

# YA Book Prize 2022: Who Would You Choose?

Comparing themes and narratives in the shortlist

## Level:

S2–S5 / KS3–4

## Explore themes of:

√ Queerness √ Community √ Mystery √ Belonging √ Identity

## Subject Checklist:

√ Expressive Arts √ English Language √ Social Studies √ Wellbeing and Health √ Creative Writing

## The YA Book Prize: Who would you Choose?

The YA Bookprize shortlist is chosen by the Bookseller magazine, before the winner is selected by a panel of experts. This resource is based on one of two special events for schools which feature a selection of the shortlisted authors: **Tanya Bryne, Simon James Green, Holly Bourne, Lisa Williamson, Adiba Jaigirdar**

*Note to teachers: These books contain some material that may not be suitable for some students. We recommend that teachers read the books carefully before using it in the classroom or recommending it to students and/or seek parental guidance.*

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## ***Hani and Ishu's Fake Guide to Dating, You're The One that I Want and Afterlove: Exploring Queer love***

**Adiba Jaigirdar's *Hani and Ishu's Fake Guide to Dating*, is the ultimate accidental love story Hani Khan is one of the most popular girls at school. But when she comes out to her friends as bisexual, they don't believe her, claiming she can't be bi if she's only dated guys. Ishu, on the other hand is an academic overachiever, with her sights set on becoming head girl. Her only problem? But she can't win without increasing her popularity at school.**

As Hani and Ishu start fake dating, they start real feelings for each other, some people will do anything to stop two Bengali girls from finding their happy ever after.

In Simon James Green's *You're the One that I Want*, Freddie starts to believe that he is unremarkable, especially in comparison to his mum and her star-studded life. But when he decides to say YES! So, saying 'yes' to every opportunity that comes by, it's not long before Freddie finds himself auditioning for the school musical production of Grease, getting noticed at school, actually going to parties, and flirting with hot new boy Zach! He's becoming a whole new, exciting person. But the path to love is never smooth, and Freddie comes to learn that sometimes getting things wrong is an important part of figuring out what - and who - you really want.

Tanya Byrne's *Aflove* takes place at the intersection between this life and the next. When Ash gets hit by a car, all she hears is the snap of breaking glass as the windscreen hits her and breaks into a million pieces like stars. But she made it, she's still here. Or is she? This New Year's Eve, Ash gets an RSVP from the afterlife she can't decline: to join a clan of formidable girl reapers who take the souls of the city's dead to await their fate. But Ash can't forget her first love, Poppy, and she will do anything to see her again...even if it means they only get a few more days together. Dead or alive.

Adiba Jaigirdar

Hani  
and Ishu's  
guide to  
Fake Dating



YOU'RE



THE



ONE



THAT I

WANT



SIMON JAMES GREEN





*not even death  
will tear them apart*

# *Afterlove*

TANYA BYRNE

## Queer love:

1. How does each book present queerness?
2. Which obstacles are posed to the characters' love stories? Are they cultural or something else?
3. Why is it important for queer love stories to be represented in literature?

## Book Cover Activity: Inside my Head . . .

Look at the covers of the three books. Note down some inferences you can make about the connections between the central characters', thoughts, feelings, and experiences from the artwork. From looking at the book covers, what do you think connects them? Consider the following:

- *The use or lack of colour*
- *The contrast between light and darkness*
- *How the characters have been illustrated*
- *Anything else you find interesting*

Think about Queerness means to you and create a visual mind-map based on all the words and ideas that you have associated with Queerness. Lay all of your mind-maps on the floor and look at all the different ideas that you have come up with.

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## Read the Extract

*Taken from chapter 1 of 'Hani and Ishu's Fake Guide to Dating'.*

## Discussion Questions

1. What impression do you get of the relationship between Nikhita and Ishu?
2. In what ways is Nikhita's communication over the phone unusual?
3. Why is Nikhita's request a strange one?
4. What kind of student do you think Ishu is?
5. Why does everyone expect Humaira and Ishu to be friends?
6. Do you think Ishu cares about popularity and friendship?
7. What impression do you get of the Bengali community from the passage?
8. What assumptions does Ishu make about Humaira?
9. What are the main differences between Ishu and Humaira?
10. In the second half of the passage, we hear no more about Ishu's strange phone call with Nikhita, what dramatic effect does this have on the reader? Does it build or decrease tension?

## **Read the Extract**

*Taken from chapter 1 of 'Afterlove'*

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What is Ashana's main fear described in the passage?
2. In what ways does Adara offer support to Ashana?
3. How do the girls from Rodean make Adara and Ashana feel different? What are the physical differences between the girls?
4. Can you explain Poppy's danger theory and why it reduces the power of Adara's fear of the open water?
5. Adara compares Poppy's laugh to the sound of her grandmother's gold bangles, what does this intimate comparison suggest to you?
6. What does Adara discover about Poppy and what does she more does she long to know?
7. What does Adara's description of the 'ghost girls' reveal about her romantic and sexual experiences?
8. On page 22, what do you think Adara means by her description of 'the One'? What impression do we get of her longing?
9. Throughout this passage, Adara nervously awaits for the moment with Poppy to end, how do we get a sense of her anticipation?
10. Towards the end of the passage on page 24, Adara says that her chest hurts for a 'different reason' but one that she can not name, can you think of some words to describe what this feeling may be?

## **Read the Extract**

*Taken from Chapter 1 of 'You're The One that I Want'*

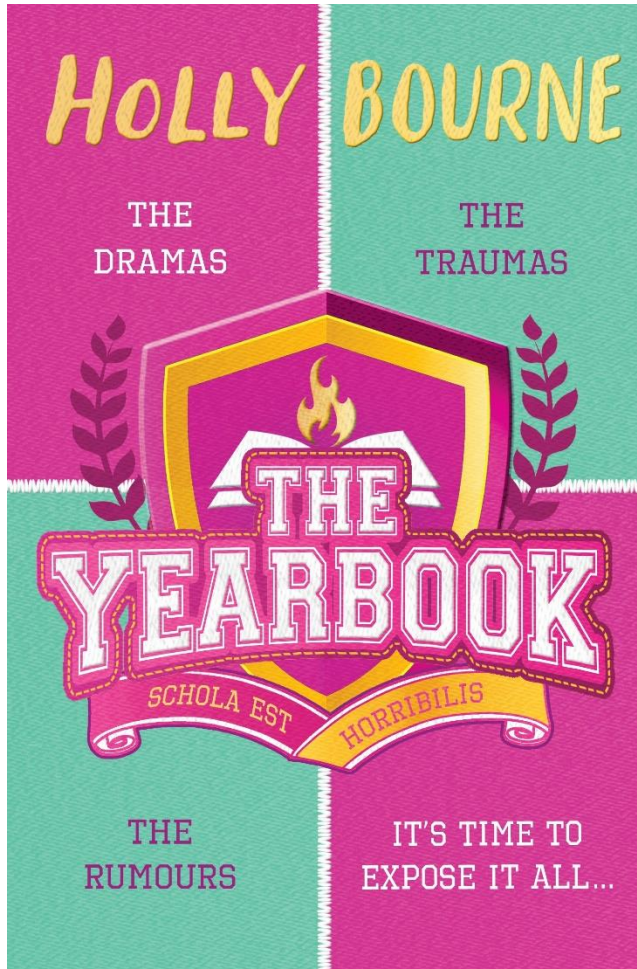
## Discussion Questions

1. How do we get a sense of Freddie's frustration with himself?
2. What recent developments have occurred in Freddie's mum's career?
3. Although Freddie gets mistaken for a waiter, why does he also get a sense of relief from this role?
4. Why does Freddie feel ill at ease around his mum?
5. How would you characterise his mum's behaviour? Is she supportive of Freddie?
6. What impression do you get of Freddie's love life? List the ways in which his mum takes such an active interest in it?
7. How does Freddie's mum attitude and behaviour differ towards Jasper?
8. In what ways do we get a sense of Freddie's isolation and insecurity?
9. The passage includes extensive description of Jasper's physical appearance, list all the ways in which he is described.
10. What dramatic effect does the final sentence of the passage have?

## ***The Yearbook and First Day of My Life: Entering the World of Fantasy***



## The Yearbook



Working on the school newspaper, Paige is used to dealing with fake stories. How popular girl Grace is a such an amazing person (lie). How Laura steals people's boyfriends (lie). How her own family are so perfect (lie). Now Grace and friends have picked their "best" high-school moments for Paige to put in the all-important Yearbook. And they're not just fake. They're poison. But Paige has had enough of all the lies in her life. And with the help of Elijah - the only boy who could ever understand her - she's going to reveal the truth.

## First Day of My Life

There are three sides to every story... It's GCSE results day. Frankie's best friend, Jojo, is missing. A baby has been stolen. And more than one person has been lying. Frankie's determined to find out the truth and her ex-boyfriend Ram is the only person who can help her. But they're both in for a shock... EVERYTHING is about to change



1. How is a sense of tension created in each book?
2. Who are the narrators in each book? What significance does a first person narrative have on the plot?
3. When and where is each book set? Does that have relevance to the narrative and how might we compare the books in this light?

### **Book Cover Activity: Portraying School Mysteries . . .**

Look at the covers of *The Yearbook* and *First Day of My Life*. Note down what you can infer from the respective fantasy worlds of each book by looking at their covers. How is magic portrayed on each book cover? Consider the following:

- *The textures and surfaces evoked*
- *The colours chosen to portray the stories*
- *How is mystery visually implied?*
- *Anything else you find interesting*

Think about why school is such a great location for a mystery. Imagine the perfect school for a mystery- what would it look like? What would the student body be like? How would the teachers be? Write a brief newspaper article reporting how strange this school is.

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### **Read the Extract**

*Taken the first chapter of 'The Yearbook'*

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why are Paige's reasons for hiding in the bathroom different to the other school girls?
2. What impression do we get of Paige from the passage, is she characterised as confident?
3. On page 11, why does Paige describe Charlie Shaw with a 'waking bullseye' on his back?
4. From the passage, what do you think Paige's general attitude towards school is?
5. On page 14, Paige lists all the actions that will ensue because of the school troublemakers, how do we get a sense of her frustration in this passage?
6. On page 12, who do you think Ruby may be?
7. What is the general significance of the yearbook pictures? Why are they so important?

8. What is Paige's reputation at school? How does she assume she will be remembered?
9. What assumptions can we make about Paige's school? Is it a supportive environment?
10. On page 16, why does Paige think it is better to be scarred rather than forgotten?



*Actual Investors*

