



You Don't Know Me but I Know You

Rebecca Barrow

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Rebecca Barrow's bright, honest debut novel about chance, choice, and unconditional love is a heartfelt testament to creating the future you truly want, one puzzle piece at a time.

There's a box in the back of Audrey's closet that she rarely thinks about.

Inside is a letter, seventeen years old, from a mother she's never met, handed to her by the woman she's called Mom her whole life. Being adopted, though, is just one piece in the puzzle of Audrey's life—the picture painstakingly put together by Audrey herself, full of all the people and pursuits that make her who she is.

But when Audrey realizes that she's pregnant, she feels something—a tightly sealed box in the closet corners of her heart—crack open, spilling her dormant fears and unanswered questions all over the life she loves.

Almost two decades ago, a girl in Audrey's situation made a choice, one that started Audrey's entire story. Now Audrey is paralyzed by her own what-ifs and terrified by the distance she feels growing between her and her best friend Rose. Down every possible path is a different unfamiliar version of her life, and as she weighs the options in her mind, she starts to wonder—what does it even mean to be Audrey Spencer?

You Don't Know Me but I Know You Details

Date : Published August 29th 2017 by Harperteen

ISBN : 9780062494191

Author : Rebecca Barrow

Format : Hardcover 336 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Contemporary, Realistic Fiction, Fiction, Parenting, Adoption, Young Adult
Contemporary, Romance, Family, Teen, Lgbt

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From Reader Review You Don't Know Me but I Know You for online ebook

Sarah says

(I received an advance copy of this book for free. Thanks to HarperCollins and Edelweiss.)

“You’re going to think I’m insane, but – I think I might be, maybe, a little... pregnant?”

This was a YA contemporary story about a girl who found herself accidentally pregnant.

Audrey was an okay character, and she really did seem to take time over her decision and look at all the possible options after finding out she was pregnant. I understood how hard it was for her to break the news to her mother though.

The storyline in this was about Audrey finding out that she was pregnant and trying to decide what she wanted to do about it. Audrey herself was adopted, which put a bit of a different spin on things, and she had a supportive boyfriend who tried to help her do what was right for her. We also got a GLBT storyline, with Audrey’s best friend Rose being gay, and hooking up with a new girl. This was an enjoyable story overall, but I didn’t feel like it was really anything new.

The ending to this was okay, and I was happy that Audrey was happy with her decision.

6.5 out of 10

Kristy says

Audrey is in high school--leading a busy life filled with her art and photography, her boyfriend, her friends, and planning for her future. Audrey is also especially close to her mother, Laura, a formerly famous actress who adopted Audrey as a baby. Overall, Audrey thinks her life is pretty good. But things change dramatically when Audrey learns she is pregnant. She loves her boyfriend, Julian, and the two of them have been practicing safe sex. Yet, here she is, with some major decisions to make. Years ago, Audrey's birth mother made a big decision, and as a result, Audrey has had her happy life. What choice should she make, and how will it affect all the people she loves?

This novel wasn't exactly what I was expecting, even though it's certainly a fairly realistic look at teen life and angst. It's a little hard to read at times, but Audrey certainly doesn't have an easy decision to make, either. For me, I found the novel oddly stressful at times. I found myself rather attached to Audrey. She was a very sympathetic and engaging character. She's nearly a woman, yet just a kid. Nearly all of Barrow's characters are fairly well-developed, but Audrey is the best. She's real, complicated, and confused. I enjoyed her and her depth.

That's not to say I didn't have issues with parts of this novel. There's a lot of fighting. There's a subplot where Audrey and her best friend, Rose, bicker. Audrey tries to push Julian away, at times. These portions can get irritating, and they drag the novel on. The Rose/Audrey fighting pieces slowed things down time after time. The friendship drama, while realistic, was very YA and got a little tiresome.

Still, Audrey's friendship with her group of friends is lovely and realistic. There are a lot of sweet and tender moments in the novel and much to love in Audrey's interactions with her family and friends, especially her relationship with Julian. It's surprisingly mature, yet rooted in the lives of two high school students. There's also a bisexual character who is just part of the novel-it's not a big deal-which is always so refreshing to see in YA literature.

Overall, this one was a little tough to read - unexpected pregnancy isn't exactly an easy subject matter. It doesn't gloss over the subject, and I appreciate that. Some of the writing is a little cliché and slow at times, but it's a first book, and there's a lot here for a debut author. Audrey is a dynamic character, very real, and the book has some endearing moments. Certainly an author to watch.

