



Curriculum Integration Book Study

Book: [Yellowface](#)

Author: R.F. Kuang

Publisher: [HarperCollins](#)



Summary

“Authors June Hayward and Athena Liu were supposed to be twin rising stars. But Athena’s a literary darling. June Hayward is literally nobody. Who wants stories about basic white girls, June thinks.

So when June witnesses Athena’s death in a freak accident, she acts on impulse: she steals Athena’s just-finished masterpiece, an experimental novel about the unsung contributions of Chinese laborers during World War I.

So what if June edits Athena’s novel and sends it to her agent as her own work? So what if she lets her new publisher rebrand her as Juniper Song—complete with an ambiguously ethnic author photo? Doesn’t this piece of history deserve to be told, whoever the teller? That’s what June claims, and the *New York Times* bestseller list seems to agree.

But June can’t get away from Athena’s shadow, and emerging evidence threatens to bring June’s (stolen) success down around her. As June races to protect her secret, she discovers exactly how far she will go to keep what she thinks she deserves.

With its totally immersive first-person voice, *Yellowface* grapples with questions of diversity, racism, and cultural appropriation, as well as the terrifying alienation of social media. R.F. Kuang’s novel is timely, razor-sharp, and eminently readable.” ([HarperCollins](#))



Where to Start?

Author R.F. Kuang wrote *Yellowface* as a way to address two anxieties she had about the literary industry: a) toxic interactions online and b) the issues around the intersection of authorial identity and textual interpretation. Consider these questions, adapted from the [Yellowface reading guide](#), as you begin reading this book:

1. How important is an author's background when we consider a story's authenticity?
2. What could be the difference between "owning" a story and "stealing" a story?
3. Based on Kuang's description of the trade publishing industry, what kinds of systems are in place?

Overall Questions

Visit the HarperCollins website for [Reading Guide questions](#) to guide your reading of *Yellowface*.