

## *The Infinite Moment of Us*

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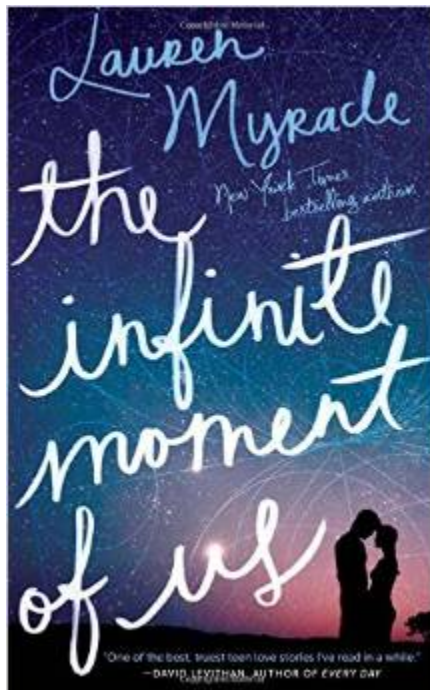
### **About the Author**



Lauren Myracle was born in Brevard, North Carolina, but grew up in Atlanta, Georgia. She went to UNC for her bachelors and achieved her MA from Colorado State University. She taught two years at Vermont College before becoming a writer. She has predominantly worked with writing young adult literature and has written about themes that are a little more risqué such as sex, drugs, homosexuality, and alcohol. These topics have led to Myracle

facing some controversy. According to the American Library Association from 2009-2011, Myracle's works were among the most challenged books due to their content.

### **Summary of *The Infinite Moment of Us***



The book is about two young lovers attempting to overcome their insecurities. The story starts off with Wren Gray who is by most accounts the perfect daughter. However, as she nears the end of her high school career, she begins to realize that what she wants to do with her life doesn't exactly run parallel to her parents' expectations. Wren has plans of joining "Project Unity" which is like light version of the Peace Corps but hasn't told her parents about it. Charlie Parker is a boy that has worked his way through the foster system and constantly battles his negative perception of his self-worth. Charlie has always harbored a crush on Wren but has never seen himself as being a worthy candidate for her affection, whereas Wren notices him late, but is immediately attracted. The two fight through their personal issues and grow stronger together, highlighting the benefits of seeking shelter in another. The book ends naturally leaving the reader to decide how the lovers proceed to the future.

(Photos are from Myracle's website: <http://www.laurenmyracle.com>)

#### Quotes:

1. "And he was lonely He tried not to be. He tried to be strong and self-reliant. If he could figure out how to stop needing anything (or anyone), then his loneliness would go away – that was his hope But it never quite worked out that way." (67-68).

Analysis: That Charlie feels the need to keep everything hidden and buried within him is a comment to the societal standards that are placed onto young boys to exude strength. Given Charlie's history in the foster care system and the abuse that he has suffered it would be completely reasonable for him to let some of his emotions out, but he has been conditioned to be stoic. The continuous moving and changing of familial dynamics has left Charlie feeling a need to be "self-reliant" because most of the inputs in his life are unstable so he feels a need to be the element in his life that is constant. He does this by adopting a mindset that doesn't create unrealistic expectations or desires.

2. "It's what you feel, and guess what? Feelings are like three-year-olds. They're not rational. They're just there." (163).

Analysis: Tessa tells this to Wren after she had expressed some jealousy that Charlie had "chosen" his family over her. Rather than tell her that she was crazy, because she was feeling so strongly attached to a boy she had been dating for a few months, she merely tells her she is justified feeling however she likes. This quote is pretty strong because it doesn't pass any judgement for feelings that may or may not be rational. This is something that should be reiterated to teens more often because they can often feel embarrassed for their hormone fueled emotions.

3. "**Can I call you? Can we at least talk over the phone?** *Um, nah. Bye for real. I'm turning off my phone.* **Wren? Wait. Are you still there? I feel like my world is falling apart. Can I please call?** She didn't respond." (186)

Analysis: This exchange is a perfect example of teenage insecurity and emphasizes how painful being shut out can be. Charlie (in bold) is talking to Wren (italicized) via text message and though they are having a little tiff she decides that she doesn't want to deal with the issue in that moment, so she shuts him out. By being ignored Charlie is left with his own worst thoughts and fears that continue to escalate. This begins to show the fragile emotional state that vulnerable teens are left in when a relationship hits some rocky points.

#### For the Classroom

The topics that are touched on in the book would make this harder to teach to any students younger than sixteen or seventeen. According to *Adolescence in the Search for Meaning* this book falls under chapter six as the main premise of the book deals with the choices of the two young leads. The mature content in the book make it a hard book to teach but the themes are easily accessible to a younger audience as the book tackles a few of the issues teens deal with

such as loneliness, parental expectations, and self-interests. Some ideas on how to teach this book to a classroom would include:

1. To teach alongside something like *Lady and the Tramp* which is less edgy but has the same sort of male and female archetypes. The childhood classic would precede the book but aim to prime the students for the types of characters that are going to be present in the text.
2. Before starting the book have the students list out a few of their plausible fears anonymously to check the temperature of the classroom as to how relevant the text would be to them.
3. During the reading of the text open the floor for discussion as to what are some of the “pressures” that they feel and why. This would help create a bridge to understanding the psyche of the characters in the book.

### **Why Should Teens Read this Novel?**

1. To gain an understanding that the starting point doesn’t have to be the ending point.
2. That they are the only person in the world that can control their own happiness.
3. They are looking for something that has a little more adult content.
4. Kids that are struggling to find something to read and are not the strongest readers.

### **Text Complexity**

Lexile Range: HL610L

The language in the book is simple and easy to understand for almost any audience. The sentence structures are also relatively simple and don’t require too much skill to understand. There are some words that may be a little racy for some younger readers but other than that the language is pretty easy to comprehend.

ATOS Book Level: 4.3    Interest Level: 9-12

This book is mostly exuding the 7<sup>th</sup> Exeter Quality as the story allows for the emotional and intellectual growth of teens due to the nature of the book. The 7<sup>th</sup> quality is demonstrated throughout the book as the two lead characters deal with two different types of emotional turmoil and give examples on how to handle them safely. The ATOS Book level appears accurate as the word choice in the text is easily understandable and could be understood by a beginning reader, however, the contents of the book may prove a little too mature for younger readers. Though the

book is recommended for readers that are reading at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level it should probably be aimed towards older kids that are struggling to read as the topics addressed.