



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper secondary (ages 14+)

CONTENTS

Plot summary	1
About the author	3
Author's inspiration	3
Key study topics	5
Further reading	6

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Language, Literature, Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Discussions around consent, love, feminism, grief, loss, independence, bullying and cyber bullying, regional life, expression and the arts, relationships, family and love
- Discussions around personal relationships, trust and sexuality, informed and enthusiastic consent
- Analysing how language and writing evoke mood, tone, tension and characterisation
- Encouraging creative and imaginative expression, especially music and art

THEMES

- Relationships and friendships
- Creative expression and music
- Family and unconventional structures
- Grief and overcoming loss
- Love, trust, sexuality and consent
- Disillusionment and strength
- Bullying and cyber bullying
- Sexuality, informed and enthusiastic consent
- Coming of age themes

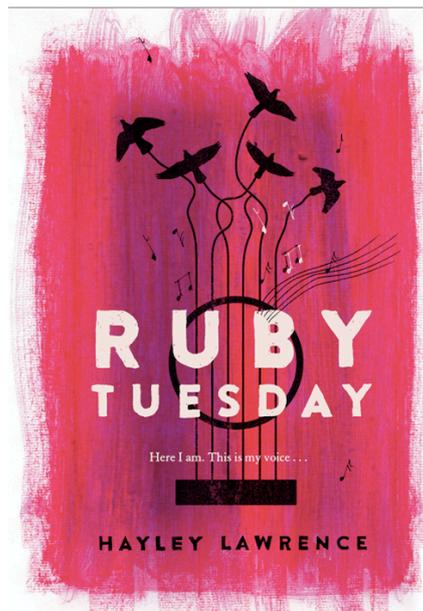
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Ruby Tuesday

Hayley Lawrence

PLOT SUMMARY

Ruby Tuesday explores the joys and difficulties of being a girl growing up in today's world, and how strength and healing can be found in the wildest of places – a celebration of the joy to be found in music and creativity, and of strong, equal friendships and relationships.

Ruby was named after a song about freedom, but she's far from free. She's trapped by her mum's accident, her past as a famous pianist a distant memory. This was never the plan – both of them invisible and voiceless in a dusty small town. And Ruby wants to be heard. But that was before Joey Milano. Before that awful party.

Now Ruby's no longer a virgin, No longer sure she said yes. No longer sure she's not pregnant. The only thing Ruby's sure of is that she'll never trust anyone again.

When the opportunity of a lifetime comes knocking, and a boy from her past reaches out, Ruby's not fooled. Some things are broken beyond repair.

Or are they?



SYNOPSIS

Seventeen-year-old Ruby was named after the song Ruby Tuesday, about a girl who could not be pinned to a place or time, yet Ruby is pinned to everything in her life – the forest overrun with wild dogs, her disabled mother, the small town of Cooper’s Creek. Ever since the accident that claimed her mum’s career as a world-class pianist, Ruby has lived in a world of solitude and women, raised on more music than food. Ruby was born with a song inside her – gifted with perfect pitch – but around the same time her mum, Celeste, stopped playing for a crowd and moved them to the forest to live with her nan, Ruby stopped singing for one.

Now Nan has passed away. Ruby and Celeste were so shell-shocked, they sent her off without a note of their own music.

Ruby wishes she had the courage to follow her dreams like the Plan A people at school, who paste their perfect lives across Instagram. So when Lukas, one of the popular boys, takes an interest in her and invites her to a party, Ruby commits to going. She’s anxious, but the beautiful and newly-single Joey Milano is going, so she must go too.

At the party, Ruby gets drunk and sings an original song to Joey. The crowd cheers, stunned by her voice. Ruby thinks this is the best night of her life, until Joey takes her to the back of the yard, and despite her protests about people being around, has sex with her – without a condom – and leaves her by a tree.

Ruby pretends she’s okay, even though she feels used. It’s evident Joey’s okay, he’s laughing with his friends. Ruby didn’t say no to him, but she didn’t say yes. And he didn’t ask. Escaping the party, Ruby runs into Lukas who tells her he loves her. Ruby brushes him off and hides in her car. When she’s sober enough, she drives home, where she showers and worries about whether she could get pregnant or whether Joey even cares.

