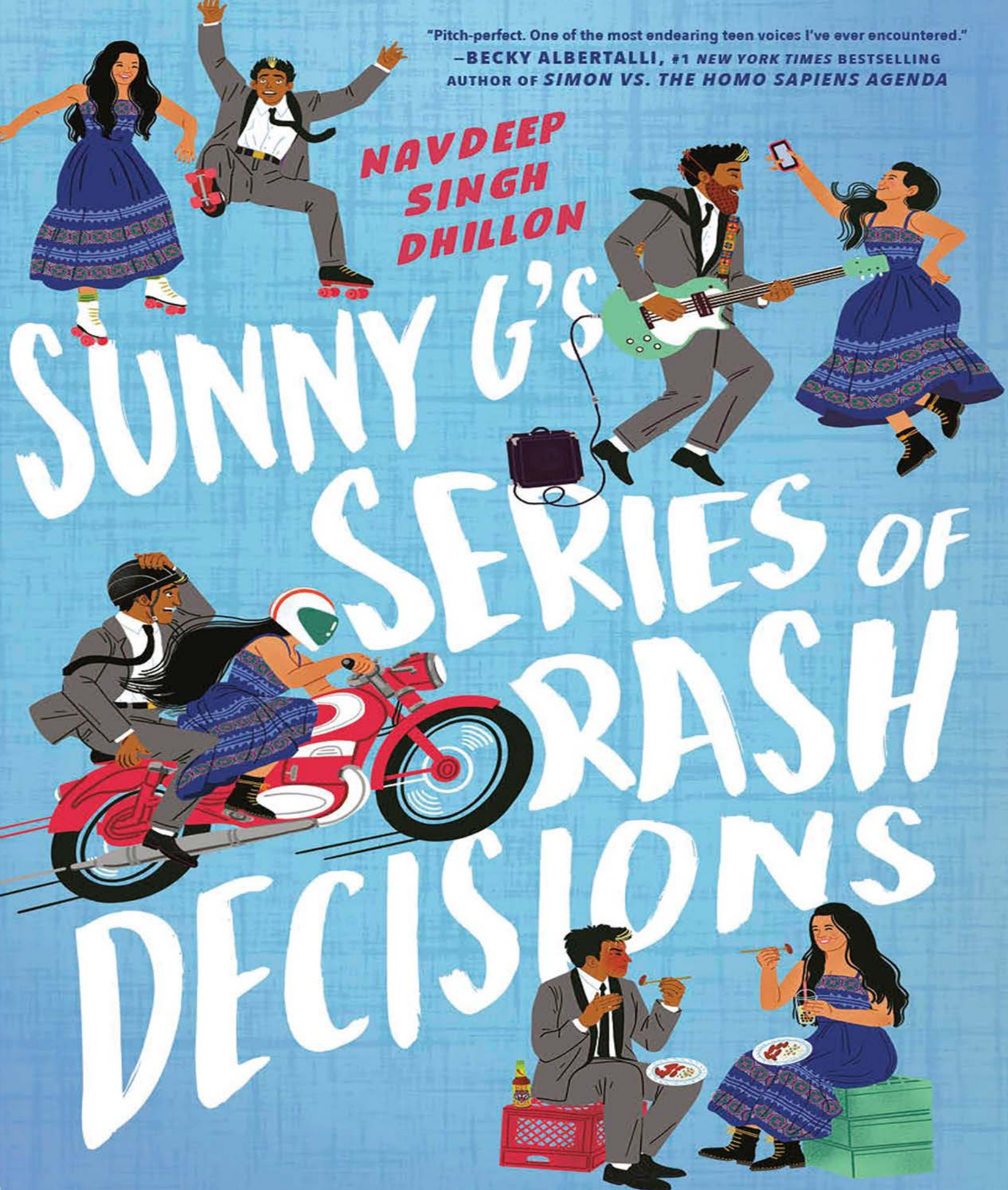


"Pitch-perfect. One of the most endearing teen voices I've ever encountered."