I received a copy of this novel from the publisher and Edelweiss (thank you!); it is available everywhere as of 08/29/2017.

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Aditi says

“Anyone who ever wondered how much they could love a child who did not spring from their own loins, know this: it is the same. The feeling of love is so profound, it's incredible and surprising.”

----Nia Vardalos

Rebecca Barrow, an English author, has penned a heart warming and extremely compelling debut teen fiction called, *You Don't Know Me but I Know You* that is centered around a young high school teenager, who has a loving adoptive family, great friends and a charming and kind musician boyfriend and both are looking forward to their future excitedly, but then this young teenage girl's life changes when she has to make difficult decision that her birth mother made for her a decade ago. This story is all about families, love, friendships, choices, motherhood and ultimately about honesty above everything.

Synopsis:

Rebecca Barrow's bright, honest debut novel about chance, choice, and unconditional love is a heartfelt testament to creating the future you truly want, one puzzle piece at a time.

There's a box in the back of Audrey's closet that she rarely thinks about.

Inside is a letter, seventeen years old, from a mother she's never met, handed to her by the woman she's called Mom her whole life. Being adopted, though, is just one piece in the puzzle of Audrey's life—the picture painstakingly put together by Audrey herself, full of all the people and pursuits that make her who

she is.

But when Audrey realizes that she's pregnant, she feels something—a tightly sealed box in the closet corners of her heart—crack open, spilling her dormant fears and unanswered questions all over the life she loves.

Almost two decades ago, a girl in Audrey's situation made a choice, one that started Audrey's entire story. Now Audrey is paralyzed by her own what-ifs and terrified by the distance she feels growing between her and her best friend Rose. Down every possible path is a different unfamiliar version of her life, and as she weighs the options in her mind, she starts to wonder—what does it even mean to be Audrey Spencer?

A decade ago, Amanda, a 16 year old teenager, gave birth to a baby girl, but then gave her up in a closed adoption to a woman named, Laura, along with a letter addressed to her daughter. 10 years later, while holding that same letter in her hands, Audrey wonders that whether she is going to repeat the same mistakes just like her birth mother. Welcome to the life of a high school teenager, named Audrey Spencer, of mixed race, living in her loving adopted family home and with a ambition to become a photographer. Audrey has great set of friends, a very cool bestie and a caring and hot boyfriend, Julian, sadly their love-making turns fatal when Audrey falls pregnant out-of-the-blue, despite of their using protection. Now Audrey is left with only two choices, either give birth to the baby and give the baby up for adoption, like her mother did a decade ago, or go for an abortion. This enduring journey of hers will not only push her away from her loved ones and will put her at odds, but will also help her grow and understand life and herself even better than her birth and adopted mothers.

I could not believe it even for once while reading, that this is Barrow's debut book, since the story line is so tight, captivating and so much striking that it felt like the story is unfolding right before my own eyes and even though the story line is "so-been-there-read-that" kind, yet the author brilliantly concocted the story without using annoying analogy or stereotypical teenage drama. The cherry-on-the-top of this story is the journey, that not only overwhelms the young protagonist, but will also overwhelm its readers so much. This is the kind of book that teenagers, mostly young girls should be encouraged to read, since it will help them grow and understand the reality in a better way.

The author's writing style is extremely eloquent and is laced strongly with evocative emotions that hold the power to move its readers deeply. The narrative is articulate and free-flowing and will resonate with so many young minds who have gone through the same challenges. Also the dialogues are very close to realism and minus the drama, they will simply intrigue the minds of the readers till the very last page. The pacing is smooth and swift with so many unpredictable moments that will keep the readers on their edges till the very end.

The characters from the book are extremely well developed, complete with realism and multiple layers to make them look relatable in the eyes of the readers. For a teenage fiction, centered around a sensitive issue like teenage pregnancy, the depiction of the teenage protagonist is a paramount factor, as she ultimately becomes an epitome towards those who will read this book. And author, Barrow, has done that flawlessly by portraying a young voice, whose background might be broken, dark and unknown, but her well being is empathetic and apprehensive, and that makes her somewhat headstrong and mature enough to not to step off on a wrong foot. Audrey is intelligent, passionate and sweet, yet when pushed under a difficult challenge, she embraces it and survives it with the best possible choice, that is unforeseeable towards the readers. Even the supporting characters, especially, Audrey's adopted mother, Laura, is an extremely understanding woman, she loves Audrey like her own flesh-and-blood and her character proves that not all adoptive parents are means towards their kids. Next in row is Julian, Adam, Rose and rest of the lot around Audrey, all stood by

her like a rock and never once pushed her to make a certain choice. Each and every character, in one word, are very encouraging enough to make them so realistic and like a role-model towards the readers.

