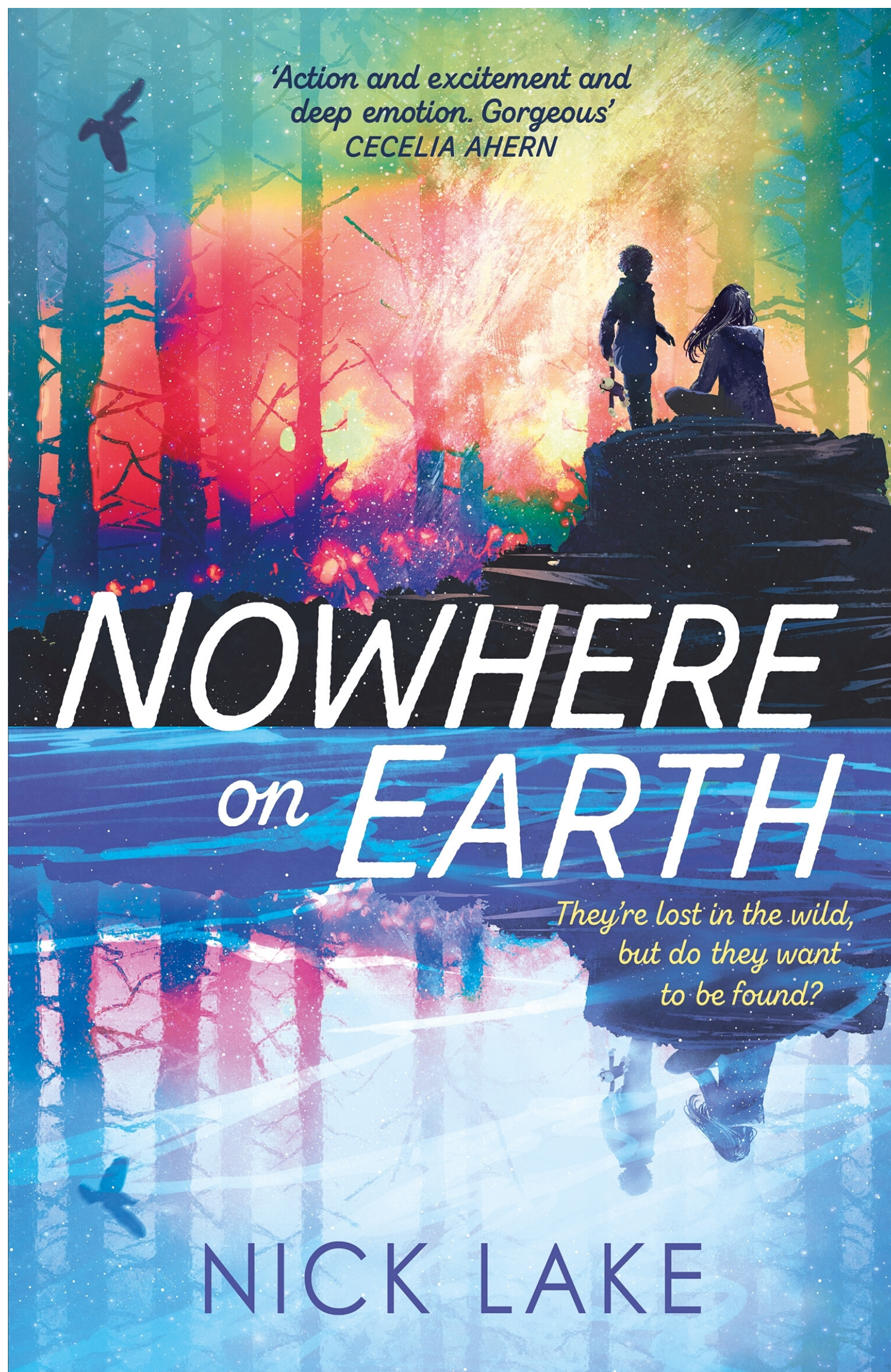


CILIP CARNEGIE SHORTLIST 2020

SHADOWING RESOURCES



CILIP Carnegie Medal 2020

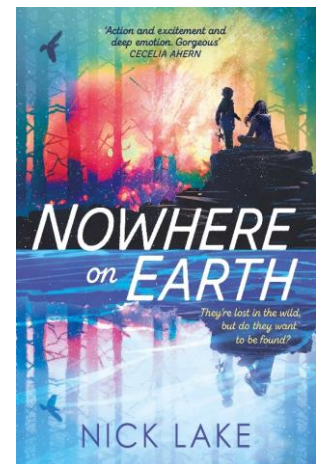
TALKING POINTS

Title: **Nowhere on Earth**

Author: **Nick Lake**

Publisher: Hodder Children's Books

Age: 12+



THE READER'S EXPECTATIONS

- You shouldn't judge a book by its cover, of course, we all know that. But let's do it anyway. What did you expect of the book when you saw it?
- The opening chapters ask more questions than they answer, and the revelations of the backstory come only gradually, in little pieces. Why do you think the author chose to do this – and is it effective?