—BECKY ALBERTALLI, #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING
AUTHOR OF *SIMON VS. THE HOMO SAPIENS AGENDA*

NAVDEEP
SINGH
DHILLON

SUNNY G'S
SERIES OF
RASH
DECISIONS



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

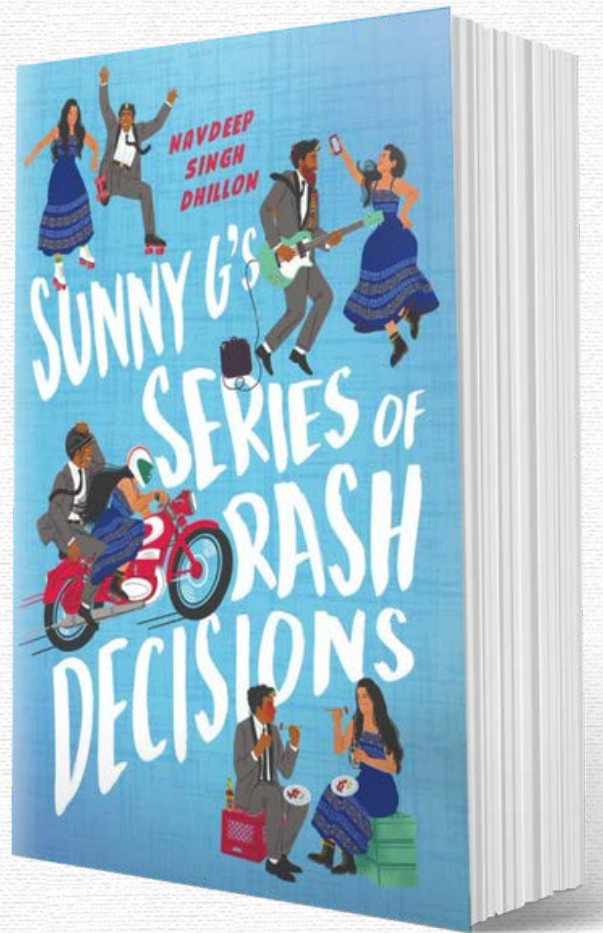


ABOUT THE BOOK

Sunny G's brother left him one thing when he died: His notebook, which Sunny is determined to fill up with a series of rash decisions. Decision number one was a big one: He stopped wearing his turban, cut off his hair, and shaved his beard. He doesn't look like a Sikh anymore. He doesn't look like himself anymore. Even his cosplay doesn't look right without his beard.

Sunny debuts his new look at prom, which he's stuck going to alone. He's skipping the big fandom party—the one where he'd normally be in full cosplay, up on stage playing bass with his band and his best friend, Ngozi—in favor of the Very Important Prom Experience. An experience that's starting to look like a bust.

Enter Mindii Vang, a girl with a penchant for making rash decisions of her own, starting with stealing Sunny's notebook. When Sunny chases after her, prom turns into an all-night adventure—a night full of rash, wonderful, romantic, stupid, life-changing decisions.



GRADES 9 AND UP | HC: 978-0-592-10997-7



Navdeep Singh Dhillon (He/Him) is the author of *SUNNY G'S SERIES OF RASH DECISIONS* (2/8/22). He has worked as a linguist in the U.S. Navy, a photographer, dishwasher, paperboy, ESL teacher in China, and is currently adjunct professor of creative writing and composition at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. He was born in England and spent his childhood in Nigeria, Tanzania, Dubai, and the Central Valley of California (Hi, Fresno!). While he speaks several languages, he is a Punjabi boy at heart =)

He holds an MFA in creative writing from California State University, Fresno, a post-grad certificate from the Writers' Institute at CUNY and is a proud two-time VONA fiction workshop alum. He is obsessed with Bhangra, Bollywood, baking, and Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Common Core Standards push readers to look closer when reading a text including examining author's craft and analyzing word choice and narrative elements. Dhillon's novel, *Sunny G's Series of Rash Decisions*, includes intricate themes, complex characters, specific word choice, and a well-crafted plot that allows the reader to deeply delve into the text. This teaching guide include discussion questions and language arts activities to be used in grades 9 and up as this text is read as a whole group, small group, or a combination. This guide could also be modified to be used with a student who is reading the novel independently.

