If You Loved Me (Reynolds, Marilyn, True-to-Life Series from Hamilton High.)

Marilyn Reynolds
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In the seventh installment in the True-to-Life Series from Hamilton High, Reynolds tackles the touchy subject of teen sex vs. abstinence. Lauren, a senior at Hamilton High, has been dealing with “If you loved me…” ever since her drug-addicted mother died in the explosion of a methamphetamine lab and her grandmother took her in to raise at age five. Mother, if you loved me, why did you screw up your life by doing drugs? Why did you die and leave me?

Since her mother turned out to be a loser in Lauren’s eyes, Lauren adopted a policy of no sex, no drugs, which had been easy to follow until Tyler came into her life: handsome, wonderful, white Tyler who loves kinky-haired, white/black/Chinese Lauren. No sex since Lauren was conceived accidentally herself and no drugs because she refuses to become her mother. But now Tyler has started to pressure Lauren to take their relationship to the next level of intimacy, and she’s not sure she can resist the temptation to go further than heavy petting and keep her promise to respect herself. At the same time, a stranger from her past appears in Lauren’s life to confuse her even more.

Through Lauren’s everyday life at home and at school, through her interactions with her friends, classmates and teachers and through her intense, unreasoning anger at life, Reynolds smoothly presents all sides of the issue using her research with teens at an alternative school in California to stay abreast of teen angst and fads, leaving the final choice in the hands of Lauren. Reynolds? books have achieved national acclaim from the American Library Association, and provide a realistic alternative to the teen soap opera series blandness permeating the market.

MELANIE C. DUNCAN (September / October 1999)

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