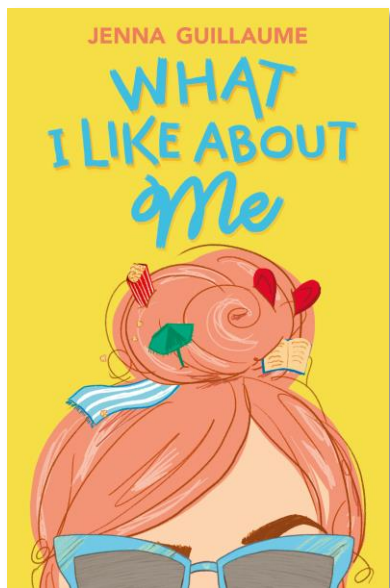




PEACHTREE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



What I Like About Me

Written by Jenna Guillaume

ABOUT THE BOOK

The last thing sixteen-year-old Maisie Martin thought she'd be doing over vacation is entering a beauty pageant. Not when she's spent most of her life hiding her body from everyone. Not when her Dad is AWOL and her gorgeous older sister has returned to rock Maisie's already shaky confidence. And especially not when her best friend starts flirting with the boy she's always loved. But Maisie's got something to prove.

As she writes down all the ways this vacation is going from bad to worse in her school-assignment journal, what starts as a homework torture-device might just end up being an account of how Maisie didn't let anything, or anyone, hold her back.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think about the journal format of the book? How does Maisie's stream of consciousness come into play?
2. Have you ever been assigned a journal for a school project or decided to start a personal journal? If so, did you find it a positive or negative experience? Why?
3. Have you ever been in a situation where you and your best friend liked the same person? If so, how did you handle it? If not, how do you think you'd feel?
4. Maisie does not feel comfortable wearing her bathing suit, so much so that she avoids the beach. Have you ever felt that way? If you could give Maisie advice, what would you say?
5. Compare the personalities of Maisie, Anna, and Leila. Which character do you most relate to and why?
6. How would you describe the dynamic between Anna and Maisie? Do you think Anna is a supportive friend? Do you think Maisie is a supportive friend? Why or why not?
7. Do you agree with Leila that Maisie should enter the beauty pageant? If you were Leila, would you push Maisie to put herself in that type of situation? Do you see Leila's advice as encouragement or pressure?
8. Compare everyone's reactions to Maisie entering the beauty pageant. Who do you think handled it the best? The worst? What would you say to Maisie?
9. What do you think of Maisie's reaction to Anna kissing Sebastian? Was her anger justified? What are your thoughts on girl codes? How healthy are they for friendships? What does it mean for a friendship if a girl breaks this code?
10. Discuss the role dancing plays in Maisie's life. How might this have affected how she sees her body? How might this have affected her relationships with her sister and mother?
11. Do you think Maisie was right to push her sister away when her sister came out?
12. What do you think of Eva dating a plus-sized person after years of fat-shaming her own sister? Do you think Eva has a genuine change of heart?
13. Before the pageant, Bess tells Maisie that Maisie is brave because she's scared to do the pageant. Have you ever done something you were terrified to do? Did your feelings change after you did it? How?

14. “So I stood there tonight, in front of the mirror,” Maisie writes (page 181). “And I cried. And I wiped my tears away, and I looked at myself. Truly *looked* at myself for the first time in a long time. And I counted the things I like about my body.” What do you think of Maisie’s method of identifying what she likes about herself by creating a list? If you made a list of everything you like about yourself, what would be on your list?
15. Jenna Guillaume does not include any specific mentions of how much Maisie weighs. Do you think this was a deliberate choice? Why do you think this is significant?
16. What do you think is the big turning point in the story? Why do you think it is important to Maisie’s character development?
17. What did you think of the ending? How do you think Maisie’s opinion of herself will continue to change moving forward? Do you think Maisie’s approach to dealing with body positivity is realistic and relatable?

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