



## What I Like About Me

*Jenna Guillaume*

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**What I Like About Me** Jenna Guillaume

*You know all those movies where teenagers have, like, THE SUMMER OF THEIR LIVES?*

*This summer is probably not going to be that.*

*Source: Everything that's happened since yesterday ...*

The last thing sixteen-year-old Maisie Martin thought she'd be doing this summer 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 for Christmas and her gorgeous older sister has returned to rock Maisie's shaky confidence. And her best friend starts going out with the boy she's always loved.

But Maisie's got something to prove.

As she writes down all the ways this summer 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...

### What I Like About Me Details

Date : Expected publication: February 26th 2019 by Pan Australia

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Author : Jenna Guillaume

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## From Reader Review What I Like About Me for online ebook

### C.G. Drews says

this was a super cute one about body positivity, beauty pageants, and the lazy shenanigans that happen in an Aussie summer. Like I am *here* for the Aussie-vibes. It was really fluffy/predictable but I acknowledge that I'm getting old and I've read a lot lolol so I can definitely see 12yo+ kids loving this.

RTC

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### Julie (Bookish.Intoxication) says

I was sent a copy of this book from MacMillan in exchange for publicity and an honest review. My full review will be up on my blog ([www.bookishintoxicationwrites.com](http://www.bookishintoxicationwrites.com)) as of the 26th of Feb 2019, as per the wishes of the publishing agency.

This book was great, I am so grateful to MacMillan for sending it to me to review. I had a blast reading it. It is honest and raw and looks at so many different aspects of growing up. It is well written and fast paced, the pages keep turning faster and faster until there are no pages left and you wish there were more. I love that this is an Australian book, I find it makes the characters easier to relate to because they go to places I go to and speak like I speak and use slangs that I use. I loved that about this book, and I think that is what made me like it so much. Yes, this book has some similarities to other popular novels such as Dumplin, but this took on a world of its own. I adore how it was written in diary entries, not only did it give the reader a much clearer sense of how the protagonist was feeling and why she was doing what she was doing, but it made it easier to read. It broke up the intense moments and also intensified the moments that usually would have been overlooked.

This book is a wakeup call to all of the teenage and twenty something girls out there that have been smacked in the face with tiny models on their tv's and magazines all of their lives, and think that in order to be respected and to matter, that they need to be skinny and eat certain things and if they don't fit that mould, then they can't wear certain clothes or go to certain places. This book is made for girls who feel that way. Love who you are, you are you for a reason! Wear that Bikini, eat that cake, get the hair cut! This book is a must read for 2019 and sums up the change that the world needs to see!

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### Fiona says

Predictable summer at the beach story in journal format. On holiday, long term crush hooks up with her best friend, his best mate is irritating, parents are having problems, she feels inadequate compared to her prettier, much thinner older sister but Lo! Her sister comes back with a fat girlfriend and supports her sister and all is forgiven. It was so meh that I can't even remember her name. I read and ARC and the cover is the best bit.

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## **ALPHAreader says**

I mean - obv.

I represent Jenna as literary agent and I am VERY much in love with Maisie and her story. I've read it about 20 times, and I love it more and more each time!

I said this on Twitter, but it's worth repeating, that: what struck me about it upon re-read is how great the incidental diversity is within. Particularly: a young character who has a troubled home life, but that's not the focus of their story.

In case you didn't know: #LoveOzYA tends to have a problem of defaulting to a comfortable middle-class background for characters. The few times people who live on a lower socioeconomic rung are portrayed, it tends to be extreme in the other way - showing how awful their world is.

Jenna Guillaume's book includes a character who comes from a troubled home life, but isn't defined by it. They're shown to have a solid support network, and particularly of people who are sensitive to their situation but not righteously believing that they need "saving" from it.

Obviously I'm generalising awfully - and the middle-class default has been a problem of all YA generally, not just Aussie, for a while now. And there are other books (Emily Gale's 'I Am Out With Lanterns' springs to mind!) that also do a good job of class diversity, and also those that radically and brilliantly portray the truth of a not-so-easy life (everyone should read Eleni Hale's 'Stone Girl' immediately!)

But it just really stuck me in 'What I Like About Me' - and goes to show a "light" slice of romantic YA can (and really should) be actively reaching for diversity and inclusivity in all ways too. Because that's what the romance genre can achieve so radically - incidental diversity.

It's all here in Jenna's book where there are;

- No female 'villains', just complex women
- Body positivity and self-love
- Wide variety of characters from all backgrounds
- True appreciation for the timeless classic that is 'Dirty Dancing'

READ IT! You'll love it, I promise!

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## **Indy says**

A beautiful and uplifting rom com of a novel that is sure to join the ranks of Dumplin' and the Upside of Unrequited.

I loved this from start to finish and Maisie is a beautiful, funny and charming voice.

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## **Mirelle says**

I was given an advanced reading copy of this book, and HOLY MOLY it was so good I'll definitely be

buying a finished copy come March 2019!