At school, Ruby’s taunted with her own lyrics and discovers that a clip of her singing is being shared online. Ruby heads for her safe space, an abandoned hangar at the local airstrip where she can sing out her pain. But her song is cut short when a young

pilot walks into the hangar and takes off in the lone plane parked inside.

When Ruby arrives home, an orange Lamborghini is parked out front. There’s a man on their back deck. Ruby is introduced to Robbie, an old muso friend of Celeste’s. Ruby retreats to her room, but Robbie stays into the night, bringing the house alive with music as he plays with Celeste. Ruby feels betrayed hearing Celeste play with a stranger.

Ruby googles the morning after pill but lacks the courage to front the pharmacy. On the bus the next morning, Lukas offers to protect her from the taunting of his mates, but Ruby declines, fearful of what she may owe him. At school, she is slut-shamed by one of Lukas’s friends. Lukas defends her, by fighting with his mate. He tells Ruby she does need his protection and asks what it will take to win her love. Ruby says she’s not something that can be won, and Lukas becomes aggressive.

When Ruby discovers sex-ed is scheduled for the day, she ditches, and runs into her ex-friend Alex. She and Alex fell out after Alex kissed Joey Milano a year ago. Now the two reconcile and Alex asks Ruby to hang out with her and her cousin Erik, Ruby’s childhood friend, who’s returned from Ireland. When Erik pulls up to collect them, Ruby recognizes him as the pilot from the hangar. They get reacquainted and Erik offers to take Ruby flying. But when Ruby feels pressured into it, she flips out. She doesn’t trust men who ignore her objections.

Ruby leaves Erik and Alex to catch the bus home, but Lukas, Joey and their mates drive by, offering her a lift and being crude. Ruby feels threatened, so she humiliates Lukas, who gets out of the car. As he grabs hold of Ruby, Erik and Alex arrive and stand by her side until the boys leave.

Celeste tells Ruby the reason for Robbie’s visit is that he has asked her to play with him at the Entertainment Centre. Ruby is hopeful of escaping their life in the forest and fulfilling their dreams. So when Robbie asks her to sing for him, Ruby sings the song she wrote about her terrible experience with Joey. Afterwards, she’s overcome with emotion and Celeste realises what has happened. She discusses reporting Joey to the police for rape.

Ruby’s period is late, but when it comes with heavy cramping at school, Ruby is relieved and leaves early. She discovers Robbie at her house and



overhears him offering to help with Ruby's career. Celeste says no, and Ruby learns that Robbie is her father. Following an argument with Celeste, Robbie leaves. He finds Ruby listening and gives her his business card. Celeste cries as she explains that Robbie was never reliable enough to be father material. Celeste is too distressed to play piano and once again, Ruby experiences a day without music.

That night, Ruby gets a text from Erik asking if she wants to go night flying. Desperate to be the fearless girl she was before Celeste's accident, Ruby says yes. Erik tells her they can turn back any time if she changes her mind, and together, they go on a magical flight. Afterwards, Erik takes her home. They hug and she tells him she's missed him, before giving him a kiss. Erik kisses her back, but when Ruby has a flashback to Joey, Erik doesn't push her. Ruby goes to sleep that night dreaming of flying.

Ruby tells Celeste she's decided to take a chance on her music and organizes a meeting with Robbie where she tells him she's ready. On a high from the meeting, Ruby agrees to a mystery flight with Erik, where he takes her to a remote airstrip and her adventurous spirit returns. They swim at the base of a waterfall and kiss until they notice smoke clouding the sky.

Ruby and Erik hurry back up the escarpment to the plane, unaware of the origin of the bushfire, and decide their best chance is to fly out. But when the smoke is too thick to climb above the mountains, Erik has to make an emergency landing. The plane flips on impact and Erik drags Ruby from the wreckage, but he's badly bleeding. Ruby administers first aid to Erik. Then with ash and smoke around them, guides him to water.

Rain helps douse the fire and the rescue chopper arrives in the morning, airlifting Ruby and Erik to hospital, where their families are waiting. Fearing she'd lost Ruby, Celeste tells her she should take the chance Robbie is offering her in music. So Robbie brings a music producer to their house to hear her sing. The producer is very impressed and Celeste tells Ruby she has decided to take a chance too. She will play at the Entertainment Centre.

When Celeste and Robbie leave for the show, Ruby invites Erik over, where she plans to make love to him. This time, it's romantic and consensual and right. The next day, Ruby and Erik enjoy a final flight

before he returns to Ireland. They make plans for a future they may not share before parting ways.