The Common Core Anchor Standards in English Language Arts and the Themes in the National Council for Social Studies Curriculum Standards that can be addressed using the discussion questions and activities in this guide are:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1](#)
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2](#)
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3](#)
Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4](#)
Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5](#)
Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10](#)
Read and comprehend complex literary texts independently and proficiently.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7](#)
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- [THEME 1: CULTURE](#)
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.
- [THEME 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE](#)
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.
- [THEME 5: INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS](#)
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions
- [THEME 9: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS](#)
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions as reading check-ins, writing prompts, or classroom discussions throughout *Sunny G's Series of Rash Decisions*.



1. Sunny and Ngozi love Dafydd and Safia from Jamie Snollygoster and felt that Safia was the real hero. What minor character in Sunny G is actually a hero and didn't get the credit they deserved?
2. Sunny looks up and likes Dafydd because he is a good friend to Jamie because of his loyalty. What do you think is the best indicator of a good friend? Who in Sunny G embodies this trait the most?
3. One of the main themes in Sunny G. is the idea that masculinity is more complex than the patriarchy would lead us to believe. How is the traditional idea of masculinity harmful?
4. On page 37, Sunny and Mindii argue over the idea of the friend zone. Do you believe the friend zone is real or just a sexist idea perpetuated by society?
5. Mrs. Ward is a 9th grade teacher that Sunny mentions who would not learn how to pronounce the Georges' names and instead said she was going to go ahead and call "all of you" George. What racism is perpetuated in this situation and statement?
6. On page 101, Sunny and Mindii discuss social media's pros and cons. Who do you agree with and why?
7. Why is Mindii thankful for her niam tais introducing her to Hindi, Thai, and Chinese pop culture? Why does she mention white supremacy when she recalls Disney princesses?
8. Throughout the book, Dhillon mentions and alludes to many different books and movies. What is the purpose of including a mention or an allusion? What does it achieve? Pick one from Sunny G. and describe what effect it has on the story/scene.

9. Why do you think the author created the world of Snollygoster however other than that used all real pop culture references?

10. Fandoms play a central role in Sunny G.'s Series of Rash Decisions. Why do you believe that the fandoms (Snollygoster, D&D, Star Wars, Star Trek, Avatar, etc.) are so important to the characters?

- Extension: Sunny mentions that Snollygoster has some problematic elements but that the fans have made the fandom something separate and all theirs. Do you think it is okay to be a fan of a series that is problematic?

11. How did Mindii inserting herself into Sunny's night change everything?

12. Towards the end of the book, Sunny starts having breakdowns including yelling at Ngozi, crying to Mindii, and mourning with his parents. Why is this so significant to Sunny's character development?

13. How has Sunny's stutter affected him as he grew up? What does Sunny's story now show you about a person with a stutter?

14. Textiles, crocheting, and clothing play a huge part in the book. They represent many different things including family traditions, storytelling, representation of culture, and more. How did they play a role in Sunny's story? Mindii's? Ngozi's?

- Extension: Pair with the article Flowery Cloth: The Art & Artistry of Hmong Paj Ntaub (<http://collections.mnhs.org/mnhistorymagazine/articles/64/v64i05p180-193.pdf>) or the video Threads of Life (<https://youtu.be/ihf6ELqEma4>).

15. How does the ending of the novel help add to the structure of the book? Would a tragic ending have changed the tone of the story?

17. Throughout the book, Sunny is trying to make Rash Decision to add to his list. Some that he thinks of including are eating spicy sausage and going roller skating. He could also definitely include stealing an ice cream truck and breaking into a library; however, what do you think was the most rash decision that Sunny made all night?

CLASSROOM EXTENSIONS

Use these activities to extend your students' thinking and experience with *Sunny G's Series of Rash Decisions*.



