

I Shall Never Fall In Love

by Hari Conner

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

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MAJOR THEMES

Gender
Class
Love and marriage
Reputation
Coming of age
Family
Self-Expression

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Hari Conner is an award-winning author, illustrator, and hopeless forest romantic. They're the creator of the webcomic *Finding Home* and choose-your-own-path books including *Into the Tower*. Hari grew up in south London, lives in Scotland, and wrote this book while living in a rainy village on a rocky stretch of English coast famous for its shipwrecks. When not drawing comics, Hari enjoys tabletop games and seeing how far they can get around historic buildings in their wheelchair.



George has always been in love with their best friend, Eleanor – and has always tried to ignore it.

Now Eleanor is coming of age and expected to marry a suitable man, it doesn't matter how George feels – they have to let her go. Besides, George is busy avoiding their aunt's matchmaking, taking over the failing family estate, and trying to keep their dressing in men's clothes a secret.

Eleanor has always wanted to do everything 'right,' including falling in love – but she's never met a boy she's interested in. She's more concerned with finding the perfect match for her cousin Charlotte, and working out why George is suddenly pulling away. But Eleanor's friendships seem to be falling apart, and she's beginning to realise that she likes George more than any man she's met at a ball...

With a swoon-worthy friends-to-lovers romance, *I Shall Never Fall in Love* shines a light on what it means to be true to yourself and rewrites the rules of Happily Ever After.

Discussion topics and activities:

- Consider the tagline “Rewriting the rules of Happily Ever After.” Where does your understanding of these rules come from? How are they subverted in the text?
- Spend some time thinking about the purpose of this graphic novel. Why do you think it was created? Who is it written for? Do you think it would have achieved the same impact as a prose novel?
- How does the graphic novel format convey emotion and tone with visual information instead of text?
- Identify the instances where Eleanor and George are expected to behave as “proper ladies.” To what extent do they follow these expectations?
- What are the barriers to George expressing their true sexuality and gender identity? What does this say about the importance of reputation in their social and historical context? Were you surprised by the reactions from George’s family and friends?
- The History Corner highlights how marginalised voices can be erased by a dominant historical narrative. Where does this kind of narrative come from, and who benefits from it? Did this section challenge or align with your assumptions about Regency era England?
- Eleanor, George and Charlotte face challenges around growing up that are unique to their time and place. What similarities do you see between their experiences and growing up in contemporary Australia?
- How is the theme of change explored in the text, whether personal, political or technological? Write about these characters’ attitudes towards change and how they evolve throughout the story:
 - George
 - Eleanor
 - Charlotte
 - Eleanor’s father
- Compare Eleanor and Charlotte’s ideas of love and marriage. How do their social and financial situations influence their perspectives?
- Upper-class families in early 1800s England followed complex social rules that influenced their daily interactions. What can we infer about these rules from the graphic novel? Explore the symbolism and subtext of the following as understood by the characters:
 - Dancing
 - Hosting dinner
 - Chaperones
 - Parties and balls
- Do you think the characters achieved a “happily ever after” ending? Why/why not?