

ABOUT THE GUIDE

Isabelle's Boyfriend is a teen novel about friendship and family, and why sometimes it's hard to see what's right in front of us. This guide is intended for use by both individual readers and groups, such as book clubs, to stimulate discussion.

For more information, please visit <http://carolinehickey.com>. You'll find reviews, FAQs, and behind-the-scenes details about the book.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. At the beginning of the book, Taryn has never had a boyfriend. What is it about Epp that makes her want to go out with him so badly? Is it his looks, or the fact that he belongs to someone else?
2. Actions tell us a lot about a character. Name something that Taryn, Epp, or Isabelle does that reveals his/her character.
3. Why does Lila want a boyfriend so badly? What does she think it will change?
4. Is Lila a good friend to Taryn? Is Taryn a good friend to Lila?
5. Why does Taryn's mother love Camille so much? How does this affect Taryn's feelings toward Camille?
6. Since their divorce, Taryn often feels torn between her mother and her father. What could she do to feel more in control?
7. Why does Taryn decide not to visit her father for Christmas? Is it the right decision? What would you have done?
8. Is Epp a good boyfriend to Isabelle, or a bad one? Why?
9. At the end, Lila and Taryn decide Isabelle might be a little smarter than they thought. What do you think? Was she really a friend to Taryn, or not?
10. Pete really likes Taryn, but as much as she wants a boyfriend, she turns him down. What makes her do that?

WRITING EXERCISES

1. Taryn pretends to be on the school paper to be able to interview Epp. Write an article about something happening at your school that would be suitable for its newspaper.
2. Write a short essay from Camille's point of view about what happens between Taryn and Epp.
3. Taryn tries to write an apology to Lila about being such a bad friend, but tears it up. Create your own version of what this note should have said.

WHAT IF...

If discussing as a group, take turns deciding what could have happened in the book IF...

1. What if Epp hadn't had a girlfriend? Would he have liked Taryn?
2. What if Isabelle hadn't been nice to Taryn? Would Taryn have tried harder to steal Epp?
3. What if Pete hadn't liked Taryn? What if Taryn had decided she liked Pete?
4. What if Taryn had written the article Carla wanted her to write, and everyone in school found out about what she'd done?
5. What if Lila hadn't pushed Taryn to chase Epp? Would she still have done it?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caroline Hickey was born and raised in Baltimore, MD, where *Isabelle's Boyfriend* takes place. After receiving her BA in English Literature at James Madison University, she moved to New York City. There she earned an MFA in Creative Writing from The New School and began writing novels for children and teens. She now lives in Washington, DC with her husband and young daughter.