

CILIP CARNEGIE SHORTLIST 2020

SHADOWING RESOURCES



CILIP Carnegie Medal 2020

TALKING POINTS

Title: **Patron Saints of Nothing**

Author: **Randy Ribay**

Publisher: Stripes (Little Tiger)

Age: 14+



Note to Group Leaders

This book contains some material that may not be suitable for some students. We recommend that group leaders read the book carefully before teaching it or recommending it to students and/or seek parental guidance. As with all Carnegie and Kate Greenaway shortlisted titles, we trust that shadowers 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.

COMING OF AGE

- How does Jay change over the course of his journey? What are the experiences that bring about this change?
- Specifically does he have a different understanding of his own identity by the end?
- Can you see a change to the way he thinks about his relationship to – and responsibility for – other people?
- How much are the changes in his character particular to his story, to his own personal circumstances, and how much might they be shared by many people of his age?

MIXED IDENTITIES

- Why do you think Ribay has dedicated his book to “the hyphenated”?
- How is Jay’s understanding of his relatively simple life in the U.S. affected by witnessing the lives of his family in the Philippines? How has his own upbringing been different from his cousin’s?
- When he is in the Philippines, and with his family there, what’s stopping Jay from feeling like he fits in?

LEARNING ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES

- What does Jay learn about life in the Philippines that surprises him?
- How much had you heard about Duterte and his drugs policies before reading this book? Why do you think so many people in the Philippines support them?
- The book includes many words from Filipino languages – why do you think the author has chosen to keep them, and what effect did they have on you when you were reading?

FAMILY

- What do Jay's family – both in the U.S. and the Philippines – feel about Duterte's drugs policies?
- What did you make of Jun's parents? They have lost their son – is it easy to feel sympathy for them? Is Jay's perception of them fair, do you think?
- Why does nobody in the family want to talk about what happened to Jun? What secrets are being kept?

SEEKING THE TRUTH

- Jay goes to the Philippines looking for the truth – what risks does he need to take in order to find it?
- And how simple and straight-forward is "the truth", after all?

UNDERSTANDING JUN

- We are shown several of Jun's letters – what do they reveal about him? How complete is the picture of Jun that they present?
- Jay feels like he has a clear picture of what Jun is like when the story begins. But in what ways is Jun a more complicated character than Jay first believed? Can you pin down how Jay feels about him by the end of the story? (Have his views about the Philippines become less simple, too?)

SOME FURTHER QUESTIONS

- This is the author's third book – having discovered him now, are you keen to go back and read the others?
- Did reading the facts in the author's note at the end of the book change the way you thought about what you'd read?

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.

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Discussing human rights in this story:

Equality and freedom from discrimination; right to life; right to live in freedom and safety; right to justice and a fair trial; freedom of belief and expression.

- Tito Maning describes the history of 'invading foreigners' (p.181). Why is it important to understand the history and legacy of colonialism?
- Why is it so important that journalists are free to investigate and report? Who should be responsible for protecting them from threats and acts of violence?
- Jay says that 'All of the adults are failing us' (p.326). Who has the power to create change?



Discussing inclusion and representation in this story:

- Jay feels a loss of his Filipino identity due to not knowing the language or fully understanding the culture. How important is it to recognise and celebrate cultural identity? What do you think the author is saying about having more than one identity?
- Why does Jay feel like he needs to stop himself crying?
- Consider how religion and belief are explored in the book.
- How does the use of Jun's letters help the reader to understand an alternative perspective?



***Patron Saints of Nothing* by Randy Ribay**

Before reading

Making predictions

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, complete the 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 *Patron Saints of Nothing*. A saint is someone who the Christian Church has recognised as living an especially holy life. A patron saint is one who is thought to protect and help a particular area, trade, activity and so on. For example, Saint Christopher is the patron saint of travellers, so people might pray to Saint Christopher before taking a long journey.

- 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.

A taster

- Read the extracts from the novel, below.
- Add to your ideas, questions and predictions about the novel, including what genre of story you might expect.

1.

26th December 2015

Dear Kuya Jay,

I have not received a reply from you in three months. In that time I have sent you six letters, counting this one.

Maybe you have moved and forgot to give me the new address? Maybe they were lost in the mail and did not make it to you? Or maybe it is that you are too busy over in America.

2.

Dad turns the laptop to face him and starts typing in the payment information. 'Go get your passport,' he says.

