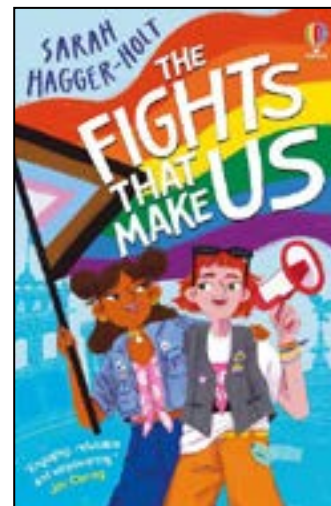


The Fights That Make Us

by Sarah Hagger-Holt
Usborne

A school project encouraging pupils to resurrect lost histories means that two parallel stories collide: Lisa and Nicky, in the 1980s, falling in love against the backdrop of the homophobic legislation, Section 28; friends Jesse, who identifies as non-binary, and Simran, who identifies as pansexual, pushing back against current day prejudices. The narratives inform each other and ultimately come together in a call to action and hope for the future.

Shortlisted for the 2025 Little Rebels Book Award



Social Justice Themes: LGBTQ+ Rights; Diversity; Participation; Equal Treatment

Things to talk about

- Jesse says, 'When someone listens to me as I am, without any fuss, then my whole body relaxes' (P14/15). How do you interpret this statement? What does Jesse mean and why do you think they feel this way?
- History and who gets to make it, which stories survive and which are forgotten is an important theme in this novel. Why?
- When Ms Ferraro overhears Jason's homophobic comments to Andy (P156/157), her response is very confused. What point is the author making here?
- The device of dual narrative is used to explore the lives of Jesse and their friends with Lisa and her friends. Why has the author chosen this technique?
- The title of this novel and the title of Jesse's and Simran's exhibition 'The Fights That Make Us' is discussed in the novel. What is the intended meaning of this phrase?

Activities

- History isn't just a neutral record of the past. It can privilege certain voices and erase others. Research examples of historical narratives that have done this. Pay particular attention to certain groups of people that this might apply to.

Extended

- In her Author's Note, Sarah Hagger-Holt mentions The Bishopsgate LGBTQ+ History Archive. You can visit it here <https://www.bishopsgate.org.uk/stories/section-28/?utm> to find out more about Section 28 and its impact.

For more information about The Little Rebels Book Award visit littlerebels.org