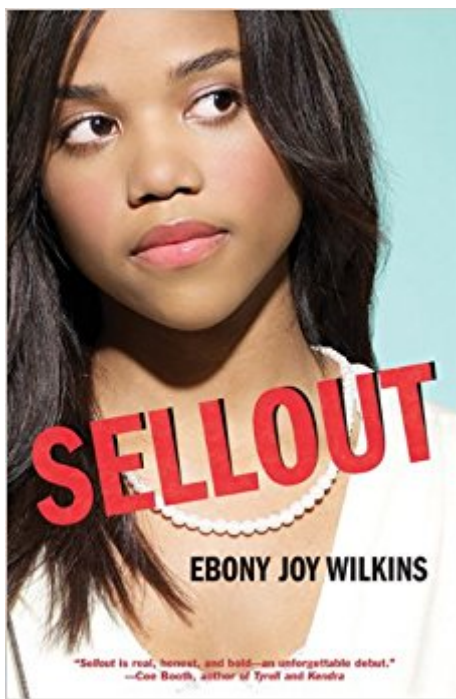


The book was found

Sellout



Synopsis

A stunning and powerful debut. NaTasha has a wonderful life in affluent Park Adams: she's popular, wealthy, and being the only African American in her school has never even crossed her mind. So when she spends the summer with her spitfire grandmother, Tilly, volunteering at a teen crisis center for troubled girls in the Bronx, she's surprised to find that for the first time in her life she doubts herself. The girls at Amber's Place are rough, streetwise, sure of themselves, and they wield their secrets like knives. They hate NaTasha. They call her a sellout. She could run back to Park Adams, and everything would go back to normal. But she doesn't. There are two boys in the neighborhood who like her and back home she's never had a boyfriend. And there a couple of girls at the center who have opened up to her, showing her a light at the end of the tunnel. So NaTasha stands her ground and discovers that friendship, love, and joyful self-discovery have been waiting for her all along.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

NaTasha Jennings is the only person of color in an entire school district and her grandmother, Tillithia Mae Evans (Tilly), doesn't like it. She believes her granddaughter is isolated and she wants her to get out into the world and experience things for herself. NaTasha's parents agree to let her spend the summer with Tilly in the Bronx. Will NaTasha be able to handle life in a place so different

from what she's used to or will she go back home before the summer is over? I know this book is about NaTasha but I really have to start with Tilly: I liked this godly woman, who was full of wisdom and could cook up a storm. I enjoyed her humor and it was nice how everyone loved her and I really loved how much she loved NaTasha. For the most part she was a positive influence on her granddaughter, but I didn't see why she thought that putting NaTasha amongst a bunch of angry, lost girls would help her to learn about who she is. With all the hurt Miss Tilly experienced in her life, I can't understand why she felt it'd be beneficial to put NaTasha in a place where she could experience the same hurts. In the predominantly white world she lived in, NaTasha had no peers who looked like her. She made certain choices to try to fit in and to be liked by the guys. At Amber's Place there may have been girls of color but she was bullied (verbally and physically abused) by those girls because they felt she was nothing like them. She seemed to be an outcast no matter where she was. It saddened me that she was placed in such a hostile environment to 'find herself'. NaTasha's dad and mom were concerned about her, as they should have been, and so was I. NaTasha was a good girl with a good heart and lots of common sense.

At times this story runs predictable and Tash started off as a hard character to like. I understood her desire to fit in at any costs since she stuck out so much, but I had a hard time dealing with her naive attitude towards people she meets in Harlem (like Rex). However, Tash does slowly change in a genuine way. It was obvious that the tough-girls who gave Tash such a hard time would have hard lives that she would never even consider. Tash's parents also annoyed me. I wanted a better explanation as to why they were so oblivious to the effects on Tash as a result of living in a mostly white neighborhood; I really didn't get how her mother changed. Her mom is Tilly's daughter, born and raised in Harlem and yet she's completely changed. I would have liked for Tash to discover why her mother went through such a drastic change. I was puzzled by Heather (Tash's best friend) sudden change of attitude towards the "mean girl" Stephanie, it came out of nowhere and it wasn't explained very well. Ultimately, I had a problem with the lack of explanation behind the character's actions. The most shocking part was the story of Shauna and how the writer introduces bleaching. I don't want to give too much away but, I'm sure that many white readers won't know that so many young people of color consider or actually do bleach their skin. It touches on the saying that "if you're light, you're alright." The whole story was heart wrenching to read about, but not a surprise. "They hated me. My hair, my skin, my body, my voice they hated everything I hated about myself. I was just like them after all, because I hated me too." (Tash, pg. 101). When Tash is at such a low point that she utters that statement, I understood completely where she was coming from and I was

angry (not angry at her) that she felt that way.

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