EMILY'S FAMILY

- Aidan is not, we learn, Emily's real brother – or even a human being at all. Are you able to have sympathy for him, all the same?
- Emily's parents reappear surprisingly in the middle of the story – but how do her feelings about them change as the story progresses?
- The bonds of family – whoever that family may be – are important in the story. (Including "adopted" family like Aidan.) Do we end the book thinking these family relationships are mostly positive or negative?

A REAL-WORLD SETTING

- How important is the book's particular setting? Can you easily imagine the story having been set somewhere different?
- How does Lake help you to picture the wild Alaskan setting, and to feel like you're really there while you're reading? Can you find examples of where he does this particularly effectively?
- This is a story featuring alien life – but set against many familiar, ordinary things. How well does the author blend these together, and how realistic does it all feel?

COMING OF AGE

- What does Emily learn about the world, and about herself, over the course of the story?
- The characters go on a tough physical journey, over the course of the book; but do they go through any other kinds of journey, like emotional or metaphorical ones, too?

- Emily's specific experiences in this story are extreme, and most of us will never go through anything like it – but are some of her general experiences common to many people her age, do you think?

HUMANITY, LOVE & EMPATHY

- The book asks some big questions – such as
 - What does it mean to be human?
 - Why do humans feel threatened by things we don't understand?
 - What is the role of love and empathy in our everyday lives?
- How do you feel each of these are resolved in this story (if they are)?

MORAL COMPLEXITY

- There is some good and some bad in the novel, but there is a lot more moral complexity than this. How, for example, do we feel about Aidan's ability to affect people's feelings for him artificially? Can you think of other examples where the good and bad are not altogether clear-cut?

ENDING

- What is the significance of the parting gift – the visions – that Emily and Bob receive from Aidan at the end?
- Was the ending a satisfying one, to you?
- Are we left with a feeling of hope, or sadness – or a bit of both?

AND FINALLY...

- Some books stay with you long after you've read them – they change the way you see the world. Was this one of those books, for you?
- Does it deserve to win the Carnegie Medal?

FURTHER THINKING

CILIP works in partnership with Amnesty International and Inclusive Minds to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of human rights, inclusion and representation in children's literature. The discussion points below are intended to further stimulate reader's thinking on the themes explored in the shortlisted books.

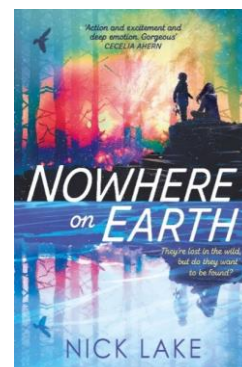
CILIP Carnegie Medal 2020

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Discussing human rights in this story:

Right to safety; right to a good life with enough food, clothing, housing and healthcare; right to be treated with dignity; right to privacy; right to asylum.

- Does Brad think he has done anything wrong? How can sexual harassment in schools be prevented?
- Why does Emily say 'We've all come from somewhere. We've all travelled'?
- How might our lives change if we all believed that love is the universal language?



Discussing inclusion and representation in this story:

- Aiden is able to influence people's thoughts and understanding of reality. What does this say about how our perceptions can be influenced by others?
- Why has Emily found it hard to fit in her new school environment?
- We're told early on that Emily's Dad says she 'took up more room in the world than her size suggested' (p9). Why is it important to take your place in the world? Why do women sometimes find this hard?
- Why is Emily wary of Bob because he's a man? Is it right or fair that women often feel this way around unknown men?
- Emily is shocked by the suggestion that being touched by one of the football players 'goes with the territory' but doesn't say anything. Why doesn't she feel she can speak up?



***Nowhere on Earth* by Nick Lake**

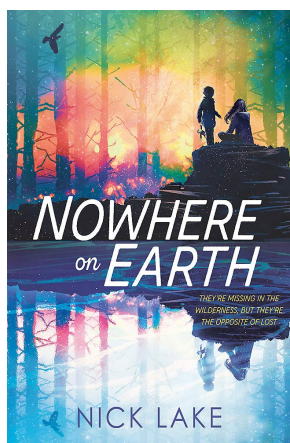
Before reading

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?



The title

The title of the novel you are going to read is *Nowhere on Earth*.

- Think about the title. What meanings and connotations can you think of for each word separately, and then for the whole title?
- Draw together your ideas, questions and predictions about the novel, including what genre of story you might expect. If possible, discuss your ideas with other readers.

