

Discussion Questions for *Just Like You*

1. It seems that to critique a book fairly we should understand its genre and while Hornby is considered a literary writer, this is a very different book from say, Rebecca Makkai's *The Great Believers*, also considered literary (**Maribeth Fischer**). So, what *is* the genre (correct word?): is this novel Comic? Ironic? Social commentary? Some combo of these or other genres? (**Katherine Gekker**). **Judy Catterton** adds "This book is described in a review as an 'amiable comedy.' Does that term shed light on how to approach this book?"
2. Does understanding the genre allow us to better answer this next question? "Why do you think the writer chose to write in this way about this topic—mixed-race, multigenerational, class, education, etc.?—**Katherine Gekker**"
3. Perhaps related to the above: "Why am I thinking of opera buffa (basically a comedic opera)? All the duets, trios, quartets, etc. of voices, with a chorus as well: of friends, strangers, the outside world of Brexit, US election, race relations, and more"—**Katherine Gekker**
4. One of the reasons we chose this book was because we'd done some heavy or serious books (*The Great Believers*, *Horse*,) tackling heavy serious subjects (AIDS crisis, racism) and we thought it would be interesting to look at a book that dealt with a heavy subject like race in a lighter, even humorous way. But is this really possible? Does the book succeed in making the reader aware of some of the issues surrounding say, race, *without* doing the deep dive?—**Maribeth Fischer**
5. The dialogue seemed to sacrifice realism in favor of comedy. The conversation between the two main characters seemed a quest for cleverness and only infrequently a serious conversation about serious issues. Might this have been the author's goal (going back to the idea of opera buffa as well as the question above), or is it simply a flaw in the dialogue?—**Judy Catterton**
6. Speaking of realism, **Paul Dyer** asks if a book has to be realistic to move the reader, to make us care? "The situation was totally unrealistic," he comments, and yet he "was compelled to keep turning the pages, and cared what became of the characters by the book's end."
7. A number of readers didn't buy the attraction between the two characters. Some didn't get what he saw in her (at all); others couldn't understand her attraction to him (at all). Is the unbelievability part of the point Hornby is making? And what is that point?—**Maribeth Fischer**
8. What is the significance of the Brexit theme? Does it compliment the other themes in the book?—**Judy Catterton**

9. *Just Like You* is the title of this book which is about two people who couldn't be more different...Why this title?—**Maribeth Fischer**