

# The yoto Carnegies

The Eternal Return of  
Clara Hart The Eternal Return  
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"What a voice.  
An amazing debut."  
– Sue Wallman,  
author of *I Know You Did It*

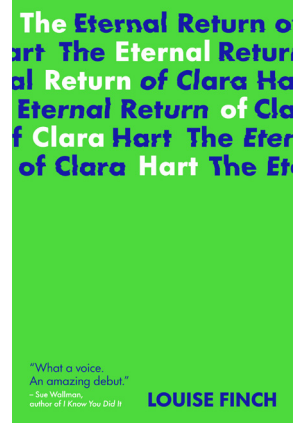
**LOUISE FINCH**

## The Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2023 Shadowing Resources



## Activities for *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart*

**Author:** Louise Finch  
**Publisher:** Little Island  
**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 Shadders 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 sexual abuse, drug-taking, misogyny.

## 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. Shadows 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. On page 172-173 Spence looks at the flyer that Clara designed for Hannah's band, supporting a Women's Charity. Design your own flyer focusing on the Me Too Movement and Women's Rights. Check out this website for ideas- <https://metoomvmt.org/>
2. On page 198, Clara talks about experimental art. Take some time to experiment for yourself. Create a self portrait collage or lino print.
3. On page 114, Mr Barnes describes the philosopher Nietzsche's Thought Experiment. Use printed and online resources to research Nietzsche and his theory of eternal recurrence. Create a mind map or poster detailing your findings.
4. Explore some other thought experiments and create a PowerPoint to share your findings.
5. On page 74 Clara uses flour, eggs, sugar and oil to make a Mug Cake. Have a go at making your own cake in a mug using a recipe like this one from BBC Good Food: <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/microwave-mug-cake>. Share your mug cakes with other shadowing groups on social media using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies23**
6. On page 171 Clara plays around changing lyrics to well known songs. Make up some nonsense lyrics of your own to a popular song.
7. Choose a partner in your group - this activity works best if you pair up with someone you don't know very well. Share your thoughts on favourite books, movies, music, hobbies, career aspirations and dreams. Share what you've learned about each other with the rest of your shadowing group.

### **Wellbeing/mindfulness:**

The novel talks about the nature and importance of memories on page 167. Create a memory box celebrating happy moments from your school days. You can include friendship photos, art work, music, special interests- use your imagination and be as creative as you like. Open it whenever you feel like some sunshine.

### ***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**

**5-10 minutes**

### **The cover**

- Look closely at the front cover. What do you notice? Think about the font, colours and repetition of the title. Make some predictions about the story.

### **The dedication**

- The novel's dedication reads: *For someone so much braver than anyone should have to be.* Why do you think the author has included this statement, phrased in this way? Who do you think this novel might be 'for'?
- Read the blurb on the back cover. Do you have any further thoughts?

## 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 Little Island paperback edition of the book, first published in the UK in 2022.*

### **Read to the end of page 33**

- Which characters have we met so far? What are the relationships like between them?
- On page 13, Spence experiences déjà vu, and the sub-headings are labelled '1.1', '1.2', etc. Revisit your ideas about the front cover and the title – can you add anything to your predictions now?
- How did you feel when you read the opening of this novel? Which moments stood out to you as particularly important, shocking, or unexpected?
- What are your initial feelings about Spence and Anthony?

### **Read to the end of page 58**

- Why do you think the author might have chosen to structure the novel like this? What do you think the relationship is like between the structure of the story and the ideas that the author is exploring?
- In Spence and Anthony's Philosophy class, Mr Barnes asks them to consider a thought experiment: 'the idea that this universe and our lives recur in an identical form an infinite number of times [...] if this were true, would we react with joy or despair?' Try out the experiment for yourself. What do you think is the purpose of this thought experiment?
- How do the male characters talk about girls and women in this novel? Which words or phrases stand out to you as particularly significant?

### **Read to the end of page 93**

- What are your thoughts about:
  - The hierarchy that exists within the school community
  - The ways the writer hints at a pervasive culture of misogyny in the school and wider society
  - The connection between Spence's experience of bereavement and Clara's recurring death
  - The ways Spence's character is developing so far.

