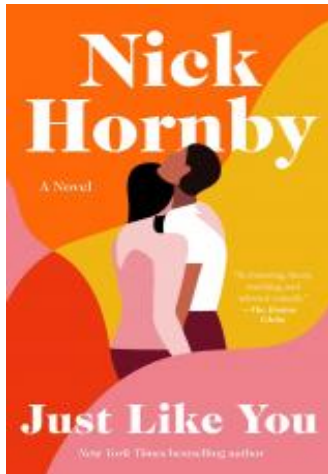


Just Like You

by Nick Hornby



About the Book

This warm, wise, highly entertaining 21st-century love story is about what happens when the person who makes you happiest is someone you never expected.

Lucy used to handle her adult romantic life according to the script she'd been handed. She met a guy just like herself: same age, same background, same hopes and dreams; they got married and started a family. Too bad he made her miserable. Now, two decades later, she's a nearly divorced, 41-year-old schoolteacher with two school-aged sons, and there is no script anymore.

So when she meets Joseph, she isn't exactly looking for love --- she's more in the market for a babysitter. Joseph is 22, living at home with his mother and working several jobs, including the butcher counter where he and Lucy meet. It's not a match anyone one could have predicted. He's of a different class, a different culture and a different generation. But sometimes it turns out that the person who can make you happiest is the one you least expect, though it can take some maneuvering to see it through.

JUST LIKE YOU is a brilliantly observed, tender but also brutally funny new novel that gets to the heart of what it means to fall surprisingly and headlong in love with the best possible person --- someone you didn't see coming.

Discussion Guide

1. JUST LIKE YOU centers on the unexpected relationship between Lucy and Joseph, who are different in almost every way --- age, race, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, parenting experience, even music preference --- yet they fall in love. In what ways do their differences create challenges for their connection? In what ways do their differences enhance their connection? Have you ever experienced anything similar?

2. How does the author convey the major differences between the characters, beyond just the facts about their lives and families? What other ways does he show you who they really are? How does he convey the similarities they share, beyond their surface differences?

3. On paper, Lucy and Michael Marwood seem perfect for each other. Why doesn't it work out for them? What about for Joseph and Hanna? For Joseph and Jaz? Do you believe there's a "right one" for all of us, or a "right one for right now," or some other way of thinking about the best romantic match?

4. Joseph's sister Grace is, like Joseph, in an interracial relationship. Do you think she and Scott faced any of the same relationship woes that Lucy and Joseph did? Do you think Lucy and Joseph's story will end the same way that Grace and Scott's did?

5. For a while, Joseph and Lucy try to deny their feelings for each other. Do you think they are mostly worried about what other people will think, or what they themselves think about the situation? Have you ever led with your head when you should have led with your heart, or vice versa?

6. Whatever form it may take, communication is an important part of any relationship. Though their age difference means they have slightly different relationships with technology, Joseph and Lucy communicate early on via text. Consider what role this plays in the evolution of their relationship. Consider, too, how the author uses their texts within the narrative, and how it allows him to illustrate more than just what they are saying to each other. Do you think Lucy and Joseph would ever have gotten together in a pre-texting culture?

7. This love story is deliberately set against the time period leading up to and following both Brexit and the U.S. Presidential election of 2016. How does the author relate this recent history and current events to the decisions and challenges facing Lucy and Joseph? What effect does this backdrop have on the actions of the characters? What effect does it have on the reader's interpretation of the front story? Do you think it would be read any differently if it were set, say, 10 years earlier?

8. The author writes this story from two different points of view, giving us access to both Lucy and Joseph. One is a white woman, the other is a Black man. Did you connect more with one voice or character over the other? Did it surprise you which one you more strongly connected to?

Author Bio

Nick Hornby is the author of such bestselling novels as *HIGH FIDELITY*, *ABOUT A BOY* and *A LONG WAY DOWN*, as well as several works of nonfiction. Many of his books have been turned into successful films and TV series. He has been Oscar-nominated twice, for his screenplays of *An Education* and *Brooklyn*. His 10-part, short-form TV series, "State of the Union," directed by Stephen Frears, has recently been broadcast by the Sundance Channel and the BBC, and has won three Emmys. He lives in London.

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