



10-24 October 2023

### Book club discussion guide

1. What was your overall impression of June? Why do you think Rebecca F. Kuang chose to write from her perspective?
2. How do you feel about Athena? Do you think Kuang intended for her to be just a powerless victim in the story?
3. Can we ever argue that someone does or doesn't have the right to tell a certain story? Where do we draw the line between this and censorship?
4. June constantly seeks to justify her actions. She claims, for instance, that Athena's success was down to her race. And she continually validates her ownership of *The Last Front* with detailed explanations of her edits and revisions to the text. Is June deluded? How would you describe her mental state?
5. June's publisher decides that June should now go by the pen name Juniper Song— and obscures her ethnicity in their publishing plans. What does this say about prejudices in the publishing industry?
6. Rebecca uses recurring imagery of masks and skin; June imagines unzipping Athena's skin and pulling it on over herself. In what ways is this trope relevant to understanding racialisation today?
7. Why do you think Athena and June were drawn to each other in the first place? Why did they keep seeing one another?
8. Cancel culture is another theme explored in *Yellowface*. As June starts to face criticism, she is compelled to read the negativity directed at her online. What do you think Kuang was trying to say about the part social media plays in people's perceptions of themselves and others?
9. The book also has a thriller element with the ghost of Athena plaguing June, as her success builds. Did you find this mystery element of the plot compelling? Did you guess who was behind the trolling?
10. Kuang describes the experience of reading *Yellowface* as like watching a 'train crash in slow-motion'. Was this your experience? How do you think she achieved this in her writing?
11. What do you think happens next for June?
12. What do you think Kuang wanted to achieve with *Yellowface*? Do you think there is a clear sense of right and wrong in the book?