

REVIEW ARTICLE



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print); 2321-3108 (online)

Female Friendships in Ana Huang's *Twisted Series*: Sisterhood, Emotional Support, and Female Identity

Mrinmayee Santoshkumar Pore

Sangli, Maharashtra, India – 416416

Email: mrinmayee248@gmail.com

DOI: [10.33329/rjelal.14.3.502](https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.14.3.502)



Mrinmayee Santoshkumar
Pore

Article info

Article Received: 21/08/2026

Article Accepted: 26/09/2026

Published online: 30/09/2026

Abstract

Ana Huang's *Twisted* series is widely recognized for its intense romantic relationships, dramatic conflicts, suspenseful plots, and morally complicated male protagonists. Yet, beneath its romantic narratives is another relationship that holds the four novels together: the friendship between Ava Chen, Bridget von Ascheberg, Jules Ambrose, and Stella Alonso. Beginning as college friends, the four women gradually develop a close bond that functions as a form of chosen family. Their friendship continues alongside their individual romantic relationships and provides emotional support, practical assistance, companionship, and a sense of belonging.

This paper examines the representation and significance of female friendship in Huang's *Twisted* series. It argues that the friendship between the four protagonists is not simply a secondary element added to the romance plots; rather, it is central to the structure and emotional continuity of the series. The women's friendship provides a space in which they can express their fears, question their decisions, and support one another through experiences of trauma, social pressure, exploitation, and danger. At the same time, their relationship offers an alternative model of intimacy to the possessive and controlling forms of romantic love frequently associated with the male protagonists. The paper also examines how the four women represent different experiences of womanhood and how their friendship allows these differences to coexist without becoming a source of competition. Ultimately, the *Twisted* series presents female friendship as a significant form of emotional connection and demonstrates that intimacy and love can exist beyond romantic relationships.

Keywords: Ana Huang, *Twisted* series, female friendship, sisterhood, chosen family, female solidarity, contemporary romance, women's relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary romance fiction frequently places romantic relationships at the centre of its narratives. Ana Huang's *Twisted* series follows this convention while also developing a strong network of relationships among its female protagonists. The series consists of four novels—*Twisted Love*, *Twisted Games*, *Twisted Hate*, and *Twisted Lies*—with each novel focusing on a different romantic couple: Alex and Ava, Rhys and Bridget, Josh and Jules, and Christian and Stella (Huang, *Twisted Love*; *Twisted Games*; *Twisted Hate*; *Twisted Lies*). Huang herself identifies these four books as the *Twisted* series and recommends reading them in publication order because the novels contain recurring characters and connections.

Although the romantic relationships receive the greatest narrative attention, the friendship among Ava Chen, Bridget von Ascheberg, Jules Ambrose, and Stella Alonso is one of the most consistent relationships across the series. The four women meet during college and gradually become close friends. Their bond continues even after their lives begin to change through romance, careers, personal crises, and other responsibilities. As the original study material notes, the friendship connects the four novels and gives the protagonists a source of emotional support beyond their romantic partners.

This aspect of the series deserves closer examination because female friendship performs several important functions. It provides emotional security, creates continuity between separate narratives, gives the characters a sense of identity outside romance, and introduces a form of care based largely on mutual understanding and loyalty. The women are also significantly different from one another. Their differences in personality, background, ambition, and experience allow the series to present womanhood as varied rather than uniform.

This paper therefore examines the role of female friendship in the *Twisted* series, focusing particularly on the ideas of chosen family, emotional support, female solidarity, identity, and the contrast between friendship and romantic possessiveness.

Female Friendship as Chosen Family

The friendship among Ava, Bridget, Jules, and Stella can first be understood through the idea of the “chosen family.” Unlike biological families, chosen families are formed through relationships of affection, trust, loyalty, and shared experience. The women in the *Twisted* series begin their relationship through circumstance: they are among the few women in their college cohort and gradually become close through spending time together and discovering shared values.

Their relationship develops beyond ordinary friendship. They become people to whom one another can turn during moments of uncertainty and crisis. Their bond remains stable even as their individual circumstances change. Each novel focuses on a different woman's romantic relationship, but the other three continue to appear in her life. This creates the impression that their friendship exists independently of the romantic plots rather than simply serving them.

The idea of chosen family is especially important because the women do not need to be identical to belong together. Ava, Bridget, Jules, and Stella have distinct personalities and experiences. Their friendship is therefore based less on sameness than on acceptance. They are able to remain close while pursuing different ambitions and making different choices.

