

TEEN BOOK CLUB

September 2017 Selection

***Every Last Word* by Tamara Ireland Stone**

Samantha McAllister looks just like the rest of the popular girls in her junior class. But hidden beneath the straightened hair and expertly applied makeup is a secret that her friends would never understand: Sam has Purely-Obsessional OCD and is consumed by a stream of dark thoughts and worries that she can't turn off.

Second-guessing every move, thought, and word makes daily life a struggle, and it doesn't help that her lifelong friends will turn toxic at the first sign of a wrong outfit, wrong lunch, or wrong crush. Yet Sam knows she'd be truly crazy to leave the protection of the most popular girls in school. So when Sam meets Caroline, she has to keep her new friend with a refreshing sense of humor and no style a secret, right up there with Sam's weekly visits to her psychiatrist.

Caroline introduces Sam to Poet's Corner, a hidden room and a tight-knit group of misfits who have been ignored by the school at large. Sam is drawn to them immediately, especially a guitar-playing guy with a talent for verse, and starts to discover a whole new side of herself. Slowly, she begins to feel more "normal" than she ever has as part of the popular crowd... until she finds a new reason to question her sanity and all she holds dear.

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Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think *Every Last Word* could help readers recognize obsessive-compulsive behavior and anxiety disorders they might be struggling with?
2. How can readers learn from Sam and her therapy sessions?
3. In what ways does Sam hid her true self from the Crazy Eights? Why is this important to her?
4. Do you have experience with a group like the Crazy Eights? Why do you think teens want to belong to groups that are mean to other teens?
5. How does Sam act differently when she is with the kids in the Poet's Corner? Why is she drawn to this group?
6. Why is AJ suspicious of Sam? If you were AJ do you think you could find forgiveness?
7. There is a major plot twist towards the end of the book. How did this change your understanding for Sam and her disease? How does the plot twist reveal the true character of Sam's friends?
8. Does the use of poetry in the novel help or hinder the story development? Why or why not?
9. Who are Sam's real friends in the end? What does it mean to be a real friend?



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Recommendations:

- If you liked *Every Last Word*, you might like *All the Bright Places*
(<http://www.booksamillion.com/p/9780385755917>)
- You might also enjoy *Eleanor & Park*
(<http://www.booksamillion.com/p/9781250012579>)