I do and then hover over his shoulder as he enters the last of the information. When he clicks to confirm the purchase, I can't believe this is really happening. A strange, fluttery feeling stirs in my chest. My heart wants to soar, but it's like a bird with clipped wings, the real reason I'm going keeping it grounded.

3.

'You were here how long ago, Sir Jay?' Tomas asks, speaking for the first time in a while, as if nearly arriving at our destination has awakened him.

'About eight years.' But it feels like a million.

He whistles long and low. 'That is a long time to be away from home, sir.'

'This isn't his home,' Tita Ami says.

Tomas laughs. His eyes meet mine in the rearview mirror. 'It is your blood, di ba?'

'Half of my blood, I guess.' Not that I know what that counts for.

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.

Learning about the Philippines

What does Jay know about the Philippines at the start of the novel? Where has he got this information from? As you read, notice where Jay's knowledge is challenged or deepened. Which aspects of the Philippines does Jay feel at home with? Which seem strange to him? Which aspects does he grow to love? Which aspects does he find it hard to live with?

Unravelling the mystery

As Jay gradually finds out more about what happened to Jun, make a note of any clues you think are important and your changing theories about what happened to him.

Jay and Jun's relationship

Why do you think Jay and Jun got on so well, even though they lived in different countries?

New information

As Jay learns more about his cousin, he discovers some surprising things, both about Jun and about several other members of his family. How does your view of and sympathy for the main characters change as the novel progresses?

Reyna

What effect does meeting Reyna and learning about her life have on Jay? What effect does it have on you to know that her experiences are based on the lives of real people? At this stage in the novel, does Jun seem too good to be true, or can you imagine someone like him behaving in this way?

Jay and Mia's friendship

Think about the friendship between Jay and Mia. For example: what does each of them get from the friendship? How does Mia help Jay in his quest to find out the truth about Jun? Do you think their relationship has a future?

The candle ceremony

What do you think is the message Ribay wants the reader to take away from the memorial ceremony?

Back home

In what ways has Jay's trip changed him?

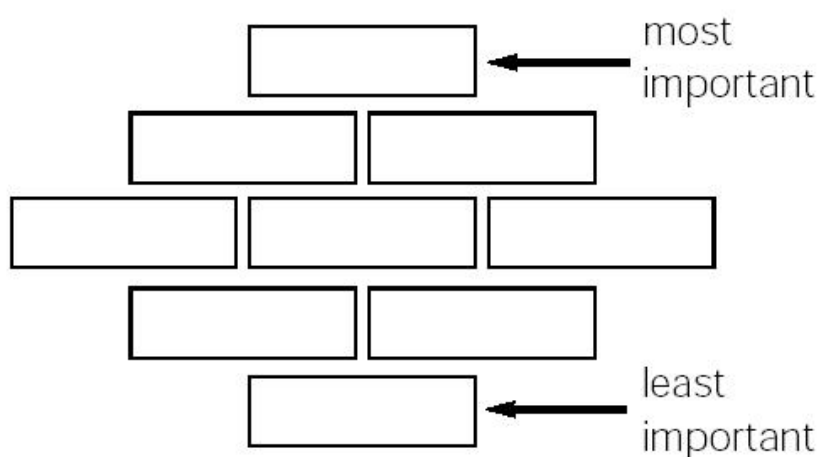
After reading

What is the novel about?

- Below are nine suggestions for what *Patron Saint of Nothing* is about.
- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a 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>Patron Saint of Nothing</i> is about ...		
... seeking the truth.	... guilt.	... connecting with your roots.
... realising that people are not just 'good' or 'bad'.	Having to choose between doing what's right and doing what's safe.	... compassion.
... the clash between different cultures.	... communication.	... the dangers of drugs.

Diamond 9 pattern



Exploring relationships

Much of the novel centres around Jay. However, there are lots of other characters who feature prominently. Remind yourself of the role played by each of the following characters.

Jun	Jay's dad	Jay's mum	Mia
Tito Maning	Tita Ami	Tita Chato	Tita Ines
Grace	Reyna	Tito Danilo	President Duterte

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, cut out the names of the characters and move them around to show different relationships in the novel. For example, you could start by creating family groups.
- Re-shuffle the names and come up with a different set of relationships, for example grouping people according to something they have in common, such as how they deal with Jun's death.
- Stick down the names on a large sheet of paper in a way that you think best shows different relationships in the novel. Draw arrows and insert comments to make it clear what the relationships are.
- If possible, compare your ideas with other readers.
- Write a short piece on your own with the title: *What the novel shows about human relationships*.

