ABOUT THE BOOK

A heart-stopping #ownvoices romcom that follows Ever Wong from Ohio to Taiwan on a program to study Mandarin for the summer, unexpectedly thrusting her into the infamous Loveboat, where she’s free from her parents’ strict rules and the nightlife runs nonstop.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Abigail Hing Wen holds a BA from Harvard and a JD from Columbia, but like Ever, she is obsessed with musicals. When she’s not writing stories or listening to her favorite score, she is busy working as an attorney in venture capital and artificial intelligence in Silicon Valley, where she lives with her husband and two sons. Visit her online at www.abigailhingwen.com and follow @abigailhingwen on Twitter and Instagram.
**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. At the beginning of the book, the author gives readers a glimpse into Ever and Megan's friendship, in part by including their reactions when Ever's parents confront her during their dance rehearsal. From these details, what can you say about the differences in how these two friends were raised? What do their families value differently? How do the girls' actions reflect their upbringings?

2. When she arrives in Taipei, Ever finds herself surrounded by Asian American teenagers for essentially the first time in her life. Having been the only Asian person in her community for so long, she feels relieved there are now others like her. How does this make her feel to no longer be in the minority? What does it mean to feel like you fit in?

3. In chapter 11, we learn that Ever dislikes needles and has a visceral reaction to both the sight and smell of blood, even though she's pursuing a career in medicine. What are the reasons she gives for why she should pursue medicine, despite her physical rejection of it? Do you believe these reasons are justified? Are there things you care so much about you’d be willing to face a similar fear in order to pursue them?

4. Ever is clearly passionate about dance, but her parents' expectations have made it difficult for her to express her desires. How does her willingness to pursue dance change throughout the book? How does she learn to better stand up for the things that matter to her most?

5. Throughout the summer, Ever slowly breaks the family rules she's lived by her whole life. When she decides to get glamour shots, she breaks a big rule that ends up having disastrous consequences. What did you predict would happen when Ever started making (and breaking) her list of rules? How do you feel about Ever's list of rules? Have you ever broken rules you weren’t supposed to, and how did you feel afterward?

6. Ever meets a group of boys who call themselves the “Angry Asian Men” (pg. 140), or the Gang of Five. What do you think they are trying to accomplish this summer? What do you think about the list of stereotypes they compile? How do they go about addressing and refuting them? Do you think they were successful? Why or why not?

7. Consider the different friendships Ever participates in throughout the novel. Why do you think Ever and Mei-Hwa became so close? How does their relationship change as time goes on? Compare this to Ever's rocky friendship with Sophie. How do Sophie and Ever navigate the various challenges they encounter? How do Ever’s friendships relate to friends you've had in your own life?

8. What was your reaction when the identity of the artist who is drawing Ever is revealed? Why does Ever tell the artist he can’t draw her anymore (pg. 179)? What do you think you would have done in her situation? Does your answer change after learning about Sophie's dishonesty? Why do you think Sophie lied about the rug?

9. On pages 218-219, Ever talks about the daily sacrifices her parents have made in order for her to pursue medical school. Despite wanting what's best for her, Ever's parents' dream of her becoming a doctor is more their dream than her own. How do their desires and struggles complicate Ever's own dreams for her future? Do you notice any similarities in Xavier, Rick, or any of the other characters' choices to go against their parents' wishes? In what ways do you relate to the different characters' family expectations?

10. In chapter 28, Sophie returns with a bruised eye and Ever suspects it was Matteo. When Ever questions Sophie about her bruised eye, Sophie claims she walked into a wall (pg. 300). Why do you think she said this instead of telling Ever the truth? What are some reasons people might be scared or unwilling to talk about abuse? Do you think Sophie is more concerned with protecting Matteo or herself?

11. Before chapter 29, what were your assumptions about Jenna? How has your opinion about her changed after reading this chapter? Do Rick’s choices make more sense to you?

12. The author includes Ever's memories of her family throughout the book, like she does on page 381. What do these anecdotes do for the reader? How do they affect the way you empathize with Ever's family and their choices? How did you feel when Ever's father is addressed as Doctor in Taiwan? What is the significance of this?

13. How does Ever feel before her big performance, knowing her dad is in the audience? How does he react? Do you think his reaction and the reaction of the audience influences Ever in the choices she makes for her future? Have you experienced anything similar in your life?

14. Chien Tan is nicknamed “Loveboat” by the students who have attended the program through the years. Do you agree with this moniker? How did your opinion of the program change throughout the book? Do you think it was successful in achieving its goals of cultural immersion and language learning? In what other, perhaps unexpected, ways did the students benefit?

15. In the epilogue, the reader learns about Ever’s life post-Chien Tan. What do you think about her decisions? How might you have chosen differently? What would you have done the same?