Crazy Beautiful

Megan Harris

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Reviewer: Megan Harris
Reading Level: Young adult
Rating: Outstanding
Genre: Fiction; Contemporary realistic fiction;
Subject: Amputees--Juvenile fiction; People with disabilities--Juvenile fiction; Bullying--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

It is clear from his two prosthetic hooks that Lucius has a secret. He has recently moved since an explosion of his house, and his family seems distant. He knows already that his first day of school won't be good when others begin whispering about him, and the obvious results of his homemade bomb-building experiments, on the bus. When the beautiful Aurora gets on the bus there is an instant connection. Aurora and her father, Mr. Belle, have also just moved into town in order to start new lives after her mother's passing from cancer. Lucius deals with bullies, stigmas, distant parents, and his double-amputations. Aurora deals with cliques, unwanted advances, and her father's arrest for allegedly having inappropriate relations with a female student. Despite all the stress, the two can't shake their connection to each other and kiss during a neighborhood party. Later, Aurora is told that Lucius is responsible for her father's unjust arrest. Aurora, heartbroken, shuns him, despite his position as Stage Manager of the school musical she stars in. Using his wits, Lucius discovers that two scheming students, both "friends" of Aurora, arranged for Mr. Belle's arrest on false charges. He breaks the news to authorities and Mr. Belle is absolved of all charges, just in time to see the end of "Grease" and the two teen's end-of-show kiss.

Baratz-Logsted approaches the tale of "Beauty and the Beast" with a contemporary slant. She realistically addresses death, guilt, second chances and the experience of amputees. The characters are likeable and believable. A balance is met with providing readers with experiences they can relate to (bullies, dating, family) and introducing experiences that may be new (death, amputation, injustice). The story is organized with the alternating perspectives of both Aurora and Lucius. An excellent read for high school students. Note: contains a short paragraph about masturbation; parental discretion suggested.

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