**Every You Every Me**

By David Levithan

 David Levithan is an American young adult fiction editor and writer.  Levithan is also the founding editor and now the editor director of PUSH, a young-adult imprint of Scholastic Press that supports new authors and finds new voice. In 2016, he won the Margaret A. Edwards Awards for *Boy Meets Boy, The Realm of Possibility, Wide Awake,* and *Love is the Higher Law.*   
Credit: School Library Journal

*Book Synopsis*

Evan, a high school student is tormented after his best friend, Ariel, is gone. He suffers from severe insomnia and paranoia because he keeps blaming himself for her absence. To add on to his trouble, he starts receiving a series of photographs sent from an anonymous person featuring him, Jack (Ariel’s ex-boyfriend) and the spots they used to hang out. The content of these photographs indicate that the sender is stalking him, threatening him, and torturing him emotionally. At first, he believes that Ariel is behind this plot to punish him. However, as he solves the mystery of the photographs, he starts to understand himself and Ariel more and fills up the friend-shaped hole that Ariel has left in his life. He also accepts the fact that there is another side of Ariel’s life that he knows nothing about. This makes him start to love and appreciate the side that Ariel has showed him and overcome the loss of his best friend.

*Salient Quotes*

*“~~When I walked through the halls, I thought of you. I wondered what you thought of this school now. This building. Was it a shelter against everything else? Could you be happy here? Or was it just another form of prison, just another place where you felt the weight of all the stones, all the people, all the thoughts?~~*

*~~I wish I’d known what was wrong with you.~~*

*~~I still wished I knew what was wrong with you.”~~*

This quote reflects the struggles that depressed students, like Ariel and Evan, face, which are their constant feelings of helplessness and self-loathing. Ariel feels hopeless to the point that she wants to end her life. Evan also feels helpless because he is unable to understand Ariel’s problems completely even though they were extremely close and shared a lot to each other. In addition, Evans constantly experienced self-hatred as he tends to harshly criticize himself for perceived faults and mistakes. Since the beginning of the novel, Evan is haunted by the memories of Ariel. He relates everything and every place around him to her. He sees her images everywhere. He is unable to cope with the hole that she has left because he keeps dwelling in the past, which gives him a hard time to live in the present. Walking along the hallway at school, Evan wonders if she sees school as a place that protects her from the chaotic and painful world outside, or if school just adds more pressure on her suffering. His wonder implies that he truly wants to understand her problems, so he can alleviate his “guilt” of betraying her. This quote also suggests how social institutions, like schools, usually fail in supporting students with mental disorder, and school might be one of the reasons Ariel’s depression keeps getting serious. The novel mentions parts where Ariel and Evan are abused by their schoolmates because of their odd behaviors.

*“~~You were always changing your mind. I wanted you to have the opportunity to change your mind… But death is not freedom. For a moment, it can look like freedom. But then it’s death.~~*

*~~Anything~~*

*~~Something~~*

*~~Nothing~~*

*~~Now I saw you nodding, All the moments you were happy. All the things you wouldn’t have wanted to lose.~~*

*~~Maybe Dana loved you for your pain~~*

*~~I loved you for everything~~”*

Up to this point of the novel, Evan’s depression and paranoia gradually die out. The stalker revealed herself as is Dana, another friend of Ariel’s that both Jack and Evan have never heard of. He ceases to blame Ariel’s absence on himself because he knows that his actions come from good intention. He understands her well enough to stop her from committing suicide. He knows that Ariel has enough courage to fight against her depression and live a brighter life instead of choosing to end her own life. He has been with her through the lows of despair and highs of exhilaration. Therefore, he believes that death is not the only option for her because he wants her to also continue to live and experience life. This part is also crucial because he appreciates the side that Ariel decides to show him. While she shows Dana her side of pain, she shows Evan her optimism, understanding, and care.

*“I still have the photos, though. Even though they are as unreliable as memories. Even though I will only know my story behind them, not yours. At least, not until you tell me yourself.”*

This quote suggests that Evan has finally moved on from his past. By the end of the novel, Evan acknowledges the fact that his friendship with Ariel is selfish; he feels uncomfortable thinking of her spending time with others, and he tends to impose his beliefs on her. He accepts that he cannot understand her thoroughly and refuses to let memories dictate his emotions. He decides to wait for her to come back and tell him everything by herself. His tone now is more positive and hopeful, which suggests that he gradually knows how to deal with his depression and paranoia. Also, he begins to look at Ariel’s situation and his future with more positivity.

*In the Classroom*

I’m going to use this novel to teach students in 8th or 9th grade English Literature classes. This novel can be used as an introduction to psychological and thriller genres because the setting of this book is in high school, so it is more bearable and approachable for young students. Also, this novel provides readers a vivid illustration of Evan’s feelings and states of mind towards loss, guilt, and depression through a special rhetorical device, the crossed-out lines. They show the way Evan edited his thoughts, how he is scared of the past, and tries not to think about it. The crossed-out passages also suggest what Evan feels and thinks but is not able to express those thoughts into words. This is exactly how people suffer from depression and paranoia. Through this novel, students learn to sympathize with people like Evans and many can take steps in understanding themselves more.

DISCUSS QUESTIONS:

1/ There are many versions in person. We only know one self that our friends choose to project to us. Others might know the same person differently. Do you show different versions of yourself to different people, like your peers, family members, and others?

2/ What do you think of the effect that the photos have on the content of the book?

3/ What do you the think of the effect of the crossed-out lines? How do they contribute to the development of Evan?

4/ In the novel, Evan spend most of his time taking all the blames on himself. Do you think Jack and he do the right thing to help Ariel?

*Text Complexity*

Lexile Score: 400L (grade 7th and beyond) ATOS Bool Level: 3.4

Age Range: 14 to 17 Grade range: 9-12

*Why Should Teens Read This Book?*

This book provides a vivid illustration of how depression and paranoid is like using rhetorical devices and Levithan’s unique writing style. Loneliness and sorrow are clearly depicted through Evan’s internal conflict. *Every You, Every Me* gives teens a close look at Evan’s life, which teaches them to sympathize with people who deal with anxiety, depression, and paranoia. It is also a great remedy for teenagers who are in the same situations with Evan and Ariel because they can take steps in understanding themselves and know that they are not alone. Since this book belongs the thriller genre, it might be fascinating and entertaining at the same time as the mystery is gradually unraveled.