



2009

Absolutely Maybe

Rachel Wadham

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Wadham, Rachel (2009) "Absolutely Maybe," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 30 : Iss. 1 , Article 20.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol30/iss1/20>

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Yee, Lisa. *Absolutely Maybe*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2009. ISBN 9780439838443. \$16.99. 274 p.

Reviewer: Rachel Wadham

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Mothers and daughters--Juvenile fiction; Runaways--Juvenile fiction; Los Angeles (Calif.)--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

When the man that her mother is going to make her seventh husband tries to rape her, Maybelline joins her diminutive Asian friend Ted and their buddy Hollywood when he moves to California to start film school. There Maybelline, who is named for her mother's favorite mascara brand and is called Maybe, hopes to connect with her biological father whom she has never known. Even though she soon runs out of money and hope, things change drastically when Ted gets a job as an assistant to a movie star and Hollywood makes a documentary based on Maybe's life. She even finds a home with one of her former stepfathers and his girlfriend. Though it all Maybe, with the help of her friends, is able to come to terms with her feelings about her mother, as she crafts a new identity which is different from the one of dyed hair and baggy T-shirts that she had created as an act of rebellion.

While the Los Angeles setting and themes of personal discovery despite family difficulties in this novel are nothing new; it is the vivid characters that make it shine. While the adults remain fairly stereotypical, the three main teen characters have distinct personalities with just the right amount of quirks that will connect with readers. The characters' emotional ups and downs are true to life, even though Maybe's reconciliation with her mother may come too easily and some of the other characters' emotional issues are not completely resolved. With an introspective character who deals with her life's troubles with courage this is surely a title that will appeal to older teen girls.

Volume 30, no. 1 (September/October 2009)