Information about the setting

Nowhere on Earth opens in Wrangell-St Elias National Park in Alaska, in the far north of America. A National Park is an area set aside for conservation, usually a wilderness area.



Inside the Wrangell-St Elias National Park.

- Read this information about the setting and then answer the questions that follow.
 - What types of stories and characters might appear in a novel set here?
 - Why might a writer choose to set a novel in a wilderness area like this?
- Alaska is the largest American state and also the most sparsely populated. Large areas are many miles from even a small town.
- Alaska is very, very cold. The book is set in spring time, but even in spring the average temperature in Alaska is -4.1 °C.
- Wrangell-St Elias National Park, Alaska, in the far northwest of America. It's huge: 50,000 square kilometres (20,000 square miles). That's bigger than Switzerland! However, there only two (gravel) roads in the park.
- The park is famous for its wild scenery, which includes mountains (some are volcanoes), glaciers, forests, lakes, rivers and the ocean. It contains the St Elias mountains which include some of the highest peaks in the United States.
- Wildlife in the park includes salmon, moose, bison, grizzly bears, beavers, whales and puffins.

During reading

We recommend reading the novel without pausing too often, then doing some more substantial work afterwards.

Keep a journal while reading, pausing to write down your reflections about each of the points below. Where possible, have a discussion with other readers before putting your thoughts down on paper.

The opening

Chapters 1 and 2 jump right into the action.

- What are your first theories about:
 - The ways in which Aidan is not a typical seven year old boy?
 - The relationship between Emily and Aidan?
 - why Aidan and Emily are on the run?

As you read more, notice which of your theories are confirmed, which are overturned and when/how.

The power of nature

The characters are battling the wilderness as much as the 'men in black'.

- Choose a place in the novel where Nick Lake really helped you to imagine the scene and notice how he conveys the dangers and difficulties of being outside in this environment.

A writer's problem

Nick Lake tries to help us to imagine the unimaginable.

- How has Lake tried to create something truly 'other' in his presentation of Aidan?

The cabin

The few days Bob, Aidan and Emily spend in the cabin give them a rest in the middle of the adventure.

- Think about some of the reasons Lake has them stay in the cabin for a few days. You could use the ideas below, to help you if you wish.
 - The characters have a chance to rest and get food. This makes their survival more believable.
 - The reader starts to relax, thinking that all the men in black must have died.
 - In the cabin we see a different side of each character.
 - The problems the characters have to solve at the cabin are different, adding variety to their journey for the reader.

The obstacles

Each time the characters seem to be making progress, they face a new obstacle.

- As you read, notice:
 - Which problems are solved by a character? Which problems are resolved by good luck?
 - Which of the characters' difficulties gripped you the most?
 - Which solution did you particularly enjoy and why?

Think about whether you prefer it when a problem is solved by a surprise event or whether you prefer it when a character comes up with the solution.

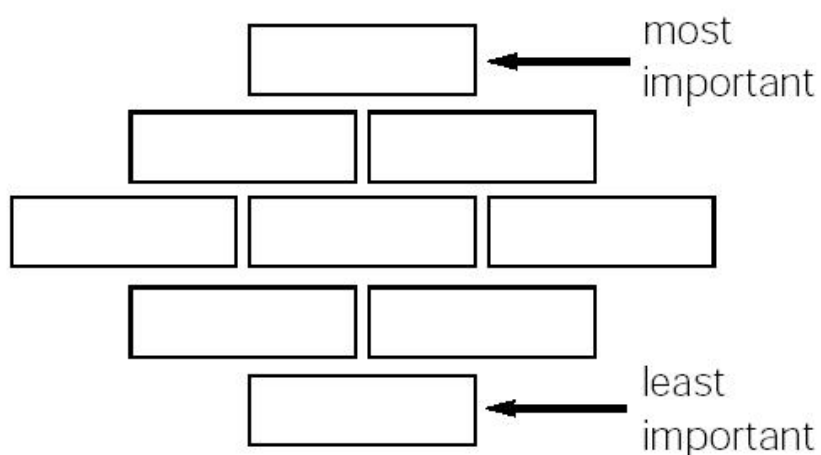
After reading

What is the novel about?

- Below are nine suggestions for what *Nowhere on Earth* is about.
- Working on your own, in a pair, or 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>Nowhere on Earth</i> is about ...		
... trying to find a place where you belong.	... overcoming tragedy.	... hidden strength.
... a difficult journey.	... the power of love.	... how you can make your own future.
... the power of nature.	... accepting that no-one is perfect.	... the importance of memories.

