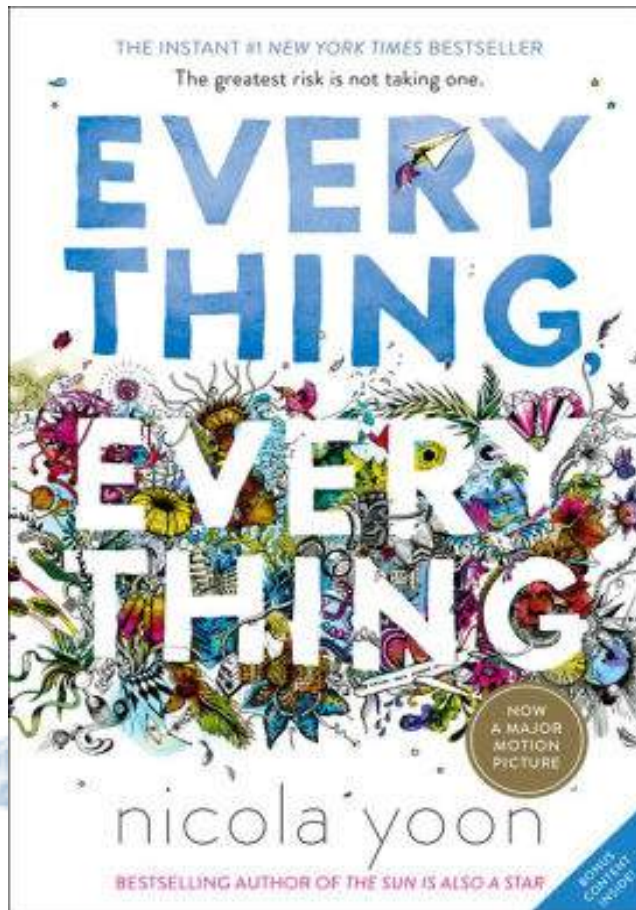




EVERYTHING, EVERYTHING

TEACHING 'SICK LIT': WHEN 'EVERYTHING' FALLS SHORT

By: Brooke Harvey

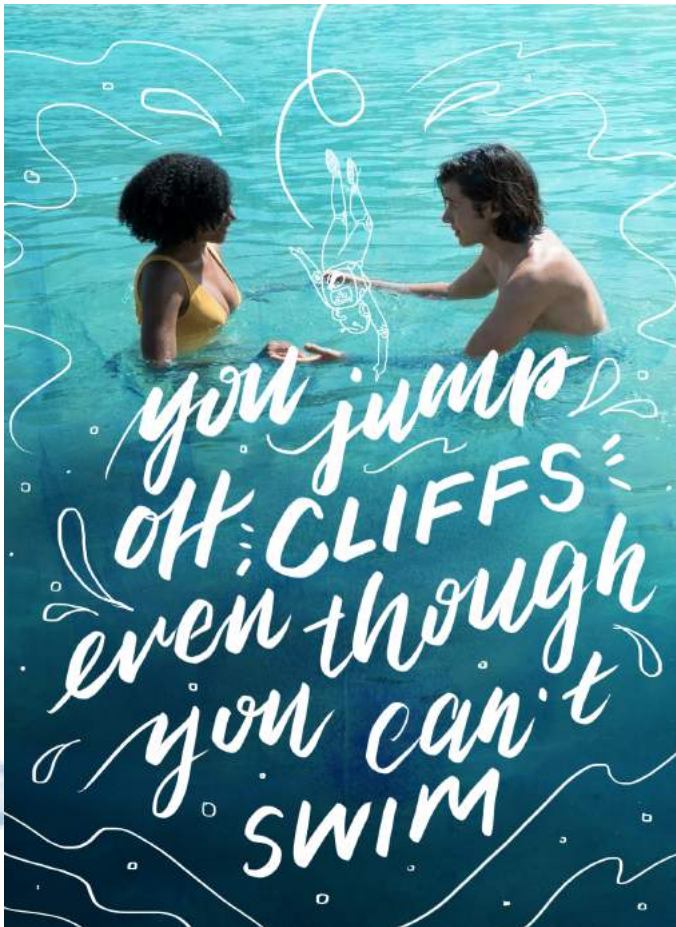


INTRODUCING *EVERYTHING*

Paperback March 7, 2017

Maddy, an 18-year old living with SCID, is confined to her home and round-the-clock care and testing by her physician mother and Carla, her in-home nurse. In quarantine, her only escape to the outdoors is through blogging and wayward ocean dreams. *Until Olly moves in next door.*

This boy-meets-girl YA novel is about more than a teenage meet-cute: it speaks to the boundaries of bodies, space, and relationships, what it means to be an outsider, and how one lives with illness.



Love Sickness: Infecting *Romeo & Juliet*

- ***Olly: a moody, broody, charmer with a forbidden love***
- ***Maddy: an over-protected window gazer making an ally out of her nurse***

...sound familiar?

