

SHADOW FOX

Discussion Notes and Writing Activity



ABOUT THE BOOK

A beautiful story of loss and belonging, all told through the eyes of a wild, affectionate, prickly fox who has a love of collecting shoes and not a small amount of magic.

Bee's family runs a lakeside inn, offering rest and sustenance to weary travellers. Bee's Nan has gone missing, possibly drowned, but Bee knows that can't be true. And so does the hungry fox that her grandmother was feeding. Shadow is cross that her supply of salmon has dried up and is determined to do something about it. Soon both fox and child are on an adventure to find Nan, uncover what's happening to all the secret islands on the Great Lake and learn just how far magical powers can take you...

Paperback
9781839946585
Published by Nosy Crow

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

“Looking back, I think that all my books have been leading to this – showing, through the eyes of a wild fox, just how much animals need their natural environments.” Carlie Sorosiak on *Shadow Fox*

Carlie Sorosiak grew up in North Carolina. She has a master's in English from Oxford University and another in publishing from City, University of London. She is the author of *I, Cosmo*, *My Life as a Cat* and *Always, Clementine*. Her goals include traveling to all seven continents and fostering a wide variety of animals. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband and her American dingo.



“Growing up, dogs were my best friends; I have always loved the companionship of animals – both real and fictional. Writing animal stories is another way to feel close to them, and to share that love with others.”

“In my spare time, I run a book club for middle grade readers, and we often talk about what animals bring to stories. It's a completely different way of seeing the world. For example, dogs experience their environments with their noses! They sniff, then see. Understanding this builds empathy; not everyone on Earth moves through life the same way.” Carlie Sorosiak on animal narrators

ABOUT THESE RESOURCES

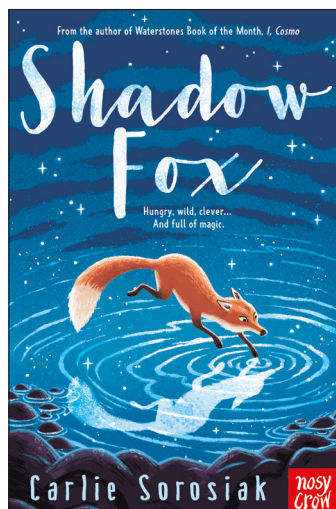
Shadow Fox is the perfect book to discuss as a group, with key themes around nature, protecting the environment and animals, family relationships, the supernatural, as well as unusual narrative voices. We've included a set of discussion questions to help get your class thinking and talking about the novel as well as a creative writing activity inspired by the book.

SHADOW FOX

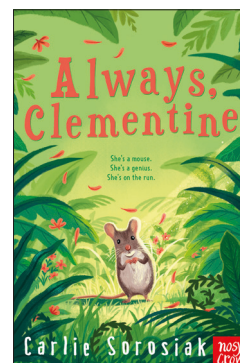
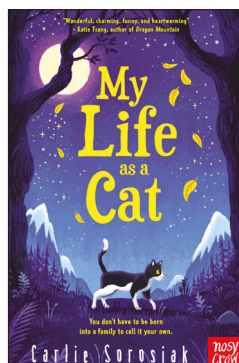
Discussion Notes and Writing Activity

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *Shadow Fox* is written from the perspective of a fox, and this helps us explore the world in a new way. What did you learn about Shadow the fox – what are her likes and dislikes? How would you describe her personality?
- “You know, any time you look into an animal’s eyes, it’s like a doorway. You recognise the intelligence there, the complex inner life, and you’re automatically somewhere else.” (p.136) What did you learn about being a fox? Can you list some emotions that Shadow experienced during the story?
- Do animals think and feel differently to humans?
- Magic is a key element of *Shadow Fox*. Shadow discovers she has magical powers early in the story – she turned someone’s gloves into pumpkin soup! What is your favourite ‘magical moment’ in the book? And how does magic help the fox?
- We learn that a magical island is under threat from the Night Islanders, who are stealing all of nature’s magic for themselves. They are described as always ‘taking taking taking’ (pg. 180) How do you feel about the Night Islanders? How are they harming and changing the island?
- How are the Night Islanders different from the other humans in the story – for example, Nan or Bee?
- Nan loses her memory on the magical island. She says “The island’s dying – all the islands are dying – and it’s changing everything, even us. We’re losing bits and pieces, memories, especially of the good things. The things rooted in nature.” (pg. 69) Why are our memories important to us?
- Shadow describes how her family and home were lost due to deforestation. What are the consequences of this for her and other animals? Can you think of ways in which humans change or destroy natural habitats?
- At the beginning of the book, the author includes the quote “All good things are wild and free” by Henry David Thoreau. What does that mean to you after reading *Shadow Fox*?



