you have a conversation about allergies and dietary requirements well in advance!
- The Shadowing Tree: ask shadowing group members to write very short reviews or info about characters on leaf shaped cutouts or sticky notes. The cutouts could be hung on an artificial tree, or a real one, depending on your setting, whilst sticky notes could be arranged on a poster and displayed in the library.
- 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.

- Rewrite the ending of one of the shortlisted books. What have you changed, and why? Does it alter how you feel about the story?
- Have a go at creating spine poetry by using the titles of the shortlisted books as phrases/words. Share your creations online using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies24**
- 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.
- Choose a character from one of the shortlisted books and reinvent them in the art style of your choosing. You could create your character digitally, draw them by hand, paint them or even make a sculpture. You could try creating the same character in a variety of styles - Manga, Pop Art, Disney - using different materials.
- 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.

Book Activities

1. In chapter 16, Safiyah tries to soothe Mr Cassin after a frightening incident by creating origami butterflies. Create a mobile of origami butterflies to display. You can use different coloured paper or white like Safiyah, patterning their wings or even putting Carnegie shortlist titles on them. Share your designs at #YotoCarnegies24. Watch this video and borrow a book on origami from the library for ideas- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZdO2e8K29o>
2. Seeds are important to Safiyah's family. Do you have access to a park or community garden? Perhaps you are able to access a private garden or an urban garden. What do these spaces offer us? How do they impact our wellbeing? Think about planting trees and shrubs to benefit your community. You can find some ideas here:
<https://www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/plant-trees-and-shrubs>
3. Find a map of occupied Paris from the period in which *Safiyah's War* is set in World War 2. Find a map of modern day Paris and compare the two. What has changed and what remains the same?
4. Read the author's historical note at the back of the book. Research the story of the American Library in Paris. Think about the librarians' efforts to help the resistance during the war and occupation.
 - a. How did they help soldiers in the trenches?
 - b. How did they assist Jewish people?
 - c. Why were books so important to people?

What do you think Director Dorothy Reeder meant when she said, "the library stands as a symbol of freedom and understanding, of service to all, a fine piece of democracy."

5. Investigate the history behind Muslim and Jewish traditions. Explore the preparations taken and the food involved during:
 - a. The Muslim celebrations of Eid
 - b. The Jewish Festival of the Passover.
6. Safiyah wants to be an adventurer and is fascinated by maps. If you were an adventurer, and you could travel anywhere in the world, which place would you choose as your ultimate destination? Using an atlas, plan your route and consider the following:
 - a. How long would you be away?
 - b. What supplies would you need to take? e.g compass, map, tent
 - c. Would you travel alone?
 - d. If not, who would you take with you? Why?
7. Safiyah found her daily prayers comforting and they created a sense of peace and tranquillity for her. What activity gives you a sense of peace and tranquillity? Why do you think that is?
8. In chapter 23, we meet Madeleine, an undercover agent, and in the historical notes we are told that she represented Noor Inayat Khan. Using your research skills, find out more about Noor Inayat Khan. Who was she? What was her nationality? What role did she play in the resistance? Why do you think the author included a reference to her?

About these resources

All of these resources are designed to be completed in small discussion groups, ideally your school's Yoto Carnegie Shadowing Group. However, they can easily be done individually. Instead of talking about the tasks, you can write down and keep a record of your ideas.

Before Reading

10-20 minutes

- Based on these extracts, discuss what you think *Safiyyah's War* will be like as a book. You should structure your discussion around the questions below.
 - What other novels do you think it will be like?
 - What do you think will happen?
 - 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?

1.
It is only in the holy places of worship and libraries that you have to whisper, for they are both sacred in their own special ways. Safiyyah spent as many afternoons as she could here in the dusty stillness of the library, poring over atlases, maps and travelogues.

2.
Almost in the 5th arrondissement where she lived, Safiyyah stopped to catch her breath for a minute, leaning against a lamppost. In between the noisy motorcars spluttering and coughing out fumes, Safiyyah noticed a man standing in front of the shops on the other side of the road. He wore a black suit and had absolutely no hair on his head. He was crying silently, and the child holding his hand, not much older than Safiyyah's little sister, looked up at him anxiously.

3.
Safiyyah took a seat on the velvet-topped stool at Baba's desk. She rearranged his collection of paperweights, lining up the trail of camels in front of the Eiffel Tower. She wiped the dust off the surface of his old drum, feeling it vibrate at her touch. She had never once heard him play it, just as she had never heard him sing.

4.
Safiyyah was fast asleep, dreaming that she, Amelie and Hana were being chased by Phillippe and Henri, who were sitting on army tanks with rage in their eyes. She was glad to be brought back to reality by Setti, who had sat down on the side of her bed, and even more glad when Setti handed her a cream envelope, with a twinkle in her eye.

