

Cross My Heart and Never Lie

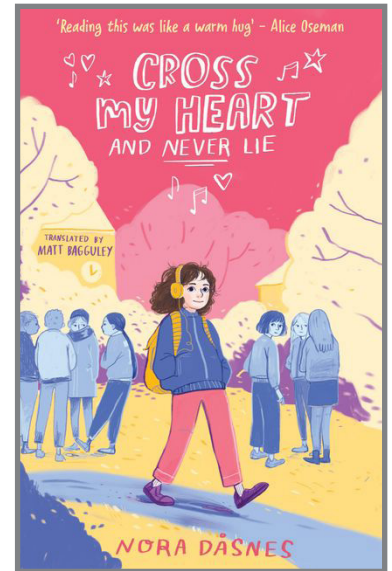
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Secondary



SYNOPSIS

Tuva is starting seventh grade, and her checklist of goals includes: writing out a diary, getting a trendy look, building the best fort in the woods with her BFFs, and much more. But when she starts school, nothing is how she hoped it would be.

Seventh grade has split her friends into rival factions: TEAM LINNEA: the girls who fall in love, and TEAM BAO: the girls who NEVER fall in love. Linnea has a BOYFRIEND, Bao hates everything related to love. Worst of all, Linnea and Bao expect Tuva to choose a side!

In this delightfully hand-lettered, coming-of-age graphic diary, Tuva gets caught between feeling like a kid and wanting to know HOW to become a teenager. Then Miriam shows up and suddenly Tuva feels as if she's met her soulmate. Can you fall in love with a girl, keep it from your friends and survive? For Tuva, it may be possible, but it's definitely not easy.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Nora Dåsnes was born in 1995, and is a Norwegian writer and illustrator. She did her BA in Illustration Animation at Kingston University outside London, graduating in 2017. *Cross My Heart and Never Lie*, won the 2024 Stonewall Award in the United States and the 2020 Pondus Prize in Norway. *Save Our Forest*, will be the follow up to *Cross my Heart and Never Lie*, which will be published July 30, 2024. She is also planning a third instalment.

STUDY NOTES

- On p 2 and p 9, Tuva created pages to introduce herself and her friends to her diary. The three girls are quite different. Why do you think they are friends? Imagine you created an information page about yourself. What would you include?
- On p 6, Tuva had outlined the five goals that she wanted to happen in seventh grade. Discuss if and how Tuva had achieved these goals by the end of the story. Take turns looking for evidence for each goal. Which one do you think was the hardest to achieve for Tuva? What five goals would you list for yourself?
- On August 21, Linnea admitted she had a boyfriend. How did Tuva react to the news? Why do you think she was so worried about having a boyfriend? What advice would you give her?
- On August 27, Tuva went to band practice and hoped to find someone there that she could love, because 'That way we'd have something in common!' (p 40). What does Miriam and Tuva have in common? Do you think it is important to have something in common with a friend or loved one?
- On p 61, Tuva listed the two main friendship groups in the school. She highlighted that 'You have to decide what

group you belong to.' Why do you think it was hard for Tuva to be in either group? Discuss the different pressures that could come from being in a group as well as not being in one at all.

- From the diary entry on September 10, in what ways does the author show that Tuva loved Mariam and wanted to spend more time with her?
- On p 56, Tuva described how she was caught between Bao and Linnea's friendship breakdown. She wrote that 'Friends SHOULD come first.' Share examples in the diary of how Tuva was torn between both friends and its impact on her. What are your views about Bao and Linnea's behaviour?
- Re-read pp 110–113 and then discuss Tuva's question to herself, ' . . . can you be in love with a girl and still like BTS?' (p 114). Have a discussion about different types of love and the importance of recognising feelings.
- On pp 148–149, Tuva decided, 'I'm going to STOP acting like a KID and BECOME a TEENAGER.' How did she try to do that? Which of her actions were successful and which were not?
- Focus on pp 190–203 and discuss the following:
 - How has the author shown Tuva's anger and then her misery?
 - Why did Tuva think everything is ruined?
 - When she shared her feelings with her dad, she felt better. Share different ways young people can get help, support or advise if they are feeling down or have a problem.
 - Tuva's dad shared his October playlist with Tuva. How do you think the track titles helped Tuva? Create your own playlist that you can listen to if you need cheering up.
- At the end of the story, Tuva and her two friends were reunited. What lessons do think they had learnt about friendship? Study the illustration on pp 239. How do we know that Tuva had found happiness and acceptance about her love for Mariam? Discuss your own feelings about the ending with the class.
- Once you have read the story, find different examples of how Tuva used her diary to convey information about her life and feelings, eg. different font sizes and styles, fun drawings, doodles, individual words, captions, labelled pictures, mind maps, maps of places, flow charts, blogs, fact files, etc. Share your favourite examples. How do they enhance the story?
- Not all of the book is Tuva's diary. How does the author show the events that happen to Tuva and her friends? Some pages are just artwork or a few words eg. pp 113–114 and pp 216–217. Find examples that capture Tuva's emotions and feelings.
- At the back of the book, the author, Nora Dåsnes, writes a personal letter to her readers. In the last paragraph, she states how growing from being a kid to being a teen is hard no matter where or when you lived. Think about how growing up and being a teen in the past might have been like compared with today. Discuss the easier and harder aspects for both times.
 - At the end of the letter, the author has written, 'So this book is for you who feel alone in all the madness of growing up.' Discuss in what ways the book can help those who find it difficult growing up. Would you recommend the book to them? How has it helped you?