Diamond 9 pattern



Lessons for Emily

- Drawing on the previous activity, write a journal entry in the voice of Emily 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:
 - Trusting people again (especially men)
 - Discovering her strengths
 - Finding her place in her family
 - Deciding how to move forward into her future.

You can't choose your family

- Think about Emily's relationship with her parents. You could think about:
 - Why she feels almost as if she is in the wrong family
 - Her mixed feelings about the way her parents respond to Aidan
 - Some of the things Aidan says to her and shows her
 - The fact that she will remember Aidan, but her parents won't
 - Her relationship with Bob
 - Her experiences in the wilderness
 - Things she discovers about her parents that she didn't know before
 - How her parents come to understand her better by the end of the novel.

Aidan's powers

In Chapter 25, Lake writes: 'In movies, aliens were always terrifying, powerful'.

- As you read, think about the questions below.
 - How does Aidan use his powers to help himself?
 - How does Aidan use his powers to help others?
 - In what ways is Aidan vulnerable and in need of protection? Why does Lake give him these weaknesses?
 - Why does Lake give Aidan's powers limits, for example they don't work at a distance or on people who have seen his true form. Why does Lake give him more powers that would be helpful, such as super strength?

Three character arcs

Bob, Aidan and Emily are all, in their own ways, trying to deal with a difficult experience in their recent past.

- Think about the questions below:
 - What difficult experience are they dealing with and how are they trying to cope?
 - Do you have more sympathy with one character than another? Why?
 - How do they help each other and what have they learned by the end of the novel?
 - Which character changes the most?
 - Which character changes the least?

Dancing on the beach

One of the things Emily says about dance in Chapter 32 is that it looks graceful and effortless but is actually the result of hard, physical work.

- Think about this idea in relation to the rest of the novel. What hidden strengths do characters have? When and why do they hide physical or emotional difficulties?

The three-act structure

The 'three-act structure' is a way to think about how the story develops in many books and films. Writer Stephen King describes it like this:

- Act 1 – put your character up a tree
- Act 2 – set the tree on fire
- Act 3 – get them down again.

Use these ideas to help you to think about the way Nick Lake structures the story in *Nowhere on Earth*.

Editing the book

Imagine that the editor of the book has suggested changing Chapters 20-23. Here's what they had to say:

I loved the way the characters overcame all the problems that were thrown at them, but this just felt like cheating. A bear shows up at the same time as the man with a gun? Too much of a coincidence.

- In role as the writer, Nick Lake, write an email to your editor, explaining why you included this incident and whether you agree that it should be cut.

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.

Action and excitement and deep emotion. Gorgeous.

Best-selling writer, Cecelia Ahern

This was one of the weirdest books I have ever read in my life. And also somehow one of the best. Like the synopsis says, I can't tell you much about it, but the entire premise has the potential to be utterly ridiculous but it's somehow not at all. This book got me right in the feels, and it also features some cool survival stuff and an amazing setting deep in the Alaskan wild.

Shannon on www.goodreads.com

I love Nick Lake's writing. I would read anything he wrote – grocery list, email etc., because his writing, always, is so real and so brave. He takes on subjects other writers might avoid.

Best-selling writer, Jennifer Niven

Emily was exactly the kind of heroine I like: strong, intelligent and skilled, but still human. Qualities I find in other female leads I loved before, like Katniss Everdeen from The Hunger Games. I loved the other characters too... but Emily was definitely my favourite.

Neide on www.goodreads.com

The premise is an interesting idea, however, I couldn't really get into the book. It never really grabbed my attention. I didn't feel super attached to the characters and the plot was a little predictable. Perhaps it was because of the confusing beginning. I believe that Nick Lake was trying to convey a sense of mystery, but it ended up feeling a bit like a confusing jumble. It gets cleared up, but not quickly enough in my opinion.

Andromeda on www.goodreads.com

This is a story of survival and of love, and Emily analyses her love for her brother and parents very candidly. I was afraid that the ending would be left in the air, but I was very satisfied with the conclusion to this powerfully gripping novel.

Customer on amazon.co.uk

This was enjoyable but I found myself a little unsatisfied with the way that things wrapped up.

Michael on www.goodreads.com

The key themes of this novel are definitely empathy and love. It's shown everywhere. The message of how humanity views things as threats instantly without asking questions is an important reflection on our society and resonated deeply with me.

Reviewer on thewhisperingofthepages.blogspot.com

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?



These cards are from the *EMC Curriculum Plus Card Collection*. Each box includes eight decks of three different sets of cards – enough for pupils to work in groups of three or four.

The cards are for: Literacy Analysis; Poetry Analysis; Critical Literacy

For full details visit <https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications/emc-curriculum-plus-card-collection>