

*Everything I Never Wanted to Be* by Dina Kucera  
Excerpt from Chapter 1: "The Funniest Mom in America"

My daughter, Carly, has been in and out of drug treatment facilities since she was thirteen. Every time she goes away, I have a routine: I go through her room and search for drugs she may have left behind. We have a laugh these days because Carly says, "So you were looking for drugs I might have left behind? I'm a drug addict, Mother. We don't leave drugs behind, especially if we're going into treatment. We do all the drugs. We don't save drugs back for later. If I have drugs, I do them. All of them. If I had my way, we would stop for more drugs on the way to rehab, and I would do them in the parking lot of the treatment center."

*I'm fumbling around, going through Carly's things piece by piece. I look in books, shoes, jacket pockets, DVD cases. I look in holes in stuffed animals. I see a box in the top corner of her closet. I open the box and see piles of papers.*

*I shuffle through them and see cute little cards, letters from friends, funny little notes from her old life. "Dear Justin. Do you like me? I like you. If you don't like me it's okay. But I will not be your friend." Ribbons, stickers, and glitter line the bottom of the box. Then I find this...this list of what Carly feels about herself.*

*I read and my heart begins to beat really fast. Toward the end of the list, I have to blink to allow the tears to roll down my face so I can see.*

*I am holding in my hand the truth. There are a million ways to get to the truth. The shittiest way to find the truth is to stumble upon it accidentally while sparkly glitter falls all over your lap.*