

## **“Tell Me Three Things”**

**Julie Buxbaum**

**Reviewed by: Laura Zhang, 13**

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When Jessie moves from Chicago to Los Angeles, her whole world turns upside down. She encounters a new stepfamily she instantly hates and an enormous mansion overflowing with riches, contrary to her former modest suburban life. Her new stepmother, who eloped with her Dad over online dating, pays for Jessie’s tuition at an extremely elite and prestigious prep school, where Jessie feels lost and alone. Jessie isn’t used to the rich snobbiness of over entitled LA kids and doesn’t know how to handle this new environment. Jessie is constantly bullied, and her lack of friends makes her life at Wood Valley miserable. However, Jessie does make one friend in a sea of vicious bullies. The problem is, Jessie has never met him before and doesn’t even know who he is. That’s because instead of having real life conversations, Jessie and this mysterious “Somebody/Nobody” (more commonly known as SN) text each other instead. They become each other’s deepest confidants and each day, tell each other three things about themselves, hence the title of the book. SN becomes Jessie’s closest ally and helps her make new friends and gives her helpful advice for navigating Wood Valley High School. As Jessie becomes closer to SN, she is increasingly anxious to meet the person who became such a close friend to her. When SN finally agrees to meet in person, Jessie encounters a surprise.

*Tell Me Three Things* is a heartwarming story of young love, discovering who you are, and moving on from the past. This novel was everything I could wish for; funny, charming, romantic, and sweet with a subtle mystery. My favorite thing about the story was how relatable and real the characters were. I understood how Jessie felt and all the struggles she had from losing her mom to coming to an environment that was so different that anything she ever experienced before. The story felt so real and captivating, and it had such a wide range of elements in it. I loved how the author incorporated the idea of a virtual anonymous friendship, which was what made the book special to me. Another thing I enjoyed reading about was Jessie’s journey. After all the hardship she faced, it felt so amazing to finally see Jessie get what she deserved; new friends, a happy family, and cute boys. The mystery itself is something very innovative and refreshing. It’s not like the usual dark mysteries in other books, but more of a light and playful one that warms your heart. There’s a sense of apprehension of discovering who SN is, which added a lot of dimension. The only thing I didn’t like was how stereotypical all the students at Wood Valley were, especially the girls. The bullies were always skinny, blonde, and stuck-up, and it seemed that there was little diversity at the school, even though LA is arguably the most diverse city in the U.S.

I found this story extremely innovative and an enjoyable read. I would recommend it to readers 13 and older as although the actual plot isn’t that mature, it has mentions of more mature

topics suitable for older teens. *Tell Me Three Things* would be perfect for teenagers as it is mainly about the relatable journey of Jessie navigating through high school. It would be a great gift, but I would recommend getting it from the library as the main idea and plot sticks with you long after you finish the novel. If you love a sweet love story, I recommend checking out *Tell Me Three Things*.

**Recommended Titles:**

To All the Boys I've Loved Before by Jenny Han

Five Feet Apart by Mikki Daughtry, Rachael Lippincott, and Tobias Iaconis

The Selection by Kiera Cass