

Title: *Concrete Rose*
Author: Angie Thomas
Genre: Realistic Fiction

Reviewer Name and Grade: Yujay A., 10th Grade

Date Reviewed: February 22, 2022

Concrete Rose starts off with Mav, the main character, and his friends playing basketball at a local park. Mav explains that he and his friends are members of the King Lords, a local gang. The King Lords are based in a city called Garden Heights, and are rivals with the Garden Disciples gang. Mav lives with his mother, as his father has been in jail since Mav was seven years old. Mav's father was once the leader of the King Lords, but was arrested. The gang has levels, with Mav being a "li'l homie" who sells weed and initiates new members, and older members being the "big homies" who sell more dangerous drugs. Maverick and his best friend King sell their own drugs for extra money on the side, without the gang knowing, because they need the money. Maverick uses the money to support his mother with the bills and to buy gifts for his girlfriend Lisa. However, a couple weeks before Maverick enters his senior year in high school, he finds out that he is the father of a girl named Iesha's children. When Mav and Lisa broke up for a very short amount of time, Mav had a child with Iesha, but the baby was believed to be King's. However, a DNA test reveals Mav to be the father, and Iesha leaves Mav with the baby. Mav has never cared for a baby before and has great difficulty in doing so, even with the help of his mother. Mav's older cousin, Dre, who is also a King Lord, stops by to give some advice. Dre is very close with Mav and has his own wife and daughter. Dre tells Mav that he needs to be a good father by changing his lifestyle. Dre convinces Mav to look for a job instead of selling drugs. Mav begins working for his next door neighbor, Mr. Wyatt, who is strict and does not pay as well as selling drugs. However, the baby causes several problems for Mav. Lisa breaks up with Mav when she finds out that he had a baby with another girl, and King is angry at Mav for leaving the drug business. One night, after Mav and Dre hang out, Dre is shot dead in his car. Throughout the novel, Mav must take revenge on Dre's killer, all while dealing with problems with school, Lisa, the gang, and his family.

Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?

The plot definitely kept me interested as there was a lot of action and suspense.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

The pace of the book was just right, as I could understand everything going on and still not be bored.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

This book is appropriate for grade levels 9 and up, as there is violence, strong language, drugs, and inappropriate scenes.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this book to anybody who enjoys the realistic fiction genre.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

The novel is the prequel to *The Hate U Give*, another realistic fiction novel written by Angie Thomas.

I would rate *Concrete Rose* 4 stars as it was a great book which showed life as a teenager in a gang. There was a lot of action, suspense, and drama and I was never bored while reading the novel. However, the storyline did not seem to have a main conflict so it became difficult at times to follow what was happening. Overall, *Concrete Rose* was a great book that I would recommend to anybody looking for a good realistic fiction novel.