

Chlorine Sky

Mahogany L. Browne

Reviewed by: Elisabeth Suarez, 15

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

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Skyy is used to being overshadowed by her best friend, Lay Li. Lay judges Skyy for wearing different clothes than her and not liking “normal teen-girl” things. She doesn’t defend Skyy when others make fun of her. Everywhere the two go, Skyy is invisible in the presence of confident and beautiful Lay. Even though Lay is not a good friend, Skyy struggles to let her go. Skyy is also constantly dealing with a hateful half-sister, Essa, and a mother who is always busy working to provide for them.

Skyy eventually finds her own hobbies, such as swimming and playing basketball. The only place she feels seen is when she is on the court, beating boys who think she shouldn’t be playing. While Lay and Skyy are fighting, she shares her insecurities and worries about not seeing Lay anymore and reflects on their friendship. She even explores dating with the neighborhood boy Clifton. In addition, Skyy grapples with being a Black woman and the effects of poverty. *Chlorine Sky* is a coming-of-age novel focusing on self-discovery by concentrating on yourself and not catering to others. Skyy eventually determines her worth without the opinions of society.

In *Chlorine Sky*, Browne discusses topics related to sexism, colorism, and broken relationships. As a teen, navigating through friendship breakups are not always talked about, and are very common in middle and high school. This book does an amazing job portraying how hard they could be and the process of finding yourself outside of your ex-friend. It teaches us that sometimes friendships don’t work out and can cause us pain, yet it is important to move on and let it go. Skyy learns lessons about herself and relationships throughout the book and it is an emotional and touching story.

This book is written in poems which makes the story even more vivid and captivating. Jealousy, misunderstanding, and hurtful words are captured powerfully. The complex relationship of Lay and Skyy is the main theme of the verses, and was very well written. I was hoping for a little more context dealing with Skyy’s family situation, but overall enjoyed the book thoroughly. I recommend this book for those fourteen and older, as it explores mature topics such as sexual assault and bullying.

Recommended Titles:

When You Look Like Us by Pamela N. Harris

Muted by Tami Charles

Grown by Tiffany D. Jackson

Every Body Looking by Candice Lloh