This is EXACTLY the kind of YA I longed for when I was a teen and experiencing the inevitable self-loathing of not having a super skinny bod. This is such a wonderfully funny, feel-good, body positive book that will make you laugh and cry, sometimes at the same time.

There are so many relatable scenes (shopping for swimwear) and observations (the hate of peeling prawns) that I felt like someone had gotten inside my head and put it all on paper.

Would definitely give this one a solid 6 stars out of 5 if I could.

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### **Tamsien West (Babbling Books) says**

Sweet, funny, smile-until-your-cheeks-hurt cute contemporary Australian YA. All about Summer romance, sisterhood, family, friendships, and body image.

Though I haven't read Dumplin' (only watched the movie) I think this book will probably be heavily compared to it because of the fat teen protagonist and the beauty pageant side plot.

But I think there is enough in this book to stand alone as a great representation of what Summer is like for Aussie teens. It delves into lots of relevant social concerns around different kinds of relationships, romantic and otherwise, and the voice is so beautifully realised and unpretentious.

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### **Adele says**

It doesn't happen often. That contemporary playfulness and romance (so common in US contemporary) combined with a distinctly Australian sensibility but What I Like About Me but it did. And I really, really enjoyed it.

And as a plus-size girl, I respected Guillaume's exploration of judgement - directed inwardly, from friends, family and strangers. And the fat girl got a lovely person. LOVE.

The voice is definitely in my wheelhouse. I loved the humorous throwaways and the introspection verging on self-destructiveness that is common in teens. I would have liked to have seen a little more fleshing out of the secondary characters (maybe a victim of the edit?) but I think it's a really strong debut.

Hear! Hear! I am definitely here for fun YA!

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### **Rhiannon Willersdorf says**

I still can't decide how I really feel about this book so that's why it got a 3 because a lot of things I like were also things that made me uncertain.

Pro:

. Well written. Makes me want to strangle the "best friend" Girl she not your friend if she hits on a person

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you like.

- . Great Cover!
- . Wonderful message of self love.
- . The book throws the word FAT around a lot as this is how the main character views herself, and it tries to put forward the idea that just because you may be bigger than someone else doesn't mean you are worth any less. Which is fabulous and I love this.
- . Realistically Australian without going overboard.
- . Realistic view of just because you live far away doesn't mean friendship and love cannot work.

Con.

- . Written in the mind frame of a teenager good things bad, bad things good.
- . Maybe slightly dangerous message of self love.
- . Talks about diets and salads like they are bad things, now yes, dieting can be dangerous if done wrong and people just starve themselves. Which please people never do this! Talk to your doctors first about the right things that you should be eating to suit your body, because we are all different and need different things. This book doesn't really touch on that or how eating bad can hurt you in the long run. It talks about eating healthy things like salad and being in shape like her mother and sister as if that is a bad thing and I worry about the impression that leaves on young readers.
- . Main character going shopping for swimmers and visiting 4 different shops and only being able to find one or two pieces of clothing that would fit her. Now that actually gave me a big pause moment and question if the main character is actually fat or if she is going on obesity. Most swimmer places I had growing up on a coast town like that, carried up to size 16 or XL if our main character is larger than that at her age, as an adult I instantly started to worry more and more about her health.

Like I said this book is very well written and makes you stop and think about a lot of things this is why I gave it a 3, might add more points later when i have time to let it sink in more and think more about the plot line.

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### **Sass says**

A joyous, wonderful addition to Australian teen literature.

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### **Sofia Casanova says**

Seriously going to be my favourite YA contemporary of 2019. Review to come.

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### **Diem says**

I had the absolute privilege of beta-reading WHAT I LIKE ABOUT ME.

I read it the first time in between two very important uni assessments and I honestly didn't care if I would fail. I just had to keep reading and know more about Maisie. I was so invested in her!

The second time I read it I had to lie down on the ground when I was done. I was overcome by how absolutely brilliant and perfect this book was.

I can't wait to read it the third time in its finished copy.

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### **Libby Armstrong says**

What a gem. This novel is one of the most realistic contemporary works of late, capturing and exploring female friendships, family dynamics and self esteem. Maisie could be right there in your friendship group now. Well written, well paced, bursting with humour and kissing!

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### **Sunny A says**

Ya'll, I finished my arc of 'What I Like About Me' & I can't say much yet but this NEEDS to be said. What I Like About Me is the type of book the very insecure yet romantic 8-17 y/o me desperately begged for & it's the book that 18 y/o me will forever be SO grateful for.

What I Like About Me is such a valuable and fun contribution to #AusYA (probs the best I've ever read) and has to go international! Girls and boys NEED this book! I can already see it on Netflix as a film & as a book studied in school. There is nothing but goodness in this book!

LOVED IT <3 <3 <3

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### **Amanda says**

Happiness is seeing your friend's book on Goodreads!!! I cannot wait to read the rest of this book <3

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