Ruby discovers she's more like Ruby Tuesday than she knew: no longer pinned to a time or place. Her world is wider than the forest corridor, deeper than the school she attends, and the people in it. She gets to make the choices in her life: about the people she allows in it, the places she will roam and the dreams she will chase.

As she headlines her first gig, Ruby is sick with nerves, but she has the support of Celeste and Robbie. She's ready to set her voice free.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hayley Lawrence worked as a lawyer in a commercial firm in Sydney before trading city life for the coast when she married a pilot. She worked for a small law firm on the mid-north coast of NSW, until starting a family. Hayley has five daughters who continue to bring immense joy and utter mayhem to her life.

Inside the Tiger, Hayley's first novel, was a CBCA Notable book in 2019. The manuscript won a Litlink Fellowship at Varuna, The Writer's House, and a PIP Fellowship, was shortlisted for The Australian /Vogel's Literary Award and longlisted for the Sisters in Crime Davitt Award 2019.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Life often doesn't go to plan. This is a fact. Curve balls come our way and things block our path. So what happens when you get the kind of life nobody would ask for? How do you work with a Plan B? In writing *Ruby Tuesday*, I wanted to explore what it would be like to grow up as the daughter of a woman who'd had the world at her feet, had it pulled away and then left that dream life in the dust. Celeste is a pianist because my grandmother was. She played from the moment she was small enough to climb onto a piano stool. My grandmother's parents couldn't afford piano lessons, so her teacher cut them a deal – she would train my grandmother classically in return for any prize money won. As a young teen, my grandmother competed at the Town Hall in Sydney, playing the same piece as fifty-odd other students. Her mother couldn't afford the train fare to the city – saying she was unlikely to



win anyway – but my grandmother was promised her mother’s precious gold watch if she did win. She bravely rode the train into Sydney. She played on stage alone. She won. There was no family to cheer for her, and I never found out if she was given the watch, but she did earn a certain sense of pride. By fourteen, my grandmother was playing recitals and being reviewed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. But when she got married at twenty-two, her dream was over. She had given up playing publicly. That was the reality of a woman’s life in the 1940s – like many others, she simply packed herself and her dreams away.

She should have been able to play at home, but although the piano remained her most prized possession I rarely heard her play it. I was never sure why. Was it her fear of ‘making a clatter’ or had the harsh words of some music critic upset her? Friends consoled her that the music would come out in her children, but it didn’t. They said it would come out in her grandchildren. It didn’t. My grandmother passed away fifteen years ago. *Ruby Tuesday* is for her. A story about the joy and healing powers of creativity. What better way to explore desire, frustration and despair, than through music’s intangible beauty?

As a mum and as someone who vividly remembers the difficulties of the teen years, I also wanted to write a novel about sexual responsibility and consent that explores some of unspoken and awful experiences teen girls often deal with.

Ruby Tuesday has #metoo elements, but it’s not an anti-male narrative. On the contrary, it’s a story about a girl discovering, after terrible experiences, that there are gentle, kind and trustworthy people out there, and finding the strength to stand up to those who disrespect her. Most of all, it’s about finding the courage to speak out and support others. I don’t suggest that there is always justice when bad things happen. Many many assaults and aggressions are suffered silently. Many go unpunished and unacknowledged. When Ruby has sex for the first time at a party, she’s not sure if she was raped. She didn’t say yes and she didn’t say no, but she didn’t want it and the experience was brutal. This is the reality for a lot of young people.

‘No means no’ was a good starting point, but rape is defined in a myriad of ways and the idea of enthusiastic informed consent should be a crucial part of every young person’s sexual experience. Coercion, both private and public, is a huge issue.

For both partners, knowing what enthusiastic consent looks like could play a huge part in reducing the alarming number of sexual assaults in our community. If *Ruby Tuesday* plays a positive part in that conversation for any reader, that’s a good thing. Trust is the key to any solid relationship and the fact that Ruby learns to trust Erik when he holds her very life in his hands helps her to realise that she is far more like her namesake Ruby Tuesday than she ever knew. She is not pinned to a time, or a place, or even to the people in her life, in the way she always believed. She too has choices. She can turn her Plan B life into something spectacular.

