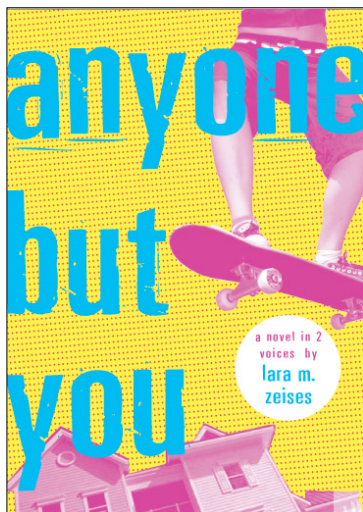


Discussion Guide for Lara M. Zeises's *Anyone But You*

Prepared by Melissa Rabey
Pt. Pleasant Borough Library, Pt. Pleasant, NJ



Critter and Jesse have been close to Seattle since her dad moved in with their mother. Closer still since he took off six years ago and Layla decided to raise Sea as one of her own. It's a decision none of them regrets, especially not Critter. He's more than a brother—he's Seattle's best friend.

Now it's vacation, and Seattle and Critter are stoop sitters, at least until summer school starts in July. It beats working, like Jesse, or worse, studying, like Layla wants them to. It's too hot for Seattle to be on her skateboard—too hot, even for Critter to be scamming on girls. But Sea comes up with a plan for them to bluff their way into the ritzy swimming pool the next town over. Big mistake.

Soon Critter's got his heart set on a Penn Acres princess, while Seattle's trying hard not to fall for a skater boy on the rebound. For the first time in a long while, they can talk to anyone but each other. Then Seattle's dad shows up unexpectedly, and the way of life Critter and Seattle have always known begins to change even more. . . .

1. "Family, it turned out, was something you really could choose for yourself." Do you agree with Seattle? Can you create a family that isn't based on blood ties? What would be good about this kind of family?
2. Why do you think Critter identifies so much with Rod Stewart, instead of a more current singer? What does this say to you about Critter as a person?
3. *Anyone But You* takes place over a few weeks in early summer, when there's a heat wave. Do you think this story could have been set at a different time of year? Did the weather have an impact on the characters and their decisions?
4. Why do you think the author chose to have both Seattle and Critter be narrators? What are the benefits of this structure?
5. Seattle, Jesse, and Critter are very close to each other—they're each other's best friends. Is it possible to be best friends with a sibling? Would you want to be so close to your brothers or sisters?
6. Jesse isn't a narrator, but he has a clearly defined role in the family: he's labeled as "the dad" by both Critter and Seattle. Why do you think Jesse acts like a father figure?
7. Sarah is labeled as a Penn Acres princess; Scott is called Genius Skater Rebound Boy. What do these names mean over the course of the book? Do they hold true, or are they just Seattle's initial reactions?

8. *"For a skater, confidence is key. The minute I started to doubt a landing, I fell."* Does this statement apply to more than just skateboarding for Seattle?
9. What do you think of Layla and Frank, the two parental figures in the book? Are they realistic to you? Why do you think Layla encourages Seattle and Critter to be better students? Does Frank deserve a second chance from Seattle?
10. Seattle and Critter have a very complex relationship throughout the book. What do you think about this relationship? What was your reaction to the attraction between the characters? How would you have felt in that situation? What do you think the future holds for Seattle and Critter?