



2018

Autofocus

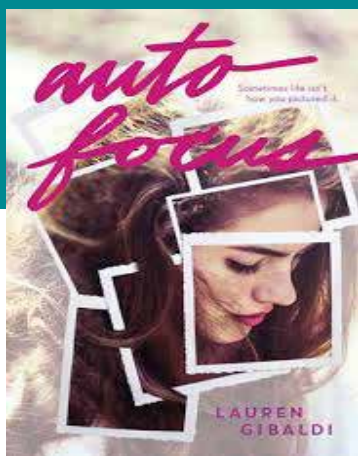
Cynthia Frazier

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Book Review

Autofocus

Author

Lauren Gibaldi

Illustrator

Reviewer

Cynthia Frazier

Rating

Dependable

Level

Young Adult

Pages

345

Year

2016

Publisher

HarperCollins Publishers

ISBN

9780062302236

Maude had tried before to find out information about her birth mother, Claire, but this time she would be traveling to the actual town where Claire had gone to college. Not only would Maude be able to complete her High School photography project about her family tree, she would stay with her best friend Treena in her dorm and experience what college life at Florida State is really like. Things did not go as planned. Her best friend seemed to be so involved with parties, her new boyfriend and breaking away from her strict Indian parents that Maude felt hurt and betrayed. Luckily, a boy in Treena's dorm stepped in and offered to show Maude around and help her locate people who knew her mother. Finding answers about the kind of person her mother had been caused Maude to wonder about the life she would have led had she not been given up for adoption. She came to realize that change is a part of life and growth, that peer pressure is real, and that family relationships make all the difference in the world.

Autofocus is Lauren Gibaldi's second novel for young adults. She relates to teenagers as she has been an English teacher and currently is a public librarian and author who writes about teenage changes and challenges. The book has well developed characters, the protagonist, Maude, is relatable and her desire to find out about her heritage is understandable. The issue of adoption and the emotional effects adoption has on families is illustrated in the book and relevant to society today. The plot is cliché in that there are no twists or unexpected outcomes. The transition from high school to college, being away from the strictures of home and family in a new environment has much to do with the plot as well as the back plot. The romantic attachment between Maude and Bennett, though an engaging character, was unnecessary to the story line and seemed forced as the story took place in such a short amount of time. Some young women would find the book interesting and fun to read.

*Contains mild language, mild sexual content, and underage alcohol use.