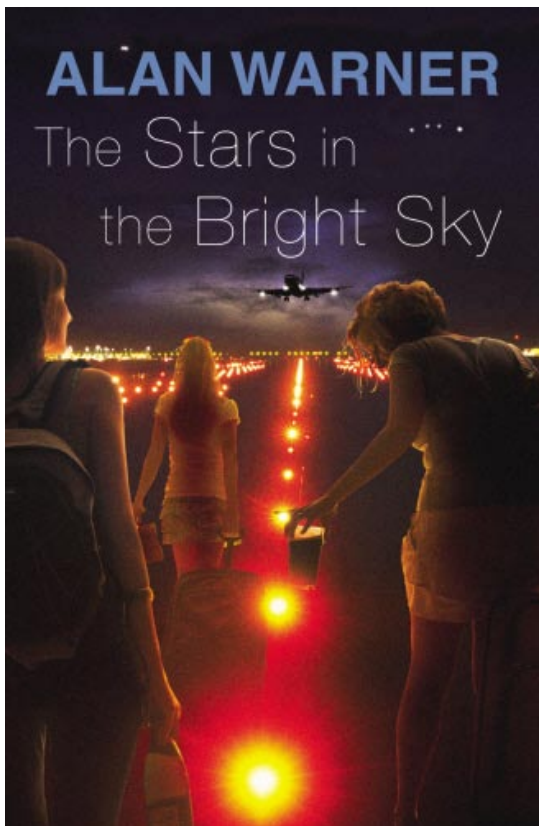




Reader's Guide



Other books by Alan Warner

Morvern Callar (1995)
These Demented Lands (1997)
The Sopranos (1998)
The Man Who Walks (2002)
The Worms Can Carry Me to Heaven (2006)

The Stars in the Bright Sky

Alan Warner

Jonathan Cape
Price £12.99

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About the author

Alan Warner is the author of five previous novels: *Morvern Callar*, *These Demented Lands*, *The Sopranos*, *The Man Who Walks* and *The Worms Can Carry Me To Heaven*. In 2003 he was chosen as one of Granta's twenty Best of Young British Novelists.

The Stars in the Bright Sky

The Sopranos are back: out of school and out in the world, gathered in Gatwick to plan a super-cheap last-minute holiday to celebrate their reunion. Kay, Kylah, Manda, Rachel and Finn are joined by Finn's equally gorgeous friend Ava - a half-French philosophy student - and are ready to go on the rampage. Just into their twenties and as wild as ever, they've added acrylic nails, pedicures, mobile phones and credit cards to their arsenal, but are still the same thirsty girls: their holiday bags packed with skimpy clothes and condoms, their hormones rampant. Will it be Benidorm or Magaluf, Paris or Las Vegas? One thing is certain: a great deal of fast-food will be eaten and gallons of Guinness will be drunk by the alpha-female Manda, and she will be matched by the others' enthusiastic intake of Bacardi Breezers, vodkas and Red Bull.

With Alan Warner's pitch-perfect ear for dialogue, pinpoint characterisation and glorious set-pieces, this is a novel propelled by conversation through scenes of excess and debauchery, hilarity and sadness. Like the six young women at its centre, *The Stars in the Bright Sky* is vivid and brimming with life - in all its squalor, rage, tears and laughter - and presents an unforgettable story of female friendship.

Discussion points

Do you agree with the reviewer that said, "its compassionate and funny depiction of the bonds of friendship is memorably bittersweet enough to make you care about the girls, and worry about baby Sean's future"? Shena Mackay, *The Guardian*.

Each girl has their own story. Do you agree that Manda is the flawed heroine? which character is most empathic? which did you find most irksome?

Do you think that one of the other girls took Manda's passport, if so which one and why?

The Stars in the Bright Sky has been described as a novel of contrasts, not only from the point of view of the characters themselves but also between the author and his characters. How successfully do you think Alan Warner captures the voices of the young women?

In a recent interview in *The Herald* Alan Warner said, "Finn has a go at Manda for using words like 'client' and talking about VIP area clubs. In a small town, no one would ever use the word 'client' because everyone knows everyone else, but suddenly this language of globalised capitalism is seeping through; it's a language that's about social exclusion where some people are allowed in and some people aren't". To what extent do you think *The Stars in the Bright Sky* explores social inequalities?

Themed reading

Niall Griffiths *Sheepshagger*
William Sutcliffe *New Boy*
Chrissie Glazebrook *The Madolescents*
Alasdair Gray *Old Men in Love*

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