1. PUNJABI & HMONG LANGUAGES

- Sunny, Sunny's family, Mindii, and many other characters are bilingual, and Navdeep Singh Dhillon included Punjabi and Hmong throughout the book. Using think-pair-share, have students reflect on, discuss, and share their thoughts on:
- What does the inclusion of languages other than English bring to the story? Make sure they include examples from the story to support their answer.
- Have the students write a literary analysis of the author's choice of including Punjabi and Hmong in the novel. How does the inclusion impact the reader's experience, add to character development, and engross the reader in the story?
- If your students do not know Punjabi and Hmong, do not worry! Context allows the reader to determine the meaning, and if not, using a translation dictionary can help.
- As they read the book, have students keep a list of the Punjabi and Hmong words they find most important to define to determine the meaning of the story. When finished, have your students create a glossary for the book.

2. ALCOHOLISM & ADDICTION

- A huge topic throughout Sunny G.'s Series of Rash Decisions is alcoholism and addiction. Pages to reference for this topic are 47, 72, 157, 158, 183, 223, and 273.
- Kids Health has created a lesson plan that includes discussion questions, activities, and reproducible materials to use with grades 9-12:
<https://classroom.kidshealth.org/classroom/9to12/problems/drugs/alcohol.pdf>
- Please make sure to share: If you are a loved one are struggling with substance abuse or mental health, there is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a year treatment and information service available: 1-800-662-4357 (HELP)

3. ROM-COM & COMING-OF-AGE INFLUENCE

STRUCTURE

- While *Sunny G's Series of Rash Decisions* has elements of romantic-comedy, there are also elements of coming-of-age. Since Sunny G subverts some tropes, have students breakdown the ways in which this novel plays with expectations in both genres.
- Have students break down *Sunny G's Series of Rash Decisions* into the 10 plot points shared in Juliana Antonio's article, *The Essential Structure of Romantic Comedies*.
<https://www.filminquiry.com/essential-structure-romantic-comedies/>
- And/or the 5 plot points shared in Erika Tan's article, *Entering the coming-of-age world one plot-point at a time*: <https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/blog/post/entering-coming-age-world-one-plot-point-time>
- Once done, have students analyze how the author's choice to structure the book this way contributed to its meaning as well as its aesthetic impact. This can be done as a discussion or a literary analysis.

TROPES

- There are also quite a few tropes that can be found in both genres. Split the class into Team Rom-Com and Team Coming-of-Age. Have your students research different tropes:
- Examples: <https://grantland.com/hollywood-prospectus/know-your-rom-coms-6-tropes-of-the-genres-golden-age/> & <https://www.filmdistrictdubai.com/blogs/what-is-the-coming-of-age-genre>
- Then as a class, do a gallery walk. Have large sheets of paper throughout the room with different tropes.
- Students should find the tropes they feel were included in Sunny's story. When they find one, they should write the event and page number that fit the trope.
- Then take the top tropes (about 5) and display them at the front of the classroom.
- Students then should pick which of the tropes they felt was the best crafted and most important within the book.
- The groups then should create a presentation explaining why they chose the trope they did and whether they think this novel falls squarely in one genre or not.

4. POETRY

- Poetry is a huge part of Sunny’s family and Mindii’s life.
- Prescribing Poetry
- Sunny’s parents prescribe poems for different occasions. For example, Goldy said, in Sunny’s dream, that after he came out to his father, he prescribed some poems. Poetry is prolific because it expands all genres, themes, and topics.
- First, have students brainstorm for 90 seconds all of the emotions they have felt in the last 24 hours.
- Then, have them pick the top 5 that they have felt the most.
- Have students find poems to prescribe for the emotions they are feeling.