This becomes particularly meaningful in a series where romantic relationships are often intense and emotionally overwhelming. The friendship offers a stable relationship that is not dependent on romantic attraction. It gives the women a social and emotional world that exists

before, during, and after their individual romances.

Emotional Support and Female Solidarity

One of the clearest functions of female friendship in the *Twisted* series is emotional support. Each protagonist encounters a different form of personal difficulty. Ava deals with traumatic memories and the consequences of her father's actions. Bridget struggles with the demands of royal life and expectations concerning her future. Jules faces blackmail connected with a coerced sexual recording, while Stella is threatened by an obsessive stalker.

These experiences place the women in vulnerable situations, but their friendship prevents complete isolation. They have people who listen to them, provide advice, and intervene when necessary. The friendship consequently functions as a form of emotional safety.

The importance of this support is particularly visible in *Twisted Lies*. Stella's stalking situation becomes increasingly serious, and her friends respond with concern for her safety. Their involvement demonstrates that Stella's problems are not treated as exclusively personal. Her friends recognise her vulnerability and become part of the support system surrounding her.

Jules's relationship with Ava also demonstrates how the friendship connects individual stories. In *Twisted Hate*, Jules's connection to Ava contributes to her relationship with Josh. The friendship therefore operates both emotionally and narratively: it provides support while also creating links between characters and events across the novels.

The everyday aspects of the friendship are equally significant. The women gossip, joke, share secrets, and spend time together. These apparently ordinary moments give the friendship a sense of familiarity and realism.

They also provide a tonal contrast to the darker elements of the series. The humour and companionship shared by the women create moments of warmth in narratives that frequently involve trauma, conflict, danger, and emotional intensity.

Female solidarity in the series is therefore not limited to dramatic moments. It is also present in ordinary companionship. The women do not need to be facing a crisis to value one another's presence.

Friendship and Romantic Possessiveness

The friendship becomes particularly interesting when it is considered alongside the romantic relationships in the series. Huang's male protagonists are frequently characterised as powerful, protective, possessive, and morally complicated. The official descriptions of the novels themselves emphasise this aspect. For example, *Twisted Love* presents Alex as a possessive antihero, while *Twisted Games* describes Rhys as a highly protective bodyguard and *Twisted Lies* presents Christian as an obsessive and morally ambiguous figure.

The female friendships operate according to a different emotional logic. The women's relationships are generally based on listening, trust, conversation, and mutual care. Rather than claiming ownership over one another, they create space for individual choices.

This contrast is important because it prevents the female protagonists from being understood exclusively through their romantic relationships. Their friends know them as individuals rather than simply as someone's girlfriend or partner. The friendship gives them an identity that is not entirely dependent on the men they love.

The difference can also be seen in the way care is expressed. Romantic relationships in the series sometimes use protection and possessiveness as expressions of love. Friendship, by contrast, tends to express care through presence and understanding. The

women can disagree with one another, question one another's choices, and still remain emotionally connected.

This does not mean that the female friendships are presented as perfect or that the romantic relationships can be reduced to a single interpretation. Rather, the contrast allows the series to present different forms of intimacy. The friendships demonstrate that protection does not necessarily require control and that emotional closeness can exist without possession.

Different Experiences of Womanhood

The four women also contribute to the series' representation of different forms of womanhood. Ava is compassionate and optimistic despite her difficult past. Bridget is responsible and composed because of her royal position but also wants the freedom to make her own decisions. Jules is outspoken, ambitious, and determined, while Stella is quieter and more anxious but deeply loyal.

These differences are important because the series does not present one fixed model of femininity. The women are allowed to possess different personalities and priorities while still belonging to the same friendship group.

Bridget's experiences are shaped by royal responsibility and public expectations. Jules's identity is strongly connected with ambition and professional independence. Ava's character is shaped by trauma and her attempt to recover from it, while Stella's experiences involve vulnerability, public visibility, and fear. Their circumstances are therefore very different, yet their friendship provides a space in which these differences can coexist.

The group consequently presents female friendship as something that does not depend on complete similarity. Women can disagree, have different ambitions, and respond to life differently without becoming rivals. Their friendship suggests that solidarity can accommodate difference.

This is also significant from the perspective of representation. Readers may recognise different aspects of themselves in the four characters because the women do not all respond to relationships, ambition, vulnerability, or social expectations in the same way. Their collective presence creates a broader representation of contemporary womanhood than any one character could provide.

