



## Everything I Know About You

*Barbara Dee*

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Misfit Tally is forced to room with queen bee Ava on the seventh grade field trip to Washington, DC, and discovers several surprising things about her roommate—including the possibility of an eating disorder—in this timely new novel from the author of *Star-Crossed* and *Halfway Normal*.

During a class trip to DC, twelve-year-old Tally and her best friends, Sonnet and Caleb (a.k.a. Spider) are less than thrilled when they are assigned roommates and are paired with kids who are essentially their sworn enemies. For Tally, rooming with “clonegirl” Ava Seely feels like punishment, rather than potential for fun.

But the trip is full of surprises. Despite a pact to stick together as much as they can, Sonnet pulls away, and spider befriends Marco, the boy who tormented him last year. And Marco just might “like” Tally—what’s that about?

But the uneasy peace in Ava and Tally’s room is quickly upended when Tally begins to suspect something is off about Ava. She has a weird notebook full of random numbers, and doesn’t seem to eat anything during meals. When Tally confronts Ava, Ava threatens to share an embarrassing picture of Tally with the class if Tally says anything to anyone about her suspicions. But will Tally endanger more than her pride by keeping her secret?

This is one class trip full of lessons Tally will never forget: how to stay true to yourself, how to love yourself and embrace your flaws, and how being a good friend can actually mean telling a secret you promised to keep...

## Everything I Know About You Details

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## **From Reader Review Everything I Know About You for online ebook**

### **Vincent Lobosco says**

Barbara Dee again, accurately and with sensitivity touches on topics students need to read characters dealing with. Ava is struggling with an eating disorder and Tally is dealing with self-discovery. Everything I Know About You is a quick read that will have students thinking because there are not simple solutions. We have been talking a lot about endurance especially in middle school. Life is not easy. This is an important book to put in middle school kids hands!

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### **Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says**

Tally Martin is headed to Washington, DC for a class trip. Her biggest worries are (1) will her friends avoid being bullied, and (2) will she and her friends have to room with their enemies.

Tally is dismayed to learn that, yes, she and her friends will be assigned roommates outside their comfort zones, but she gradually comes to realize that her friends are able to stand on their own feet without need of help from her and that they can all make new, unexpected friendships.

I loved these characters and how they grew from stretching themselves outside their comfort zones. It's a great story.

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### **Violet Sinclair says**

4.5 Stars

Wow. Where do I even begin with this book?

I've had a week to gather my thoughts, and I still can't formulate how good this book is. It was just...I don't know, something about it.

The characters were great. Tally was literally me at like, fourteen. I loved her so much. Spider was another really relatable character, I really liked him. And AVA. GOOD GOD AVA. Yes, there were many points where I didn't like her, but ultimately she was a really well-written character.

The writing style was very similar to Beth Vrabel's, which is probably why I liked it so much. (I read CAMP DORK just after this one, and holy cow, I had to keep reminding myself that it was a different author.)

All in all, this was a really important book that I just loved with all my heart.

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## **Mandy Stallard says**

How do you help someone who doesn't want to be helped? Should you even try to help someone that doesn't think they need it? The main character, Tally, faces these very questions in *Everything I Know About You* by Barbara Dee.

Tally is forced to room with one of her least favorite people, Ava, on a school field trip to Washington, D.C. While rooming with Ava, Tally notices that she keeps a list of random numbers in a notebook. There is even a gold star on a completely blank page. At first, she thinks that Ava is keeping track of how much she exercises. However, when Tally notices that the numbers don't add up, she realizes that Ava is keeping track of her calories, and she is hardly consuming any.

Tally confronts Ava about how little she eats and how much she exercises, but Ava refuses to acknowledge that she has a problem and blackmails Tally to keep her quiet. Even though Tally really dislikes Ava, she knows that she needs someone to intervene before she starves herself to death. She is faced with a huge moral dilemma: out Ava and risk being ridiculed by her peers or keep Ava's deadly secret.

Barbara Dee sheds light on a topic that many people deal with but few people discuss. Her writing had me completely hooked from the first chapter. I love that the chapters are fairly short because I think this will help readers stay engaged who have lower reading stamina. This book is a little over 300 pages long, which can be intimidating to some MG readers, but I flew through it, and I think students will as well. In a classroom setting, this book would pair very well with *Every Shiny Thing* by Cordelia Jensen and Laurie Morrison as they have similar themes.

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## **Lorie Barber says**

We've been talking a lot lately about tackling tough topics in middle grade lit. I haven't read a MG book that touches on anorexia until this revelation from Barbara Dee.

Spunky and original Tally is forced to room with the oh-so-popular Ava, a "bonding" experience made to enhance their 7th grade DC trip. And if that's not bad enough, Tally's lifelong friends, Sonnet and Spider, are moving in other directions. But as Tally and Ava spend more time together, Tally begins to see that Ava's life might not be so perfect after all.

