



YOUR BOOK CLUB RESOURCE

Reading Group Guide

Discussion Questions

1. Has the book inspired you to take on any of the challenges posed in the *Sorry Not Sorry* podcast? Which would you pick and why?
2. *Sorry Not Sorry* uses British language and slang. Were there any phrases you found hard to understand? Any you'll be adopting to use yourself?
3. Charlotte has a distant relationship with her mother. How does this affect her relationships with her friends and with men?
4. Myles's treatment of Charlotte—not to mention his wife—is downright shabby. What do you think makes him behave in that way?
5. Maddy and Charlotte's other friends find themselves having to take sides when Bianca intervenes in their friendship group. Is this behavior understandable, or just malicious?

6. Adam keeps his feelings for Charlotte to himself for most of the novel. What do you think this reveals about his character, and could he have got the woman he wanted if he'd acted differently?
7. Tansy is haunted by the secret of her webcam work, and ultimately it does destroy her relationship with Renzo. What does this say about Renzo as a character?
8. Charlotte agonizes over whether to tell Myles's wife about their relationship, and is let off the hook when he says he has confessed himself. Would telling her have been the right thing for Charlotte to do?
9. Tansy, Adam, and Myles all have secrets. Which, if any, of these would have been better kept to themselves?
10. Charlotte ultimately gets her happily-ever-after with Xander. Is he the right person for her, and why?
11. If *Sorry Not Sorry* was made into a movie, who would you cast as Charlotte, and why?

Author Q&A

Tell us about your journey to publication with *Sorry Not Sorry*.

It's really hard to fix a point when it all started. My mother was a writer and two of my five sisters are published authors, so you could say it's in my DNA! I'd always wanted to write a novel, but life got in the way, so I worked in magazine publishing for almost fifteen years. Then I found myself without a job, and it seemed like the perfect opportunity to scratch that author itch. I wrote most of an unpublishable manuscript, and during that time the idea for another book brewed in my mind. I wrote that, too, and finished it, and then was fortunate to secure representation from an agency. They supported me through the process of self-publishing five novels, which I'm enormously proud of. But traditional publishing eluded me until I signed with Bookouture for *Sorry Not Sorry* in 2018.

Are there any moments in the process that stand out for you?

Because I'd had novels out there in the world before, I was familiar with the highs and lows of the process. You pour your heart and soul into a book, dragging it out of you like pulling teeth; you work with a team of people to get it as good as it can be; and then you release it into the world and watch as it sinks or swims.

In the case of *Sorry Not Sorry*, I was overjoyed to see it not just swim but soar. The book really seemed to hit a sweet spot with

readers in the UK and across the pond, and it just kept going. Perhaps the most thrilling moment was when it was featured on the “Fred Judges a Book by Its Cover” slot on *Late Night with Seth*—there was something about putting Lego into beer that I still don’t quite get! But I was overwhelmed.

What inspired you to write Charlotte’s story?

I think a lot of millennial women—and even more so their younger Gen Z sisters—find themselves isolated from friendship and family circles as their adult lives take divergent paths. I wanted to explore that experience and look at the isolation young women feel when suddenly their friends are moving on and they’re left behind, alone in a life that doesn’t necessarily fit or make them happy any longer. On the surface Charlotte has everything going for her, but in reality she’s left alone on Friday nights with Netflix and a pot noodle, and she’s like, “Really? Is this it?”

What made you choose the medium of a podcast to drive the narrative forward?

There’s a lot of twaddle talked about how people don’t read any longer, or talk anymore, or communicate meaningfully outside of Instagram and TikTok. From my own experience, that’s nonsense—my closest girlfriends and I have been communicating far more over Facebook and WhatsApp than in real life for years now. And that doesn’t in any way diminish the sincerity and intimacy of

our face-to-face connections when we do meet up. So I wanted to explore the power of new media to impact and change people's lives in a very real way—both as consumer and as creator.

The podcast challenges Charlotte to set aside her inhibitions, break new ground, and seek out new experiences. Is that something you've been through yourself?

The step-by-step process that Charlotte follows is a bit of a literary device, and I think that most people would fall at quite an early hurdle. It's like taking on the plank challenge over a month, or doing Veganuary—something like that. Charlotte is inherently a disciplined person, so she keeps at it, which I know I would struggle to do. But most of us find ourselves cast out of our comfort zone at some point in our lives, and grow through that process. That's certainly been the case for me.

Falling for a married man is a tricky subject to navigate in women's fiction. How did you balance that with the need for Charlotte to grow as a character?

With Charlotte and Myles's relationship, I wanted to portray the power balance between men and women. For so many women, being found attractive and having a man is still the holy grail, and we are willing to overlook so many red flags when we've got our eye on that prize. But ultimately, for Charlotte, her relationship with Myles was about discovering things about herself, her sexuality,

and her strength as a woman that helped her to grow. So she was in a sense the winner in that dynamic, and he was the loser.

Charlotte's friends are so mean to her! Why did you write them like that?

Aren't they awful? The first thing I wanted to do with that was look at the way female friendship groups can get toxic, competitive, and bitchy, which I think is something we've all experienced. But the more important thing I wanted to portray was how totally batshit women can get when planning a wedding. It's like, "This is my day and it must all be perfect while I'm this princess for a moment that will be the high point of my life." It's so short-sighted and self-destructive, and I'm really glad that Maddy and the other girls see that and realize that their friendship is worth far more.

When I started reading the book, I was convinced that Charlotte and Renzo would end up together. Why did you decide not to go down that route?

Well, Renzo is a Grade-A douche! So of course I didn't want Charlotte to end up in some kind of alpha cliché relationship that wouldn't let her thrive and grow as a strong, independent woman. But I wanted to explore how the currency exchange of male power and female beauty plays out, even though we're not in a Cinderella world, and so it made sense for Tansy and Renzo to set their sights on each other.

Aside from Charlotte, are there any characters in the novel who have stayed with you afterward? And what happens to them next?

Sorry Not Sorry is actually the second of four novels set around the Daily Grind coffee shop in Hackney—which is basically the Williamsburg of London. The first introduces the world, following an aspiring YouTuber as she starts her independent life. The third takes Tansy’s story forward, and the last kind of closes the loop around them all. But there are still characters whose stories are unfinished, and many of my readers have asked me what happens to them. They’re very much alive in my mind still, so watch this space!

What other authors have inspired you to write in this genre?

Women’s fiction is often trivialized as small and domestic—just like women’s lives. I can’t tell you how cross this makes me! From Charlotte Brontë to Jane Austen, from Marian Keyes to Mhairi McFarlane, there are so many authors whose books make women think, “Oh yes. That’s me!” I am so proud to make my small contribution to a genre that celebrates the female experience and helps us realize we’re not inconsequential or silly—we matter and our stories deserve to be told.

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About the Author

Sophie Ranald is the youngest of five sisters. She was born in Zimbabwe and lived in South Africa until an acute case of itchy feet brought her to London in her mid-twenties. As an editor for a customer publishing agency, Sophie developed her fiction-writing skills describing holidays to places she'd never visited.

In 2011, she decided to disregard all the good advice given to aspiring novelists and attempt to write full-time. After one false start, *It Would Be Wrong to Steal My Sister's Boyfriend (Wouldn't It?)* seemed to write itself, and six more novels have followed. Sophie also writes for magazines and online about food, fashion, finance, and fitness. She lives in southeast London with her amazing partner, Hopi, and their two adorable cats.

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