



## THE TRUTH: I'm a Girl, I'm Smart and I Know Everything

### Readers Share their Reading Experience

"This wonderful story is about a girl on the cusp of puberty, as spoken in her own voice. She is childish and immature, but she is wise beyond her years. She offers a fresh perspective on adult life that can only be offered by one who is not yet there. I could feel her pain and her joy as she struggled with the issues of her transition from childhood to adolescence. I laughed and cried as I read it. It is a delightful reading experience." -*Barbara Fleischer, Ph.D. Clinical Psychologist and Psychoanalyst*

"When she's ten years old, The Girl starts keeping a secret diary. In it she writes everything she wants to remember, in her words "the real truth." From her first crush on Paul, the new boy in her class, to things she wants to ask her mother but can't, to hating her mother sometimes, to making lists of things she can do, The Girl reveals feelings most young girls experience on that rocky path to growing up. She has strong opinions about swearing (it gives her bad feelings in her stomach), people making fun of others (it really hurts), and doing things "on her own" like visiting the 5 and 10 cent store and buying lace to make a doll's dress, as well as an ice cream sundae to eat.

Things she likes:

Solving the mystery in a Nancy Drew book before Nancy solves it.  
The mystery rides her father takes the family on from time to time.  
Being a good big sister to her six-year-old brother.  
Riding her bicycle fast down the hill.  
Her new friend Dawn.  
Her eleventh birthday where she gets money, a gold locket on a chain, and has cake and ice cream and steak for dinner.

Things she hates:

Her parents fighting.  
Kids that pick her last to play on the kickball team.  
Angela, because she sits next to Paul.  
Gloria, because she's so pretty.  
She's now in sixth grade and taller than Paul.  
The Girl worries about becoming a teenager. They're possessed with make-up and clothes and boys.  
She worries about her parents or grandparents dying.

But she can't talk to her mother about these things and wishes she could, like her friend Angela can talk to her mom about anything.

The Girl's thoughts run in many different directions, typical of girls growing up and wondering about the world around them and how they fit in. She's concerned about her dad who has a new job which means they have to move. And Paul doesn't seem as attractive as he once did. And then her mom is having a new baby, and The Girl is not happy about that.

In her diary, *The Girl* lists the things she promises to do when she grows up. This is a delightful, sometimes funny, definitely eye-opening look into the mind of a young girl's outlook on life. All preteen girls, teens, and their mothers should read this book. You'll learn more than you ever dreamed about growing up "girl." And that's the truth." – *Beverly Stowe McClure*

"*The Truth*, Barbara Becker Holstein's latest book, is the truth about the feelings and thoughts of a 10-year old girl. She could be any girl, growing up in the 1950's or even in the twenty-first century, as her wise insights and gut-felt reactions are universally recognizable. This little book, written as a child's diary, is an easy read, and contains much food for thought.

Becker Holstein has written about the passage from girlhood to adulthood before in her books, *The Enchanted Self*, *A Positive Therapy and Recipes for Enchantment*, *The Secret is You*. In *The Truth*, we observe the girl's growing understanding of herself and the world around her, and we are reminded that we were all once very wise as children. What made us forget and doubt ourselves?

Falling in love with the new boy in school, being last to be picked for teams in gym class, feeling the sting of a teacher's disapproval for asking the wrong questions are examples of some of the things that our girl discusses in *The Truth*. At home, our girl is always watching her parents' behavior, trying to make sense of it, not understanding why grownups hurt each other and their children by fighting and being cruel to one another. The girl confides, "I can be so miserable at home. Usually it is when my parents start fighting. But if I can get away from them, then I'm okay. When I stay around and listen, I feel like they are yelling at me." Why can't the girl's mother just be honest and tell her what's going on instead of just looking away sadly? Our smart girl vows to be different when she grows up. She will never look away when her kids ask her tough questions, and she won't get into silly fights with her husband.

Our girl describes the joyous feeling of being loved unconditionally by her extended family. "I'm most happy when no one is fighting and no one is telling me what's wrong with me, and that's why I love being with my grandparents." Her visits with them are wonderful because "They like everything about me, just the way I am." How precious and valuable such experiences are for children growing up!