Barbara Dee has a knack for creating original characters that tug at your heartstrings, and Tally is definitely another one. Multiple conflicts, well-developed characters, and an engaging setting made this a read I couldn't put down, and the resolution had me in tears. I was alternately cheering for and irritated at Tally and Ava, but ended up caring so, so much for both of them. This book belongs in the same category as *Wonder*, *Finding Perfect*, and *Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus*: characters with heart that are so much more than what's on the surface. I'll be proud to add this one to my library and share it with my students. This one will help one of my kids someday.

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## **Jenni Frencham says**

Tally has always liked herself as she is - taller and larger than her family members, a fierce friend /

bodyguard for her two best friends, a math nerd, a person with unusual fashion sense. But when she goes on the 7th grade trip to Washington, D.C., she's paired with her arch-nemesis, Ava. Ava is everything Tally is not - popular, fashion-forward, able to fit in with her classmates. When Tally's friends start to branch out and find other people to spend time with, Tally is stuck with Ava, and when she sees how little Ava eats and how much she exercises, she faces some tough decisions.

I read this entire book in one sitting, which is something I can't often do. I loved that Tally had a very well-rounded personality but that she wasn't perfect. Her fierce protection of her friends made them think of her as their babysitter or "rescue dolphin." She had her own style and was blissfully oblivious of what others thought of her. But then Ava is not a 2-dimensional antagonist, either. She has her own personality and we get to learn more about her throughout the book.

I don't know that I've ever seen a book for tweens about anorexia, but this is definitely an issue that tweens can struggle with, and I'm glad that this book exists. My only (very small) complaint has to do with the cover: it looks to me like a cover of a book for adults or older teens. I'd love to have seen some characters on the cover, or an illustration of Washington, D.C. or something. Nevertheless, this book will be added to my library's collection and I will be book-talking it to the tweens and teens.

Recommended for: tweens

Red Flags: Tally talks about how she punched a classmate for bullying her friend; Tally's roommate Ava counts the calories in her food and over-exercises, so there is discussion of anorexia as well

Overall Rating: 5/5 stars

Read-Alikes: Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus, Sadia, The Popularity Papers

I received a complimentary copy of this book through Edelweiss for the purposes of review.

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## Laurie says

Interest Level: 5-8

Have you ever had one of those friends who was always like a mother hen and always took care of everyone and everything? Are you one of those friends? That is Tally Martin. She is always taking care of her best friends Caleb (aka Spider) and her new friend Sonnet. When she finds out about the seventh grade class trip to Washington, DC she is so excited.. that is until she finds out that the teacher over the trip is trying to promote seventh grade unity and is making them room with their enemies. Tally is mortified that she is going to have to room with "clonegirl" Ava Sealy. They have been mortal enemies for so long, how can she be expected to spend three whole days with her? Tally, Ava, Sonnet, Caleb and everyone else on the trip soon finds out that there is more to their classmates than they every imaged. Tally soon finds out that everyone is fighting a secret battle. This book is filled with friendships, fightings, break-ups, make-ups, and even a possible crush comes to light. However, the biggest challenge Tally faces is when she finds out that her roommate may possibly have an eating disorder but she is being blackmailed into not telling anyone, especially Ava's mom. What will Tally do? Will she still have her best friends at the end of this trip, or has her tight reigns finally broken? Will she do the right thing and get her enemy help despite risking an incredibly embarrassing picture coming out? Read this amazing middle school book to see how this plays out.

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## **Charbear says**

I received this book as an ARC, so I don't want to give away too many plot details or spoilers, but I do have to include details! I will tag any possible spoilers at all so I don't ruin this for anyone. This book is for ages 9-13, and it is very well suited for that age group.

Ok, so our main character is Talia, known as Tally, throughout the story. I loved Tally, she was quirky and different and not afraid to stand out. She's already much taller and bulkier than other girls, so she dresses outlandishly as well. However, on the flip side of that, we do see that sometimes she uses her differences as a shield. She will take things too far to keep people away from her; that way if someone doesn't like her, she can just blame it on how she looks and not who she is. It's a defense to keep herself from being hurt, and I liked how the author brought that about.

Tally is going on a school trip with her two best friends; the three of them have always stuck together. However, on this school trip, she and her best friends Spider and Sonnet are separated from each other. Sonnet and Spider are fine with this; they seem to grasp the idea that they can make new friends, even with old enemies. People change, right? Tally doesn't agree. She can't understand why Sonnet and Spider are so forgiving. She fights the entire process, and it pushes her best friends away. I did like that the book showed people CAN change, you can forgive people and be friends; but I totally understood what Tally was going through as well. She's protective to a fault; her friends kind of turn on her quickly. Growing up, all they wanted was for Tally to protect them, it's what she's good at. But the minute they get tired of it they completely turn on her. They blame for doing WHAT THEY ASKED HER TO DO. I was just as frustrated as Tally, but this is a coming of age story, and Tally grew through it. Did she handle it well? No. But she learns from it, and it makes her a better person for it. I liked the plot, but I didn't like that Sonnet and Spider never fully apologize; both sides were wrong about something, but Tally shouldn't take all the blame.

