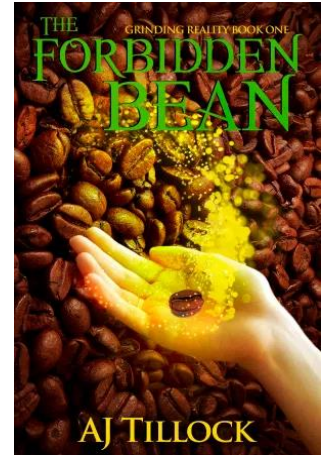


The Forbidden Bean

By: AJ Tillock

Introduction

Barbara Meyers, writing under her alter ego, AJ Tillock, takes readers into a fantasy world in her *Grinding Reality* book series about a young woman who works as a coffee shop manager. The series begins with book one, *The Forbidden Bean*, where her main character, Tee Rutledge, is suddenly transformed into various insects from consuming magic coffee beans. The transformations allow Tee to become a “fly on the wall” where she sees, hears, and can even intervene to alter human events. *The Forbidden Bean*



was published by Barbara Meyers, LLC on January 2, 2012 followed by her second novel, *Cool Beans*, published June 6, 2016. A third book in the series, *Killer Beans*, is still in the works.

Summary of the book

In this exhilarating novel, author AJ Tillock paints a picture through her character, Tee Rutledge, of what it would be like to be a “fly on the wall.” Tee Rutledge is lower caste member of society who works as a coffee shop manager in a small city. Her inner struggles paint the picture of a frail young woman who is a shadow to her successful sister, Sammi. Tee battles with the absence of her father and the need to seek the truth about her life as well as suspicious characters she encounters. The seemingly weak young woman, Tee Rutledge, would forever be transformed on the day she discovers a bag of magic beans. Her power to change her own fate would be acquired through changing the fate of those around her. Would these magic beans eventually overpower Tee’s life, or would she embrace the power of her newly found strength? This thrilling novel keeps readers turning pages to find out!

Book Discussion Questions

1. The coffee beans are found by Tee while she is cleaning the storage room at her place of work. Do you think the beans magically appeared in the storage room or did someone place them in there knowing she would be the one to find them? Do you think the beans have a connection to her because of her aunt's disappearance and her father's absence associated with the *Espresso mafia*?
2. Tee seems to be vulnerable as a human but powerful as an insect/arachnid. What personal traits does Tee possess to make her suitable for a transformation to an insect/arachnid heroine?
3. Discuss the dynamics of Tee's family. Why does her father appear in her life after being absent for nearly 25 years? Do you think he has been watching her and the rest of the family the whole time he was absent just to protect them from the dangers he is aware of associated with the *Espresso mafia*?
4. When Tee transforms into an insect for the first time, her reaction was not panicked or even concerned. Why do you think the author chose to portray the transformation the way she did? Do you think the storyline would have worked if the author chose to create panic during the first insect transformation? Why or why not?
5. Analyze the different insect/arachnid species that Tee becomes to alter fate. What was the significance of the species she transformed to for each incident? Would one of these species have been better in another situation?
6. Tee transforms into an insect/arachnid but is still functioning as a human being. Discuss the portions of her personality that are left in her human form and what portions of her personality are carried to the insect form. What are the advantages of the characteristics being split simultaneously between human form and insect form?

7. Discuss the relationship of Tee with Joe, Lenny, and Cody. What do each of these characters possess that aid in building Tee's need to transform into an insect/arachnid to intervene in different situations? Do you think that one or all these men know something about the crimes that are happening or are any of them just finding out information as Tee reveals it to them?
8. Discuss Tee's last transformation and how much power she holds as the species in which she transforms. Does her final act while in nonhuman form make her a criminal or is she a hero?

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