

***Dumplin'***  
By  
Julie Murphy

*Grade Levels:*

- 9-12
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*Synopsis:*

As Willowdean states at the beginning, "I'm fat. It's not a cuss word. It's not an insult." (p. 9). She embraces life and does not let her size dictate who she is. Willowdean accepts not only who she is but also who she isn't. She is not a beauty pageant queen like her mother. She is happy being a big girl; at least until she falls for her co-worker Bo, who is a quiet, mysterious hunk. Unhappy about her discontent with their relationship, she decides to enter the beauty pageant to make a point. Is she making a mistake?

*Author Website:*

Juliemurphywrites.com

*More social media connections:*

[www.goodreads.com/andijulie](http://www.goodreads.com/andijulie)

*Twitter, tumblr, and Instagram: andimjulie*

*Curricular Connections:*

- This would be a good selection to use in English classes focusing on narrative writing.
- It is also a good choice for self-selected reading.

*Lesson Ideas:*

- Mrs. Murphy's use of language and choice of subject makes this novel a good selection as a model for narrative writing and for the politically correct "taboo" topics.
- Teacher led discussions of sensitive social issues to help students learn to analyze such issues.

*Common Core Standards:*

- 9-10.CCRA.L.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
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- 9-10.L.5.a Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
- 10.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- 9-10.W.3a Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator

- and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- 9-10.W.3b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- 9-10.W.3c Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
- 9-10.W.3d Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- 9-10.W.3e Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
- 11-12.L.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- 11-12.L.5a Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
- 11-12.W.2f Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
- 11-12.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- 11-12.W.3a Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- 11-12.W.3b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- 11-12.W.3c Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
- 11-12.W.3d Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- 11-12.W.3e Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

*Suggested Companion Titles:*

- *Everything, Everything*. By Nicole Yoon
- *The Beginning of Everything* by Robyn Schneider
- *Althea and Oliver* by Christina Moracho
- *None of the Above* by I.W. Gregorio

Additional note: Disney Productions has optioned the rights to *Dumplin'* with the intention of making a movie.