Yes, this story of Audrey who gets pregnant in her teenage years is an exemplary story that must be read by one and all, especially by the parents who have adopted children.

Verdict: *This gripping and enlightening book is strongly recommended to everyone!*

Courtesy: *Thanks to the publishers from Harper Collins India for giving me an opportunity to read and review this book.*

Dahlia says

Really, really good. This book just feels so...healthy? Like, YDKMBIKY is to reproductive choice after consensual sex as EXIT, PURSUED BY A BEAR is to reproductive choice after rape. If you loved the latter, please read this too. I think it'll go a long way toward helping teens who've chosen the same path feel less alone and less judged.

Haley says

I received advance readers copy in exchange for an honest review. Thank you Edelweiss and HarperCollins

This book is about a young girl making a decision on whether she wants to keep her baby or not. Audrey finds out she's pregnant and she has no idea what to do. Her birth mother gave her up for adoption when she was younger and Audrey finds herself in a happy family now without her. Audrey is faced with all the pros and cons of having a baby at 17. It doesn't help when her best friend-Rose is supposed to be there for her, but rather her best friend and she have gotten into an argument.

The Bad

I feel like I've read a book like this sooo many other times so this is just repetitive. There wasn't anything new in the storyline that I haven't heard before.

The Good

Although this is a repetitive story and I've read ones like this multiple times. It was a cute story and the ending was happy. There was a fast pace which made it so much better and I found the length to be perfect for the story.

Overall

I think Audrey made the right choice in the ending for her future. It was a fun and fast paced read and I did really enjoy the author's writing. I just wish it wasn't like every other book that's out there now.

Megan says

[I found the main character to be selfish and annoying. She tried to (view spoiler) Needle

Laurie Flynn says

I was lucky enough to read this book early, and I really fell in love with it. *YOU DON'T KNOW ME BUT I KNOW YOU* tackles difficult subject matter with both nuance and integrity, and Rebecca Barrow has created a cast of characters who feel like genuine people. (As an author, I know firsthand how difficult this is to do.) Audrey, the main character, has to make the most important decision of her life when she learns she is pregnant. Audrey's thoughts and emotions are chronicled so believably, and themes of family and friendship are woven throughout in such a beautiful way. Audrey's female friendships feel more like a tightly-knit sisterhood, and her boyfriend, Julian, is supportive and not stereotypical. I also thought Audrey's relationships with her mom (who adopted her as a baby) and her mom's boyfriend are so authentic. It's tough as a writer to have the supporting characters feel as fleshed out as the main character, but Rebecca Barrow does it in such an effortless way.

An honest, realistic portrait of a teenage girl trying to make the best decision for her, not the decision others may think is right. Readers will gravitate to Audrey and be able to see themselves in the different facets of her personality. I'm so excited for this book to come out so I can rave about it even more!

Danielle (Life of a Literary Nerd) says

“The whole world is full of people trying to get through, making the best of what they have, pretending like they can pull it off. And there’s no shame in that.”

You Don't Know Me but I Know You is a beautiful story of family, growth, and acceptance. It's about making choices you aren't ready for and finding the strength in yourself and those around you to know you will be okay. Audrey Spencer finds herself unexpectedly pregnant and must look at her own past, including her own adoption, as she faces questions she doesn't know how to answer in this inspiring story of family and strength.

Things I Liked

GIRL FRIENDSHIPS IN STORIES. SUPPORTIVE GIRL FRIENDSHIPS IN STORIES. I'm all here for female friendships shown in all their many layered facets. We see Audrey, Rose, Maria, and Jen celebrate and support each other. We see them fight and get angry. We see them forgive and grow. I just really loved seeing their interactions, and how their differences didn't create problems that couldn't be resolved. And I loved seeing Olivia become a part of their group too!

I love stories about **family**, and I love that this book featured a **non-nuclear family**. I love that we see **adoption**, and Audrey's mom isn't married, but in a committed and meaningful relationship. It's important to show that families come in many different forms and they're all valid. I love that we get a MC who's adopted, and her adoption is never used as a plot device to “surprise” or to create conflict between Audrey and her mom. I loved that there was no yelling, blaming, or shaming when her parents get the news about Audrey's pregnancy. And even when there are fights, they from highly emotional situations that feel appropriate and honest, but they are always resolved.

