



Concrete Rose

Books Reviewed:

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Editor's Choice:

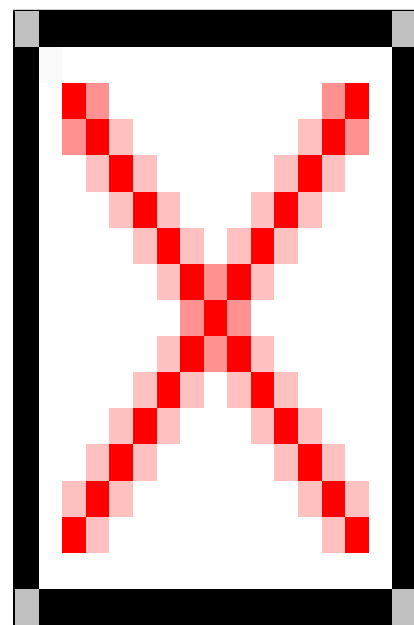
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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5



This story is written as if by Maverick 'Mav' Carter, a 17-year-old boy living in Gordon Heights, a predominately black and often deprived area outside New York. His father is locked away for drug-offences and his heroic mother just about keeps the home going, though money is scarce. But Mav has already started his own relatively modest drug-dealing and is anxious to get into the big time. He is also a gang member, with school a low priority. The time is 1998 and his future seems assured: easy money while it lasts and after that either prison or an early death. But there is still something intrinsically good about Mav. He really loves and respects his mother and also his bright and outspoken girl-friend Lisa. But when he finds out he is going to be a father first with a girl he never particularly liked and then once again with Lisa all in the same year, everything changes.

To write a compelling story about a teenager unexpectedly encountering fatherhood and actually making a success of it takes a particular talent, and Angie Thomas succeeds here superbly. With this novel, a prequel to her best-selling **The Hate U Give**, later successfully filmed, she once more comes up with a work that is urgent, topical and crackling with

energy. Fluent in the language of the streets, Mav is always an entertaining presence whatever the obstacles facing him. Things so nearly go wrong, but his redemption is well-earned with the help of hard work and a still active conscience. And much of that hard work is to do with looking after Seven, his first child, with changing diapers at night a particular chore. Sometimes he too ends up 'sobbing like a baby as if I ain't got a baby sobbing for me.' There is so much in this brilliant story for everyone, particularly teenagers about the same age as Mav. How good it would be if as many of them as possible come to read it for themselves.

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