The Bluebird is the vehicle that takes Ruby beyond her own knowledge and away from the physical world to which she’s normally chained. But for me, flying was not just a metaphor used to raise the stakes. It’s far more personal than that. I may not be a pilot but I know a bit about flying. When I was eighteen, I bought my husband (then boyfriend) an instructional flight as a birthday present. He now flies a Boeing 787 Dreamliner. Between that first flight and now, there were many years and adventures in small planes just like the Bluebird.

Flying is not without serious danger – a lesson Ruby learns and that I have also learnt. During the years of his training, my husband lost his twenty-seven-year-old instructor Justen Emmett in a plane crash. Every pilot we know has a similar story.

Writing the flying scenes in *Ruby Tuesday* allowed me to journey back to my first experiences with light aircraft. The vulnerability of it, the fear, the utter abandon! Flying lends a unique perspective to everyday life. From up in the clouds, I have always felt small; my problems insignificant.

When I was twenty, we flew a small plane from Bankstown Airport in Sydney all the way to the Great Barrier Reef, dodging storms and stopping to refuel at small airports along the way. A low cloud base forced us down over the town of Kempsey, right near the forest corridor of the wild dogs where I set *Ruby Tuesday*. An area that we would one day come to call home.

Ruby Tuesday was the kind of story that I started writing, until it took over and started writing me. Ruby gets battered quite a bit on her journey. There is more disillusionment here for Ruby than she deserved, but there is also beauty, humility and truth in her recovery. Many of Ruby’s mistakes and lessons



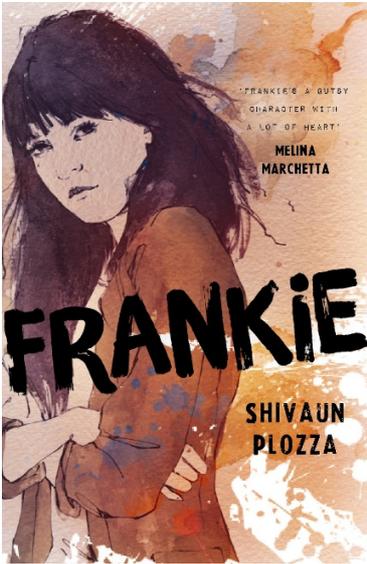
have been my own, making this a very personal coming-of-age story.

KEY STUDY TOPICS

- What is the novel's writing style? Is Ruby a strong or weak narrator? How effectively does this contribute to the novel's storytelling?
- How does the first-person point-of-view affect what is revealed to the reader and our feelings about the narrator? How might the story have been different if a third-person narration had been used?
- How might the story be different if it had been written from another character's point-of-view? Choose one of the bullying incidents in the story and write it from one of the male characters' perspectives.
- Ruby Tuesday uses present tense narration. What does present tense narration add to the way the story is conveyed?
- How does the author use letters, text messages, instant message and recorded video to move the story forward? What impact does this have on how we experience the characters in the novel and how we feel about them?
- What are some other ways this novel could have ended and how would that have affected your experience of the story and feelings about the characters?
- How does the book's title relate to its content? What does it refer to?
- One of the major themes of the novel is sexual consent. What does enthusiastic consent mean and how does it compare to informed consent? Use the two sex scenes in the novel to provide contrasting examples of consenting behaviour and non-consenting sexual behaviour.
- Ruby googles the Morning After Pill as an emergency form of contraception. What is the Morning After Pill? What stops Ruby from taking it? Write an opinion piece about access to emergency contraception for young women.
- Another major theme is bullying. Write a diary entry from Ruby's perspective detailing one of the instances of bullying she experienced in the book.
- Imagine a humiliating clip of yourself was going viral. What sources of support would you draw on in dealing with this? Discuss.
- Choose one of the forms of bullying portrayed in the novel (e.g. cyber bullying, slut shaming, intimidation or physical threats/violence). Write a scene, fiction or non-fiction, in which you or a character are the victim of this form bullying and manage to overcome it.
- 'Slut shaming' involves gender stereotypes around male and female roles with regards to relationships and sex. Explain your understanding of this issue, citing at least one example from Ruby Tuesday.
- Consent is a major theme in *Ruby Tuesday*. With reference to the chapter where Erik first takes Ruby flying, cite three examples of instances where Erik shows respect for gaining informed consent from Ruby and earns her trust.
- In that scene, Ruby believes that if she were to be assaulted, society would blame her. Do you believe this is a valid fear for young women? Can you cite instances in the media where a young woman has been assaulted and had questions asked about her own behaviour?
- Celeste tells Ruby that no one in her life has a right to be loved just because of their title, whether they're a parent, friend, sibling or partner. What does she mean by this and do you agree? Argue for/against.
- Is Ruby a 'victim' throughout the novel? Discuss her character arc and development.
- Is Celeste's story tragic or inspirational? Discuss her character arc and development across the novel. How would this story be different if it was written from her POV?
- Discuss Erik in terms of his role as a secondary character. Where in the novel does he change the course of the story and how?
- Are there moral dilemmas in the book? Discuss how the various characters dealt with them and the fall out of their decisions.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