### **Read to the break on page 118**

- The scenario that plays out the 'fifth time' is more extreme – what are your thoughts about this?
- Mr Barnes mentions Sci-Fi when Spence asks him about a 'key' for stopping the time-loop. In which genre would you place this novel, and why?
- What stands out to you as particularly significant in this part of the novel?

**Read to the end of page 141**

- What do we learn about Anthony's family in this part of the novel? Does it change your opinions of him, or of Spence?
- What's different in this version of the Friday? What do you predict might happen next?
- In this part of the novel, Clara is found unconscious with Anthony and Spence calls an ambulance for her. How do the different characters react to this moment? How have your sympathies changed or developed for the characters since the beginning of the novel?
- Spence thinks he has found 'the key' to stopping the time-glitch, because 'it doesn't matter how it happened. All that matters is that she's alive. She's the key.' Do you agree?

**Read to the end of page 178**

- What connections can you make between the following quotes?
  - "What kind of mates are they that I'd go to a party rather than talk? What kind of mates are they for forgetting?"
  - "I don't talk about it. It's a downer for whoever listens and a slippery slope. But today, what's the harm? It doesn't matter anymore."
  - "'When's the last time Anthony asked you about anything real?' Worm slumps back against the tree and refocuses on the air above my head, 'When did you?'"

**Read to the end of page 192**

- In 8.5, Clara and Spence disagree about whether people can truly change for the better. What do you think?
- Is Spence changing for good or for bad in this part of the novel?
- Do you think this is a hopeful novel or a pessimistic one? Or something else? Why?

**Read to the end of page 226**

- In this version of the Philosophy lesson, Mr Barnes explains the concept of *amor fati* or 'the love of one's fate'. He goes on to say that this isn't about 'fixing everything, but instead being at peace with your own conscience', and an approach to morality that argues 'for personal responsibility'.
- Do you think the writer's references to Nietzsche are successful? How do they work within the context of the novel?
- What do you make of this approach to life?
- What do you think would happen if Spence managed to stay awake until the morning?

**Read to the end of the novel**

- When Clara discovers the rugby group chat, Spence defends himself by saying 'I wasn't the worst.' How did you feel when you read this part of the novel?
- What do you think of the writer's handling of Mia's testimony, the depiction of the police involvement, and the #ShameOnUs campaign in this part of the novel?
- Do you think Spence redeems himself by the end of the novel?
- What do you think Spence is most afraid of?
- Spence wonders why it was that particular Friday, and why it was him who had to re-live the day so many times. What do you think?

## After Reading

**Spend 10-15 minutes discussing some or all of the questions below.**

- What are your overall impressions of this novel?
- Which moments stick most in your memory and why?
- Which characters did you think were the most interesting and why?
- Have you read anything like this before – if so, what was it? If not, what is it that makes this novel feel different or new to you?
- Which questions do you think this novel is asking? Which questions do you think the author wants us to ask ourselves?
- Based on reading *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart*, how likely are you to read other novels by Louise Finch?

### **What's *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart* about?**

- Spend one or two minutes writing down a single sentence that begins: *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart* 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 novel is about.
- If you are working in a group, spend 5-10 minutes sorting the sentences, from the one you agree with most to the one you agree with least.
- Finally, decide on the statement you agree with most. It can be one from the list or your own. Write down a few ideas about how *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart* relates to your chosen statement.

#### ***The Eternal Return of Clara Hart* is about...**

- Taking responsibility for our actions
- The true meaning of friendship
- How toxic masculinity harms both boys and girls
- How to carry on after devastating loss
- The importance of challenging harmful behaviour
- The impact of peer pressure on teenagers
- The meaning of life.



## Exploring the book further

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

### **Stories about multiple lives**

Like Louise Finch, lots of writers of novels and films have used time-loop structures to explore questions about reality, experience, choice and time.

- Have you read any other narratives that explore the same day over and over, or a character reliving slightly different realities? How do they compare to *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart*?
- In Buddhism and Hinduism, samsara is the idea that your actions in life lead to a new existence after death, repeated in an endless cycle. This cycle only stops when an individual is freed from ignorance by gaining self-knowledge (moksha). How might you relate these concepts to *Eternal Return of Clara Hart*?
- Why do you think Finch chose the structure she did for her novel?
- Can you think of an idea for your own time-loop story, which you could use as a vehicle for exploring a contemporary issue?

