

The Girl on Fire

gender

A female protagonist who takes on roles often reserved for boys—adventure/ action, fighting, infiltrating, leading, surviving, rescuing, solving puzzles, creating social change, and facing down corruption.

She tells her story in the “I” or via an omniscient narrator, speaks up for what’s right, questions the way things are.

age

Most often 16 or 17 years old, but sometimes 15 or 18 (flashbacks in the story portray events from girlhood).

Identity and Character

A “mainstream” girl who is described or assumed as white, but may reflect a future of racial ambiguities.

class

Most often a lower socio-economic class and/or living in survival mode.

Norms

She is often an outsider or an outcast of some kind.

sexuality

Heterosexual or non-sexual. A non-heterosexual orientation—or a lack of a male love interest or love triangle—is rare. Romance is a frequent theme.

An “Other” girl is non-white as established by name, skin color or hair texture, ancestry or parentage, ethnic group, or combination of these; race is overt.

ability

Sometimes has special abilities or skills. Able bodies and sound minds are challenged and sometimes compromised.

race

The Human Side:

Adolescence, coming of age

Family, friends

School, hobbies, work

Love, community

Overlapping Genres in

YA Dystopian Lit:

Romance

Fantasy

Science fiction

Horror

Speculative fiction

Action/adventure

The Girl on Fire

Culture and

Context

The Dystopian Context Cultural, Institutional, Structural

Social organization/power/politics/justice/corruption

Health/disease/genetics/bioethics

Landscape/geography/climate change

Resources: food, water, shelter, clothing, education, technology

Timeframe/relationship to the past