



## The Other Side of You

By Amanda Craig

### About the book

Will must run, or die. He's seen a murder, and the gang on his estate are after him.

Hurt, hungry and afraid, he comes to an abandoned house in a different part of the city. Behind its high fences is a place of safety. Here, he can hide like a wounded beast. He can find food, and healing - and learn how to do more than survive.

But when Will meets Padma, he must choose between his good side and his bad one. For the gang he left behind is still there. How can he live without becoming a killer? How can he love without being a thief?

### About the author

Amanda Craig is the author of six novels including *Foreign Bodies*, *A Vicious Circle*, *Love in Idleness* and *Hearts and Minds*. Her articles and reviews have appeared in the *Independent*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* and the *Observer*. She lives in London.

Visit Amanda's website [www.amandacraig.com](http://www.amandacraig.com)

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Here is a range of activities to try as you read the book. See the key at the bottom of the page to explain the symbols we've used.

## Before Reading



- Look at the cover of this book. What does it make you think about?



- What do you know about the writer, Amanda Craig? Use a library or the internet to see what you can find out. Write a paragraph about what you find and share with someone else.



- Read the first sentence (and only the first sentence) of chapter 1. What do you think is happening? What do you think is going to happen? Why?

## Chapter 1



- What do we know about the narrator?
- What do we know about the BANG Gang?
- What do we know about the estate?  
Copy out the words or phrases that tell us this.
- Can you find any words that you think may be particularly connected with or used by gangs?



- About how many people are killed on this estate every year? (See page 2 for information to help you.)



- Do you know how many young people are killed in gang violence in the area you live? Or in other parts of the country? Use the library or the internet to find out more.
- Do you know of, or can you find out about, any organisations that work to decrease gang violence?

### KEY



## Chapter 2, 3 and 4



- Take a piece of flip-chart paper, or any piece of paper, and use words, arrows or pictures to record what the narrator does in these three chapters. Think about where he goes and who else is around. If you are in a group, present your ideas to others.



- Draw a picture of the place that the narrator finds. Add as much detail as possible. Read carefully.



- Where does the food come from?
- Where is the owner of this place?
- What do you think the narrator should do next? Why?

## Chapter 5, 6 and 7



- Add to your drawing of the place the narrator has found.
- Reread the description of him listening to the radio on page 27. What station do you think he is listening to? Why do you think so?
- Do you ever listen to this kind of radio ('no music, just voices')? If so, why? If not, try it and see what you think.



- What is happening to the narrator?
- What does he mean by (page 25) 'Aunty May's name for me was like a curse. I had become a beast.' Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Find some other words or phrases in these chapters that tell us something about how he seems himself.
- What does the word 'beast' make you think about?
- Find where he thinks about the idea of a 'guardian angel'. Do you think the narrator has a guardian angel? Do you have one?

### KEY



- Write one sentence describing what you know of the narrator so far. If you are in a group, compare your sentence with someone else's.



- On page 32, the narrator refers to 'a cartoon called *Beauty and the Beast*.' Have you seen this? Do you know the story?
- Ask around, visit your local library or use the internet to find out everything you can about the story of *Beauty and the Beast*.
- If you can, watch a movie version (there are several) and tell others about it.
- What does the story of *Beauty and the Beast* have to do with this book?

## Chapter 8 and 9



- Note down what we know of the two new characters. Think about how they are different from, or similar to, the narrator.
- Look at the sentence you have written about the narrator. Do you still agree with it? Change it, or add another sentence.



- What do you think about the narrator stealing money from children?
- What do you think is going to happen next?

## Chapter 13, 14 and 15



- Are you surprised by anything that has happened in these chapters? Why or why not?
- Reread the description of the narrator's new area on pages 65 and 66. How does this sound to you?
- Is any of this similar to the story of *Beauty of the Beast*? How? And is it different in any ways?

### KEY



- Imagine you are the narrator. Write in your diary about what happens in these final chapters. Write about your hopes and dreams too.



- Why is it so important that they find the lottery ticket?  
What will happen next?  
What would the future have been like if they had not found the lottery ticket?

## Afterword



- In your own words, explain what this *afterword* is telling us.
- Have you experienced anything like this?
- Could it be something 'more mysterious'?
- We learn in this *afterword* that the title of this book comes from T.S. Eliot's poem 'The Waste Land'. Now that you have read the book, what do you think the title means?



- Use a library, the internet or a friend to find a copy of T.S. Eliot's poem 'The Waste Land'. Read some or all of it. What do you think?

## After reading the book...

These are some questions to think about individually or as a group.

- Would you describe the narrator as a good person or a bad person? Explain why.
- Why does Padma want the narrator to be rich? Do you think she cares too much about money or is she being realistic?
- The narrator may never be punished for mugging the children. Do you think this is right? Why or why not?
- Think about how you could retell the story of *Beauty and the Beast* set in a different time and place.

## KEY

## Continuing your reading journey

As well as Quick Reads, The Reading Agency runs lots of programmes to help keep you reading.

**Reading Ahead** invites you to pick six reads and record your reading in a diary in order to get a certificate. If you're thinking about improving your reading or would like to read more, then this is for you. Find out more at [www.readingahead.org.uk](http://www.readingahead.org.uk)

**World Book Night** is an annual celebration of reading and books on 23 April, which sees passionate volunteers give out books in their communities to share their love of reading. Find out more at [worldbooknight.org](http://worldbooknight.org)

Reading together with a child will help them to develop a lifelong love of reading. Our **Chatterbooks** children's reading groups and **Summer Reading Challenge** inspire children to read more and share the books they love. Find out more at [www.readingagency.org.uk/children](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/children)

### KEY

 Reading  Discussion/reflection  Writing  ICT  Maths  Explore

These resources have been designed for those using Quick Reads independently, as well as for those using Quick Reads in a group.

As teachers, you could therefore refer your students to these resources as independent study material, or use them with groups in the classroom. We have included activities focussed on discussion, reflection, close reading, writing, ICT, mathematics/numeracy and other ways to explore a topic or theme.

Quick Reads have been created specifically for adults who are less confident in their reading, who may not see themselves as readers or who may feel that it has been a long time since they have read. They will also appeal to younger people who feel daunted by reading their first book.

In the terms of the English adult literacy core curriculum, or Functional Skills levels, they are often seen as suitable for those at Entry 3, Level 1 or Level 2. Adult literacy or functional skills English learners below Entry 3 may find them too challenging (as may some Entry 3 learners), but everyone is different, so it is always worth having a look.

ESOL learners - those learning or developing their English as an additional language - may also find Quick Reads a helpful introduction into reading books in English and a useful way to develop vocabulary and awareness of language structures. Quick Reads are often used by ESOL teachers teaching at Entry 3 or above. What works will individual learners will depend on the learners, their confidences, their language and literacy backgrounds and the particular books themselves.

As with all resources, Quick Reads could potentially be used with a range of groups and levels, depending of course on how you use them. It is worth remembering that Quick Reads are authentic texts - real books written by real authors - and so can be particularly motivating for adult learners.

We have written these resources so that they are accessible by those who would also find Quick Reads accessible. However, the needs, strengths and interests between and within groups vary (whether your groups is a Functional Skills English class, an adult literacy class, a GCSE class or an ESOL class) and so you may want to adapt the language at times, as well as adapt and play around with the ideas. You may find that you prefer some activities to others and that you will want to adjust them for your particular group(s) and context(s).

We hope that if you do use these with your students, you try things out that you haven't tried before, and let us - and your colleagues - know what worked well and not so well.

Email us at [quickreads@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:quickreads@readingagency.org.uk)

To find out more about **Quick Reads**, visit [www.readingagency.org.uk/quickreads](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/quickreads)

**Resources compiled by Sam Duncan, Senior Lecturer in Adult Education and Literacies, Department of Education, Practice and Society, UCL Institute of Education**