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Young Adult Fiction

#15 Mallory's Guide to Boys, Brothers, Dads, and Dogs
Laurie Friedman
Jennifer Kalis, illustrator
Darbycreek
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Ten-year-old Mallory McDonald knows just how to solve the very serious problem she faces; it should be simple to get a boy to notice her. But somehow, things don't work as planned: her brother won't help her, and her grades are slipping. It's all falling apart. And with every scheme, things only get worse. *Mallory's Guide to Boy's, Brothers, Dads, and Dogs* is a delightful tale of a schoolgirl crush and the trouble it can cause.

In this latest book by Laurie Friedman, Mallory experiences her first crush—on an older boy in sixth grade. She knows they are perfect for each other. Only one little problem stands in the way: he doesn't know she exists! So Mallory launches a plan, which promptly backfires in a big way. As she schemes to get noticed, her brother tells her to stick to boys her own age. And her parents get after her to improve her grades. But that's hard for a girl to do when all she can think about is *the* guy. Mallory must find a way to get noticed, gain her brother's support, and pass her math class all at the same time.

Friedman's book explores issues of growing up familiar to upper-elementary age girls. Told in first person from a young girl's point of view, a bit like a diary, the story engages readers as they follow the mishaps of a character they can easily understand. Along the way, readers get a few gentle lessons in maturing into capable young women.

Friedman proved her storytelling ability through several award-winning picture books, such as *Love, Ruby Valentine* and *I'm Not Afraid of This Haunted House*. *Mallory's Guide* is the fifteenth book in the Mallory Series, so many readers may already know and love Mallory. Yet Freidman keeps Mallory's voice fresh, her personality charming, and her challenges relevant.

Overall, it's a wholesome read that teaches girls how to keep "boy-crazy" feelings in perspective, something parents can appreciate. Teachers and librarians will find this series highlights education as a priority and, at the same time, boasts a writing style that captivates

with its charm. And elementary-aged girls should enjoy Mallory's adventures. As they cheer Mallory on in her pursuit of the boy she has a crush on, they may well find a BFF in Mallory herself.

Diane Gardner