I seriously loved **Audrey and Julian's relationship**. They had so much fantastic open communication - about their fears and worries and hopes. It was great to see. They never blamed one another, and again their fights felt honest and in-the-moment, but they didn't let their anger fester. They were both supportive and talked about their options. I liked that we got to see cute moments of them being together and happy in the midst of their now hectic lives.

Things I Didn't Like

I liked how the fights were handled in their resolution, but I felt like **miscommunication** was the root of all problems in the story. Some of the fights, especially the smaller ones, were either miscommunication based or just because of highly charged emotions. While I understood the emotional toll and the uncertainty that led to miscommunication, I felt like some of the problems could have easily been resolved, if the open communication they had at the end of the fight was there at the beginning.

This was a great story, with fantastic character dynamics that feel honest and real. I love stories about family and friendship and people caring about each other. I loved seeing Audrey's journey and seeing her opening herself to the possibilities of her future. *You Know Me but I Don't Know You* is a beautiful story of possibility, love, and hope that warms your heart.

I received a copy of the book from HarperTeen via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

??Hannah?? says

Nope. Absolutely not. This was such a terrible read. I not only hated her decision because it was absolutely selfish but I couldn't stand her as a person. Her "friends" were terrible. I can't imagine being around people like that. Sadly I knew from the first few chapters these people were going to be unlikable. I'm sorry to have wasted my time on this book.

Vic James says

This charming, challenging contemporary YA goes for the sweet spot between Holly Bourne and Non Pratt and lands right on target.

High-schooler Audrey experiences not one but two unexpected upheavals: an unplanned pregnancy, and the arrival of a letter from her birth mother. Coupled with a falling-out with her best friend, Audrey's secure, loved life suddenly involved choices she could never have anticipated.

What could easily have become dark and difficult remains upbeat, as we see Audrey grow through the difficult choices she makes. Partly this is because she's surrounded by a loving circle of friends that's more diverse than any I've read, with gay, bi, Latin, Asian, bi-racial, Jewish, Muslim and Christian friends. (Personal favourite cameo? The hijab-wearing drummer in Audrey's boyfriend's band...) She also has an awesome, if unconventional, family: former film-star Mom, with a wisetalking youngest boyfriend.

But mostly it's down to Audrey herself. Intensely likeable, convincingly teenage, Audrey rises to the challenges she faces and you'll be rooting for her all the way. This isn't an 'issues' book about teen pregnancy

or adoption, it's about finding out - and trying to be true to - who you really are.

Allison says

How the hell do you just insert 20 crying emojis with 20 jazz-hands emojis????

Rachel Solomon says

Perhaps it's lofty to say Rebecca Barrow's *YOU DON'T KNOW ME BUT I KNOW YOU* is everything I love about contemporary YA, but it's 100 percent true.

I devoured this gorgeous gift of a novel. The writing is stunning, the characters' relationships are authentic and messy, and the dialogue is pitch perfect. The cast of characters is diverse in a natural way -- because that is our world. This book is *BRAVE* and it pushes boundaries and I cannot wait to discuss it with more readers!!

Highly recommend this incredible debut!

Paige (Illegal in 3 Countries) says

See more of my reviews on *The YA Kitten*! My copy was an ARC I got as a reviewer for YA Books Central.

What is a privileged white girl like me supposed to say about a book this good? It defies words in that special way you only experience when you consume a piece of media that you love but also know you'll never fully get because you're not who it's either for or about. *Girls Trip* is another good example of that. I loved that movie so much I saw it twice, but I'll never know black womanhood because I'm white and therefore will never fully get it. *You Don't Know Me But I Know You* is simply a book you need to read no matter what walk of life you come from.

This #ownvoices slice of life is gorgeously written and comes with a well-written, diverse cast of characters; Audrey is biracial, her best friend Rose is bi, and Audrey's boyfriend is Jewish. If you want a cast full of POC and queer people, you'll find exactly that here! Even side characters who gets considerably less page time experience solid character development.

The focus remains on Audrey, though. Her feelings once she realizes she's pregnant, her lingering questions about her birth mother and why Audrey was put up for adoption at birth, her crumbling friendship with her best friend Rose, and the reproductive choice she has to make: whether to keep the pregnancy and the child, give the child up for adoption after birth, or have an abortion. Boyfriend Julian is generally a great, supportive figure to her and recognizes that though he's the one who got her pregnant, what happens now is up to her because he isn't the pregnant one.

