



2016

Something Real

Aylea Stephens

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Stephens, Aylea (2016) "Something Real," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 37 : Iss. 8 , Article 29.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol37/iss8/29>

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Book Review

Title: Something Real
Author: Heather Demetrios
Reviewer: Aylea Stephens
Publisher: Henry Holt and Co.
Publication Year: 2014
ISBN: 9780805097948
Number of Pages: 406
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding



Review

Bonnie™ Baker grew up on TV with her twelve siblings on the hit reality show Baker's Dozen. Since the show was cancelled four years ago, she changed her name to Chloe and started a normal life not in the spotlight. She loves having friends and a potential boyfriend, but finding out that Baker's Dozen is going back on the air soon might ruin all of that for her. Four years ago the show was partly cancelled after she swallowed too many pills and nearly died. Now with the show back on air, those past events are coming back to haunt her and she again has to deal with having no privacy in her life. Dealing with PTSD, panic attacks, and the ever-present cameras, Chloe decides that she won't put up with the invasion of her personal space and the TV show changing what is actually happening in her home. With the help of her friends and her brother, she gains the courage to break the connection and make her own life away from cameras and the false world of reality TV.

Something Real explores the exploitation of children in reality television when they don't have a choice about what is going on. The exploitation and the manipulation the producers and her parents use to keep her under control make the book slightly uncomfortable to read, but for the right reasons. There are plenty of tough subjects here, from depression to suicide to her brother and his boyfriend hiding to avoid negative attention from the press about their relationship. The description of her mother's selfishness and the things that happen are infuriating. Chloe's voice is harsh and cynical, but also truthful and funny as she portrays her life in a realistic way that pulls the reader into the chaos. The sibling dynamics between Lexie, Chloe, and Benny are well done, and the connection between Chloe and Benny and their concern for each other is a treat to read about. The romance is a sweet depiction of how people can stick together even in difficult times. Patrick can't fix all of Chloe's problems, but he can help her go through them. This smart, funny, and sometimes frustrating book will have readers cheering for Chloe to succeed while thinking about the importance of freedom and privacy.

*Contains underage drinking, strong language, homosexual relationships, mild violence, suicide, mild discussions about sex.