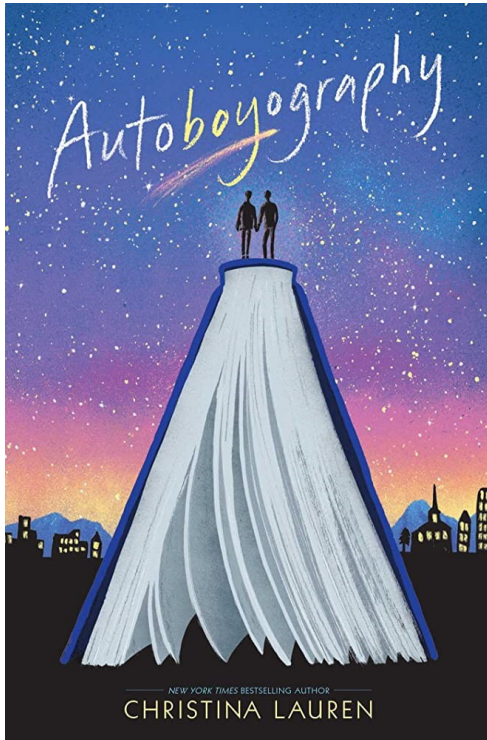


# AUTOBOYOGRAPHY



*Young Adult*

**By Christina Lauren**

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## CONTENT WARNING

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**3** /5

**Minor Restricted**  
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
7	Not to mention I'm a half-Jewish queer kid in a straight and Mormon town. ...It wasn't that big a deal in Palo Alto when, at thirteen, I realized I liked the idea of kissing guys as much as kissing girls.
19	The one and only time I've ever seen Autumn drunk was this past summer, which is also the one and only time she admitted she was in love with me. I thought we'd been on the same page after our make-out session two years ago, but apparently not. Sometime after drinking four Mike's Hard Lemonades but before shaking me awake on her floor and begging me with boozy breath to forget everything she said, she babbled for an hour about the secret feelings she'd been harboring the past couple years. From the haze of my own inebriation and the tangle of her alcohol-fueled incoherence, I remember only three clear sentences:...
20	Auddy's words twanged that dissonant chord inside me, the inner conflict about what it means to be bisexual. There's the devil on one shoulder, the ignorant perception that I get from all sides, both inside and outside the queer community, who say bisexuality is really about indecision, that it's impossible for bisexuals to be satisfied with one person and the label is a way to not commit. And then there's the angel on the other shoulder—who the queer-positive books and pamphlets encourage me to believe—saying that no, what it means is I'm open to falling in love with anyone.
21	I am drunk.
25	I probably should have put two and two together and realized my parents would also be using it on our home network before I discovered I could stream porn on my phone. That was an awkward conversation, but at least it resulted in a compromise: I could go to certain sites, and they wouldn't stalk me online as long as I didn't lurk on places that, as Mom put it, "would give me unrealistic expectations about how sex should be or what our bodies should look like." In the end, my stridently anti-LDS parents moved their emo-scene daughter and queer son back into LDS wonderland. To compensate for their guilt over making sure I protect myself at all costs (read: be very, very careful about who I come out to), my parents have made our home a gay, gay den of pride. Autumn and I spend most of our time together at her house, and Hailey hates almost everyone (and no one from her angry coven ever comes over), so LGBTQ essays, PFLAG pamphlets, and rainbow T-shirts are handed to me at spontaneous moments with a kiss and a lingering look of pride. Mom will slide the occasional bumper sticker into my pillowcase, to be found when the sharp corner meets my cheek at night.
29	When I started questioning my sexuality, they told me their love for me was not dependent on where I stick my dick.
52	No one back home had to explain what it means to be bisexual. I have known since I was thirteen that I was into boys. But I knew before then that I was probably into girls, too.
53	Sebastian knows-he has to know- that I am attracted to him. My eyes are helplessly bouncing around his face, his neck, his chest, his jeans whenever he's in the classroom.
59	"Coffee stunts your growth," I tell my sister. "Is that why your penis is so—"
61	What if it was Soccer Dave, and he noticed my eyes following Sebastian in class, and the bishop asked around with some contacts in Palo Alto who told him I was queer, and he told Sebastian, and Sebastian told everyone?

