

RADHIKA SANGHANI

THE  
GIRL  
WHO  
COULDN'T  
LIE



# THE GIRL WHO COULDN'T LIE

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## Reading Notes and Activities



### About the book

Priya Shah lies. A lot. She pretends everything in her life is perfect, so she doesn't disappoint anyone.

But when she puts on a bangle left to her by her Ba – the one person she was always honest with – she finds herself unable to tell a lie.

Priya is mortified. She tells her dad she hates his cooking, she tells Dan Zhang about her huge crush on him, she shares her best friends' secrets at school. She can't get the bangle off, and she can't stop the truths pouring out of her.

As more things go wrong, and Priya's truth-telling spirals out of control, can Priya learn to be honest without hurting the people she loves?

### About the author

**RADHIKA SANGHANI** is an award-winning features journalist, acclaimed author, screenwriter, influential body positivity campaigner and a 2020 BBC Writers Room graduate.

Radhika writes regularly for *the Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mail*, *Elle*, *Guardian*, *Grazia*, *Glamour* and *Cosmopolitan*; was recently featured in *Italian Vogue* as well as BBC Radio 4 *Woman's Hour* and is a regular guest on *Sky News* and *Good Morning Britain*. She is also a *TedX* speaker on body positivity, a yoga teacher and runs a charity initiative with *AgeUK* fighting loneliness in older women.



### About this pack

Use the discussion notes and activities included to explore the book in your classroom, library or book club. The activities focus on the themes of friendship, family and honesty.



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## Looking at the cover



Before you begin the book, discuss the questions below:

- Why do you think the girl on the cover has her hands over her mouth?
  - What are lies? Why do we sometimes tell lies?
- What do you think might happen if you could never tell a lie again?



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## Discussion Questions:

### Meet Priya!

- In the first two chapters (p. 5 - 34) we meet Priya, who is having a terrible day. Discuss all the things that have gone wrong for her on this day, and also think about all the times she tells a lie. Why does she decide not to be honest?
- Priya has been sad since her Ba died, and she hasn't been able to talk to her family about the way she has felt. Discuss the different ways that Priya's family are grieving.
- Priya's Ba says that 'loneliness comes when we can't be honest with people' (p. 29). Do you agree with this? Why?
- Why do you think Priya felt she could always tell her Ba how she was feeling?
- Why are Priya's friends and gymnastics both so important to her?

### The Truth Bangle

- Priya starts to panic about what might happen now that she can't lie. Make a list of all the benefits of being honest, as well as anything you think might be bad about not being able to lie.
- The bangle forces Priya to open up to Sami and Mei about lies she has told them including about starting her period and doing Katie's homework. How do her friends' reactions to these lies surprise Priya? (p. 43 - 48 & p. 69-72).
- What is it about Sami and Mei that makes them good friends?
- List the positive things that have come out of Priya being honest.
- Do you agree with Dan and Priya that it takes courage to speak the truth? (p. 153) Why is this?



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## Discussion Questions:

### Is Honesty the Best Policy?

- Why do you think Katie is nice to Priya in detention? (p. 164-171)
- When do things start going wrong for Priya? What lesson do you think the bangle is trying to teach her?
- Do you think Sami and Mei are right to be upset with Priya? (p. 211-218)
- How do you think Priya could have done things differently?
- Katie opens up to Priya about what is happening at home (p. 223-226). Do you think what is happening excuses her behaviour? Why has she decided to treat people unkindly instead of being honest about her feelings?
- Why do you think Priya's Ba left her the bangle when everything seems to be going wrong?

### Speaking My Truth

- After speaking to her dad (p. 232-238), Priya feels 'like a huge weight had disappeared from around her neck'. Why is this?
- How had Priya's way of trying to please everyone ended up with her feeling distant from those around her?
- Does Priya's decision about being on the Teen Olympics team surprise you? (p. 271) Why/why not?
- Priya gives a speech at the end of the book (p. 283-285). Make a list of the lessons she has learnt about friendship, honesty, pleasing others and being on a team.



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## Suggested Activities:

### What Priya Learns

In the book, Priya is going to learn a lot about **LIES, HONESTY, FRIENDSHIP, TEAMWORK and BRAVERY.**

On a large piece of paper, write out each of these words. Add a description for each word, and discuss what they mean to you. As you go through the book, add to your display with different quotes, or lessons that you have learnt alongside Priya.

Once you have read the book, look back at these words to reflect on them. Choose one word and create your own poster about it. Add some key quotes from the book, a short description and share a message you think people should take away from the book with Priya.

### All About Me

Create a fact file all about you using the template on the following page. Think about all the things you love, and practise your honesty here too – what can you share about yourself that others might not know?

Using your fact files, as a group play a game of two truths and a lie. Take it in turns to share two truths about yourself, and one lie.

Can you guess what each other's lies are?

#### For example:

*I'm a member of a netball team.*

*I can speak French. (lie!)*

*My favourite food is lasagne.*

Have you learnt anything new about each other from these facts?  
Discuss how it feels to open up to each other.



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## Template for a fact file

### All About Me

My Name:

.....

Things I love to do:

- 
- 
- 

I'm scared of:

- 
- 
- 

I live with:

.....

A fun fact people don't know about me:

.....  
.....  
.....

A drawing of me



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## Suggested Activities

### My Honesty Journal

Speaking the truth can feel scary as we can feel unsure how people will react. Begin by creating an honesty journal. Use the prompts below to explore telling the truth and being more honest. Discuss your journals as a group, how can you help each other to feel more brave?

**Prompts:**

- Today I feel.....
- I feel lonely when.....
- I was frustrated when.....
- I wish I could tell people about....

### A Letter from Ba

Write a letter to Priya from her Ba. What advice do you think Ba would give Priya about the bangle and honesty? What would Ba want Priya to know to help her through this? Why do you think Ba gave Priya the bangle?

### Writing a Speech

Priya's speech at the Bat Mitzvah is a success, and she manages to win her friends back. Write a speech about the importance of being honest. What has Priya's story taught you about honesty? Make your speech persuasive and clear, using examples and emotive language.

### Honesty Box

Priya learns the importance of sharing her own truth. Set up an honesty box in your library or classroom to encourage people to share their own truths in the box. Remind people that they should only share their truths, and not other peoples. They can be kept anonymous, but it is a great chance to practise being brave!

