

“Brown Girl Dreaming”

Jacqueline Woodson

Reviewed by: Laura Zhang, 13

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

Brown Girl Dreaming is a beautiful memoir told in verse about growing up as an African American girl in the ‘60s and ‘70s. It crafts the journey of Woodson’s life from her childhood to her young teen years and everything that happened in between. Woodson spent most of her childhood in the South and later moved to Brooklyn, two very contrasting places. The novel is all about her experiences growing up and finding her way in the world, from encountering segregation to discovering her life passion. There is a central idea of the importance of family, with most poems surrounding this concept. Woodson’s family is very important to her and you can see the beautiful bond they have in the novel. As she grew older, Woodson started developing a love for words and writing. It was enthralling to read about her writing journey because it was so closely related to my own journey with words. Woodson’s poems construct a breathtaking story that inspire stunning imagery of flowing rivers, flying porch swings, and pattering rain.

I thought this book was very meaningful and delightful. I usually don’t like books written in prose, but this was an exception. It was so skillfully written, with everything flowing together and delicately connecting for an insightful read. It was intriguing to get a new point of view on how the events of the fight for equality affected Woodson as usually history isn’t written from a child’s perspective. I found it extremely inspirational to read about the sacrifices her grandparents made to provide a better life for their grandchildren. Her family had this bond unlike most families; it was extremely strong yet still delicate and spun a web of love around everyone in it. Her memories dive into deep ideas about segregation, fighting for equality, and the importance of love and family. I learned and gained a new perspective from reading this book and loved the genuine simplicity of it.

This book would be perfect for any reader wanting to learn about the past in a beautiful way. I would recommend this book to any reader over the age of 10. It is perfect for all ages and captures Woodson’s story into alluring prose. Some younger readers might not be a fan of Woodson’s style of writing in verse, as it is more mature than typical writing, but it is beautiful, nonetheless. This would be a perfect gift because Woodson’s poems because they’re just something extremely special about them. I would also suggest listening to the audiobook because her poems, when spoken aloud, are somehow even more stunning. For an enchanting journey through the past told through stunning verse, go read *Brown Girl Dreaming*.

Recommended Titles:

After Tupac by Jacqueline Woodson

The Crossover by Kwame Alexander

Hidden Figures: The Untold True Story of Four African American Women who Helped Launch
Our Nation Into Space by Margot Lee Shetterly