

Concrete Rose

Angie Thomas

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In a prequel to her hit novel *The Hate U Give*, Angie Thomas shines a light on Maverick Carter and the world of parenthood. Maverick, a teenager who hasn't really seen himself as a kid in a long time, is suddenly forced to grow in an entirely new way — as a father. He struggles with his emotions and his masculinity as a young black boy, but grows to be an incredible father over the course of the book.

The plot is a little quieter than *THUG*, but this really allows Thomas's gorgeous writing to shine through. All of the characters are given thought and charm, which makes a story based in family dynamics all the more interesting. The story's definitely an emotional rollercoaster on par with the original. Thomas is great at setting up stakes and conflict. There's a lot of heavy themes regarding racism and gang violence, so be careful if these might be triggering. Thomas handles these topics really well, so this is also pretty educational for readers a little unfamiliar with them. The emotional beats all hit very hard. This isn't a light novel, nor one that's easy to breeze through mentally. The more you read, the more things you find. Angie Thomas is a fantastic writer, so this was something I enjoyed rereading.

Concrete Roses is great for high schoolers and young adults. There are some mature themes, so do know what you're getting into. This isn't something you'd want to read just once, so it makes a great gift! Fans of Thomas's other novels including the original will definitely love this book. Fans of contemporary in general will enjoy her works.

Recommended Titles:

Dear Martin by Nic Stone

On the Come Up by Angie Thomas

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky