Made You Up

Aylea Stephens

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Review

Alex can’t tell what is real and what is not. She suffers from paranoia and schizophrenia. She takes pictures of everything so later she can tell what is real and what isn’t and checks her food for poison. She was first diagnosed after an incident with a boy that everyone says didn’t really happen, but when she meets a boy that reminds her of him she keeps wondering how much is real and how much isn’t. What she wants is to be normal, but she doesn’t really know how to get there. Alex navigates her senior year of high school dealing with pranks, family drama, and conspiracies that she has no way of knowing if they are accurate. She has to learn how to be normal in a world where everyone expects her to be crazy.

Alex is an unreliable narrator because of her mental illnesses, and that creates mystery for the reader. The reader is as clueless about what is real and what is not as Alex is, helping to create empathy for those who struggle with mental illness. The depth of the characters of Miles and Alex are impressive. Alex responds differently to different people, being sweet with some and angry with others, and Miles is more complex in his emotions than the bad boy character that he seems at first. The emotions and reactions of the characters feel real. The romance is not the main point of the story, and it is not “insta-love” either. Instead, the characters get to know each other and the hidden parts of each other to form a relationship. The book does with difficult subjects from mental illness to death to abuse, but it is handled in a tasteful, realistic way. *Made You Up* is a heartbreaking, vivid exploration of what it takes to have to fight to be normal.

*Contains sexual content, violence, and strong language.*