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66	I open my mouth to speak—to explain—just as he says, “So this is your overall theme, right? You’re going to write about someone who is homosexual living in Provo?” ...I nod vigorously. “I was thinking he’d be bisexual. Yeah.”
69	“What role does his being, um, bisexual play in the book?”
82	He’s not stupid. He knows I’m bi. He has to know I’m into him.
83	<p>The biggest piece on my mind lately—other than the Sebastian/ garment question—is the one thing in the world that will make my mom’s blood boil: the LDS Church’s terrible history concerning gays.</p> <p>The church has since condemned the practice of conversion therapy, but that doesn’t mean it didn’t exist, or ruin many, many lives. From the bits I’ve gathered from Mom, here’s the basic situation: An LDS individual would come out to their family, who would quickly ship them off somewhere to be “fixed.” This type of therapy involved institutionalization and electroconvulsive shock therapy. Sometimes medication or aversion conditioning, which sounded okay until I realized it meant they would use drugs to make the person nauseated while viewing same-sex erotica. The Internet tells me that more “benign” versions included shame conditioning, or retraining in stereotypical masculine and feminine behaviors, dating therapy, hypnosis, and something called orgasmic reconditioning, which—just no.</p> <p>When Aunt Emily came out twenty-eight years ago, her parents offered her a choice: conversion therapy or excommunication. Now the Mormon Church’s stance on queer stuff is clear as mud.</p> <p>According to any church statement you can find on the matter, the only sex that should be happening is between a husband and a wife. Yawn. But surprisingly, the church does recognize a difference between same-sex attraction and what they call homosexual behavior. In essence: guys feeling attracted to other guys = we’ll look the other way. Guys kissing guys = bad.</p>
86	Before I moved to Utah, I heard a lot about the church from people who, admittedly, have never been a part of it. They marry their daughters off when they’re twelve! They’re polygamists!
93	I want him to tell me he went home and googled pictures of guys kissing.
100	<p>“I don’t even know if he’s gay.”</p> <p>“Well, for argument’s sake, let’s assume he is and your feelings are reciprocated. You know the church thinks it’s okay to have same-sex attraction but you aren’t allowed to act on it?”</p>
116	We snuck off during a dinner with a bunch of the other doctors and their families and kissed until our lips were numb.
131	Of course they aren’t allowed to engage in any sexual behavior—certainly not with members of the same sex. They want to save you, because they think you need saving.
133	<p>I watch the rise and fall of his back through his jacket, the solid muscle there- but also the straight posture, the unique poise of him- and absolutely defile him in my head. My hands all over him, his hands all over me.</p> <p>I want him.</p>
137	His breath is coming out so hard and fast. His cheeks are pink. “Have you always . . . liked guys?” “I’ve always liked whoever,” I tell him. “I really am bi. It’s about the person, not the parts, I guess.”

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	<p>...“Why wouldn’t you just be with a girl, then?” he asks quietly. “If you were attracted to them? Wouldn’t it be so much easier?”</p> <p>“That’s not something you get to choose.”</p>
138	<p>“I think . . . I’ve always liked guys,” he whispers.</p> <p>...“I’m not even attracted to girls. I envy you that. I keep praying I will be at some point.”</p> <p>He puffs out a breath. “I’ve never said that out loud.”</p> <p>...“You’ve never been with a guy?” He shakes his head again, quickly. “No. Nothing.”</p> <p>...“I’ve kissed guys, but honestly . . . I’ve never felt like . . . this.”</p> <p>...“Me either.”</p> <p>I turn to him, and it happens so fast. One second he’s staring at my face and the next second his mouth is on mine, warm and smooth and it feels so good. Oh my God. I make some guttural sound I can’t control. He makes it back, and the growl turns into a laugh because he pulls away with the biggest smile the sky has ever seen, and then he’s coming in to kiss me more and deeper, his hands on my neck.</p> <p>His mouth opens, and I feel the tentative sweep of his tongue.</p> <p>Light bursts behind my closed eyes, so intensely I nearly hear the popping sound. It’s my brain melting, or my world ending, or maybe we’ve just been hit by a meteor and this is the rapture and I’m given one last perfect moment before I’m sent to purgatory and he’s sent somewhere much, much better.</p> <p>It isn’t his first kiss—I know that—but it’s his first real one.</p>
141	<p>I</p> <p>Kissed Sebastian.</p> <p>I felt his mouth on mine, and his tongue, and his laugh reverberating in the space between us. We kissed over and over. All kinds of kisses too. Fast and messy, and the slower deep ones that make me think of sex and long afternoons safely hidden in someone’s bedroom. He bit my lip, and I did it back, and then he let loose a sound that I’ll hear echoing around the frenzy of my thoughts for the rest of the weekend. It felt . . . so fucking right. Like, whatever I did before, with someone else, wasn’t really kissing. Maybe it sounds dumb, but it was like every cell in my body was engaged. It makes everything else I’ve ever done feel sort of whitewashed and hard to remember. We kissed until the chill started crawling beneath our clothes.</p> <p>Actually, now that I think about it, we kissed until Sebastian pulled away when my hand was flirting with the hem of his shirt.</p> <p>He said he’s never done anything with a guy, but it’s clear the mechanics of this weren’t new to him, and I’m betting he’s had girlfriends. Still, we were both literally shaking with the same manic hunger, so maybe for him this was as different as it was for me. Has he . . . had sex before? I’m guessing he hasn’t—I’m sure Autumn would laugh and say that some of the LDS kids are the dirtiest kids at school, but something about Sebastian tells me he’s different in that way, like, other than what we did today, he honors those sorts of rules.</p> <p>But would he? With me?</p> <p>The question triggers anxiety and heat in my blood. Clearly I am getting way ahead of myself, but I’m worked up and high and don’t know how this proceeds. Are we . . . dating, or something? Even if only on the down low?</p>