There is very little concrete action or forward momentum in the novel. Instead, you'll be pulled along by the strength of the characters and how genuine Audrey's experience is. It's practically the definition of a slice of life story! Because the cast is interesting and nuanced enough, it all works and it's hard to put the book

down.

Sure, there's a small touch of suspense as Audrey considers her options, but it's not a suspenseful book. *You Don't Know Me But I Know You* is a novel of reproductive choice and Audrey takes her time to consider her options. Having or not having a kid is a huge deal, especially when you're in high school! Most importantly, it delivers the messages that every person is different, every pregnancy is different, and no one option is better than the others. That's the kind of healthy thinking sexually active teenagers need to hear, not anti-abortion propaganda that falsely claims having an abortion will increase your risk of breast cancer.

With as powerful and gentle a debut as this, Rebecca Barrow is an author to watch. As soon as I can afford it, I'll be adding a finished copy of *You Don't Know Me But I Know You* to my bookshelves. It's also got me fired up to fight even harder for reproductive rights!

Madison says

You Don't Know Me But I Know You is another book that has left me with very mixed feelings. It has a writing style that is easy to read, but without characters who really grabbed me, I struggled with reading this book. In the end, I would pick it up only to put it down and distract myself with another book. I guess I was expecting something different. Something that broke all the moulds and would make me care about this story, care especially about this girl and her journey through a surprising discovery and hard decisions.

When Audrey discovers she is pregnant it forces her to evaluate her life and what she wants from it, who she wants to be. It brings into focus her relationships, with her supportive, musician, going-places boyfriend, her snarky, infuriating best friend, her wider group of friends, her adoptive mother, and even her biological mother, who has always remained somewhat of a mystery.

There are a lot of things to give the author points for in this book. Her main character is a person of colour. There is a bisexual best friend. There are plenty of other characters from diverse ethnicity. But sometimes it felt a little like they were also just boxes on a checklist that had been ticked off. There was nothing new or groundbreaking to make this story or the characters' stories within jump out and grab me by the heartstrings.

At the end of the day, the reason I didn't enjoy this book as much as I expected to was that I just didn't connect to Audrey. I guess she has the excuse of hormones but watching her lash out at everyone around her wasn't fun. I didn't see a lot of growth or change in end character. I also wasn't invested in her choices (which sounds pretty harsh). I'm glad she was so happy with her choice. Happy she was so quick to go back to partying and freaking out about outfits and being glad it was all over and that she could go back to her life and that they didn't 'lose' everything. But I wonder if such a choice is ever so easy. I also thought it made it sound like she made the 'right' choice. And I don't mean the right choice for her but that she would have been 'stupid' to choose any other way and I think that is judgemental and a terrible message to send. Also, I think it is very unrealistic to believe that she will always be happy with her decision, tomorrow, two weeks or a couple years from now. She might be, but she also may not be happy. She won't know. If any of us knew that we would never regret anything, would always make the 'right' choices!!

Okay, Audrey does get points for telling her boyfriend about her pregnancy almost immediately. Big bonus points for that. And I could totally understand her not wanting to tell anyone else for a while. While her friends are going on with their lives, falling in love, she is struggling with one of the biggest decisions of her life. Not easy. But I found this book was actually focused a lot more on her friendships than her pregnancy

and certainly more on that than of her search for her biological mother. I must have misread the synopsis because I thought a lot more of the book would be focused on Audrey's biological mother. Aside from a letter she receives from her biological mother, there isn't much more to that part of the story.

Overall, this book wasn't for me. It didn't stand out from the many other books out there with similar themes and I certainly didn't connect with the characters. I fear my reaction may differ from the majority, so I encourage you to try it for yourself.

The publishers provided an advanced readers copy of this book for reviewing purposes. All opinions are my own.

Find more reviews, reading age guides, content advisory, and recommendations on my blog [Madison's Library](#).

Courtney says

I really wanted to like this, but it was just so... boring. It's never good when I start to skim parts of a book, like I did this one. There was a lot going on but at the same time, it felt like nothing was really happening, if that makes any sense. Some of the writing and dialogue was almost annoying in some spots? Maybe that's the best way I can think to describe it? If you were to ask me what the plot of this book is, I'm honestly not sure how I'd explain. Like I said, a lot of random things were going on and the story almost didn't feel cohesive. It just didn't work for me and didn't really hold my attention. I probably should have marked it a DNF, but sometimes books that start out slow turn out to be amazing so I guess I was hoping that would happen here. Oh well. On to the next one!
