

I Hope This Doesn't Find You



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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Secondary

SYNOPSIS

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 co-captain, 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 travelling 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.

THEMES

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

STUDY NOTES**BEFORE READING**

- 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-lovers 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?

AFTER READING**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. Identify other novels/movies/stories you have come across that explore the enemies-to-lovers trope.
 - 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?
- 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 the author, 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

- 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 serious 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

- 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. 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

- Another key theme explored in *I Hope This Doesn't Find You* is the enormous amount of pressure Sadie places on herself academically. 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?
- 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?
- 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?
- 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?