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149	A Post-it sticks out from the bottom of my notebook, and the only words visible are LICK HIS NECK
155	We kissed, and it wasn't a simple kiss or accidental peck, but a kiss, with tongue and hands and lips and intent.
187	<p>"After the hike," he says, and then nods to me for confirmation, as if I would somehow not know what he's referring to, "I went home and . . ."</p> <p>Jerked off? "Freaked out?"</p> <p>He laughs. "No. I prayed."</p>
189	<p>God, enough small talk. I pull him to me, my hand on the back of his neck, and he comes down immediately, mouth over mine, weight partially on me, breath leaving his lips in a relieved gust. It starts so slow, this relieved, leisurely kissing.</p> <p>...And it ramps up from there, like a plane at takeoff, and we're infected at the same time with something wilder and more desperate. I don't want to think that we're hungry like this because there is a ticking clock.</p> <p>...His chest rests on mine and his hands are in my hair and he makes these small, deep sounds that slowly unravel me until the only word I can think, over and over, is yes. Everything feels yes.</p> <p>His mouth is yes, and his hands are yes, and over me, on top of me now, he's moving and yes, yes, yes.</p> <p>I run my hands down his back and under his shirt to the warm skin of his torso. Yes. There's no time to appreciate that I've answered my own garment question because then his shirt is off, yes, and mine comes off; skin to skin is</p> <p>Y E S</p> <p>and I've never been on bottom like this, never wrapped my leg around someone's hip, never felt this kind of shifting and friction, and he tells me he thinks about me every second</p> <p>yes</p> <p>and tells me he's never felt this way, he likes to suck on my bottom lip, he wants to pause time so we can kiss for hours</p> <p>yes</p> <p>and I tell him truthfully that nothing ever felt as good as this does, and he laughs into my mouth again because I'm sure it's obvious how into this I am. I am a monster beneath him, with arching hips, an octopus with hands everywhere at once. I don't think anything in the history of time has felt this good.</p> <p>"I want to know everything about you," he says into me, frantic now, his mouth moving over my jaw, stubble scraping my neck.</p> <p>"I'll tell you anything."</p> <p>"Are you my boyfriend?" he asks, and then sucks my bottom lip before laughing at himself, as if this isn't the most amazing thing anyone has ever said to me in the history of my life.</p> <p>"Um, yes."</p> <p>Boyfriend. Yes.</p> <p>"Even if I'm your boyfriend now, I won't tell anyone about this," I whisper.</p> <p>"I know."</p>

