



2016

The Start of Me and You

Aylea Stephens

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Book Review

Title: The Start of Me and You

Author: Emery Lord

Reviewer: Aylea Stephens

Publisher: Bloomsbury

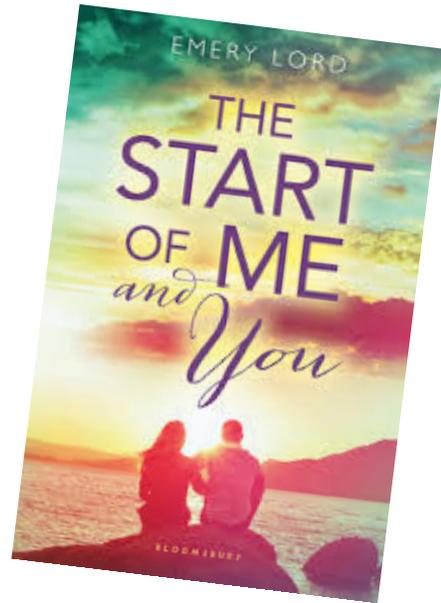
Publication Year: 2015

ISBN: 9781619633599

Number of Pages: 384

Interest Level: Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding



Review

A year after Paige's boyfriend Aaron died in a drowning accident, she is still trying to recover and feel normal again. Determined to change things, she makes a list of things she's going to do during the school year to help herself move on: join a club, swim, make new friends, and date Ryan Chase, the boy she'd had a crush on before she dated Aaron. In the process of making new friends and joining a club, she befriends Ryan's cousin Max and joins him in Quiz Bowl. As she progresses in some of her goals and struggles in others, her friends and family help her move on from grief.

The majority of the book isn't a love story—it's Paige's story of trying to find herself and realize what she wants her life to look like. Her friendships are a key part of the story, and sometimes the most important part of the book isn't the romance but the bond between Paige and her friends. All of the girls have distinct personalities with strengths and weaknesses, and their relationship is one of the best parts of the book. Paige is struggling with family issues, from her parents dating after a difficult divorce and her grandmother's illness. Her relationships with her friends help her get through the difficult times in a beautiful way. The book has a lot of emotion and relatable issues that give it something for everyone, including inspiring teachers, Jane Austen references, discussion about different kinds of grief, and developing friendships. Paige's voice feels real, and even though readers might know what's coming in the end, they will still cheer for Paige as she discovers what she wants in life and who she wants to be.