5.
Suddenly, a high-pitched, continuous whistle sounded from the sky, its scream becoming louder and shriller until it stopped altogether.

During Reading

Warning: Don't read the questions before reading each section.

Read up to the page number listed and then answer the questions. You will probably need to spend about 5-10 minutes answering each set of questions.

The page numbers are based on the Andersen Press paperback edition of the book, first published in the UK in 2023.

Read to the end of page 36

- What are your first impressions of Safiyyah? What kind of character is she? What do you think will happen to her during the course of the novel?
- The novel is set against the background of Paris during World War Two. What do you learn about the war in these pages? What do you already know about the war that might help you understand what is going on?
- Lots of characters are introduced in these pages. How many can you recall? What role do you think each of them will play?

Read to the end of page 72

- What different aspects of the war are introduced in the pages you have just read? How are they presented and how did it make you feel reading about them?
- What are the different reactions of members of Safiyyah's family to the war? Why do you think different family members have such different reactions?
- Books seem to play an important role in this novel. On what different occasions are books mentioned in the pages you have just read? What do you think the story is suggesting about the importance of books?
- What do you think will happen next in the story?

Read to the end of page 115

- What are the significant developments in the life of Safiyyah and the life of Paris in the pages you have just read?
- Hana, Safiyyah's classmate, suffers anti-semitic abuse from two boys in the class, Henri and Phillipe. What do you think about to how this abuse is presented?
- Discuss your thoughts about a new character introduced in these pages, Timothée.

Read to the end of page 166

- What is your reaction to reading about what had happened to Monsieur Cassin?
- What risks does Safiyyah take in this section and what is your reaction to them?
- How does Safiyyah's father respond to the risks that she takes? Do you think he is right to respond in this way?
- What do you learn about the war from the letter written by Safiyyah's cousin, Tarek, to his family?
- What have you learned about World War Two up to this point that you have found particularly interesting?
- What does Safiyyah find in her father's locked study? What do you think has been going on in there? What do you think its significance will be for the rest of the novel?

Read to the end of page 232

- What different examples are there in this section about life in Paris becoming increasingly difficult, especially for Jewish people? What do you think about the efforts of Safiyyah and her family to help? Do you think that most people would act in this way?
- What is your reaction to Hana reappearing in the story? What are your predictions about this storyline?

Read to the end of page 315

- How does the writer build up tension in the passage where Safiyyah is lost in the catacombs? How would you have felt and acted in this situation?
- How does the writer present Setti's final days and death? How do you think this fits in with the wider events of the novel?
- When and why did Safiyyah begin to wear a hijab? How does the book present the power of headgear?
- What are your thoughts about the section where Safiyyah leads everyone through the catacombs to the docks? How does the writer build a sense of tension here?
- The section that follows this one is entitled 'Ten Years Later'. What are your predictions about what will have happened in the ten years since the main part of the story ended?

Read to the end of page 317

- What are your thoughts about the 'Ten Years Later' section?

Read to the end of page 323

- Did the 'Historical Note' surprise you in any way? In what way does it add to your thoughts about the novel as a whole?

After Reading

Initial Thoughts

Spend 10-15 minutes discussing 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 do you find the story?
- What are your thoughts about how the book is written?
- Based on reading *Safiyyah's War*, how likely are you to read other novels by Hiba Noor Khan?

What's *Safiyyah's War* about?

- Spend one or two minutes writing down a single sentence that begins: '*Safiyyah's War* 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 collection is about.
- If you are working in a group, spend 5-10 minutes ordering the sentences, from the one you agree with most to the one you agree with least.
- Finally, decide on the single statement that you agree with most. It can be one from the list or your own. Write down a few ideas about how *Safiyyah's War* relates to your chosen statement.

Safiyyah's War is about ...

- Doing the right thing.
- The right of all faiths to freedom.
- The importance of resistance.
- The importance of family.
- The importance of friendship.
- Learning about the dangers that exist in the world.
- Being able to make a difference whatever your age.
- How people are more similar than different.
- The importance of taking risks.

Exploring the novel further

Other characters

The novel is told from the perspective of Safiyyah, who is the main character. There are several other characters who play a significant role in the novel.

- Write two or three sentences in the voices of 3-4 of these characters, expressing their thoughts and feelings about Safiyyah.
 - Baba
 - Setti
 - Yemma
 - Madame Odette
 - Mr Cassin
 - Isabelle
 - Ammo Kader
 - Timothée
 - Hana

Spend 15-20 minutes on this activity.