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	<p>His hand comes over me, between us—oh my God—and through my track pants it seems so innocent and so dirty at the same time, but the dirty is washed away when I look up and realize he’s watching my face, awestruck.</p> <p>And I get it. I’ve never done that either.</p> <p>In a daze, I reach down too. His eyes roll back before they fall closed.</p> <p>It doesn’t feel real. How can this be real?</p> <p>He moves forward once, and again, and this is the most amazing thing I’ve ever done—I don’t even hear the footsteps or the door before I hear my dad’s mortified “Oh!” and the door slam shut.</p> <p>Sebastian vaults off me, turning to face the wall, his hands pressed to his face.</p>
204	<p>Finding someone that comes from the same community and has the same values, in the end, is more important than being with the person you want to have sex with for a few months.</p>
216	<p>“You and Sebastian just had an entire conversation in sexual innuendo.”</p>
217	<p>All I want to do is kiss, and kiss, and kiss you.</p>
221	<p>I turn, looking down at him. The temptation to crawl over him and kiss him for hours is nearly impossible to resist, but there’s also something pretty great about being able to just sit here and hold hands</p> <p>with</p> <p>my</p> <p>boyfriend.</p>
223	<p>“I mean, I honestly didn’t know. It’s not like I’d been through this before. I just knew that I felt the same when I looked at pictures of naked guys as I did when I looked at pictures of naked girls.”</p> <p>...His words come out a little garbled: “Have you had sex?”</p> <p>“I’ve been with a few girls,” I admit. “Only kissed guys.”</p> <p>He nods, as if this makes sense.</p> <p>“When did you know?” I ask.</p> <p>His brow furrows. “Know what? About you being bi?”</p> <p>“No.” I laugh, but bite it back because I don’t want it to come off as mocking. “I mean, that you’re gay.”</p> <p>The confusion on his face deepens. “I’m not.”</p> <p>“Not what?”</p> <p>“Not . . . that.”</p> <p>Something seems to catch in the spinning wheel of my pulse, and it trips. For a breath, my chest hurts. “You’re not gay?”</p> <p>“I mean,” he says, flustered, trying again, “I’m attracted to guys, and I’m with you right now, but I’m not gay. That’s a different choice, and I’m not choosing that path.”</p>
229	<p>The lyrics seem innocent at first, but it’s clear it’s about sex, just like nearly every song on the radio.</p> <p>It makes me think about sex, and what that would be like with Sebastian. How it happens. How we’d . . . be. It’s this vast unknown, both thrilling and terrifying.</p>
231	<p>“How many girls have you been with?”</p> <p>I blink over to her, startled by the abrupt question. “What?”</p>

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	Even in hindsight, I feel this weird twinge of disloyalty to Sebastian for having slept with anyone else.
234	"I bet you just got the biggest boner, you fucking homo." Eli brushes off his jeans.
237	I know that Autumn is pro-gay rights—she adores Emily and Shivani, she rails about the LDS policy about queer members, and she helped put up flyers for the Provo High Gay-Straight Alliance party last spring.
238	She blinks, confused. "But you made out with Jen Riley sophomore year. I saw you," she says. "And what about Jessa, Kailley, and Trin? You've had sex. With girls." "I also made out with you," I remind her. She flushes, and I point to my chest. "Bi."
240	"That doesn't mean he's not gay, Tann. Lots of Mormons are gay. Lots of missionaries, lots of married men, even." ...Autumn squeezes my fingers. Her cheeks flush just before she asks, "Have you had sex with a guy?" I shake my head. "Kissed. I had a boyfriend for a few months back home." ...Are there other guys at school I've liked? How many guys have I kissed? Is it different from kissing girls? Which do I prefer?
248	I can tell it shocks him how he just came in here and kissed me without any regard to what was going on deeper in the room. I won't pretend it doesn't surprise me, too.
262	He's gay; he didn't die.
277	We both let it trail off. I'm choosing to think the end of that sentence would be . . . and God told me you were the right choice for me. "Yeah," I say. "So nobody at school knows you like guys, then," he says. I notice the way he avoids the words "gay," "bi," "queer" again. ..."No. I think because I've dated girls, most people just assume I'm straight."
286	Asher rips into the classroom with a shrieking McKenna on his back, and the entire room goes still as he lets her down in the lewdest way possible. She slides down his back, all giggly, and his hands are basically glued to her ass. Their entrance is so preposterous, so attention-whorey, even Burrito Dave lets out a bewildered, "Dude, seriously?" They kiss in front of the entire class, announcing their reunion.
288	THE MOON WAS GONE, LEAVING ONLY THE YELLOWING GLOW OF THE LAMPS BEHIND US. DIRT ROAD STRETCHED BACKWARD FOR ETERNITY AND FOR ONCE WE WERE ALONE. I'D TAKE THE HEAT OF YOU ON THIS TINY CAR EVERY DAY OVER THE MEMORY OF YOU IN MY BED. IN MY HAND, SO HEAVY. A LIFTETIME OF WANT, FILLING MY PALM. YOU BIT MY NECK WHEN YOU CAME AND THEN KEPT YOUR EYES CLOSED WHEN YOU KISSED ME.