Friendship as a Narrative Structure

Female friendship is also essential to the structural organization of the *Twisted* series. The four books function as interconnected romances rather than completely separate stories. Huang's official reading order identifies *Twisted Love*, *Twisted Games*, *Twisted Hate*, and *Twisted Lies* as the four books in the series, while her FAQ identifies the four central couples.

The recurring friendship helps make these separate romances feel like parts of a larger narrative. Characters from one novel continue to appear in subsequent books, allowing readers to follow their lives beyond their individual romantic stories.

There are also direct connections between the characters. Rhys, Bridget's love interest, is associated with Harper Security, which connects his story with Christian and Stella's narrative. Josh, Ava's brother and Jules's love interest, creates another connection between *Twisted Love* and *Twisted Hate*.

Such connections encourage readers to become invested in the wider group. Once readers have developed an attachment to one protagonist, subsequent appearances allow them to see her again in a different role. The friendship therefore produces continuity not only for the characters but also for the reading experience.

The result is a fictional community rather than a collection of isolated romances. The novels remain individually focused, but the relationships among the four women create a larger emotional framework.

Reader Reception and Contemporary Romance Culture

The popularity of the *Twisted* series has also contributed to the visibility of its female friendships. Online reading communities frequently discuss the four women as a group, focusing on their loyalty, humour, and emotional closeness. The original research material identifies social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram as important spaces in which readers respond to the friendships.

This reader response is significant because contemporary romance is increasingly discussed through online reading communities. Readers do not engage only with individual books; they also discuss characters, relationships, tropes, and friendship groups.

The female friendship in *Twisted* fits well into this culture because it provides readers with a relationship that exists alongside romance. While the romantic couples generate much of the series' dramatic appeal, the friendship gives readers another emotional connection to the characters.

However, reader responses remain varied. Some readers appreciate the intensity of Huang's romances, while others question the use of possessive relationships and traumatic storylines. The friendship can therefore be viewed as one of the more stable aspects of the series without assuming that every reader interprets the broader representation of gender and romance in the same way.

CONCLUSION

Female friendship is one of the central relationships that gives Ana Huang's *Twisted* series its continuity and emotional depth. Although the four novels are primarily structured around romantic relationships, the bond among Ava, Bridget, Jules, and Stella provides a parallel narrative of sisterhood and chosen family.

The friendship allows the women to support one another through trauma, danger,

personal uncertainty, and major life changes. It also provides a space in which they can maintain their identities outside romance. Their differences in personality and circumstance demonstrate that female solidarity does not require women to be identical. Instead, meaningful friendship can accommodate different ambitions, personalities, and experiences.

The contrast between the women's friendship and the series' romantic relationships is equally significant. While the male protagonists are often associated with possessiveness and intense protection, the women generally express care through listening, loyalty, understanding, and mutual support. This creates an alternative model of intimacy within a series otherwise dominated by intense romantic relationships.

Ultimately, the friendship among Ava, Bridget, Jules, and Stella is more than a narrative device. It is a representation of chosen family, female solidarity, and emotional belonging. Through these relationships, Huang's *Twisted* series suggests that while romantic love may transform the protagonists' lives, friendship is what repeatedly gives them a place to return to.

References

- BookScouter. (2025, October 8). *The Twisted book series: A review*.
<https://bookscouter.com/blog/twisted-book-series/>
- Huang, A. (2021). *Twisted games*. Piatkus.
- Is it worth reading the whole series of Twisted?* (2023, June 5). *Skyline Post*.
<https://skylinepost.org/2851/arts-entertainment/is-it-worth-reading-the-whole-series-of-twisted/>
- Review: Twisted series – Ana Huang*. (2023, November 30). *The Bookish Mindset*.
<https://thebookishmindset.com/2023/11/30/twisted-series-ana-huang-review/>

Twisted hate – Author insights. (2026, May 17).

SuperSummary.

<https://www.supersummary.com/twisted-hate/author-insights/>

Twisted series guide. (2025, March 10). *Lemon8.*

[https://www.lemon8-](https://www.lemon8-app.com/@emilypeot/7371613828561732102)

[app.com/@emilypeot/7371613828561732102](https://www.lemon8-app.com/@emilypeot/7371613828561732102)

What's behind the hype of Ana Huang's Twisted series? (2024, September 22). *The Teen Magazine.*

<https://www.theteenmagazine.com/what-s-behind-the-hype-of-ana-huang-s-twisted-series>