The Year of Secret Assignments by Jaclyn Moriarty

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Lydia, Emily, and Cassie have been best friends through everything, guy problems, family issues and even Secret Assignments. While they all attend a posh private school, each girl has a unique way of expressing herself. Lydia sometimes declares that she is a fish, with the intention of becoming a writer someday. Emily's dream of becoming a lawyer might never gain steam if she can't remember the difference between cinnamon and synonym. And Cassie just wants to stop being too afraid to get up on stage and sing. This year their English teacher has assigned them pen pals from public school Brookfield High to reacquaint them with the Joy of the Envelope. Over the course of the year they each get to know a stranger. Sebastian is an artistic soccer player who sometimes can't control his temper. Charlie is a sweet guy who always seems to be in trouble. And Matthew is either very dangerous or nonexistent. Prank calls, mistaken identities, spy missions, Dates with Girls, with a side of blackmail and revenge make for an interesting year!

While this is somewhat of a sequel to Moriarty's *Feeling Sorry for Celia*, it stands on its own as a roller coaster of a ride through the interconnected lives of six Australian teens. Readers may be familiar with changing narrators every few chapters, but Moriarty adds a wrinkle into this framing device by having characters interact with each other directly only through a combination of letters, journal entries, and emails. Some characters utilize more traditional storytelling methods in their correspondence, which keeps the story from becoming too hard to follow. The humor of the story and the individuality of the characters keep you reading to the satisfying conclusion.
If you want to read more on teens coming of age, you should check out how Virginia Shreves deals with her weight in *The Earth, My Butt and Other Big Round Things* by Carolyn Mackler. If you like humor and romance of this book, you might also like how Georgia Nicholson copes with her first boyfriend in *Angus, Thongs, and Full-Frontal Snogging* by Louise Rennison. Maybe you liked the format of letters and emails, if so you might also enjoy reading the tweets of the teens in *Tweet Heart* by Elizabeth Rudnick.

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