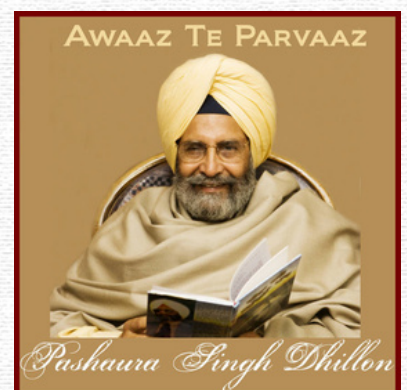
EMOTION	PRESCRIBED POEM	WHY PRESCRIBE THIS POEM?
Example: Fear	Risk by Anaïs Nin	This poem pushes the reader to think about if the fear of the unknown is worse than the success of the unknown.

- Have resources for students to allow them to browse poetry and work to promote poets and poetry outside of what is traditionally taught in American schools.
- An optional alternative for this assignment is to have students trade emotions so that others are prescribing for them; however, preface the assignment with this so that students know that emotions will be shared.

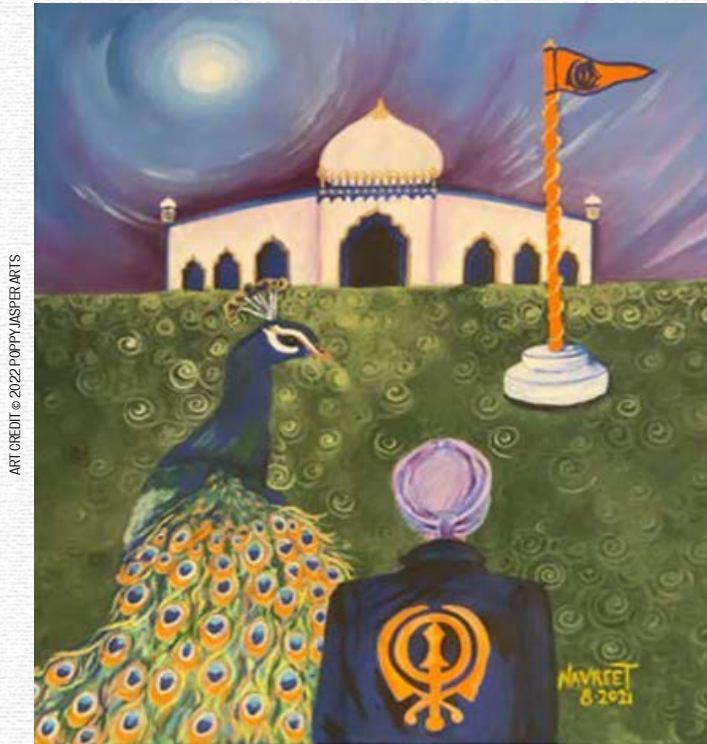
DEATH POETRY

Using poetry to deal with complex emotions such as grief is a central theme in this novel.

- Introduce students to Death Poetry using the New Yorker’s article: <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-poetry-of-death>.
- Refer to page 86 where Mindii decides she doesn’t want Sunny to translate his dad’s Punjabi poem, “Ki Rakhiye Naam Iss Alam Da,” about Goldy’s death. Ask students why she chooses to do this.
- Listen to the poem sung by Pashaura Singh Dhillon (Navdeep’s dad!). Despite not understanding the words, can students connect to the emotions? Ask students if their initial impression of the poem changed when they heard it sung: <https://pashaurasinghdhillon.bandcamp.com/track/ki-rakhiye-naa>
- Ask the students what they think Mindii understood of the poem?



5. ART AND IDENTITY



- Share the above artwork (print or save image) by Dr. Navreet Dhillon (the author's sister!) inspired by a pivotal scene with Goldy in Chapter 20 (pp. 268 - 282).
- Ask students to research the significance of hair in Sikhism as well as other faiths and communities.
- Example: The Connection Between Hair and Identity in Black Culture
<https://www.ccresearch.com/blog/connection-between-hair-and-identity-black-culture>
- Example: Theology of Hair in Multiple Faiths
https://www.mlive.com/living/grand-rapids/2011/11/theology_of_hair_how_many_worl.html
- Have students brainstorm for 90 seconds on about their thoughts on Sunny shedding his outward Sikh identity. Why do you think he does it?
- What emotions are elicited from this artwork? Make sure students use some references from the book

6. WHITE-WASHED HISTORY

SUNNY & MINDII'S FAMILY HISTORY

- Throughout the book, Sunny and Mindii mention parts of history that are not shared in American history curriculum. Some examples were pages 95 (Sikh history) and 140-141 (the Secret War and Hmong refugees).
- Have students split into groups to learn more about these histories and present to their classmates to give a fuller view of Sunny and Mindii's family histories.