Now for some possible spoilery parts; WARNING possible spoilers ahead, read at your own risk. One big theme of the book is body image and disordered eating. I think the way the author handled this subject and portrayed it in this story is eye opening. Details in this part: (view spoiler)

So overall, I only have good things to say about this book. I definitely recommend for its intended age group, but I also think that older teens and young adults would enjoy it as well.

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## **Emily says**

Barbara Dee does such a wonderful job capturing the confusion of middle grade kids who are in transition and dealing with all kinds of problems, small and big. In this novel, the protagonist Tally is feeling pretty secure in her friendships...until she's not, and her two best friends begin to challenge her and befriend classmates Tally deems either dangerous bullies or superficial "clones" (or both).

When she's forced to room with her kind-of arch nemesis Ava on a class trip to Washington, D.C., things begin to really unravel and Tally has to do some soul searching. Is she holding on too tight and not allowing herself and her friends to grow and change? Tally also notices that Ava isn't as perfect as she seems and may be struggling with an eating disorder. Should she say something?

What I loved about this book is that it was both serious and light. Dee doesn't hide the fact that Ava is clearly underweight and in danger. At the same time, the kids sound and behave like kids who make mistakes, but ultimately learn from them and do the right thing. There's lots of humor and hope here.

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### **Em says**

A middle grade novel dealing with eating disorders? Sign me up, this is the representation needed in children's literature.

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### **Kristen Picone says**

An important book for tweens and teens! Barbara Dee has a knack for tackling tough topics in MG with grace and even some humor. This book includes authentic middle school voices, and while Ava's eating disorder is an issue, it's not the ONLY issue. Main character Tally has always been comfortable in her skin, until being forced to room with Ava on an overnight field trip to Washington DC makes her really look within herself. Tally's two best friends begin drifting toward other friends and she finds herself unsure of what to do about Ava. Should she tell anyone about Ava's eating habits? Why is she even worried about Ava? Do people ever really change? I can't wait to include this book in my classroom library.

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### **Kate Olson says**

Thanks to the author for providing @kidlitexchange with a review copy of this book!

I will preface this review with the fact that I have a close personal connection to the eating disorder topics addressed in this book, and have read extensively on the topic at times in my life. In addition, I try to read all (or as many as possible!) MG and YA titles that discuss this topic to ensure that the portrayal is 1) accurate and 2) sensitive and 3) non-glamorizing. I am so happy to say that this book hits all three of those in the best middle-grade-way possible, and in addition, addresses the life-long nature of anorexia and purging through exercise rather than a tied-with-a-bow quick fix.

Tally....oh Tally. She is one of my new favorite middle grade heroines because of her body positive attitude and strong sense of self. She bows to no one, but also realizes her own vulnerabilities, and is willing to admit when she is wrong and apologize to those who deserve it. She EATS food and dresses to her heart's desire and rejects harmful body image and style stereotypes. Her struggles with how to deal with Ava's issues are heartfelt and so so real.

Now for the trip storyline. I \*JUST\* returned from a middle school bus trip to Washington DC with my daughter and her class, so this story entered my reading life at the exact right time! I connected with every part of the trip, and it brought me right back there - I loved how Dee addressed the rooming issues and social

issues, as these are the exact things I witnessed during my time as a chaperone. For anyone who hasn't gone on this trip, please know that this book perfectly nails it.

EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT YOU deserves a place in every middle school library and classroom, and I have already pre-ordered copies for my library and my daughter. As a mom, THIS is the book I want my daughter reading and Tally is the heroine I want her reading about.

Please also go and read Dee's post on Nerdy Book Club on her motivation for this story - it is required reading!

AND if you want another MG on this topic, with a slightly different, but equally good twist, please read THINGS THAT SURPRISE YOU by Jennifer Maschari.

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### **Gray Cox says**

I would've loved this when I was younger.

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### **socks&#x1f319; says**

this was a really good book. a little lower than my normal reading level, but worth it. i enjoyed the plot and how real the relationships were. the characters were all so sweet and true to average middle-schoolers.

my favorite characters were ava, spider, and sonnet. after reading this book, most people love tally and her protective instincts, but i was with her friends and found them annoying. on almost every page it was repeated how she wanted to protect spider, or she didn't understand that sonnet had other friends too. it got old fast for me. i liked these instincts more in relation to ava though, because they fit more and how she tried to fight them for her.

her relationship with marco was like any middle school relationship: a little forced, very awkward, but cute nonetheless.

the representation of ava's anorexia was pretty well done, i think. it's especially nice to see it in a book for younger kids, and to have it handled pretty well. it's interesting to see what tally thinks her notebook is of as well. the hostility of ava about it was pretty accurate i believe, like with the picture of tally.

i also would like to mention that i absolutely love the cover. the two sides both with numbers but one with ava's and one with tally's is so cool. i also just love the colors.

overall a good book that will stay on my shelf.

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### **JoEllen says**

Barbra Dee is a gift to MG. Her ability to address tough topics with authenticity, heart and humor makes her a triple threat. This deals with challenging friendships, family, acceptance, being true to oneself and being

proud of who you are. Barbara's Tally is a character to love. Ava's eating disorder is something that not many books explore and it is done so well.

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