

Every Body Looking

Candice Lloh

Reviewed by: Elisabeth Suarez, 14

Star Teen Book Reviewer of the Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Ada begins her self-discovery journey when she leaves home to attend her freshmen year at a Historically Black College. She has never been this far away from her family, which gives her the opportunity to make her own decisions for the first time in her life. She is in control of how she spends her time, her money, and who she is with. As she furthers her love for dance, she explores parts of herself she didn't realize were there.

As she grows as an independent woman, she explores her sexuality and struggles to understand her past- her mother's addiction, her assault, her controlling Nigerian father's wishes. Ultimately, she concludes that she needs to forget everyone else's dreams for her life and follow her own.

This book is a beautiful representation of finding your self-worth from out of the shadows of others. It portrays love, struggle, pain, and belonging. Ada talks about her heavily Christian father and the strict values he tried to instill in her. Once she arrives at college, she is free to reclaim her body and discover what is truly important to her- dance.

Every Body Looking also covers the topic of sexual assault. Ada is raped by her older male cousin, and because of her family's idea of suppression, she doesn't reflect on the incident until she is by herself at school. This story is heartbreaking but powerful and told through poetry and flashbacks. Because it includes mature topics, I recommend this book for those ages fourteen and up.

Recommended Books:

Grown by Tiffany D. Jackson

On the Come Up by Angie Thomas

Allegedly by Tiffany D. Jackson

On the Come Up by Angie Thomas