



TEACHERS' NOTES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Lower to upper secondary
(Ages 12+; years 9-12)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Critical and Creative Thinking; Ethical Understanding; Intercultural Understanding; Literacy
- **Cross-curriculum priorities:** Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Students can consider the conventions and tropes of romance novels, as well as exploring themes including cyber safety, ethical dilemmas and self-perception.

THEMES

- Enemies-to-lovers trope
- Cyber safety
- Ethics
- Self-perception

PREPARED BY

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I Hope This Doesn't Find You Ann Liang

PLOT SUMMARY

Sadie Wen is perfect on paper.

She's school captain, valedictorian, and a 'pleasure to have in class.' Sadie has a trick to maintaining her model-student smile: she channels her frustrations into draft emails. She'd never send them – she'd rather die than hurt anyone's feelings – but it's a relief to let loose on her power-hungry English teacher or credit-stealing classmate.

Sadie's most vehement words – 'You're attention starved and self-obsessed and unbearably vain' – are directed at her cocaptain, Julius Gong, whose arrogance and competitive streak have always infuriated her.

She doesn't hold back in her emails, because nobody will ever read them . . . until they're accidentally sent out. It's Sadie's worst nightmare – now everyone at school knows what she really thinks, and they're not afraid to tell her what they really think of her either.

But amid the chaos, there's one person growing to appreciate the 'real' Sadie – Julius, the only boy she's sworn to hate . . .

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ann Liang is a graduate of the University of Melbourne and author of the critically acclaimed YA novels *This Time It's Real* and *If You Could See the Sun*. Born in Beijing, she grew up traveling back and forth between China and Australia, but somehow ended up with an American accent. When she isn't writing, she can be found making overambitious to-do lists, binge-watching dramas, and having profound conversations with her pet labradoodle about who's a good dog. You can find her online at annliang.com.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Ann says:

When I first came up with the plot for *I Hope This Doesn't Find You*, I was inspired by the idea of love letters with a twist. I've always been drawn to love letters in fiction – there's something so intimate and romantic about them, in part because you have to be deliberate with every word you write, craft each sentence with the utmost care, and hope that your letter not only reaches the recipient, but moves them. In many ways, hate emails are the exact opposite of that: an unfiltered spill of your most vicious thoughts, very much not intended for the subject to ever read in their lifetime. But as a romance writer, I was fascinated by that contrast, by the ever-thin line between love and hate, and how a relationship might bloom from the most unlikely of beginnings.

During the writing process itself, I like to imagine the kind of reader I'm writing the story for. While I was drafting *I Hope This Doesn't Find You*, I found myself picturing the teenagers who had to grow up a little too fast. The ones who put on a smile and insist that they're fine, and learn to hide their problems so well that nobody else notices when something's wrong. The ones who are made to feel like they're the second choice, or that they have to prove their worth over and over in order to be loved. The ones who place tremendous pressure on themselves to be perfect at all times, who are terrified to let anyone down, who stay up at night worrying about things they can't change. The people pleasers like Sadie Wen, who never say no and always try, try, try. I wanted to write this book for them, to tell them that it's okay to make mistakes, that you can be kind to others while also being kind to yourself. So I wrote this book with the fervent hope that it finds its way to these readers, and that it'll be able to offer them some form of comfort or joy.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

- Have a look at the cover and the blurb. See if you can identify any elements of the romance genre. For instance, the cover's colour scheme, the positioning of the two main characters and the enemies-to-loves trope mentioned in the blurb.
- By dissecting the blurb, pinpoint what you think the story will be about and the concepts that it might explore. What seems interesting to you about the story before reading it?

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Tropes

Different fiction genres often come with their own tropes – recurring themes, motifs or plots that are common across many books in that genre.

For instance, the enemies-to-lovers scenario in *I Hope This Doesn't Find You* is a trope in the romance genre, in which two characters start off as enemies and, over the course of a book or series, end up developing a romantic relationship.

Questions and activities

Julius isn't just a boy. He's my enemy. My equal. My point of comparison. He's the one I'm constantly trying to outrun, to outsmart, to impress. He's the ever-moving target in my peripheral vision, the person I've mapped all my plans around, the start and finish line and everything in between. All my dreams and nightmares are about him and only him. (pp. 144–145)

- Identify other novels/movies/stories you have come across that explore the enemies-to-lovers trope. (For instance, *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, *To All the Boys Loved Before* by Jenny Han and *The Hating Game* by Sally Thorne.) Why do the characters start off disliking one another? At what points in the story do they change their minds/start to fall for each other? Draw a flowchart mapping the key turning points and narrative beats that become catalysts for this change.
- Once you have done this, compare this to how the trope plays out in *I Hope This Doesn't Find You*. Is it similar? Do the characters realise they have fallen for each other around a similar point in the narrative?
- Pinpoint moments in the novel that indicate Sadie and Julius are beginning to fall for each other. How does the author make this an authentic, believable progression? An example might be when Julius gives Sadie his gold medal when she can't compete in the Athletics Carnival, or when Sadie



stands up for Julius when his older brother, James, is being hurtful to him.

- What other romance tropes can you name?
- If you read other genres, what other tropes or recurring plots have you spotted in those genres? For instance, fantasy novels might include tropes such as 'the chosen one' or a quest or an evil overlord; crime novels often include red herrings or a big reveal featuring all the suspects; horror stories might include a haunted house.
- Why do you think those tropes have become popular, and why do you think readers often choose to read multiple books featuring the same trope? What is it about the familiarity of a trope that appeals to readers?
- Writers need to work hard to make sure a story feels fresh and original if the plot includes a trope. Name some of the plot points that Ann Liang has added to *I Hope This Doesn't Find You* that deepen and enrich the story beyond the 'enemies-to-lovers' concept.

Cyber safety

"Everything you post will leave a permanent mark on the internet. Every comment, every interaction, every selfie . . . Your digital footprint could affect your school records, your future colleges, your future jobs." (pp. 68–69)

While Sadie isn't the one to send off her draft emails, there are a bunch of ramifications once it happens. Her relationships with her classmates, her teachers and the school's overall image are affected.

- When something is online, it is there forever. List examples of how an ill-suited post could affect your job, relationships, friendships, etc. For instance, think of the backlash celebrities or online personalities receive when they post something publicly that they shouldn't.
- While everything turns out okay in *I Hope This Doesn't Find You*, what could have been some series implications for Sadie and her academic pursuits if things had gone the other way?
- What are some ways to be safe online? Examples might be keeping your accounts on private, thinking twice about what you are posting and having secure passwords.

Ethics

"Not on purpose . . . Not all of them. I was just—I was reading the draft you wrote to Julius, and I knew that he'd been bothering you for ages, and in that moment I thought . . . I don't know, I was tired of seeing

people walk all over you. It was only one email; it was only supposed to be one email." (p. 278)

When we finally uncover how Sadie's draft emails were exposed to the world, we find out it's someone close to her who felt it would help Sadie become a more assertive person.

Questions and activities

- Do you think sending the emails without Sadie's knowledge/permission was okay? Can you understand why the person did it? Do you think there might have been a better way for them to help Sadie? Discuss with your classmates.
- Discuss the ethical ramifications of this decision by making a pros and cons table.
- If you were Sadie, would you have accepted this person's apology? How do you think this might affect your relationship with someone who did this to you?
- Is it better to have everything 'out in the open', with complete honesty, even if it could hurt someone? Where should you draw the line when it comes to giving people feedback?
- What else could Sadie have done to show others how she was feeling, without resorting to her angry emails?

Self-perception

"All you do is work and study and live for other people," she goes on, gesturing to the stacks of textbooks on the floor, the shiny awards and sports trophies on the bookshelf. "Yes, you help out a lot, and I'm very grateful for it; the bakery wouldn't be running without you. But I'd much rather see you enjoying your teen years while you can. I worry that you're going to look back when you're twenty or forty and all you'll remember is your desk and the dishes. Really, it would ease my guilt if you did." Her smile is sad. "I never wanted you to grow up this fast." (p. 184–185)

It's true, I guess. I haven't really talked about it with anyone. Not my mom, because I don't want her to worry. Not Max, because I don't think he'd understand. And not Abigail, because I don't want her pity. But maybe it's also habit by this point. The summer when I was eleven, we had flown to China for a large family gathering, and as everyone was trading stories and laughing and clinking drinks in the crimson glow of the restaurant, a fish bone had gotten lodged in my throat. Instead of making a big deal out of it and trying to cough it out in front of thirty-six people I was directly or indirectly related to, I'd chosen to swallow it inward, to quietly absorb the pain as the bone scraped its way down while I sat there and smiled. Nobody could have guessed that something was



wrong.

It was only years later, when the event had long passed, that I had even thought to bring it up with my mother as a joke. She was horrified. You could have choked to death, she'd scolded me. You should've said something. But you were chatting with laolao, I'd replied. I was afraid of bothering you.

She had been silent for a long time. When she finally breathed out, her eyes were so sad and heavy I'd regretted bringing it up in the first place. Why are you this way? she kept asking, until I didn't know if she was directing the question at me or herself. Since when did you become this way? (p. 277)

Another key theme explored in *I Hope This Doesn't Find You* is the enormous amount of pressure Sadie places on herself academically. This comes from Sadie feeling responsible for her father leaving – even though it wasn't her fault – and feeling the need to take care of her family. As a result of being there for everyone else, Sadie rarely stands up for herself or prioritises her own needs.

