

You Should See Me in a Crown

Leah Johnson

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You Should See Me in a Crown centers around Liz Lighty and her life in prom-obsessed Campbell, Indiana. When her music scholarship is rejected, Liz must find another way to fund her dream of attending Pennington college and becoming a doctor like her mother before her. However, Liz is everything that a Campbell prom queen has never been: black and queer. How can Liz win the crown and the scholarship money that comes with being queen in a predominantly white and traditionally straight high school?

This story was extremely inspiring and felt incredibly relatable as a high-school student myself. I loved the friendships Liz had with her friends because of how realistic they were. This story had so many light-hearted moments, but also showed the actuality of friendship. Everyone must find that balance between loyalty to the self and loyalty to others. This story had hurt and hope, beauty and betrayal, making for not only an incredibly high-school coming of age narrative, but a testament to the meaning of being human.

I would recommend this novel to high-school students who are similarly struggling with sexual identity or some other facet of growing up. This story does feature family illness and past character death, and while these themes are not the direct focus of the narrative, *You Should See Me in a Crown* should be avoided if you're only looking for a light-hearted romance. This book also features homophobia and racism, however Johnson's novel is mainly a message about overcoming these barriers and persevering in the face of opposition. This book would be a good gift from a parent to a teenage daughter who is currently struggling with being accepted in society.

Recommended Titles:

Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo

The Henna Wars by Adiba Jaigirdar

The Black Flamingo by Dean Atta