



AUTHOR

Katya Balen has written four books to date. The second, *October, October*, won the Yoto Carnegie Medal in 2022. As well as being a writer, she is co-director of Mainspring Arts, a not-for-profit organization that supports neurodivergent and autistic people to access creative opportunities. She lives in London with her partner and their dogs Raffi and Mouse.

WEBSITE

<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/authors/katya-balen/>

LINKS

Q & A with Katya Balen

<https://www.readingzone.com/authors/katya-balen/>

Inightful book review

<https://www.readingzone.com/books/the-light-in-everything/>

Educational resource pack designed for Key Stage 2; also suitable for KS3

https://www.bloomsbury.com/media/0w1cbrec/lie_teachersnotes_pb.pdf



THE LIGHT IN EVERYTHING

Older Readers Shortlist 2023

INTRODUCTION

This powerful story explores **sensitive issues** (including **domestic abuse**, blended families, changing schools, a new baby and complications in pregnancy); as well as **deep emotions** (anger, jealousy, fear and the sense of belonging). However, this emotionally-charged, **dual-narrative** story about two very different eleven-year-olds is ultimately uplifting and life-affirming.

When introducing the book, a good passage to read aloud would be pages 64 – 67 which marks the point in the story when everything starts to **change** for Tom and Zofia. While neither are happy about what's going to happen, their reactions highlight the differences between their characters.

ACTIVITIES

Read: Find out about the symbolism of cranes in Japanese culture.

<https://mapleandmoon.com/blogs/news/legend-of-the-crane-%E9%B6%B4-a-symbol-of-hope-healing>

Discuss the importance and significance of folding paper cranes for Tom personally and on behalf of his baby sister Ula.

Write or illustrate: Invite children to write about what they like to do to help them feel calmer or to cope with difficult situations or feelings.

Children could be asked to create a Word Cloud for the novel; or to create character portraits/profiles for Tom and Zofia.

Make: Follow these step-by-step instructions for making an easy origami crane. Although this tutorial is designed for beginners, there are a lot of folds involved! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GC_Szxdqh2Y

NOW READ ON

The Light Jar by Lisa Thompson (Scholastic, 2018) Nate and his mum run away from her abusive boyfriend. A poignant mystery story. 10+

Skellig by David Almond (Hodder Children's Books, 2013) A lyrical

magical story about a boy dealing with his baby sister's illness. 11+

The Weight of Water by Sarah Crossan (Bloomsbury, 2019) Verse novel about first love, friendship and courage. 12+

We Are All Made of Molecules by Susin Nielson (Andersen Press, 2016)

YA novel, featuring polar opposite step-siblings who support each other. Strong themes covered, dealt with humour and sensitivity. 13+