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292	<p>There are so many now, and over time we just got so comfortable being on the mountain, kissing like we were behind closed doors.</p> <p>...How ironic, too, that it's happening while we're at school, the halls thinning out but for a few stragglers here and there who have no idea we're together, that we've kissed, that I've seen what he looks like when he's lost to pleasure, that I've watched him cry and held his hand.</p>
293	<p>"Look. Manny saw us. Not just me—us. I'm not exactly waving the rainbow flag here. I don't tell people I'm bi. Autumn—my best friend—didn't even know until a week ago, and I didn't tell her about you. I told her I had feelings for you, not that they were reciprocated."</p>
295	<p>So I ask him, "Do you ever imagine telling your parents that you're gay?"</p>
316	<p>I wonder if it's because, after the chaos of mutual apologies, the reality has settled in that we had sex.</p>
324	<p>Sebastian moves closer, ponderously, never closing his eyes even when his mouth touches mine. I don't even think I kiss him back.</p> <p>..."I love you too." He kisses me again, this time longer. This time I kiss him back.</p> <p>...I need about a half hour to figure out how to react to what he's said that's slightly more measured than pulling him on top of me on the lawn.</p>
325	<p>"I'm totally gay."</p>
329	<p>"You're amazing," I say anyway, and he chokes out a sob-laugh. "Come on, kiss me. Let me kiss that amazing face."</p>
333	<p>Dad looks back over his shoulder at me, giving me a single half encouraging, half reminding-me-not-to-have-sex-on-the-couch look, and then disappears.</p>
334	<p>"Just to make sure I understand: You had sex with her?"</p> <p>I pause, guilt and shame pressing down on my shoulders like a weight. "Yeah."</p> <p>His jaw tics. "But you don't want to be with her?"</p> <p>"Sebastian, if I wanted to be with Auddy, I'd be with Auddy. She's my best friend, and I went to her because I was heartbroken. I realize this sounds completely insane, but we got into a weird comfort spiral that turned into sex."</p>
339	<p>I can still feel your kiss on my neck.</p> <p>...If I gave him even the first hundred, he would get right to the part where Sebastian told me he's attracted to guys. He would get to where we kiss.</p>
348	<p>"Marriage is eternal, is between a man and a woman, and leads to an exalted, eternal family. Homosexuality denies that plan."</p>
356	<p>His pulse pounds in his ears as he reads about the noises they make, of fingers and lips and hands that skim lower.</p>
360	<p>But right now images are on a loop, a flickering filmstrip: his laptop in his drawer; the words "I'm totally gay" on a page; Sebastian's face just before he fell asleep on the couch beside him, satisfied, cocky, also, a little shy; the deteriorating, half-assed ending to his document.</p>
368	<p>She stretches, kissing his jaw. "You're sweet."</p> <p>"You're a menace."</p> <p>"At least I'm not a virgin menace anymore."</p>
386	<p>He's gay. He'll never be anything else.</p>



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390	There have been situations where I think, If it weren't for Sebastian, I probably would have hooked up tonight. But I want him.
391	I imagine showing up wherever he is, seeing him in his missionary uniform, and his surprise at seeing me there. I think I'd make the trade: I'll convert, if you'll be with me, even in secret, forever.
405	We started talking about this book years ago; Christina worked in a junior high counseling office in Utah, and saw teen after teen coming through who honestly believed, devastatingly, that their parents would probably rather have a dead child than a gay one. As a woman who grew up bi in the queer-friendly world of the Bay Area, Lauren felt a social obligation to reach out to teens whose experiences weren't as easy.

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	19
Bitch	1
Dick	5
Faggot/Fag	5
Fuck	10
Goddamn	6
Piss	4
Pussy	3
Shit	12