HISTORY IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

- On page 157, Sunny and Mindii also discuss the change of historical narrative to fit a point of view that is wanted, for example when it comes to the Founding Fathers and eliminating that they were enslavers. There is much debate over if the history taught in American schools is eliminating the stories of marginalized groups thus not fully teaching history.
- Have students complete a short research project looking into this and determining their point of view on the situation then have them write a short essay sharing their research, thoughts, and analysis.

Some examples of sources are:

- <https://www.aacu.org/blog/dangers-teaching-whitewashed-american-history>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/25/critical-race-theory-us-history-1619-project>
- <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/09/harvard-historian-examines-how-textbooks-taught-white-supremacy>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2018/05/23/were-whitewashing-the-history-of-our-founding-its-fueling-problems-today>

7. TED NGOY, THE DONUT KING

- If possible, watch Alice Gu's *The Donut King* documentary that looks at Ted Ngoy's rise and fall.
- If you are unable to legally obtain a copy of the documentary, a preview can be watched at <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/the-donut-king/> and a biography can be read at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Ngoy
- Sunny compares Ted Ngoy's story to the rags to riches stories of the first Punjabi immigrants who came to the U.S. in the early 1900s and Mindii brings up the Ghadar Party in British India and the Alien Land Law. Throughout the book, it is also mentioned how there are many Punjabi-owned liquor and convenience stores.
- Have students do research about the history of immigration and job specialty. Students should, individually or in groups, choose a "rags to riches" story to present to the class as a documentary, podcast, or other medium of their choosing. Students must include how the history of U.S. immigration and racism were barriers.

8. CHAPTER TITLES

- Each chapter has a very distinctive title that gives clues into what is happening within the story. When students have finished the book, have students analyze why the author would choose the chapter title he did.

Chapter 1	The Life Promtastic	Promtastic plays on the word bombastic which means that something has an exaggerated importance. The chapter is titled this because Sunny has given great importance in his mind around the tradition of prom, but the title foreshadows that fact that in the end it is not the answer for his worries; it is overblown.
Chapter 2	The Promtastrophe	
Chapter 3	The Girl in the Brambleberry Dress	
Etc		

- Similarly, this could be completed while reading to practice prediction. Before starting each chapter, students can use the chapter titles to guess what is going to happen in the chapter.

Chapter 1	The Life Promtastic	I predict this chapter will be about ...	My prediction was (correct/incorrect) because...
Etc			

This guide was created by Kellee Moyer, a middle school teacher-librarian in Orlando, FL. Kellee is the author of various teaching guides for all levels; the co-author of the blog [Unleashing Readers](#); a past chair of the Schneider Family Award and Amelia Elizabeth Walden Book Award juries; a past ALAN board member; and a member of NCTE, ALAN, ALA, and FAME. Kellee can be reached at Kellee.Moye@gmail.com

"Pitch-perfect. One of the most endearing voices I've ever encountered."

–Becky Albertalli, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Simon vs the Homo Sapien's Agenda*

"This book, written in a voice that feels like the wind in your hair, is a love letter to the many Americas that make one country, to heritage, and to love itself."

–Jeff Zentner, award-winning author of *The Serpent King* and *In the Wild Light*

★ **"Perfect for fandom lovers and for fans of John Green and Sandhya Menon, Sunny G is a cerebral novel full of heart. It's not one to miss"**

–*Booklist*, starred review

"Poignant and moving, with an undercurrent of romance."

– *Kirkus Reviews*