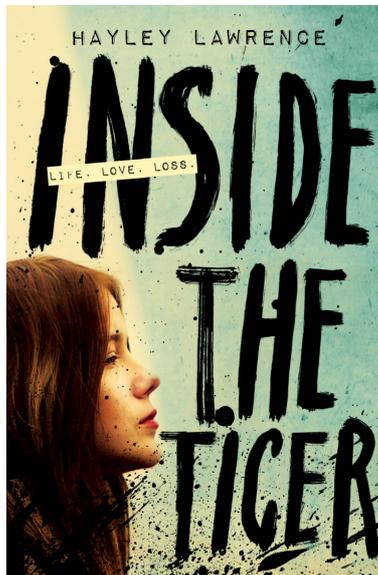


Frankie
by Shivaun Plozza

Frankie Vega is angry. Just ask the guy whose nose she broke. Or the cop investigating the burglary she witnessed, or her cheating ex-boyfriend or her aunt who's tired of giving second chances . . .

When a kid shows up claiming to be Frankie's half brother, it opens the door to a past she doesn't want to remember. And when that kid goes missing, the only person willing to help is a boy with stupidly blue eyes . . . and secrets of his own.

Frankie's search for the truth could change her life, or cost her everything.



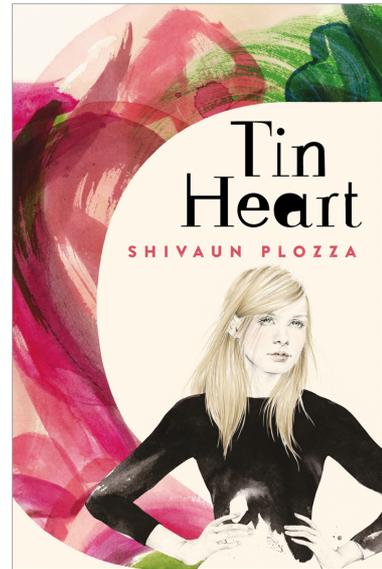
Inside the Tiger
by Hayley Lawrence

It's not because Bel's mother was murdered.
It's not because her father is a politician.
Bel writes to a Death Row prisoner as an easy way out of an assignment.

But now he's written back.

Drawn to Micah's world inside a Thai prison, Bel finds herself falling for the boy with ragged hair, shackles and a terrible past. But is she setting herself up for more loss? And will loving him mean losing the people who mean the most to her at home?

Whatever happens, none of them will ever be the same . . .



Tin Heart
by Shivaun Plozza

When Marlowe gets a heart transplant and a second chance at life, all she wants is to thank her donor's family. Maybe then she can move on. Maybe then she'll discover who she is if she's no longer The Dying Girl.

But with a little brother who dresses like every day is Halloween, a vegan warrior for a mother and an all-out war with the hot butcher's apprentice next door, Marlowe's life is already pretty complicated. And her second chance is about to take an unexpected turn...



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Ruby Tuesday	Hayley Lawrence	9781760894894	14+	\$19.99		
Inside the Tiger	Hayley Lawrence	9780143788959	14+	\$19.99		
Frankie	Shivaun Plozza	9780143573166	14+	\$19.99		
All the Bright Places	Jennifer Niven	9780141357034	14+	\$17.99		
Our Chemical Hearts	Krystal Sutherland	9780143573906	14+	\$19.99		
The Piper's Son (YA crossover, 16+)	Melina Marchetta	9780143203421	16+	\$19.99		
Tin Heart	Shivaun Plozza	9780143786276	14+	\$19.99		
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