Teaching Ideas:

- **Grades 8-12** – Why Shakespeare?, Stereotypes, Privilege, Genre, Alternative Adaptations (sorry, Leo!)
- **Grade 12** – Humoral Theory, The Body Politic, Disability Studies

Love Sickness: Infecting *Romeo & Juliet*

“A Tale of Two Maddys”

Teaching Idea: R&J (I.III)

“She’s upset with the change she didn’t see coming. I resent and understand it at the same time. She’s had to control so many things to keep me safe in my bubble” (114).

“Isn’t growing apart a part of growing up? Don’t I get to have even this bit of normalcy? Even so, I feel guilty. She’s devoted her entire life to me. Who am I to throw that away at the first sign of love?” (115).



NAMAST'AY IN BED

Teaching Sick Lit with *Everything,
Everything*

Genre: Typically YA Fiction wherein illness (usually terminal) thwarts teen romance, or at the very least the life of a charming, but relatable protagonist whose wit and vintage Levi's provide mere distraction from the grievous deep end of 'adult' problems into which the sick teen is thrown. Illness is seen as an instigator of the meet-cute.

...sound familiar?

Teaching Sick Lit with *Everything, Everything*

“I’m a grenade and at some point I’m going to blow up and I would like to minimize the casualties, okay?”
– John Green, *The Fault in Our Stars*

“I would rather be with you—even the you that you seem to think is diminished—than with anyone else in the world.”
– Jojo Moyes, *Me Before You*





Teaching Sick Lit with *Everything, Everything*

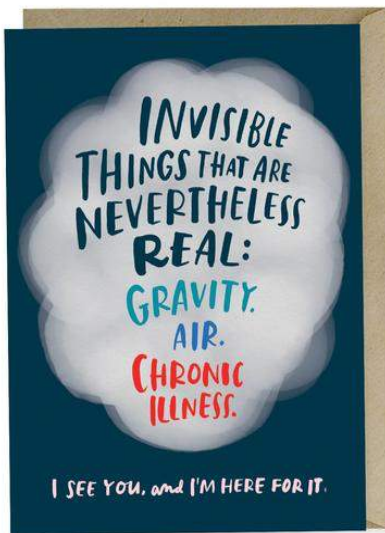
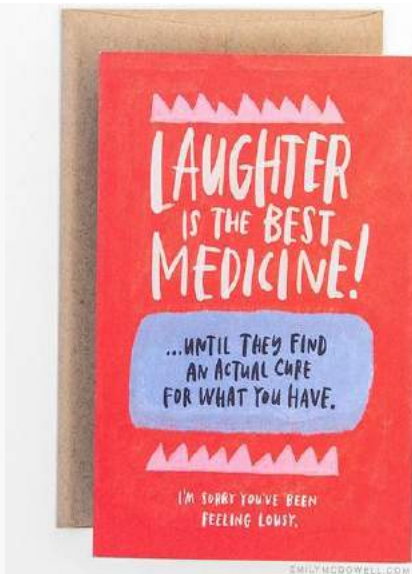
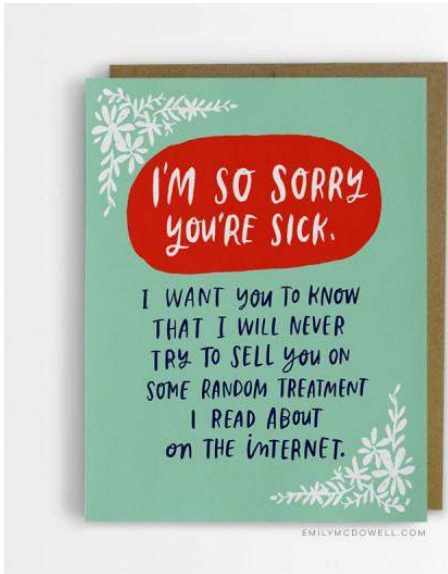
Falling Short: Once Maddy escapes to the ocean with Olly, we learn the truth. Out of grief, her mother (Pauline) claims that Maddy has SCID. Fear makes her want to protect her daughter from further harm, so she decides that Maddy has a disease which requires constant quarantine as a way to do so.

She doesn't look sick, and she isn't.



Everything, Everything that is wrong:

- ✓ Reinforces victim-blaming
- ✓ Reflects a lack of agency
- ✓ Reinforces visibility as a requisite of illness
- ✓ Propagates disease as something one must long to escape
- ✓ Continues to harm via 'happily-ever-afters'
- ✓ Reductively portrays medical expertise
- ✓ Presents illness as a choice for those with wealth and status



Get-Well Alternatives: Activity

“But you don’t look sick.”

“You’re going to have to get over it.”

“We need a doctor’s note.”


“Be brave. Remember, life is a gift” (Yoon 141).



Life is (Long Enough) Spoiler Reviews

Activity:

- Example of constrained writing (word limit, language register, emojis)
- 'Study Guide' for lower grade reading lists
- Can extend to TV shows, Instagram accounts, food menus, etc.



“There are entire worlds that
exist just beneath our notice of
them.”

- Nicola Yoon