If you enjoyed reading *Shadow Fox*, you might enjoy other books by Carlie Sorosiak!



**nosy
crow**

SHADOW FOX

Discussion Notes and Writing Activity

CREATIVE WRITING ACTIVITY: MY ANIMAL STORY

In *Shadow Fox*, we experience the world through the eyes of a fox.
Can you write a short scene where an animal narrator meets a human?

Research your animal first using the following questions – you can fill out the sheet below to help you make notes! *Top tip: Ask a teacher or librarian to help you find resources or books on your chosen animal*

1. First of all, choose your animal – it could be something you see all the time, a fly, a cat, a bird, or it could be an animal you don't see often, like a lion or a whale!
2. What does your animal look like? Are they big or small? Do they have fur, scales or feathers?
3. Find out a little bit about where they live. Do they live in a park, the sea, or a forest, for example?
4. What are your animal's special skills? Have they got a good sense of smell, can they fly really high or do they have sharp claws?
5. Now you have to use your imagination! What personality does your animal have? Are they funny, brave or kind, for example?
6. Give your animal a name!

MY CHOSEN ANIMAL IS A.....

APPEARANCE.....

HABITAT.....

SPECIAL SKILLS.....

PERSONALITY.....

NAME:



SHADOW FOX

Discussion Notes and Writing Activity

CREATIVE WRITING ACTIVITY: MY ANIMAL STORY

Now it's time to start constructing your animal story – you can use the story template to help you structure your writing if that is helpful.

1. Introduce your animal to the reader

Like *Shadow Fox*, we want to write the story from the animal's point of view and using the animal's voice – this style of writing is called 'first person narrative'. For example, this is how Shadow the fox introduces herself to the reader:

"My name is YAAAARRRRRAAWWWAAAARRR. You say it with a screech, when you're about to pounce on a rabbit in the snow. I also have another name, which is much easier for humans to pronounce, because it's a human word. I can't tell you that name up front. It would ruin the story. Which is about foxes. So it's a good one." (p.2)

Can you start your story introducing your animal to the reader and setting up the story. Think about how your animal might communicate and behave – are they confident, shy, clever, friendly? How would they observe the human world? Develop a voice for your animal character that you can use throughout the story.

2. What is your animal doing?

Place your animal in their natural environment and think about how they might behave. Think about all of the senses – what can they hear, smell, see, feel, taste? It could be very different from how you as a human experience the world! For example, this is how Shadow moves through the forest:

"I'm trotting along, light-footed. Each paw-step is like the forest itself: quiet, quiet, quiet. That's how foxes are supposed to move. We're not supposed to be seen, not supposed to be heard." (p.3)

Think about your animal's emotions and feelings – could they be scared? Playful? Hungry?

3. Meeting a human

Imagine your animal sees a human – how do they react? Maybe they see humans all the time – for food possibly – or they are shocked to see a human! How does the human impact on their natural environment? Does your animal interact with the human or do they steer clear? Think about Shadow's first encounter with Bee at the start of the book:

"I bark at the girl, who startles. Her shoulders jump up and down, like a fox springing. But she keeps her hand flat, extended, reaching towards me. Doesn't she know I'm wild? Doesn't she know I could reach out and nip her fingers? I really could! I could do that!" (p.6)



SHADOW FOX

Discussion Notes and Writing Activity

CREATIVE WRITING ACTIVITY: MY ANIMAL STORY

Hello! My name is.....

(Introduce your animal in their voice)

My story begins when I was.....

(Describe what your animal is doing in their own environment)

Then, I saw the human/s.....

(Imagine your animal encounters a human – what happens?)

If you're on a roll, keep writing! What happens next in your animal's adventure?

SHADOW FOX

Discussion Notes and Writing Activity

DESIGN A BOOK COVER FOR YOUR ANIMAL STORY

Remember to include:

The title of the story (this could be your animal's name!)

Your name as the author

An image of your animal