**Spend 10-15 minutes on this activity.**

### **Who was Nietzsche?**

Spence and Anthony both take Philosophy at school, and each Friday Spence relives a slightly different version of his Friday Philosophy lesson until he breaks the cycle.

Nietzsche is one of the most famous philosophers of the 19th Century, and a proponent of ideas such as:

- Change is a fundamental aspect of life – it is the only constant.
- There is no one single 'truth', there are many. Pretending there is one objective truth is unhealthy; a healthy mind is flexible and can understand that there are many ways to consider a matter.
- There is no such thing as 'being', only the state of 'becoming', because nothing is fixed and everything is always changing. All of reality is intertwined: we have to either say 'yes' to all of life, or 'no' to all of it.
- Christian morality is the 'enemy of life' – Nietzsche believed it discouraged curiosity, was based on the concept of the afterlife which devalued this life, and made humans ashamed of their instincts.

Choose one of the ideas above to research online, if you like.

Now that you know a bit more about Nietzsche, do you think you understand the novel better? Do you think understanding Nietzsche is essential for understanding this novel?

**Spend 10-15 minutes on this activity.**

### **Reflections on Spence**

The novel is told in the voice of Spence. It's his life that keeps re-looping, but he intervenes repeatedly in the lives of others and attempts to change the outcome for several guests at the party. Choose one character and explore they might feel about Spence during two or three different versions of the Friday, by writing in their voice:

- Clara
- Anthony
- Mia
- Spence's dad
- Worm
- Bee

**Spend 10-15 minutes on 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. Louise Finch's bold and honest young adult fiction debut proves a nuanced take on both subtle and overt misogyny all within the genre of science fiction. It stands out among other feminist works aimed at young people through a unique and telling perspective – that of an ordinary teenage boy.

**Gemma McLaughlin, [thenational.scot](http://thenational.scot)**

B. This book is POWERFUL and RAW and just beautifully crafted, its subject matter is timely and explored in a compassionate way with a light touch without ever shying away from the matter at hand. *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart* is one of those novels that showcase the power of Y.A novels and how they can explore and communicate difficult subject matters in ways that feel raw and real and never preachy. This is a novel that needs to be in every school with a message that needs to be shouted from every rooftop.

**Charli, [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)**

C. The prose is sharp, drawing the reader through the story with ease. Finch's voice is fresh and urgent. Her characters are well defined, lovable and frustrating in their actions. You'll want the best for them. A great debut. I'm waiting to see what Finch says next.

**Lorenzo, [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)**

D. *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart* demonstrates why it's crucial to be honest and open with ourselves as well as those around us. It shows how conversations about uncomfortable subjects are vital. It emphasises how talking – and listening – to our friends and family, even if we or they might not like what is being said, is essential for our wellbeing and that of those around us.

**Paperbacksnob.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 *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart* further.

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

### Another Friday

- Plan an additional Friday chapter for Spence to live through. What might happen to him, Clara, Anthony and Mia this time? Make sure you consider:
  - How Anthony wakes up in the school carpark
  - The content of his philosophy lesson
  - A conversation he has in the canteen
  - What happens at Anthony's party
- Choose one of these sections of the story to write up, trying to imitate Louise Finch's style and Spence's voice.

### Letter writing

Communication (and a lack of communication) is an important theme in the novel. Spence and his father need to learn to talk meaningfully to each other, and what they don't say is as important as what they do.

- Write a letter from Spence's dad to Spence, to be opened on the anniversary of Spence's mother's death.
- Write another letter, this time a reply from Spence to his father.

### Blogging

Write a blog entry with the title 'What teenage boys could learn about responsibility from *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart*'. You might like to include:

Which types of responsibility are explored in the novel.

- How ideas about misogyny and toxic masculinity are explored in the novel.
- Key moments/characters in the novel related to the idea of responsibility.

### Found poetry

Create a 'found poem' (sometimes known as a 'black-out poem') using a page from the novel. Steps:

- Find a moment in the novel that feels significant for you
- Select one page (or a double page) from this moment
- Photocopy this page
- In pencil, select 50-100 words that stand out to you
- Erase or black-out the words you don't want to use

Options:

- Colour/illustrate the blank space around your 'found poem'.
- Type up the 'found poem', leaving out the erased text.

Write a commentary on your poem, explaining your approach and the poem's relationship to the original text.