- While Sadie's competitiveness with Julius is motivated by her desire to beat him (and liking him!), do you think it is also influenced by something else? A need to prove herself, perhaps, beyond her desire to do well and get a good job to support her family? How does her competitiveness become healthier by the end of the book?
- *But I think I'm starting to get it. The vicious look on [Julius's] face when I'd beaten him in that class debate. Why he's never mentioned his brother before. Why he's so ruthlessly determined to be first all the time. Why he's scowling now, the lines of his shoulder tight. (p. 125)*

List any similarities you can find between Sadie and Julius towards their approach to learning. Do you think Sadie comes to understand Julius and ultimately herself a bit more when finding out more about him and his family dynamics?

- Do you think Sadie's lifestyle is sustainable? Why is balance important? How do you try to find balance between school, hobbies and friendships in your life?

... I feel lighter than I have in years. (p. 302)

- How does Julius help Sadie become more comfortable in her own skin, and a freer, confident person? Can you think of any other characters who help Sadie see this, too?

This entire time I've been worried sick about him and his future, desperate to solve every problem to come up, because I thought that he wasn't worried at all. That he simply didn't care enough. But he's okay—far

better than okay. And this bakery is okay too. And, somehow, so is my mom, who's smiling at both of us, her eyes bright.

And I have to wonder when things changed. Or if it's been like this for years, but I was buried too deep in my own guilt to look up and see for myself that everything is really, truly fine. (p. 305)

- Sadie's brother Max is an interesting character in the story, almost operating as a 'foil' for Sadie. He is presented as her polar opposite – carefree about his studies and more focused on his sporting career, and not as attentive helping out their mum with the bakery as Sadie is.

Define what a literary foil is. How is Max Sadie's foil? While Sadie spends most of the story perceiving Max a certain way, what does she end up learning from him and how does this ultimately develop her own character arc and self-perception?

- Identify moments of Sadie's character growth in the novel, where she slowly starts to unburden herself of all the responsibility she carries on her shoulders. Can you relate to the way Sadie feels or recall times in your life where you have changed or grown as a person?



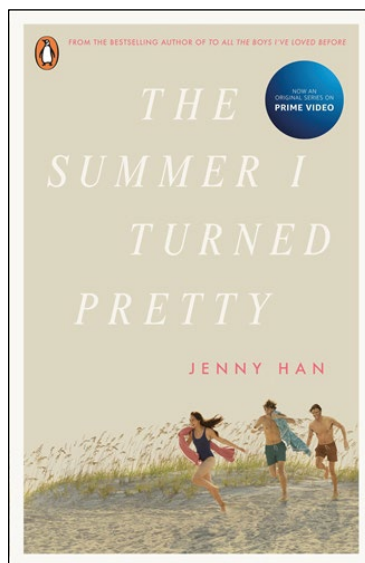
FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



This Time It's Real
by Ann Liang

Get ready to fall in love in this hilarious romcom about a girl who begins a fake relationship with the famous actor in her class, perfect for fans of Meg Cabot and Jenny Han.

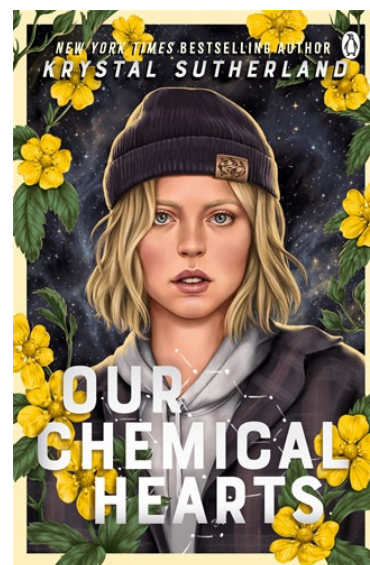
[Teachers' notes available.](#)



The Summer I Turned Pretty
by Jenny Han

The Summer I Turned Pretty is now a major new TV series on Amazon Prime! If you loved *The Kissing Booth* and Jenny Han's smash-hit Netflix movie series *To All the Boys I Loved Before*, then you'll adore this gorgeous, funny, romantic story!

[Teachers' notes available.](#)



Our Chemical Hearts
by Krystal Sutherland

An irresistible story of first love, broken hearts, and the golden seams that put them back together again. A new edition of the brilliant debut YA novel by the New York Times bestselling author of *House of Hollow*, Krystal Sutherland.

[Teachers' notes available.](#)



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
I Hope This Doesn't Find You	Ann Liang	9781761049811	7-12	\$19.99		
This Time It's Real	Ann Liang	9781761049804	7-12	\$19.99		
The Summer I Turned Pretty	Jenny Han	9780241599198	7-12	\$19.99		
Our Chemical Hearts	Krystal Sutherland	9781761048760	7-12	\$19.99		
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