Paris at war

Safiyyah's War gives readers one girl's perspective of events in Paris towards the start of World War Two. It does this during a period of time in which German Nazis come to occupy the city.

- Imagine you are a book editor who has decided to reissue *Safiyyah's War*, this time splitting it into four sections.
- Decide how you would split the book into four sections. Give each section a title and write a brief account of what readers should look out for in each one.

Spend 20-30 minutes on this activity.

Taking Risks

Safiyyah often puts herself in danger, mainly to help others.

- Identify up to 5 occasions in the novel where Safiyyah is shown to be in personal danger of one kind or another.
- Rank these occasions in order of risk.
- Write a short 'citation for bravery' to be read out at a presentation to Safiyyah after the war, to recognise her efforts. A citation is an official statement about someone's heroism, or bravery, mainly given out for wartime activities.

Spend 20-30 minutes on this activity.

Reading the reviews

The extracts, below, are all from reviews of *Safiyah's War*.

- Read all the reviews and discuss which comes closest to your own view of the book.
- Working individually, write your own paragraph expressing your views.
- If possible, share your reviews with others.

You can submit your reviews to the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme website. This can be accessed at:
XXX

Give yourself 30-60 minutes to complete this activity.

A.
I found this book fascinating as I hadn't heard about the Great Mosque in France before and was unaware of the role it played in the resistance. I think every class should have a copy of this book as it's so important in so many ways. First to provide representation; for children to see that people of many different [faiths and] races took a stand against the Nazis and secondly because of the message of respect towards other religions that this book shows. There can be such a focus on the things that make us different and such negative representation of people of different religions and the courageous acts of the people in this book (and the real-life people it's based on) show that what really matters is love and respect, especially in the face of hatred.
Victoria Simmons, www.goodreads.com

B.
Ultimately this is a story about love and kindness, and doing the right thing even when it would be easier not to. Certain lines definitely felt very pointedly applicable to present day issues, but overall I love the message that this sends for both children and adult readers! Actually, this is exactly the kind of book I want adults who dismiss middle grade [8-12 year olds] to read, because the writing may be simple, but that doesn't mean it's not effective, and the way Khan writes emotions is incredibly moving!
Hana, www.goodreads.com

C.
A brilliant kids historical fiction set in Paris during the Nazi occupation - a time period I am fascinated by and have done a lot of research in, as has this author. Sometimes that felt a little bit fact-dumping, but I wondered if that was my own reading perspective rather than the narrative. Similarly, some of the conversations felt like they were a bit unnatural - like they were giving information rather than the characters speaking to each other, and the grandmother character definitely spoke in wise quotations (which I kind of liked as her role but it didn't feel like natural speech). I loved the protagonist in this - she was appropriately cautious, yet still brave and feisty. Her friendships with many of the characters really jumped off the page and it said a lot about her as a character.
Bookbairn, review on www.amazon.co.uk

D.
As I delved into the story, I found myself transported to the heart of World War 2 in Paris. The story is based on true events of a Parisian Muslim community and The Grand Mosque in Paris being integral to ushering and saving hundreds of Jews during the war.

The main protagonist, Safiyah, and her journey reminded me that even in the darkest times, compassion and the desire to do what's right, help and serve others and can illuminate a path to a better future.

I greatly appreciated how artfully the writer integrated the exquisite elements of our Faith and tradition, such as prayer, The Mawlid, and the profound significance of the hijab, into the narrative. I absolutely loved reading this book and highly recommend it!

Brilliant work Hiba, thank you
Sidra Mushtaq, review on www.amazon.co.uk

Writing Activities

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

You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.

Remembering Safiyyah

Imagine that you are a historian, researching Paris during World War Two. You have come across the story of Safiyyah, a young Muslim girl involved in helping Jewish people escape from the Nazis. You want to bring Safiyyah's story to public attention. You intend to write her full biography, but want to start getting people interested in her life by creating a blog.

- Write your first blog about Safiyyah, which has the title: '8 Fascinating Facts About Safiyyah's Life in Wartime Paris'. Be as specific as you can, while also writing in a punchy, concise style.

Message in a Bottle

At one point in the novel, Safiyyah writes a letter to her friend, Isabelle. Isabelle has moved from Paris to England, so Safiyyah cannot send the letter to her because of the war. Instead, she puts it in a bottle and throws it into the River Seine.

- Write the letter that you imagine Safiyyah wrote.

Everyone should read *Safiyyah's War*!

Imagine that your school is running a competition to select a book that every class has to read during tutor time. Students have been invited to deliver speeches advocating a book of their choice. Write a speech for *Safiyyah's War*. The audience is a small group of teachers and students, who will make the final decision.