



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**Advancement | Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving**

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## **UCF Alumni Book Club**

### **Wahala by Nikki May**

#### **Book Discussion Guide**

#### **Book Description**

Ronke wants happily ever after and 2.2. kids. She's dating Kayode and wants him to be "the one" (perfect, like her dead father). Her friends think he's just another in a long line of dodgy Nigerian boyfriends.

Boo has everything Ronke wants—a kind husband, gorgeous child. But she's frustrated, unfulfilled, plagued by guilt, and desperate to remember who she used to be.

Simi is the golden one with the perfect lifestyle. No one knows she's crippled by impostor syndrome and tempted to pack it all in each time her boss mentions her "urban vibe." Her husband thinks they're trying for a baby. She's not.

When the high-flying, charismatic Isobel explodes into the group, it seems at first she's bringing out the best in each woman. (She gets Simi an interview in Shanghai! Goes jogging with Boo!) But the more Isobel intervenes, the more chaos she sows, and Ronke, Simi, and Boo's close friendship begins to crack.

#### **About the Author**

Born in Bristol and raised in Lagos, Nikki May is Nigerian-British. At twenty, she dropped out of medical school, moved to London, and began a career in advertising, going on to run a successful agency. Her debut novel *Wahala* was inspired by a long lunch with friends. It will be published around the world and is due to be turned into a major TV series. Nikki lives in Dorset with her husband and two standard schnauzers.

Bio from: <https://www.madeleinemilburn.co.uk/mm-authors/nikki-may/>

## **Characters:**

Ronke  
Kayode  
Boo  
Didier  
Simi  
Martin  
Isobel  
Sofia

## **Wahala**

Wahala means 'Trouble', and its meaning can change depending on context.

When someone says 'No wahala', they could mean 'Yes' or 'No problem'.

The flip side is 'Wahala dey o', meaning there is a problem. It is rare for this word to stand alone, except to express surprise at a disconcerting situation.

[Definition](#)

## **Discussion Questions**

### **General Questions**

- Share your overall thoughts on the book?
  - What were some likes/dislikes?
- What were some scenes that stuck out to you?
- What surprised you the most about the book?
- How did your opinion of the book change as you read it?
- If you could ask the author anything, what would it be?
- Are there lingering questions from the book you're still thinking about?
- What do you think happens to the characters after the book's official ending?
- How did the setting impact the story?
- Did the plot proceed in a way that felt natural? Or did you feel manipulated by the storyline?
- Did the characters seem believable to you?

## Book Specific Questions

- Do you think Boo, Ronke, and Simi's friendship was as strong as they thought, if it was so easily shaken up by Isobel?
- Share your thoughts on Isobel when she is first introduced.
- Each of the chapters was from the POV from Boo, Ronke, and Simi. We never get a POV chapter from Isobel. Share your thoughts on that, do you think it helped or hurt the story?
- Who of the characters did you relate to the most, if any? Why/in what way?
- May is great at illustrating the question so many women have grappled with: If we celebrate women's choices, why does contemplating divergent paths so easily lend itself to infighting and attack?
  - From article: <https://www.npr.org/2022/01/10/1070854970/in-wahala-intimacy-at-times-morphs-into-enmity>
- Dropped threads (Ronke deals with a stalker who has no bearing on the overall plot) did you notice this as you were reading? Where do you think the author was going with some of these storylines, and how did they tie into the main plot?
  - The author said in an interview that the Wahala for each character was added after the initial draft of the story was written.
- Share your thoughts on how each of the women are connected to their heritage and how they view it.
- Did you feel as if each of these women were always capable of going the things Isobel encouraged them to do, all they needed was her influence?
- On review of Wahala said "They live their lives to the fullest and have each other's backs." Where-as another article states, "there's not as much love, support or joy among the Black British women in Wahala – just constant striving." What's your opinion, did you feel the women supported each other, or not so much?
- What were your thoughts on the ending?
  - Did you see it coming?
  - Did you feel like it was too abrupt?
  - Do you think the women will ever get back to where their friendship was before Isobel?
  - Did you suspect Isobel was capable of the things she did?

- How did the 'Aftermath' prologue tie into the rest of the novel? Do you think we needed that snippet scene at the beginning?
- This book is going to be turned into a TV series. How would you like to see this set up? More of a thriller? A drama? Who would you like to see cast?

## Resources

### Discussion Questions

<https://www.oprahdaily.com/entertainment/a31047508/book-club-questions/>

<https://www.signupgenius.com/groups/book-club-questions.cfm>

### Articles:

<https://www.npr.org/2022/01/10/1070854970/in-wahala-intimacy-at-times-morphs-into-enmity>

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/nikki-may/wahala/>

<https://www.thebooksatchel.com/book-review-wahala-nikki-may/>

### Author Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lq5NJMhxL8>

### Author Website

<https://www.nikki-may.com/>