Feeling that she is smart and "knows everything", our girl still puzzles about many of the mysteries of life. What is going to happen to her when she goes through that awful stage of being a teenager? Must she become silly and lose her brain and her self? She dreads the thought of it, though she knows it is a necessary passage to get to adulthood and freedom. Venturing out into the larger world is very satisfying for our pre-teen girl, who gets great enjoyment from being confident enough to take the bus downtown by herself to do a little shopping. Her mother has instructed her to sit close to the driver, which she does, and they are friends. Our girl feels sorry for another girl whose parents do not allow her to go anywhere by herself, and drive her places in their car. "I'm lucky my mom and dad let me do a lot on my own," she says.

Here is a dilemma of modern family life. How do you nurture that growing sense of freedom, courage and self-sufficiency that is so healthy for children without placing them in danger? Though we don't have buses with friendly, helpful drivers in our local neighborhoods and the intact nuclear family is a thing of the past, still, there must be ways that we can find to teach our children how to do things by themselves safely.

Though the setting of *The Truth* goes back several decades to a less complicated time, the feelings of our girl transcend time. We can all identify with her wanting to be loved and

accepted, wanting to be pretty, yearning for family stability and peace, wanting to do something important and meaningful in life and at the same time, wanting to be happily married with children to take care of and love. "I'm not going to be trapped in the house with nothing to do but chores and laundry." Our girl promises herself she will get the right education and do whatever it takes to "really be somebody". She adds, "my kids can do the wash while I do more important things."

The Truth would be a terrific little book for a therapist to give to families to read at home as an adjunct to therapy. The book would be a delightful experience for moms and daughters to read together and talk about their reactions and thoughts. It could help the generations understand each other better and relate to each other by sharing thoughts about their common feelings and life experiences. Reading this book will make you laugh and cry, and that's the truth!" - *Lucinda M. Seares-Monica, Psy. D.*

"The Truth, I'm a Girl, I'm smart and I Know Everything by Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein is a beautifully painted picture of times gone by and done so in a timeless and relevant fashion. Simplistic and honest in tone, the story is centered around the internal thoughts and emotions of a 10 year old girl, on the verge of puberty, belonging to the generation before my own.

As one who has always appreciated the sometimes brutal honesty of a child, unspoiled and not yet tempered by the world around them, I found myself identifying with our young guide. Having had a tumultuous childhood, I reconnect with my younger self while sharing in our girl's experiences with adults who are at times too caught up in their own lives and struggles to realize the effect it may have on the children around them.

Charming and profound, I easily connect with "the truths" on each page; the early pangs of first love, the depth and disillusionment of friendship, moments of confidence and the struggles of insecurity, the desire to connect with your mother and the sadness of having your own emotions not taken into consideration by the people you love the most. Growing pains, how difficult and painful they can be; no matter the age they occur - and that is "the truth"." - *Ann Johnson, Certified Life Coach, A Thousand Forests, www.athousandforests.com*

"Funny, thought-provoking, and inspiring, "The Truth (I'm a girl, I'm smart and I know everything)" by Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein is sure to be a hit with young girls ages 8 to 14.

Based upon Dr. Holstein's women's self-help book, "The Truth (I'm 10, I'm smart and I know everything)", the girl's version has a hip new cover, new introduction, and new discussion questions.

The format remains the same: a series of diary entries from a young girl who shares everything she thinks and feels about life at home and at school, her dreams for the future, and her knowledge of The Truth. Young girls will follow along as this girl talks about how her parents' fighting makes her feel. They'll witness her fall in love. They'll even get to be with her as her body begins to change. And as young girls move along through two years in this young journalist's life, they will be reminded of their inner strength, their talents, and their future potential.

"The Truth (I'm a girl, I'm smart and I know everything)" is a book that girls and their mothers can read together. It will also make a meaningful gift for any young girl age 8 to 14.

Once again, Positive Psychologist and Happiness Coach Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein teaches her readers how to learn about themselves in positive ways." - *Cheryl M.*