Let it be

Jay is advised by several people to try to let go of what happened to Jun and move on. Near the end of the novel he says 'I expected the truth to illuminate, to resurrect. Not to ruin.'

- Discuss whether Jay, Grace and Mia were right to pursue the truth at any cost.

A complex picture

Randy Ribay could have presented President Duterte and his war on drugs, Tito Maning, and Jun in a more one-dimensional way but instead he presents a complex picture, even when it comes to Duterte.

- Why do you think he does this? You could think about:
 - What Tito Maning says about why many ordinary Philppinos supported Duarte's war on drugs, even though innocent people were killed as a result.
 - Why Ribay chose to reveal that Tito Maning continued to try to help Jun after he left home.
 - Why he created Jun as a sensitive, compassionate character who helped others, but also one who sold drugs which he knew would cause problems for others.

Silence won't save you

A theme in the novel is what Grace calls 'faking it' – the way the extended family ignore important issues, almost as if they had never happened.

- How does Jay reflect on this throughout the novel and how do his experiences change his own attitudes to communicating about difficult issues?

The setting

Choose a place in the novel where Ribay really helps you to imagine what it would be like to be in different places in the Philippines such as Tito Maning's house; the slums in Manila; Tita Ines and Tita Chato's house near the sea; Lolo and Lola's house in the village.

- Think about how he has put this across.

The structure

Some of the chapters in the novel are long and involved. Some chapters towards the end are less than a page long.

- Look back through the novel and choose two or three of these very short chapters to read again.
 - Why do you think Ribay chose to keep these so short?
 - Why are they near the end of the novel?
 - What effect do they have on the reader?

Editing the book

Imagine that the editor of the book has suggested cutting some of the dialogue. Here's what the editor has to say:

I love the novel, but too often your characters give little speeches to explain factual information and tell the reader how to think about politics, poverty or drugs. These don't sound real and they slow the story down. I think you should cut some of these sections and let the reader think for themselves a bit more. If they want factual information they can do their own research.

- In role as the writer, Randy Ribay, write an email to your editor, explaining why you included this kind of dialogue and whether you agree with any of their points.

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.

Brilliant, honest, and equal parts heartbreaking and soul-healing.

Laurie Halse Anderson, author of *SHOUT*

Randy Ribay has written a heartrending and powerful coming-of-age novel that explores grief, complex family relationships, and identity. He brilliantly highlights the Philippines' rich culture and history while also exposing some of the horrific issues happening in the country, such as the violent drug war, poverty, and sex trafficking. Although the main reason Jay journeys to the Philippines is to find out how Jun died, he also learns a lot about himself and reconnects with his Filipino heritage. There are many instances where Jay is called out for being too American to truly understand what's happening in the Philippines, but part of Jay's growth and character development involves his learning how to seek out the truth and speak out when injustice is occurring.

Amanda Nojadera, www.common sense media.org

Passionately and fearlessly, Ribay delves into matters of justice, grief, and identity.

Publishers Weekly, starred review

Unfortunately, I did not love this as much as I would have liked. I felt that the characters could have been better fleshed out. Outside of the circumstances brought to them by Jun's passing, I could not tell who they were. Also, the war on drugs is such a complex subject to discuss. And I understand why it's hard to put into words but I wished we could have gone deeper. Because regarding the war on drugs, we only scratched the surface.

But with that said, I praise the author for having the guts to write this story. As a Filipino, I could imagine how hard it was to write this. The current administration censors critics of Duterte's reign. It takes someone with a passion and love for the country to write this. I think this book will be an eye opener for those clueless with what's happening in the Philippines. I highly encourage everyone to give this book a try. This is the type of story that needs to be told.

Maica on www.goodreads.com

While this story features numerous elements that you'd expect to find in a YA novel—friction between teens and their parents, budding romance and its inherent complications, dilemmas regarding identity and the future—Ribay's novel transcends the trappings of the genre and depicts compelling moments of epiphany as Jay arrives at uncomfortable but necessary truths about how well we actually know those we profess to care about, the complex motives that drive human behaviour, and our ability to control our own destinies. Highly recommended.

James on www.amazon.co.uk

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>