



NOT MYSELF TODAY TEACHER GUIDE

When a magical museum artifact makes wealthy Riya swap bodies with her immigrant classmate Saanvi, Riya learns that money doesn't buy happiness. Saanvi's warm working-class family, the satisfaction of helping out in their store and a new perspective on her mean-girl friends makes Riya question her previous actions. But can she work with Saanvi to find a way to switch back?

THEMES

Bullying | Empathy | Identity | Class and privilege | Friendship | Family | Belonging | South Asian culture | Personal growth

SETTING

Set in the present day, the story moves between school, home and community spaces. A class trip to an exhibit of ancient eastern artifacts becomes the catalyst for the novel's central conflict and transformation.

WHO WILL ENJOY THIS BOOK?

Perfect for readers who enjoy:

- body-swap stories
- school drama and friendship conflict
- fast-paced, high-interest fiction
- character growth and redemption arcs
- stories that explore culture, identity and belonging

A great recommendation for readers looking for “*Freaky Friday* with a South Asian twist.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do Riya's words and actions at the beginning of the novel reveal about her character?
2. Why does Riya make assumptions about her classmates?
3. How do Char and Nikki influence Riya's behavior?
4. Why do you think Saanvi's confidence bothers Riya?
5. How does the body swap change Riya's understanding of bullying?
6. What does Riya learn about privilege and class difference through Saanvi's life?
7. How does Saanvi's family help Riya see the world differently?
8. In what ways does culture shape identity in the novel?
9. Do you think Riya earns forgiveness by the end of the story? Why or why not?
10. What message does the novel send about empathy and judging others based on appearances?



ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS
Reaching More Readers
orcabook.com • 1-800-210-5277

Orca currents

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Perspective Journal:

Ask students to write two short journal entries about the same event—one from Riya’s point of view and one from Saanvi’s. Encourage students to focus on voice, emotion and perspective.

2. Walk In My Shoes:

Invite students to choose a scene from the novel and reflect on the assumptions made by the characters. Students can present their ideas as a written response, poster or short discussion, focusing on how empathy might have changed the outcome.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS CHECKLIST

Language Arts

Teachers may use this text to support learning outcomes in:

- reading comprehension
- making inferences
- identifying theme
- analyzing character development
- examining point of view
- oral communication
- written response to text
- supporting ideas with textual evidence

Health/Social-Emotional Learning

This text supports discussion and reflection in:

- empathy development
- relationship skills
- anti-bullying education
- self-awareness
- responsible decision-making
- respectful communication

Social Studies/Humanities

This novel connects to themes of:

- identity and belonging
- diversity and inclusion
- social responsibility
- class and socioeconomic difference
- stereotypes, bias and assumptions
- community and lived experience

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Teachers may connect the novel to learning about:

- cultural identity
- perspective-taking
- challenging prejudice
- inclusive classroom discussion
- respect for different lived experiences

WHY TEACH THIS BOOK?

Not Myself Today combines a compelling, high-interest premise with timely themes that resonate in the classroom. With its accessible reading level and discussion-rich content, it is well suited for middle-grade readers, including striving readers, and offers meaningful opportunities to explore empathy, bullying, privilege and belonging.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mahtab Narsimhan is an internationally published, award-winning author of over twenty critically acclaimed books. Mahtab writes for all age groups—from picture books to young adult novels—many of which have been shortlisted for the Silver Birch, Red Maple, SYRCA, MYRCA and CCBC Best Books for Kids & Teens awards. She is deeply committed to representation and inclusivity in her work. Mahtab lives near Vancouver.



ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS
Reaching More Readers
orcabook.com • 1-800-210-5277

Orca currents