



## Bifocal

*By Deborah Ellis, Eric Walters*

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**Bifocal** By Deborah Ellis, Eric Walters

On the White Ravens' Outstanding New International Books for Children and Young Adults list, 2008

*ForeWord Magazine's* Book of the Year Awards Bronze Medal Winner (YA Fiction category), 2007

Snow Willow Award nominee, 2008

CCBC's Best Books for Kids and Teens, 2008

Two bestselling authors join forces to write a powerful novel about racism.

A student arrested on suspicions of terrorism. A high school torn apart by racism. Two boys from two different sets of circumstances forced to choose sides.

These are the issues at the heart of *Bifocal*, a ground-breaking new novel for young-adults.

The story is told from two different points of view. Haroon is a serious student devoted to his family. His grandparents emigrated from Afghanistan. Jay is a football star devoted to his team. He is white.

One day their high school is put on lockdown, and the police arrest a Muslim student on suspicion of terrorist affiliations. He might be guilty. Or is he singled out because of his race?

The entire student body fragments along racial lines and both Haroon and Jay find that their differences initially put them at odds. The Muslim students become targets and a smoke-bomb is set off near their lockers while Jay and his teammates believe they've been set-up to look like racists.

*Bifocal* is, by no stretch, an easy book. Award-winning authors Deborah Ellis and Eric Walters deliver a serious, hard-hitting book about racism that does not talk down to young people.

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## **Bifocal By Deborah Ellis, Eric Walters Bibliography**

- Rank: #318801 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Fitzhenry n Whiteside
- Published on: 2007-09-18
- Released on: 2008-08-16
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .90" w x 5.50" l, .74 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 280 pages

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## Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Two award-winning Canadian authors team up to tell a story of race prejudice that divides a high school after Azeem, a Muslim student, is arrested following a bomb plot. The story is told in the alternating voices of two students: studious Haroon, Azeem's academic-bowl teammate; and Jay, a popular football player. Neither boy seems to be aware of much prejudice in the school, although Jay describes the seating in the cafeteria as "divided in as many subgroups as tables." As Azeem's trial progresses, vandalism and racial slurs escalate, and the narrators are jolted by the actions and attitudes of people they thought they knew. Their individual struggles to understand the flaring prejudice and their journeys toward self-discovery are subtle and authentic. Secondary characters, such as Haroon's sister, who wears the abaya, and biracial Steve, raise interesting side issues but are less well developed than Haroon and Jay. This is a story that will leave readers looking at their schools and themselves with new eyes. Grades 7-10. --Lynn Rutan

## Review

"This thought-provoking novel works extremely well as an examination of the dangers of racism and the redeeming value of tolerance."

-- *Quill & Quire*

"This is a powerful and important book, one that will speak to modern teen readers in a way that they will undoubtedly hear and respond to. . . Without falling into didacticism, Ellis and Walters thoughtfully depict a full range of reactions and widely-held beliefs and offer readers the opportunity to see not only the vastly different experiences that shape Jay and Haroon's understanding of events, but also how so many others feel and respond to events like 9/11 and the mere threat of anything similar. . . *Bifocal* should, and will, enjoy a wide readership and would make an excellent choice for class, or group, discussion."

**Highly Recommended.**

-- *CM Magazine*

"This is a story that will leave readers looking at their schools and themselves with new eyes."

-- *Booklist*

"Bifocal is perhaps the bravest, most important, engaging and enraging, most satisfying work of fiction for young Canadians in a long while. Also, the most timely. It will make you think, render you angry and saddened, and leave you hopeful and reflective."

-- *The Hamilton Spectator*

"This novel is about our differences and how we treat one another. It deals with contemporary issues and could well become important reading in today's high schools."

-- *Winnipeg Free Press*

"(Bifocal) is a powerful look at a community divided along racial lines."

-- *The Canadian Press*

"Together, Ellis and Walters created two vivid characters and put them in a fictional high school that bristles with racial tension."

-- *The Toronto Star*

## About the Author

Deborah Ellis is the acclaimed author of *The Heaven Shop* and the *Breadwinner* trilogy. She has won the Governor General's Award, Canada's highest literary honor, and is a member of the Order of Ontario. She travels the world to hear the stories of children marginalized by war, illness, and poverty.

Eric Walters is one of Canada's most successful writers and prolific writers for teenagers. His novel *Shattered* recently won the 2007 National Chapter of Canada IODE Violet Downey Award and the 2007 White Pine Award. A former teacher, Eric visits classrooms across the country and he has already spoken to more than 750,000 students.

## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

#### James Sellers:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open as well as read a book called Bifocal? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have some other opinion?

#### Marni Elliott:

People live in this new moment of lifestyle always try and and must have the free time or they will get lot of stress from both everyday life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not only a robot. Then we consult again, what kind of activity are there when the spare time coming to you of course your answer may unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative in spending your spare time, the book you have read is Bifocal.

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#### Timothy Rhine:

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